

# Ragchew

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## April 2026 Issue 4

### CLUB CONTACT DETAILS:

*Email the Secretary for all correspondence please:*

*Anne Bareham, can be reached on Cell: 072-268 1207 or by email: [zs1ct@ctarc.org.za](mailto:zs1ct@ctarc.org.za)*

*Banking Details: Name: The Cape Town Amateur Radio Centre.*

*Standard Bank: Claremont, Cape Town. Branch Code: 025-109 Current*



# Chairman's chat:



## Chairman's Chat May 2026

I begin this chat having to reflect on the tragic passing of Pino Gozzard, (her call sign was ZU1KAT), the very young daughter of our good friend Chris ZS1CDG, our past committee member and long time RAE teacher who returned to the UK with the family a couple of years ago. We all extend our deepest condolences to Chris. RIP Pino.

Life carries on fortunately, we wish the RAE candidates well for the forthcoming exam on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May and we hope to welcome all of them on the air soon.

The mystery gentleman's picture in the last Ragchew has a name and call sign to attach to it.

The late Louis Selikowitz, then ZS1GA, lived in Sea Point in a presumably large flat on the beach front.

His daughter lives in the same block of retirement flats as does Barry ZS1FJ and XYL Inge.

Many thanks must go to all the helpers who were involved in the last two work parties, namely at the clubhouse and at the Morningstar remote station.

The clubhouse mast and associated accessories needed a lot of TLC, not having had much maintenance in the past few years. We unfortunately do have an issue with the 10m performance of the yagi which will need some forensic work to find out what is wrong.

We will have to make some progress with the antennas stored in the clubhouse to sort out at least one which will be easy to erect and use at the Green Point lighthouse in August.

By the time this Ragchew is published we hope to have the security beam operational in the ceiling space at the clubhouse.

The Morningstar work party last Saturday managed to achieve just about all of what we intended to get done.

The replacement rotator was installed after the whole mast was tilted over carefully.

Allan ZS1LS spent a lot of time preparing the site ahead of the time.



The mast was raised up again and secured, Allan will complete the calibration in the next few days. There have been power failures at the airfield due to various reasons and a newer UPS and battery system is in the progress queue.

We have made progress with the set up and programming of the "new" repeaters to be installed on Kanonkop. Thanks to Michael ZS1MJT and Neville ZS1NEV.

The SARL 100th year commemorative book has been published and copies are available, the CTARC members have been very responsive in ordering for which we thank you.

Please remember the "end" of the month meeting at the clubhouse, 1400 hrs on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> May this month, there are five Saturdays, beware!

**73 de ZS1S**



## *Secretary and Treasurer's report:*

Hi Everyone

Another month has passed and autumn / winter is settling in fast.

The meeting on 25th was interesting and well received as was the work party that was postponed from 18th which was held before the meeting on 25th. The tower was bought down and repairs done, so that's another job out of the way.

Thanks to all who helped on the day.

Now we look forward to the rest of the year and events that have been planned and discussed. I'll keep you all posted.

Look after yourselves, and keep warm and dry.

'Till next time  
Anne

# WHAT'S ON THE CALENDAR

May 23rd Connectors  
 May 30th Foxhunt  
 June 27th TBA  
 July 25th CTARC AGM



Would you like to read the bulletin on a Sunday morning, please contact:

Paul ZS1S on 082 555 0872.

The bulletin is done in two parts. First the SARL bulletin that THE SARL will email to you to read, the second is the CTARC bulletin that you compile yourself.

Even if you would just like to begin by reading only the SARL bulletin and one of the regular bulletin readers comes on and reads the CTARC bulletin, assistance will be most appreciated.

## Bulletin readers

3 May	Paul ZS1S
10 May	Barry ZS1FJ
17 May	Paul ZS1S
24 May	Charl ZS1ZZ
31 May	Hylton ZR1HPC
7 June	Rob ZS1SA

## Your Committee:



Paul Johnson ZS1S , (Chairman / Bulletin Manager)

Anne Bareham , (Secretary / Treasurer/events coordinator)

Rob Bareham ZS1SA , (Clubhouse manager)

Paul Kennedy ZS1P XK , (Meeting Logistics/QSL manager )

Peter Cloete ZS1PC , (Assets Manager)

John Ward ZS1EQ , (Technical Advisor)

James Dudgeon , ZS1ZKZ (Assistant to Club House Manager )

James Venmore, ZS1RBT (Webmaster / Blog spot Manager )

Charl Marais, ZS1ZZ (Ragchew editor /RAE/Field day/Youth)

Ian Bradley , ZS1BR (Clubhouse IT manager/WCRWG Rep /Lighthouse manager )

Michael Taylor , ZS1MJT (Emergency Preparedness )



## CTARC is now on CLUBLOG

ClubLog is an online database with a suite of powerful tools supporting active DXers. Once you have registered on ClubLog and uploaded your log, you will be able to:

Generate personal reports, showing which DXCC countries you have worked and/or confirmed, when you first worked them, which ones you still need, and which are the most likely to QSL; See how you stand relative to your peers in various league tables and challenges; analyse your log for possible/likely errors in the DXCC allocations; Predict the bands and times on which you are most likely to work almost any DX station, based on actual QSOs in the logs uploaded to Club Log, and draw great circle maps; Set up a personal DX Cluster feed that filters out the DXCCs you have already worked, leaving just the ones you still need.

Once you have registered with Clublog, under settings and club you will see CTARC. Please join our league table to encourage HF activity and promote some healthy competition between our members.

Additionally our club group can be ranked amongst other clubs around the world.

Chris, ZS1CDG



The screenshot shows the ClubLog website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Settings, Upload, QQRS, Donate, Expeditions, and Help. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with buttons for Settings, Callsigns, Locators, Clubs, Cass A, Admin, App. Passwords, Access Log, and Live Stream. The main content area is titled 'Main Account Settings' and contains a 'Personal details' section with fields for Name (Chris Gozzard), Email (chris.gozzard@1...ll.com), and Photo. A green box with the text 'Click on Settings' is positioned over the 'Settings' button in the secondary navigation bar. A red arrow points from this box to the 'Settings' link in the top navigation bar. Another red arrow points from the 'Settings' link to the 'Clubs' button in the secondary navigation bar. A second green box with the text 'Then clubs' is positioned below the 'Clubs' button.

**A list of clubs will pop up.**

**Find CTARC in the list and select our club.**

**Finally click “Join Club”**



**WE WANT YOU!**



# See latest **CLUBLOG** table for CTARC's latest standing :

Rank	Callsign	160	80	60	40	30	20	17	15	12	10	DXCC ▼	Slots	Range
1	ZS1J	115	156	31	282	184	334	249	301	223	299	350	2174	45 yrs
2	ZS6P	64	145	0	278	106	336	241	300	215	298	350	1983	45 yrs
3	ZS1A+1	138	211	105	281	249	328	308	319	297	298	345	2534	46 yrs
4	ZS1LS+1	182	262	180	308	312	325	322	324	312	301	327	2828	18 yrs
5	ZS2Y	20	142	53	206	240	278	260	290	246	270	324	2005	20 yrs
6	ZS1OPB	0	1	0	34	0	196	161	120	44	132	245	688	8 yrs
7	ZS1IS+2	0	0	0	104	142	162	133	145	140	158	232	984	47 yrs
8	DF1KW	0	68	0	153	70	224	86	89	62	104	228	856	6 yrs
9	AE7U	1	7	14	83	114	155	149	171	138	144	212	976	43 yrs
10	ZS1TT+1	1	17	0	126	43	134	78	148	121	117	212	785	24 yrs
		160	80	60	40	30	20	17	15	12	10			
11	ZS1PT	0	5	0	51	46	107	38	87	22	139	189	495	31 yrs
12	ZS1WH	0	2	0	22	5	146	62	125	54	136	183	552	1 yrs
13	ZS1SA	0	2	1	28	24	88	75	128	84	136	177	566	17 yrs
14	ZS1JWM	0	0	0	17	28	72	17	65	60	112	143	371	3 yrs
15	ZS1BR	0	0	0	10	0	74	14	35	16	95	116	244	6 yrs
16	ZS1JDM	1	1	1	16	12	58	50	43	40	88	114	310	3 yrs
17	ZS1ZZ	0	0	0	25	17	31	1	31	32	81	108	218	5 yrs
18	ZS1CO	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	83	0	27	85	114	4 yrs
19	ZR1JT	0	0	0	6	0	19	7	43	28	58	78	161	1 yrs

## Do YOU want to become an Amateur radio operator?

Be part of a Progressive, Friendly, Balanced and Considerate community?

Why not partake in the RAE exam and become a registered Amateur radio operator which will give you the opportunity to:

- ✓ Make long distance communications across the globe
- ✓ Work satellites and possibly even make contact with an astronaut
- ✓ Radio sport such as Foxhunts and SOTA is within your grasp
- ✓ Acquire new technological skills and widen your knowledge base
- ✓ Acquire emergency communication preparedness skills
- ✓ Obtain the internationally recognised HAREC certificate
- ✓ Practice an amazing hobby and form friendships around the globe

Please email: [zs1ct@ctarc.org.za](mailto:zs1ct@ctarc.org.za) for information

# CONTEST CORNER NR 145

## International contests

9 May CQ-M International DX  
9 May Volta RTTY DX contest  
16 May UN DX contest  
16 May European PSK DX contest  
16 May The King of Spain CW contest  
23 May CQ WPX CW contest  
6 June VK Shires contest  
6 June IARU region 1 field day CW  
6 June ARRL International digital contest

## ZS COUNTRY CONTESTS

13 May Early morning coffee QSO party  
16 May ZS SOTA Activity weekend  
17 May ZS3 QSO party  
20 May SARL Wednesday 80m club contest  
3 June SARL Top Band QSO Contest



## Upcoming DXpeditions

### The Top of the World Goes on the Air

When we say "the top of the world," we mean it literally. Franz Josef Land the northernmost DXCC entity on the planet is scheduled to be activated later this year by the Russian DXpedition Team (RUDXT), operating as **R1FJL** from Heiss Island. Departure from Murmansk aboard the yacht *Maria* is planned for **25 August 2026**, with a voyage of six to seven days to reach the island, followed by approximately **15 days of on-air activity**. This is one of the most logistically demanding operations of 2026, and for many operators worldwide it will be an all time new one.

### Franz Josef Land A Place Beyond Ordinary

Franz Josef Land is a remote Russian archipelago lying deep in the Arctic Ocean, north of Novaya Zemlya at roughly 80° North latitude. The archipelago consists of 192 islands covering nearly 16,000 square kilometers, most of it permanently locked under glaciers and sea ice for the better part of the year. The chain was discovered in 1873 by the Austro-Hungarian expedition aboard the vessel *Tegethoff*, led by Julius Payer and Karl Weyprecht, who named the territory in honor of Emperor Franz Josef I of Austria.



The team will set up at the **E.T. Krenkel meteorological station** on Heiss Island named after Soviet polar explorer Ernst Krenkel one of the few structures on the entire archipelago. The station features a small community of scientists, a library, a laboratory, and even the world's northernmost post office. Average temperatures hover around  $-12^{\circ}$  C, polar nights stretch for 125 days, and polar days last 140. Summer, such as it is, runs for barely four weeks before the chill returns.

Wildlife on Heiss Island is hardy and abundant. Polar bears wander freely around the settlement — previous expeditions have reported up to eight bears visiting camp in a single day. Walrus, harp seals, white gulls, and burgomasters (large gulls) are common, and the permafrost meadows occasionally surprise visitors with polar poppies and saxifrages in the brief summer window.

## The Team

The RUDXT team behind RI1FJL are no strangers to remote, high-cost operations. Their recent track record includes award-winning DXpeditions to Rwanda (9X5RU, winner of the 2023 Cass Award), Burundi (9U1RU), winner of the 2025 Cass Award, Botswana (A25RU), Lesotho (7P8RU), and Juan Fernandez Island (XR0ZRC), among many others. They are known for running multiple high-power stations simultaneously, clean pileup management, and prioritising weaker stations and rare paths.

## Operating Plans

The team plans to operate at least five high-power stations simultaneously, covering **160m through 10m** using **CW, SSB, and FT8**. The expedition budget is close to **USD 80,000** a significant sum for a small team and community donations are still being accepted via the team website. The vessel charter alone required a USD 20,000 deposit, and accommodation at the Krenkel station is provided on a commercial basis following a hard won written agreement with the Northern Administration of Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring. QSL via **ClubLog, OQRS** and **LoTW**. The team consistently uploads logs promptly after their expeditions. Use the ClubLog OQRS system for the fastest electronic confirmation. Paper cards can be requested via direct mail check R7AL's QRZ.com page for current QSL manager details closer to the expedition dates.



Callsign	Name	Surname
R7AL	Vasily	Pinchuk
RW8A	Vlad	Rodin
RW9JZ	Leo	Berezhnoy
UA3QLC	Victor	Filimonov
RA4DX	Andrei	Soldatkin
UA4Z	Ruslan	Vladimirov

# APRIL MEETING REPORT



The meeting of April took on a slightly diverse format In comparison to any other meeting that was held at the CTARC clubhouse, The meeting started with the assembly of a workforce of a number of willing and very able volunteer members.

The object of the operation was to lower the antenna tower to an accessible level to facilitate certain necessary repairs to the rotation of the antenna system. The whole operation wasn't without some stumbling difficulties. It was also revealed that the system as a whole had attained a fair amount of wear and tear through exposure. Even before the operation could commence a fair amount of bush wacking had to be applied to the undergrowth so as to gain access to the cage surrounding the tower.

And then it all fell into place, so the operation fell into the time space allowed to allow the meeting to proceed on time. The meeting was duly opened by Chairman Paul ZS1S. Apologies were expressed for absentees and thereafter Peter Cloete ZS1PC gave a very detailed and substantial talk on Coaxial Cable.

It was revealed that the seemingly simple connection between radio and antenna is very much more complex and involved than was ever thought, So all went home more informed than when they first arrived. A hearty thanks to Peter for a very informative afternoon. Time well spent.

Look forward to the next meet on 23 May.

**Tony Kahn**  
**ZS1TK**



# Ham Radio Adventures

## Part one by Shaun ZS1RA

### The Idea:

I was so fortunate to have met OM Barry, ZS1FJ, during my tenure as Chairman of CTARC. Barry had been living between Singapore and Cape Town at the time. In our discussions he mentioned to me that he is keen on doing a DX-Pedition to Hollam's Bird Island. Knowing what Hollam's Bird Island is I thought this is an absolutely crazy idea so I was immediately hooked. As matters would have it despite my contacts in Namibia with influential people we would never be allowed to do this DX-Pedition because of the environmental sensitivity. Having done lots of volunteer work in the environmental protection and conservation sphere I did not want to push it any further.



Hollam's bird  
Island



But what Barry did not realise is that he had awoken a plan that OM Tom, ZS1TA, had been mulling over for a longtime. We looked at the most desirable country for DXers to make contact with, close to us and that happened to be Botswana. I was raising a family, Tom was retired so the mix of too little leave and money between the two of us we put it off until a future date. To me the idea of a DX-Pedition is mix of adventure and people playing with radios. I was intrigued by the idea of going to Botswana but knowing Bots quite well I knew we would not be allowed to setup in a really remote location so it was not a problem to me to park the idea. An idea I did not let go of, was to do a DX-Pedition on the highest accessible peak in Southern Africa so that obviously meant Lesotho.

### The Planning

I bounced the idea off the now late OM Tony ZS1APB and he thought it was a great idea. We know nothing about DX-Peditions so we went to talk to OM Deon, ZS1ZL, and of course the DX-Pedition champion of the world OM Barry, ZS1FJ. As an aside, anyone with an interest in adventure DX-Peditions should have a chat to Barry regarding his DX-Pedition to Chatham Island. After our discussions it was a go project and we started making plans. Barry gave us the guidelines so Tony and I set to work.

For me the idea of the highest peak I was not going to let go of so I pursued this with vigour. Things we take for granted such as Google Maps, WhatsApp, Cellphones were either not available or in its infancy so lots of paper map studies, telephone calls and emails between myself and, the then, owner of the Sani Chalets were exchanged. He convinced me that getting a radio station to the top of Thabana Ntlenyana at 3,482 meters was near impossible without a huge budget for either helicopters or to pay horseman and sherpas to carry the equipment up the peak. Him knowing the area I listened to his advice and opted for an unnamed peak which is the second highest by only 153 meters and I decided that we need to try it. He also told me that obtaining approvals and locals could be an issue which I had to consider. After much discussion with the working group being Tony, Deon and I, we decided that this DX-Pedition will need to be tackled in two phases first a recce then the DX-Pedition.



## The Recce

The dates are blurry but I believe it was February 2007 when we decided to undertake the recce. I had a Toyota Condor 4x4 at the time which we used to undertake the journey and on the fateful morning I collected Tony and we phoned Deon to let him know that we were on the way to fetch him. As luck would have it Deon misplaced his passport and mayhem ensued in his household. We had a deadline to make sure that we get to our first stop by nightfall. We made the gut-wrenching decision to leave Deon at home and whilst we were heading towards the N1 we received a call from Deon telling us that the passport had been found. Relieved we collected Deon and made headway to Lesotho.

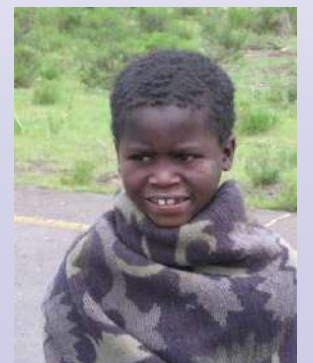
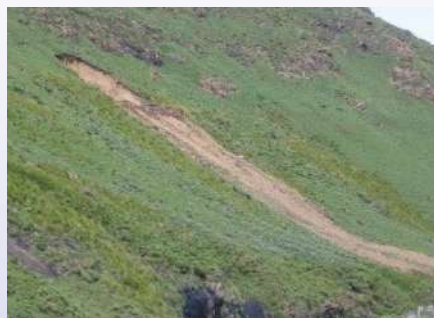
We travelled with no specific plan, my favorite way of travel, but knew that we would not make the border crossing in time to cross the same night. Enroute, we exchanged great stories and Deon told us about his DX-Pedition experiences accompanying Barry and before we knew it, it was nightfall. Travelling without a plan meant that we now needed to search for overnight accommodation. We found a lovely chalet at a fantastic resort somewhere near Bloemfontein if my memory is correct. A small braai for dinner, some tall stories and we were ready for bed.



Not being too far from the border we had a leisurely start to the day before heading out for the Lesotho border. But not before explaining to some curious people around us what the angle iron bracket and the Band Spanner antenna growing out the front of my vehicle was for. Once we fed their curiosity we drove to the border. Lesotho like most African borders is chaotic and it took us a very long time to clear. We made small talk with the locals and others whilst waiting to cross and were fascinated by the vendors selling all sorts of things from beads to meat on the sidewalk. With time we were allowed to go through and drove slowly taking in what is Maseru. We were met by the scenes of poverty, people on the sides of the road trying to make a measly living in the city. Of course, the black Mercedes of a politician rolled pass all the poverty giving those poor souls the metaphorical middle finger. After some gawking we headed into the great big mountains of Lesotho.



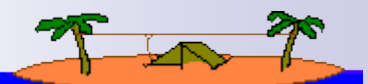
The Condor having a non-turbocharged engine sluggishly negotiated its way through the many twisties and climbs. The slow pace allowed us to appreciate the surroundings and we made many stops to chat to locals, a real immersive experience for us. We chatted to shepherds and herdsman who gave us some great insight to the Lesotho way. One particular insightful shepherd asked us if we knew what Lesotho's biggest export was. I thought I'd be clever and say water to which he replied, close but it is actually topsoil. The penny immediately dropped as the amount of soil erosion could not go unnoticed.



All the time we were wending our way to the peak, by the time we reached the top of the Mahlasela pass at 3222 meters just below the peak the Condor was well and truly out of breath. The AfriSki resort is on the opposite side of the road to the peak so we decided to explore the area. It was not snow season so the resort was closed but we met more locals, made conversation, looked at the machinery before deciding that we needed to head to the top of the peak.



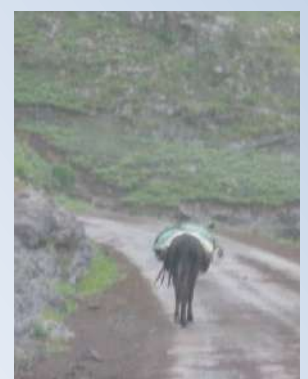
There was no formal road to the top of the peak but there were at least 2 radio towers on the top so we followed the tracks of the builders and maintenance people. Once we reached the top and saw the views we were pleased as there were no mountains visible above us to potentially affect our signals. The top was very rocky and we had some concerns about setting up tents and antennas on the site. We eventually found a spot that we thought we could hammer some steel rods through the cracks. While walking around on the top it soon became apparent to us why the locals are always wrapped in a blanket. At that altitude the weather changes from good to freezing in a matter of seconds! Not wanting to bear the cold any longer we decided to find accommodation. The ski resort was closed and we were literally in the middle of nowhere.



Deon remembered seeing chalets on the way up so we headed down, backtracking to the chalets. When we arrived at the Ox Bow Lodge we were greeted by really nice people with great chalets. I am sure that during the skiing season this place is packed but we had the place to ourselves.



Our host was fantastic, the people friendly and they answered the many questions we had about setting a camp on the peak, electricity and lots more. We stayed for 2 nights and after seeing and learning what we needed to know we headed to the Sani Chalets which proved to be another very interesting drive, meeting people, experiencing the countryside and culture. The highlights of the drive for me were seeing how important horsemanship is to the Basuto people and two young boys on their way to a ceremony. I'm sure that fathers had to hide their daughters from these dashing guys. The entrepreneurial spirit was also evident by the number of small businesses, from phone booths to small shops it was a buzz. The funniest sight was seeing a donkey walking home with his load by himself while his owner, no doubt was having a pint or three with his mates in the pub.





The Sani Top Chalets is a refuge in the cold inhospitable world on top of the Sani Pass. When we arrived there the owner, whose name escapes me told us that he had forgotten about us and had no accommodation except in the backpackers. We went to have a look at the backpackers and came across a Spanish guy who asked us in broken English to go and rescue his friend.

We could not understand fully but the desperation in his voice was evident so we drove him to the border gate at the top of the pass. His friend was standing there in the bitter cold, unable to communicate in English with the border guards. He had gone on a hike and returned after the border had closed and they would not let him through. After some discussion with the guards, we managed to get them to allow him through. I don't remember the reason but the management of Sani Top Chalets informed us that we could not stay at the backpackers any longer and the only other place they had available was the dining room which is only used during high season. Fortunately, I am always prepared for camping and the floor in the dining room became our bedroom. The ambience, toasty fireplaces and friendly people made this stop memorable but all good things have to come to an end and we headed down the Sani Pass the next day, back into South Africa and home.



The Sani Pass is spectacular and if driving / walking / riding it is the only reason you go to Lesotho then do it.



We

decided to take a slow drive down admiring every twist, turn, waterfall and amazing view and before we knew it we reached the bottom. The check through the border post was the easiest I have ever experienced anywhere in the world and just like that we were back in sunny South Africa. We had a long way to go to Cape Town but we decided that we had do it in one drive. This was the second longest one day drive I have ever done, the longest being from Kasane to Cape Town in one go but that's a story for another day.



Our route took us through KZN, Eastern Cape into the Western Cape and finally home. Along the way we had to send an urgent email for a reason I cannot remember but I do remember us pulling up at a filling station and a generous pump attendant unplugged his heater to allow us to charge the laptop for a while. We eventually arrived home, tired but filled with excitement about the upcoming DX-Pedition.



**Part 2 in the May Ragchew**

# Parks On The Air

## Pig's On The Air

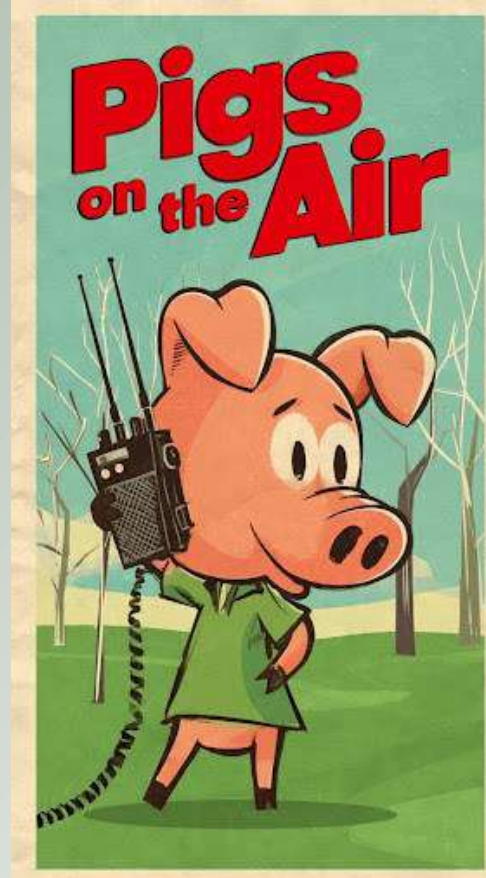
By Trevor Hughes ZS1PIG

### Introduction

Well, this little piggy has a story to tell — a story full of adventure, success, failure, cold, wet weather, rain and shine. A tale of **Parks on the Air** and pigs on the air. POTA<sup>2</sup> if you will.

Now some of you might still be wondering what this POTA lark is. Some may never have heard of it, some will have. Some of you might have taken part as an activator, and some as a hunter. It's just another way to have good fun with your radio and chat to other hams.

It gets you out of the shack and into parks and nature, and lets you hone your skills operating your rig portable. You need your rig, a power source (a battery), an antenna, some coax, and a sense of fun and adventure.



### POTA explained

Parks on the Air started in early 2017 when the ARRL's National Parks on the Air special event ended. A group of volunteers wanted to continue the fun beyond the one-year event, and thus POTA was born.

General information about the programme is available at <http://parksontheair.com>

### How do I get started?

The South African scene is still in the early stages of gaining momentum, with over 100 parks registered and more being added.

There are two ways to take part: **Activator** or **Hunter**.

#### Hunter

The easiest way to start is as a Hunter. You need do nothing other than listen out for an activator and make a simple QSO with them.

The website <http://pota.app> is the place to look for activations currently underway. You won't always see many local activations there yet, as there are relatively few, and much activity is coordinated via WhatsApp groups. However, activations *should also be posted on pota.app for everyone — including DX stations — to see.*

I often hunt US activators in the evenings, mainly on 20m, using pota.app and tuning around the frequencies. It's always a kick for both hunter and activator when DX turns up in a park, especially as the activator is often operating in less-than-ideal conditions with antenna compromises.

Just log the QSO as you normally would and take note of the park reference number. That's it — you've taken part.



## Activator

As an activator, you need a free account on pota.app. Then you pick a park, pack your portable rig and antenna, and head out.

You “spot” yourself on pota.app, the local WhatsApp group, or even via your local repeater. Then start calling CQ POTA and wait for the hunters.

Once complete, the hunters submit their logs to pota.app.

## What is a successful activation?

To successfully activate a park, you need 10 QSOs. These can be on any band and any mode — CW, SSB, or digital.

You can work the same station on multiple bands and each counts towards your total of 10. Locally, 40m tends to be the main band, but 30m works well too, and 20m/10m can bring in DX.

Don't forget VHF/UHF counts as well. I've had activations saved by a couple of FM QSOs when HF refused to cooperate. I've even activated Table Mountain entirely on a handheld before.

## Logging requirements

Hunters log as normal but must include the park reference. Activators upload their logs to pota.app. Hunters still get credit even if you only partially complete an activation, so always submit your log.

Hunters should also register on pota.app, you can then track which parks and activators have logged you.

## Pigs on the Air

Now for the tales of excitement and despair.

My first POTA was with Phil ZS1WW on “The Hill”. Terrible weather, not much activity, and frantic spotting on WhatsApp and repeaters. We eventually scraped together the 10 QSOs to activate.

This was one of those times where a handheld and VHF/UHF saved the day. While Phil was struggling on his G90 for the final QSO, I called CQ POTA on the handheld and grabbed the last contact needed.

My next activations were also with Phil, using his G90:

- ZA-0102 Keurboom Park
- ZA-0113 Rondebosch Park

Getting more into it, I made good use of my Table Mountain cable car pass and activated **ZA-0040 Table Mountain** at least four times on VHF/UHF with my trusty Baofeng UV-5R. I love that thing.



*Rondebosch Common when I activated finally*

At a club field day I activated Keurboom Park successfully with the G90, proving it worked fine. So the mystery remained.

Later, during a SARL 40m contest, the G90 worked perfectly for about 35 minutes then suddenly went dead on transmit. I could still hear AM broadcast stations, but the radio was effectively useless. Not good.

My next POTA outing was a Hibiscus Coast Club event. I had to activate Cape Town, so Rondebosch Common was the target again.

With no G90 available, I pressed my Kenwood TS-480HX into service, limited to 100W. My usual battery wasn't available, so I improvised with a large inverter/loose battery setup used for load shedding backup.

It worked — but it nearly killed my back carrying it.

In pouring rain I set up a 40m EFHW using my 10m DX Commander mast, got soaked, and operated from the car.

Nothing on 40m.

At that point it felt like another failure.

Fortunately, the WhatsApp group suggested 20m. I moved there, spotted myself, and finally got over 10 QSOs. ZA-0106 was activated.

Packing up in the rain, I didn't care — success at last.

Another highlight was Signal Hill with visiting American ham Trevor (ZS1/WT0RJ), along with Kam (ZS1/KZ1KAM). Despite the weather, we strung an EFHW from a tree to the trig beacon and operated for four hours.

We even managed a contact to New York on 15m, plus a CW QSO. A great session.

My last activation was Rondebosch Common again during the AWA Valve QSO party. This time I had a smaller inverter/battery setup that didn't destroy my back.

Despite rain and fading light, I activated successfully on 100W with Claire ZS1COG keeping me company, packing up in the glow of the Jimny headlights.

## In summary

Parks on the Air is a lot of fun. As momentum grows, it will become even better when you're not just fighting for 10 QSOs.

It gets you away from the shack, away from the noise, and into a park with fresh air and a different operating challenge. There are currently around 137 parks designated, and it's easy to get your local park added.

If you're curious but don't have the gear, battery, or antenna — give me a shout. I'm always up for an activation and happy to show you the ropes.



*Above: The ridiculous power situation*



*Kam and Trevor on Signal Hill*

# Trevor ZS1PIG

# The FT 225 story

The radio has an interesting history.

It was presumably new when the late Terry Cotton, (ZS1HS originally and then ZS1AYJ) bought it in the mid to late 1970's. He and Jane lived in Green Point, Terry worked for ICL, the British company which later was absorbed into Fujitsu somehow.



There was a very active and friendly bunch of Cape Town Branch members, particularly Terry (SK), Dave ZS1SG, Derek ZS1DP (SK), Rolf ZS1VM, Robert ZS1RR (SK), Lee ZS1TF (SK), Owen ZS1JN (SK), Colin ZS1RG and quite a few more. Derek was always called "The good Uncle"

There was a lot of two meter activity and it included VHF and UHF activity which led to the realisation that there were occasions when the propagation up the west coast became very enhanced to as far as Lüderitz in the then

South West Africa, ZS3 as it was.

Distance records were set on VHF and UHF by Terry then ZS1HS and Gerhard Schlorf ZS3B, (SK also a long time ago) in Lüderitz which stood for many years.

There was also a lot of fun and nonsense in the radio bunch, they used to descend into the social activity and pseudo tech world in the infamous ad hoc **Signal Hill Institute of Technology**, I leave it up to your imagination!

This VHF all mode FT225 radio which Dennis ZS1TC has now refurbished and put back in operation is the one that Terry used way back then.

Fun people, I remember them well.

## 73 de ZS1S



# NUMBER STATIONS

*Ghosts on the Shortwave Bands*

## Voices in the Ether

It is late at night. You are slowly spinning the dial of your shortwave receiver, crossing the forty meter band. Static, broadcast voices in distant languages, perhaps the warble of a digital mode and then, something else. A calm, emotionless voice begins reading groups of numbers in slow, deliberate tones. Five digits at a time. No call sign. No station ID. No explanation. Just numbers, repeated with mechanical precision, and then silence.

You have encountered one of the most enduring mysteries of the radio spectrum: a numbers station. For over a century these enigmatic transmissions have haunted the shortwave bands, carrying encrypted messages to spies and intelligence operatives scattered across the globe. They are officially unacknowledged by the governments that operate them, technically illegal under ITU regulations, and yet as events in early 2026 dramatically confirmed they are very much alive.

## The One-Time Pad: An Unbreakable Cipher

To understand why numbers stations exist, you need to understand the cryptographic system that makes them worth operating: the one-time pad (OTP). Developed formally around 1917–1919 by Gilbert Vernam and Joseph Mauborgne of the US Army, the principle is simple. If you encrypt a message using a random key that is exactly as long as the message, used only once, and kept perfectly secret, the resulting cipher is mathematically unbreakable not merely difficult to crack, but theoretically impossible to decode without the key. Even with unlimited computing power, an adversary cannot determine whether the text says "attack at dawn" or "bring milk and beers."

Combine an unbreakable cipher with the global reach of shortwave radio HF signals that propagate thousands of kilometers by bouncing off the ionosphere and the numbers station concept emerges almost inevitably. An agency creates a one time pad, gives one copy to their field agent, and retains the other. At a prearranged time and frequency, a broadcast goes out: groups of numbers read by a neutral voice. The agent writes them down, applies the pad arithmetically, and reads the message. No computer required. No internet connection. No detectable transmission from the receiving end. Just a shortwave receiver, a pencil, and a piece of paper.

## A Century of Clandestine Broadcasts

While numbers stations almost certainly operated during both World Wars, their use was compounded during the Cold War. From the late 1940s through the Soviet collapse in 1991, the shortwave spectrum was thick with clandestine broadcasts from agencies on every side of the geopolitical divide. Western listeners stumbled across them accidentally ham operators and shortwave hobbyists gradually recognised reoccurring patterns: the same frequencies, the same schedules, the same distinctive introductions.

## Famous Stations

The Lincolnshire Poacher (designated E03 by the monitoring community) was perhaps the most famous English-language station, named for its musical introduction the first bars of the traditional folk song. Widely attributed to Britain's MI6, broadcasting from Akrotiri in Cyprus, it transmitted to agents in Eastern Europe and the Middle East for decades before going silent around 2008.

The Buzzer known in Russian as Zhuzhzhalka has broadcast a near continuous repetitive buzzing tone on 4625 kHz since the 1970s, interrupted only occasionally by terse voice messages. Its purpose remains debated. What is not debated is that it is still transmitting as of 2026, making it one of the longest running continuous transmissions in radio history.

The Cuban HMO1 station, known as Atencion, broadcast Spanish five digit groups to Cuban intelligence agents in the United States for years. Its existence was confirmed beyond doubt during the trial of the Cuban Five intelligence officers arrested in the US in 1998 making HMO1 one of the very few numbers stations whose operational purpose was formally established in an open court of law.

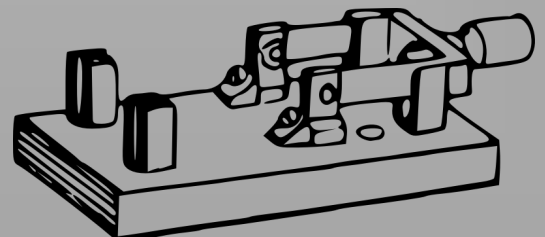
## The Conet Project

In 1997, the British label Irdial Discs released The Conet Project, a four-disc compilation of numbers station recordings gathered by hobbyists over many years. The release brought the phenomenon to wider public attention, confirming what listeners had long suspected: these were not random anomalies but systematic, purposeful transmissions with consistent formats and schedules and they were coming from governments.

## How Monitoring Works: Priyom and the Community

The task of cataloguing numbers stations falls to a global community of dedicated shortwave listeners. The most significant modern effort is Priyom.org, a volunteer network that maintains live schedules, archives recordings, and publishes technical analyses of active stations worldwide. Priyom uses the ENIGMA nomenclature system prefix letters indicating language or signal type (E for English, G for German, V for various, S for Slavic) followed by a number allowing uniform cross reference across monitoring reports from different listeners on different continents.

The monitoring toolkit has never been more accessible. A software defined radio (SDR) dongle costing a few hundred rand, paired with any reasonable HF antenna and free software such as SDR# or GQRX, is sufficient to receive most active stations. The Kiwi SDR network a global array of web based receivers operated by hobbyists allows anyone to tune a receiver on the other side of the world through a browser. Numbers stations that are inaudible from southern Africa due to propagation can often be received clearly on a Kiwi SDR in central Europe.



## Why the Internet Has Not Killed Them

There are those who have periodically declared numbers stations obsolete Cold War relics clinging to life in an age of encrypted smartphones and VPNs. The argument sounds reasonable until you examine the threat model. Internet communications, however well encrypted, leaves metadata, connection logs, IP addresses, timing signatures, cell tower records. An agent operating in a hostile country may find that internet infrastructure is monitored, restricted, or simply unavailable. A number of well publicised cases have demonstrated that even "secure" messaging applications can be compromised at the endpoint.

A shortwave receiver, by contrast, leaves no trace at all. There is no connection to establish, no packet to log, no satellite handshake to intercept. The agent does not acknowledge receipt. The broadcast simply goes out and either reaches them or it does not. This passive reception model, combined with the mathematical certainty of a one time pad, gives numbers stations a safety net that no digital system can fully replicate under adversarial conditions. The content of the message is protected by cryptography. The act of receiving it is invisible.

## V32 — 7910 kHz: Proof of Concept, February 2026

On February 28th, 2026 about twelve hours after the first US airstrikes against Iran that opened the current conflict there was a new signal which appeared on 7910 kHz USB. A male voice, calm and measured, began reading structured five digit numeric groups in Farsi, the Persian language spoken by some eighty million Iranians. No call sign. No identification. Twice a day, at 18:00 UTC and 02:00 UTC, with transmissions lasting up to two hours.

The station, designated V32 by Priyom, was logged within its first minute of transmission. Technical analysis quickly turned up a remarkable detail: a periodic dual tone beep audible beneath the voice, identified by experienced monitors as the plain text override warning tone generated automatically by L3Harris military grade radio equipment operated by Western military and intelligence services. Signal triangulation using the global Kiwi SDR network placed the likely transmission origin outside Iran, with analysis eventually pointing toward central Europe.

Iran's response was swift and unmistakable. From March 4th, the Iranian bubble jammer, the same pulsing interference signal Tehran has long used to block Radio Farda and BBC Persian from reaching the country appeared on 7910 kHz during V32's transmission windows. A government does not jam its own station. The jamming confirmed, as clearly as any official statement could, that V32 was being received inside Iran and that Tehran wanted it stopped.

What followed was a modern cat and mouse game played out in full view of the global monitoring community. V32 moved to 7842 kHz. The Iranian jammer followed. V32 returned to 7910 kHz on March 18th in a new format iteration. The jammer followed again with a second interference signal a continuous 1000 Hz AM tone from an unknown source joined the effort from March 20th.

Regular high-power transmissions effectively ceased after March 25th, though extremely faint signals consistent with the same equipment were still being logged in early April.

The significance of V32 for our discussion is not who operated it or what the messages said both remain officially unconfirmed. The importance is the timing. When an active military conflict erupted involving one of the world's most tightly controlled internet environments, a numbers station was on the air within twelve hours. Not a secure app. Not a satellite phone. A shortwave transmitter, a one time pad, and a frequency that any agent with a basic receiver could tune.

Numbers stations are, simultaneously, the simplest and the most mysterious objects in the radio spectrum. A carrier wave, a voice reading numbers and beneath that, implications reaching from the physics of the ionosphere to the operational security of intelligence services worldwide. They have outlasted every prediction of their demise, adapted through various geopolitical landscape, and continued to transmit through every era of technological change.

For those of us who operate in the HF bands who spend evenings listening to signals across the planet with wire antennas and modest power there is something both sobering and electrifying about sharing those frequencies with these ghost signals. The one time pad has never been broken. HF propagation has not changed. And somewhere out there, on a frequency not far from where you run your FT8 or your SSB, a calm voice is reading numbers to someone who very much needs to hear them.

*Keep your ears open*

*ZS1ZZ*

*Charl*

Reference pages used for this article : Priyom.org | SWLing Post — March 2026 | IZØKBA Lorenzo monitoring blog | The Conet Project, Irdial Discs, 1997 | Shortwave Radio Forum — V32 reception reports

For further reference or monitoring hereby a list of websites for your perusal :

<https://priyom.org/number-stations/station-schedule> this is a brilliant website where most of the station schedules are posted.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Numbers\\_station](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Numbers_station)

<http://www.signalshed.com/>



# SPORT REPORT

## *Swartland National Rally - 24-25 April 2026*

Amateur radio operators once again played a vital supporting role at the 2026 Swartland National Rally, held on 24 and 25 April in the Swartland region of the Western Cape. As one of the key rounds in the South African National Rally Championship calendar, the event brought together rally crews, officials, support teams and volunteers from around the country.

As in previous events, amateur radio formed an important part of the rally communications network, providing reliable coordination between Rally HQ, stage officials, and course vehicles across the widespread and often remote operating area.



Operations were conducted on 145.650 MHz via the Hawequa Repeater, which provided dependable wide-area coverage for the duration of the event.

### **Day 1**

Day 1 began at De Werf Padstal, where the radio team met to fit mobile radios and mag-mount antennas into the Clerk of the Course (CoC) vehicle, the Zero Cars and the commentator's vehicle. The commentator's vehicle was fitted with a radio but intentionally not equipped with a microphone, as no dedicated radio operator was assigned to that vehicle. This allowed the commentator to monitor the control net and maintain situational awareness without risk of transmitting.

Once the mobile installations were complete, the control station was established at Hermitake Restaurant, just outside the town of Hermon, which served as the primary Rally HQ for Day 1 operations.



Due to a clerical error the first stage marshals ended up at the incorrect location which delayed the stage. Fortunately, the radio operators in the Zero Car and at end of the stage were able to get the message back to Control so that the CoC could be informed. Chief Radio, ZS1MJT, was dispatched to assist on the scene and the stage was eventually opened at 14:36.



Due to delays accumulated throughout the day, Stage 6 was ultimately scrubbed, and Stage 5 was run as the designated night stage, concluding at 20:30.

While there were no major incidents requiring the medical team to be dispatched there were plenty of retirements due to mechanical failure throughout the day. Of the 33 starters only 19 teams completed all 5 stages.

## Day 2

Less than 12 hours later Day 2 operations began with control being established at Hoërskool Swartland at 08:00. Who said being a radio amateur was easy?

With the previous day's challenges resolved and lessons from Day 1 already applied, the second day started far more smoothly.

The first two stages ran on time and were incident free, however, an accident in the third stage brought the rally to a halt. The CoC was quickly informed as soon as Control received the message so that the stage could be stopped and the medics sent in. It was soon determined that a spectator had been hit by a rock, kicked up by one of the passing cars, which broke his leg. While all safety measures were in place, rallying is still a dangerous sport, and unfortunate accidents do happen from time to time. We wish him all the best with his recovery.

No further incidents were reported for the day, however, the delays in Stage 3 did push the end time for the rally back by about 50 minutes.

### Reliable Communications Where They Matter Most

In a motorsport environment where timing, safety and rapid coordination are critical, dependable communications remain essential—and amateur radio continues to prove its value in exactly this role. The 2026 Swartland National Rally once again highlighted one of amateur radio's enduring strengths: the ability to provide reliable, infrastructure-independent communications in support of safety, coordination and event operations under real-world field conditions.

A sincere thank you goes to ZS1MJT, ZS1ATX, ZS1ES, ZR1JL, ZS1LAM, ZS1WV and ZS1YT who gave their time, equipment and expertise in support of the event, as well as to ZR1FR and ZS1JM for working their magic behind the scenes.

As a point of interest, 827 times were passed on top of all the other transmissions over the two days!



**Ian**  
**ZS1BR**





# CTARC RF CAFÉ



So what exactly is RF CAFE??

RF CAFE is another facility and feature of Cape Town Amateur Radio Centre.

So what is the function and purpose??

The clubhouse will be open and available for any interested party to meet and greet informally and sociably. To this end, members are encouraged to invite any interested associate they want to. This invitation will be extended to a passer by should the occasion arise. The whole purpose being to drum up interest in amateur radio and the workings thereof. Another purpose is that the facility could be utilised as a meeting spot to discuss any aspect of radio or even as a work party or workshop.

An important aspect of the CAFE is that a fully functional radio shack will be in place for good use. This will cover all bands that may be open at the time of access.

The CAFE part of it comes in with a FREE BOTTOMLESS CUP OF COFFEE.



## Weekly repeater schedule

USE	USER	AFFECTED REPEATERS	FROM	TO	ON	NOTES
Net	CTARC	434.625 MHz Kanonkop	08:00	09:00	Mondays	Monday UHF Net — CTARC
Bulletin	HWC	145.700 Constantiaberg	19:30	20:30	Wednesdays	Hamnet Western Cape Except the first Wednesday of each month
Net	BARK	DMR Talkgroup 6551	19:30	—	Thursdays	BARK DMR Net Talkgroup 6551
Bulletin	CTARC	145.750 Kanonkop	08:30	09:30	Sundays	SARL bulletin followed by Cape Town Amateur Radio Centre bulletin
Bulletin	BARK	145.700 Constantiaberg	09:30	10:30	Sundays	SARL bulletin followed by Boland Amateur Radio club bulletin
Bulletin	SARL	145.700 Constantiaberg	10:30	11:30	Sundays	SARL bulletin followed by Amateur Radio Today bulletin



Please remember the UHF net which Tony Kahn, ZS1TK facilitates every Monday evening from 20:00 CAT on the ever popular CTARC UHF repeater . For those who do not know, the input frequency is 433.025MHZ and the receiving frequency is 434.625MHZ with no CTCSS tone required.

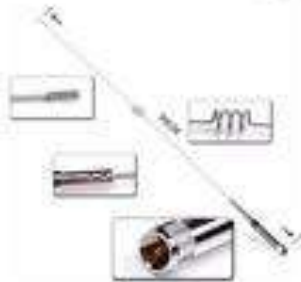


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Steve Gage ZS1BBG has excess to his needs the following up for grabs :

4 Element TET Yagi beam for the 10,14,21,25,28 MHz frequencies , the beam can be used in either a 3 or 4 element configuration. The hardcopy manual will be provided.

Hy Gain M rotator fitted with a steel ring gear, new bearings and cages. Along with a control head (a second control head is also available)

2 x 30m lengths of RG213 and a limited length of rotator control cable

A brand new (never used) Yaesu GS050 thrust bearing

The beam has been in storage for the last five year with all the stainless steel hardware. The items will be sold in a package deal, no breaking up of individual items. The collection needs to be done in Swellendam and the package will be prepared by me, unfortunately the package is too big and heavy for conventional couriers and would therefore need to be collected.

The asking price is R10 500 or nearest cash offer .

**Steve Gage ZS1BBG can be contacted by phone or Whatsapp on 0767564703**



# CLUB ANNOUNCEMENTS



ZS1JPB	Jean Bauermeister	6 May
ZS1PWJ	Pieter Jordaan	13 May
ZS1VG	Glen Verran	14 May
ZS1HA	Hans Moolenschot	17 May
ZS1RS	Colin Porter	17 May
ZS1KK	David Kirk	20 May
ZS1A	Johan Sevenster	21 May
ZS1FZ	Fred Ziss	21 May
ZR1JT	Jean Thirion	23 May
ZS1J	Tjerk Lammers	25 May
ZS1WA	Geoff Warr	25 May
ZS1JWM	James Miller	30 May

## New Members!!

A warm welcome to: Paul Winters (no call) and David Semple (no call) I'm sure you will enjoy the camaraderie at the Cape Town amateur radio centre

The 2026 SARL contest manual is available on the SARL website , please download it for your perusal.

<https://mysarl.org.za/contest-resources/>

### Disclaimer:

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AMATEURS  
ABSOLUTELY FREE AT EVERY  
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