

National Top Band DF event 2016

9 teams met at the well appointed start at Broxton (Loo, and a Tea bar), with signals heard from all three Transmitters, although a read through the rules would have caused the TX to be on longer, however, if any team had not got a start bearing, approximates were given. The lack of entrants was due to holidays times, medical reasons, and various unstated reasons, and basically lack of entrants in the qualifying events. The organiser had attended 5 events even though he would not qualify for the final and even won one event, thanks (by the skin of his teeth)

Station A MOZDF/P was run by Chris Heys and Roger Bell M0GGMG, placed on the northern side of the Weaver Navigation opposite Silver Well. (see map) They were not particularly well hidden in sparse woodland and fed a simple dipole. Car access was from the north at Aston Grange, where the farmer had arranged parking in one of his fields. As it happens, apart from the TX crew no-one used this car park. The two teams that went for this station guessed wrong and came to the south side of the river, they managed to blagg a lift across on a passing boat, but had no such help to get back across the river. After a long walk back to their cars they didn't get time for other stations, and appeared at the tea without angst. The station was heard from the start at a range of 23km, but the bearing went temptingly through Delamere Forest, which side-tracked a few competitors as it had been used a few times before and results in long runs.



Station B MW0ZDF/2 was run by John Jocys and John McNeill, located just in Wales, on the south side of the River Alun near Ithells Bridge Farm. The aerial here was run across the river along the trees on the north side of the river for at least a $\frac{1}{2}$ wave, then connected to the top wire of a barbed wire fence. (see map) With the road on the north side of the river only 30 yards away, most teams searched that side of the river. First in to the spacious hide (complete with camp chairs and table) was Paul Clarks son Matthew having paddled the river but needed his dad to push him up the steep bank. Most of the rest of the 7 teams to find this station found the bridge at Ithells Bridge farm and came in with dry feet. The cows in the field were well amused by the antics of the teams during the afternoon. The TX was only 8 km from the start, but the bearing would have tempted teams to try the infamous Wrexham Forest with its Rhoddies and cliffs. As it happens no-one went there but

feared the worst at 13:30. Access to the site was down 1 mile of single track road across the flood plain of the R. Dee with parking next to the aerial...



Station C MW0ZDF/3 was run by Roger Thawley and Dave Chipendale, and was only 15' from the side of a track under the Telford Aquaduct at Pont Cysyllte near Llangollen (see map). The antenna was a $\frac{1}{4}$ wave vertical dropped down on the south side of the River Dee next to one of the stone columns. Chris had remembered the effect of loading up a bridge from a local event when he loaded the Thirwall Viaduct on the north bound M6. This time the ruse worked perfectly, the $\frac{1}{4}$ wave gave a good signal to the start 23km away, but also loaded the cast iron of the aquaduct so that teams went to either end, several times and to the wrong side of the river bank also several times. Frustration was evident as the TX operators learnt some new swear words when they were eventually found. Seen teams also found this site. Access here was either finding the hidden track south of the river, or parking in the free carpark north of the aquaduct and running across the towpath of the bridge.



The organiser had suffered all sorts of problems setting up the DF computer and clocks with a battery failure for the computer making the clocks impossible to set-up. Eventually setting up a more modern netbook solved this problem. Three days had previously been spent re-programming the CW chips after a new Eprom programmer had been bought, and much consultation with Phil Arnold (Thanks a lot to him)

Back at the tea at Egerton Arms next to the start, everyone had calmed down and enjoyed a roast meal and desert before departing for home ground.

Some deliberate jamming was suffered on all transmission frequencies, investigations are ongoing and the guilty persons will be reported to the authorities. This jamming caused the 13:30 transmissions from our legal station to be blocked, however the sites were found fairly quickly.

As the event was run by the newly formed Manchester DF group, we applied for 3 call-signs from Ofcom, however they declined and only issued us with one call but adding that a /n would be allowed. This should not have caused confusion as the TXs were over 10kHz apart and well spread apart. The event would have been drivable, had confusion caused loss of time at the TXs, as the main road A483T is a dual Carriageway allowing swift transits between stations.

The National Final trophy and bottle of wine was presented to Paul Clark's Torbay Tigers, and the second place trophy and bottle to Andrew Collett with the box of chocolates presented to Cathy.