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# VHF/UHF – An Expanding World

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David Smith VK3H

## Weak Signal

David Smith - VK3HZ

There's not a great deal of propagation activity to report on this month. However, Mike VK3KH discovered recently that there's still life in a seemingly dead band:

*It's easy to think that winter time means that the VHF/UHF bands are dead, and that propagation is non-existent, even for someone like me who has been playing this game for 30 years. But you never know...*

*Friday morning 5th June looked like most other mornings for the last few weeks. No sign of the DX beacons on two metres that normally signal a chance of propagation, and even Mr Hepburn was showing no hope. A check of the VK Logger also showed no sign of activity. However, one interesting observation was I noted Phil VK5AKK was logged on. Hadn't seen him on the logger for some time. I have worked Phil lots of times over the last few years and he is always one of the strongest stations out of the Adelaide area into this location if there is propagation. I also know from experience that if Phil is on the Logger around this time of morning (8.00 - 8.30am Melbourne time), he will have his radio on while he makes his breakfast.*

*With nothing to lose, I thought it was worth a try calling in his direction. I put out a call, and then listened. Nothing. I considered QSYing to 144.200 for the Aircraft Net, and was about to do it when I heard Phil calling QRZ - not very strong but very readable. I answered his call and he quickly came back with a 5/1 report. I returned his report as 5/1 also, and we then chatted briefly, commenting we hadn't heard each other for a while, conditions had been lousy, etc. We then said our 73's and the contact was over.*

*Now this contact is not startling, we have done it many times before, and many times with signals up to 5/9. But it was 670km, and a good readable contact. However it served to remind me that although we think the band may be dead, the research may tell you there is no propagation, it is still worth a try. I just wonder how many times the band is open to somewhere, and because we only hear white noise from our receivers, we don't bother to call CQ. It is worth a try!*

### VK3UM Software Update

Doug VK3UM has been busy adding more features to his already comprehensive EMECalc program. This program can be used to model the performance of a planned station setup, or verify the performance of an existing station. Despite the name, the program is not only for EME stations but also very useful for those interested in terrestrial weak-signal operation. The latest version includes a further 10 types of Dish feed including the RA3AQ designs, dual and single dipole configurations, dual patch (linear and circular) as well as Quad and Loop designs.

The software in a zip format may be obtained from several sites including:

[http://www.vk3bez.org/vk3um\\_software.htm](http://www.vk3bez.org/vk3um_software.htm)

Several other programs are included in the package including EMRCalc – a program that should be mandatory for every amateur to use to ensure conformity with the EMR regulations

### VK3UM EME Activity

Speaking of Doug, he sent this short report on his recent activity during the DUBUS 23 cm 2009 Contest on May 30/31:

*I was about an hour late getting on for my moon rise on Saturday and may have missed a few North American stations. Conditions were excellent both days except at low elevation when considerable libration was evident. Unfortunately, the low angle made it harder for some in the northern hemisphere and reflected back on me when my greatest activity then occurred in the last few degrees of my moon. (with added ground noise). As it happened, I worked PI9CAM starting at 0.2 degrees of moon on the Saturday but left someone in my 'moon shadow' on the Sunday! For me it was a rare event to actually work someone at 48 degrees elevation when given the high declination weekends it rarely gets above 28 degrees.*

*For a total of 54 QSO's and 48 multipliers, total score was 259200 points.*

*A special thank you to David VK2JDS who came on CW unannounced and to Chris VK5MC who was running flea power to his new 10 meter dish. Very pleasant surprises.*

Please send any Weak Signal reports to David VK3HZ at ...

## Digital DX Modes

Rex Moncur – VK7MO

Welcome to Brian VK3CCR, Roland VK4VDX and Doug VK4ADC who have joined in the 2 metre FSK441 meteor scatter activity. Brian completed his first contact with John VK4JMC, Doug his first contact with Rex VK7MO and Roland using only 30 watts and a 10-element yagi his first with Jim VK3II. Brian VK3CCR has also completed contacts on JT65a.

Phil VK4CDI, is now active on 1296 MHz EME, using JT65c and has completed contacts with N9JIM, HB9Q, VK2JDS and RD3DA.

A North American meteor scatter group "Super 7" has introduced a "Ten Thousand Miles" award for completing FSK441 contacts over 1000 miles for a total of Ten Thousand Miles after 1 May 2009. There are awards for single band and multi-band with 6 meters being the easiest and 2 meters more difficult. Full details of the award requirements are at <http://www.ykc.com/wa5ufh/Super7/S7Index.htm>. The first award issued has gone not to North America but to VK with Rex VK7MO completing 10,000 miles as follows:

| Date        | Station      | Distance Miles |
|-------------|--------------|----------------|
| 08-May-2009 | ZL4DK        | 1157           |
| 08-May-2009 | ZL3TY        | 1214           |
| 09-May-2009 | VK4BG        | 1251           |
| 09-May-2009 | VK4JMC       | 1091           |
| 22-May-2009 | ZL4LV        | 1157           |
| 22-May-2009 | ZL3CU        | 1271           |
| 23-May-2009 | VK4CDI       | 1081           |
| 23-May-2009 | VK4EME       | 1186           |
| 29-May-2009 | VK4ADC       | 1102           |
|             | <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>10510</b>   |

Please send any Digital DX Modes reports to Rex VK7MO at ...