

The 144 MHz EME NewsLetter

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ZC4RH - UK Sovereign Base Areas, Cyprus on EME



Chris PA2CHR, Dave ZC4RH and Jos PA3FYC in sunny Cyprus in front of the 2x 10/10 ele yagis

Back in December 2021 Chris PA2CHR got into contact with Dave ZC4RH. During various email exchanges during the first months of 2022 they discussed a possible activity from the UK Sovereign Base Areas, Cyprus on EME on VHF and UHF. Since it was not possible to get a license for Chris, he asked Dave whether it was possible to assist Dave to help him getting QRV on VHF/UHF by just bringing all necessary equipment and antennas. Together with Jos PA3FYC who had already conducted some DXpeditions with Chris they discussed about what to do to bring ZC4 on the moon. ZC4RH soon became very enthusiastic about EME and was happy for the support from PA2CHR and PA3FYC so they started to look for a good location. This was not at all a simple thing because there

are no hotels and only a few apartments for rent in the ZC4 area. None of those was suitable for putting up antennas. The only possibility was to have a look at the area itself, with the eyes of a VHF EME operator. Hence, Chris flew down to Cyprus on June 3rd to meet Dave. The next three days they travelled around the SBA area and rather unexpectedly they found a good location: the Royal British Veterans clubhouse close to the coastline in KM64UX. There are no other buildings close by and most importantly Chris measured no local QRM. Dave took care of arranging for a permission to rent part of the clubhouse for the EME activities – and early in October he received the final confirmation. So preparations could start.



Isn't this much different from working terrestrial modes? Dave ZC4RH in operating position with Jos as support.

The planned time slot was from November 10th to 19th and equipment for 144 MHz was the usual and proven gear from TG9 in 2018 and VP2 in 2019: FT857, SSPA, LNA and 2 x 10/10 ele x-pol yagis (16 dBd). To be on the safe side all gear was expedited by UPS to Dave weeks before. The team used Dave's callsign ZC4RH since Dave had to be the operator while Chris and Jos just explained to him the peculiarities of EME and in the first hours also guided him working the pile-up.

When setting up the station on November 10th this did not go 100% smoothly. On 144 MHz QRM was being noticed from the power supply used for 1296 MHz. This was easy to rectify: The planned parallel operation 2 m and 23 cm was cancelled. The second problem was a coax-relay in 144 preamp box; the coil was burned and had to be replaced it by a new one. Though these were unexpected delays, around 1720 UTC everything was ready to go. In JT65B at 1729 UTC RK3FG was the first call sign in the 2 m log, followed by 222 other initials with W8TN being the last log entry at

0951 UTC on November 15th. The other hours until the end of the activity on Nov 19th, 1052 UTC were spent on 432 MHz with 54 initials and 1296 MHz with 32 initials.

Though this time Jos and Chris were not working from the station but more or less acting like consultants it was again great fun and joy for them that they had helped to bring such a very wanted DXCC (even by HF standards) on the moon. Let alone Dave ZC4RH who was a fast learner re EME propagation. Dave was already very active on 6 m and now looks hooked also for the 2 m band. He will be QRV the next sporadic e season with a 5 ele yagi and some 40 watts which should be enough for that propagation – if conds are supportive. Last summer Cyprus was open at least one day on 2 m even from the Netherlands – only, there sadly was no activity.

The complete log is available at www.qrz.com/db/PA2CHR Scroll down for some very professionally made videos from earlier DXpeditions by PA2CHR and friends. Maybe Chris is already busy making a video about this ZC4RH activity.

4U1ITU last QRV on EME for quite a while



Lins PA3CMC and Chris PA2CHR on the roof of the ITU building with the 2 m yagi in the background.

In September Chris PA2CHR and Lins PA3CMC had been QRV on EME from the 4U1ITU station in the ITU building in Geneva. 4U1ITU counts as a separate DXCC hence it very much sought after on all bands. However, since the ITU will relocate to a new building in Geneva probably next year it is uncertain whether and when 4U1ITU will be QRV again. It might well be some years – not only on VHF, also on HF. Therefore Chris and Lins hurried to conduct at least one more EME DXpedition from there before the closing of the station.

Together with station keepers Nick SV3SJ and Attila OM1AM they set up a single 13/13-ele-xpol yagi (14,5 dBd) on the roof of the ITU building and assembled the 2 m EME station (FT857 + SSPA) in the ITU shack. Everything worked without a problem – until Chris switched on his main Dell i7 laptop. It decided to run a Windows 10 update and after restart it did not work properly anymore since it apparently had lost some configuration data. Consequently they had to swap it for the back-up laptop which ran only on Windows 7 and lacked the computing power for Q65. Therefore JT65B was chosen instead.



Different perspective: The 16/16 ele xpol focussing on the moon. (Photos PA2CHR)

Since the ITU building is located in the “Nations” area of Geneva there are uncountable numbers of PCs, laptops, switching power supplies and all other kinds of electronics close by – and also inside the ITU building of course. Noise was already a big problem last time Chris was working from 4U1ITU in 2012. No surprise, things had not changed for the better the past 10 years. Since the team only had permission to run outside of office hours, QRV times were between 1800 and 0600 UTC. This meant the noise floor was somewhat less during the night but still very much present. Indeed the

QRM was heavy, but luckily got less with more elevation. The best situation was around 25 degrees when probably not catching much from outside anymore and still not much from inside the ITU building. After the first moon pass 37 stations were in log which is not bad given the noise issues. Next day was 70 cm activity before yet another moon on 144 MHz.

Time Table

2 Jan The January Issue of the 144 MHz EME Newsletter ready for download.

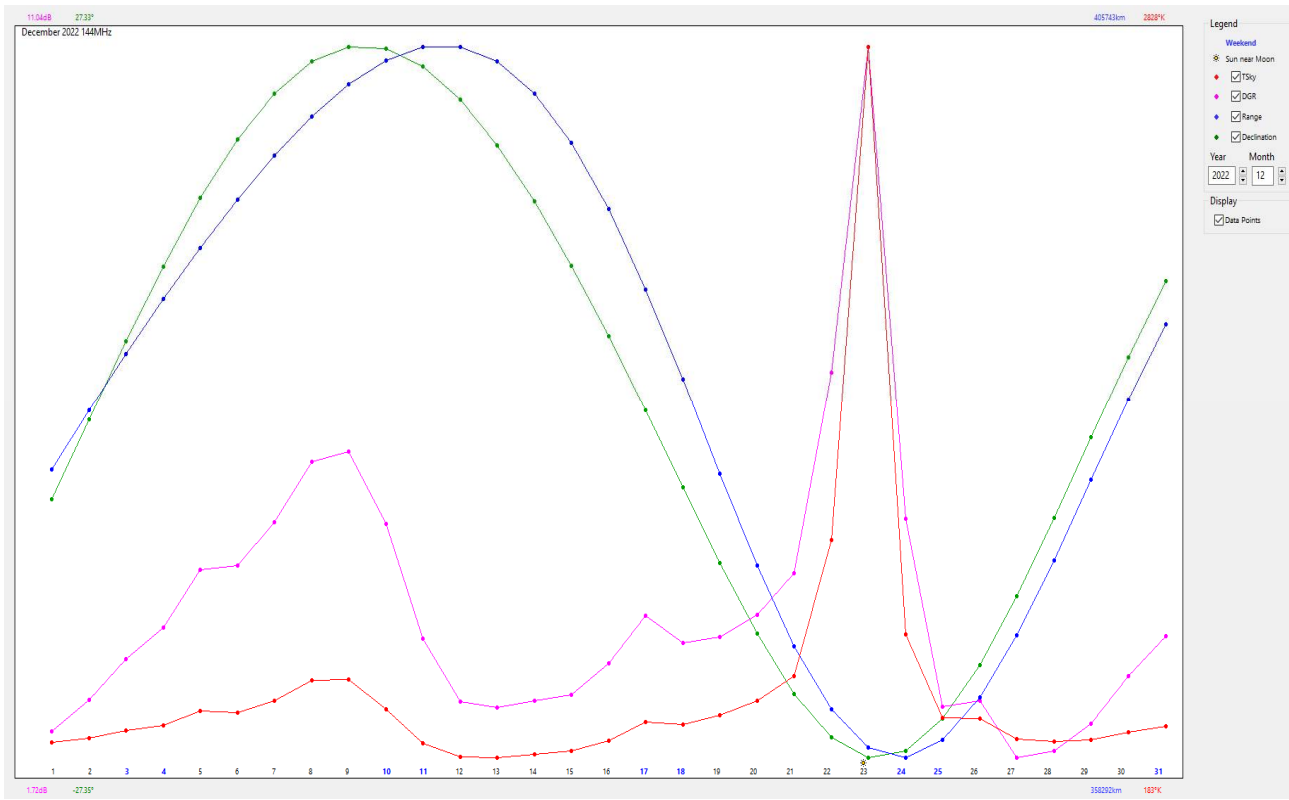
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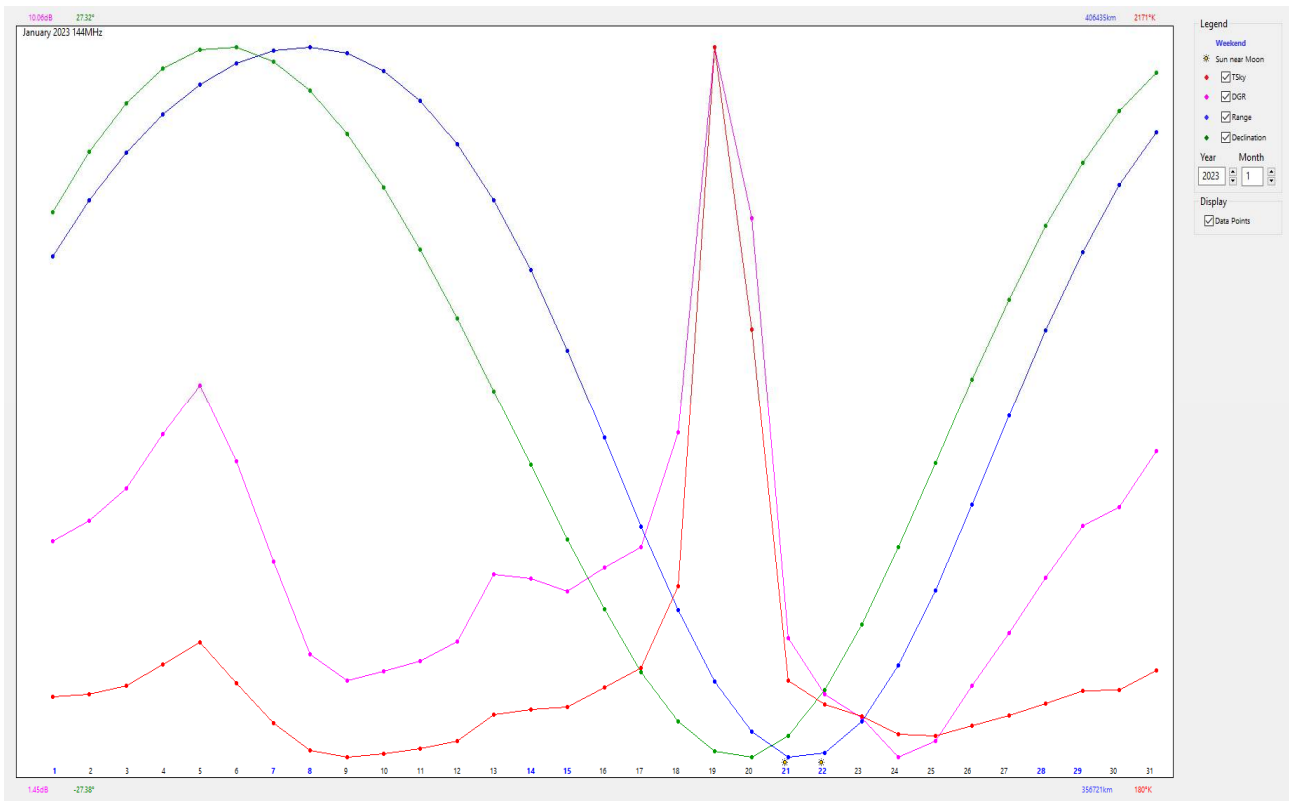
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Moon Conditions



Moon Graph December 2022



Moon Graph January 2023

(Courtesy of David GM4JJJ (sk 2019) www.gm4jjj.co.uk/MoonSked/moonsked.htm)