

April 2000: VP6BR - Pitcairn is. operation by Jukka OH2BR.

by Pierluigi "Luis" Mansutti, IV3PRK

This was an unforgettable DX operation by Jukka, OH2BR, in celebration of his 40 years of ham radio activity. From Jan. 24 to April 21, 2000, 56.242 QSOs were made, with 642 of them on 160 meters!

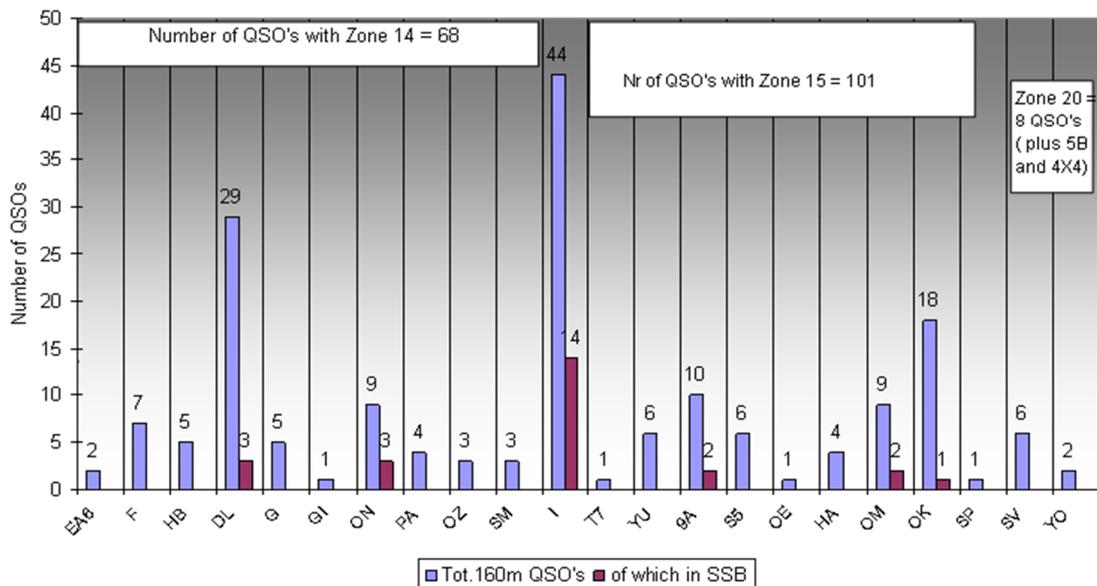
The full story with pictures and online log are still available on his website <http://www.qsl.net/oh2br/reports.html> from which I extracted Jukka's own words:

«The Top Band produced strong emotional moments during the DXpedition even at sunspot maximum. Who could have predicted that Europe would have been so strong on Pitcairn?! Certainly, if somebody had told me that I could work VP6 from Israel and Sweden on 160 m. with S9 signals would have seen me smiling - do not fool me, please! But it happened many times and each time it was a miracle.

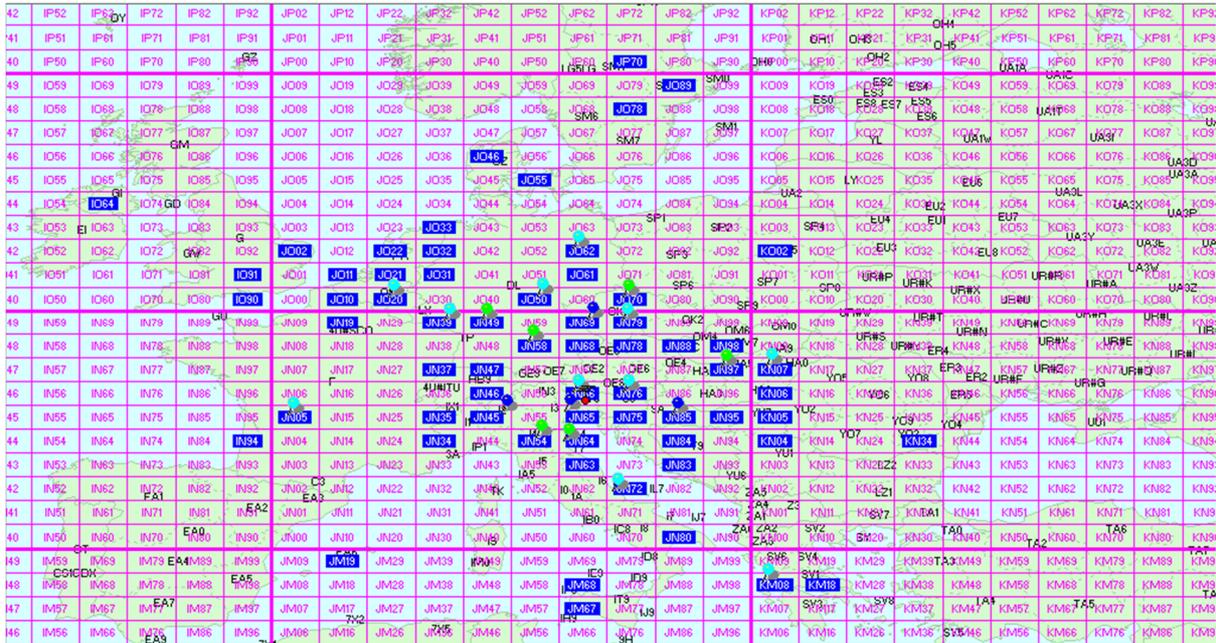
4X4DK and 4X4NJ made the longest distance QSOs on 160 m and, curiously enough, even in faraway Finland VP6BR was heard once (by OH1XX). But unfortunately, there was no two-way OH-VP6 QSO made this time. The Italians were the winners with S9+10...20 dB signals and armchair copy on SSB. One of these days I plan to visit their stations to see how they do the trick.»

Jukka is right as, thanks to CLUBLOG, I analysed VP6BR European QSOs and found an amazing number of Italian stations worked! But many of them are not known as Topbanders, ...just occasional HF DXers without special tricks for 160 meters. So, there was a kind of pipeline from Pitcairn is. to some limited areas in Europe, a true a case of spotlight propagation or, better to say, "DUCTING" conditions as learnt by Prof. Robert Brown, NM7M (SK).

VP6BR Pitcairn is. Dxpediton by Jukka OH2BR, April 2000
160 meter QSO's with Europe: Total Nr. 177 (25 in SSB)



I don't know if Jukka was operating on 160m already in February and March, but I did not see any trace of VP6BR in Europe until the month of April. It was not difficult to extract all the European callsigns from ClubLog and to match them with their own grid square. The following is my DX Atlas chart with the usual-coloured pins on the most favoured areas. This time, we see that all northeastern Europe (Finland, Baltic countries, Russia and Ukraine) has been completely out of the game.

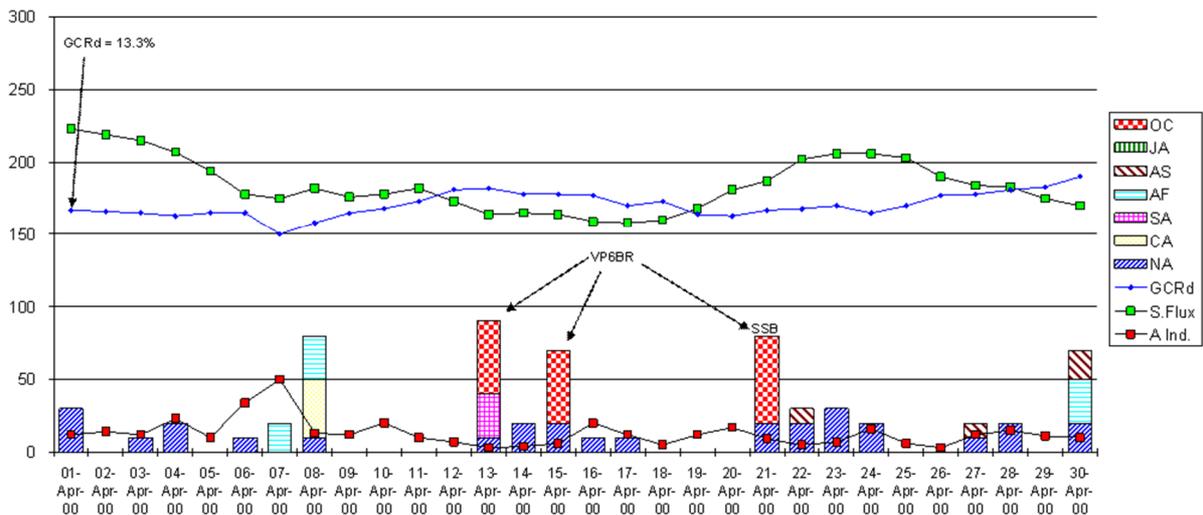


As said, there was no sign of VP6BR 160 m. activity in Europe until April 10. These are the notes on my Year 2000 paper book:

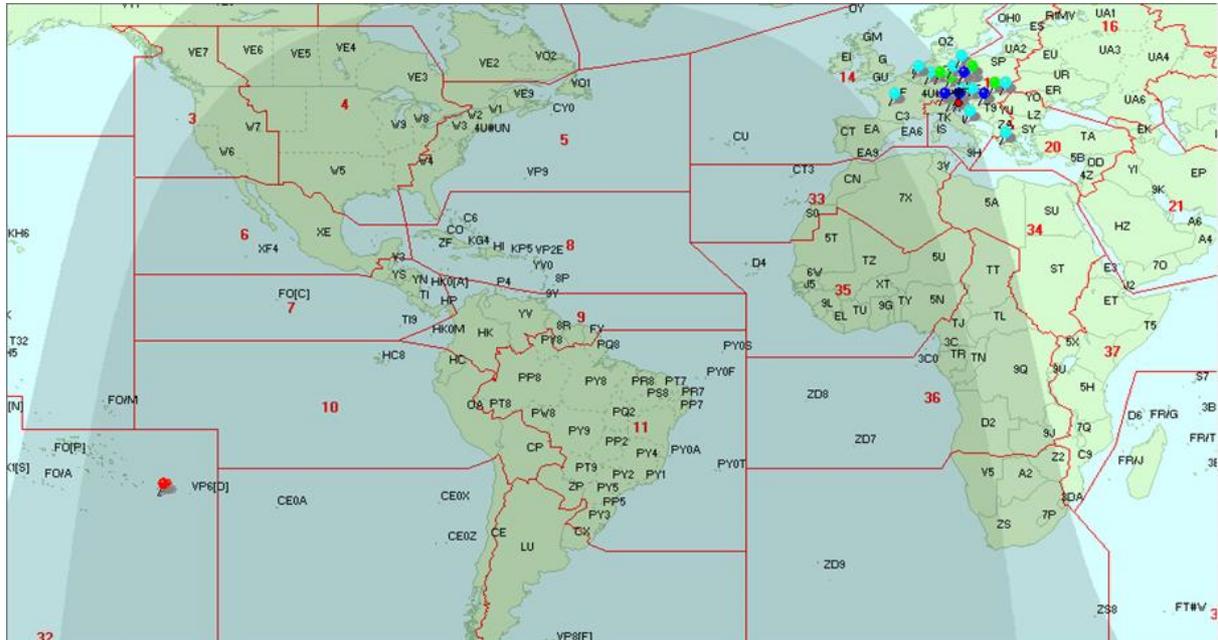
- April 11, 04.00 - 04.30: heard IK7 and IT9 stations working him... nothing here.
- April 13, 03.39: IV3PRK-VP6BR CW QSO 579/559 followed by SV1AOZ, SV8ZC etc.;
04.20: still heard 569/579; 04.30: nothing more.
- April 15, 03.45: heard VP6BR 449, at 04.00: hrd 579, at 04.15: hrd 569, at 04.20: hrd 449.
- April 21, 03.00: VP6BR working North, Central and East Europe... nil here; at 03.40 coming up to 569; at 03.47: IV3PRK- VP6BR SSB QSO 57 / 59, at 03.52 peaking 59 on SSB; at 04.05 back in CW down to 559and at 04.10 disappeared, one minute after my Sunrise!

This is my daily graph for the month of April 2000 which shows not great DX conditions due to the late spring season, but also the temporary decreasing of the Solar Flux from above 200 to the 150 level; on the other side Galactic Cosmic Radiations hold down typical of the high Solar cycle. This combination could had favoured the ducting propagation (see the NM7M theory on the New Zealand page), but there are other factors we don't yet know.

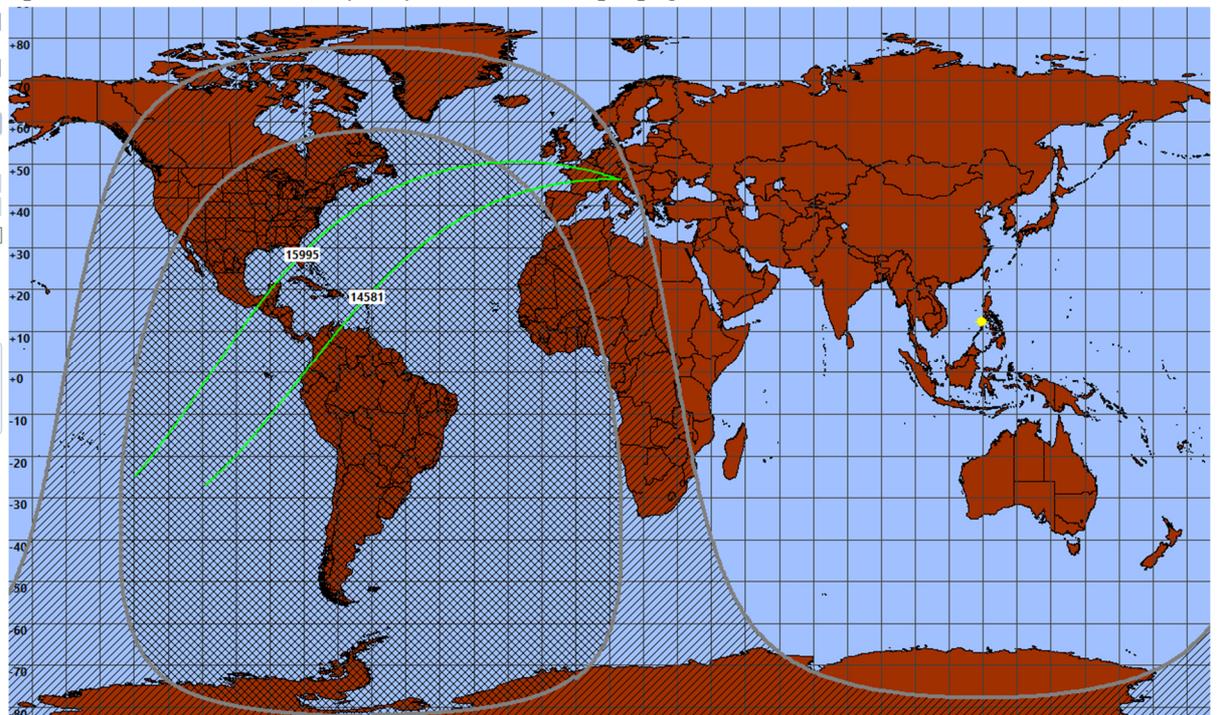
Daily 160 m. DX conditions from IV3PRK - April 2000



Noteworthy, on both April 21 and 22 there was also XR0ZY active from Easter is. and spotted at the same time working North Europeans, but I was never able to hear a whisper from them, as it were in another duct.



The path is almost the same, or even better: 16.000 km at 294 degrees to Pitcairn and 14.580 km at 273 degrees to Eastern Island, both with low loss reflections over salt water, but seemingly taking separate routes... : another mystery of 160-meters propagation!



This analysis has been written twelve years later, to compare with the results of a recent international DXpedition to Pitcairn - VP6T - under similar solar cycle conditions.