



SQUELCH TALES



**Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association
for September 2025**



More on My Transatlantic Two Meter Contact Quest

By Dick Bean, K1HC

Bruce, W1ZE, the much-appreciated Editor of the Merrymeeting ARA Squelch Tales Newsletter, had gratuitously published a piece in the last newsletter highlighting my interest in a Transatlantic contact on the 2 meter band from my QTH in Harpswell. I have a 10 watt 2 meter beacon operating on 144.291 MHZ using an array of 16 five element yagis on a 120' tower at 170' ASL overlooking the Long Reach salt marsh adjacent to Harpswell Islands Road (RT 24). I wanted to provide newsletter readers more detail about the efforts by several hams over the years to cross the Atlantic on 2 meters as well as background on the awards offered for various Transatlantic 2 meter activities.

The Irish Radio Transmitters Society (IRTS) is the national association of radio amateurs in Ireland. It published information about the Brendan Trophy on June 7, 1995 to commemorate 100 years of radio. The Brendan Trophy will be awarded to the hams on each end of a successful two-way Transatlantic contact on the 2 meter band using terrestrial modes (no satellite, man-made, or moonbounce reflection of a signal) using phone or CW capable of being read without machine assistance (no high speed CW). The award will include the presentation of two finely handcrafted and inscribed Waterford crystal vases as pictured above in this article.



Irish Radio Transmitters Society Brendan Trophies



Trophy Inscription

There are two other categories of the award. The second category, called the Brendan Shields, which is for what they term “nontraditional” modes including high speed CW and all digital modes. The third category, the Brendan Plates, would be awarded to the first confirmed reception of a Transatlantic 2 meter signal.

You might wonder who is Brendan? The award is named in honor of Saint Brendan the Navigator of Clonfert, Ireland (c. AD 484 – c. 577). He was considered the patron saint of sailors because of his purported exploits as a sailor, with some claiming he and his crew had discovered Newfoundland long before any other European sailor. While there is no physical evidence supporting the claim, the legend endures regarding his 15-day sail westward from Ireland in 510 AD.

Here is a link for the full set of IRTS rules for the Brendan Trophy:

<https://www.irts.ie/cgi/st.cgi?brendan>

In the summer of 2014, a group of five Canadian hams made an expedition to Pouch Cove, Newfoundland (Maidenhead Grid Square GN37os) using the callsign VC1T. The group included Al, VO1NO, Rich, VA1CHP, Helen, VA1YL, Roger, VE1SKY, and Fred, VE1FA. There is an extensive article in the May 2016 QST magazine that is a very good read regarding their efforts (see link below). Their main antenna was a 43 element rope yagi that was just over 97 feet long, and a “legal limit” Larcen amplifier for transmitting power. The team used JT65B and FSK441 digital modes, two digital modes commonly used at the time. This resulted in a reception in Great Britain by John, G4SWX, a distance of 2,831 miles. However, post-contact analysis revealed that the signal had reflected off the International Space Station (see QST article link below for details)! Yet, the team certainly planned and executed quite an effort despite not meeting the established IRTS rules for the Brendan award.

May 2016 QST Article:

<https://www.arrl.org/news/brendan-quest-team-s-2-meter-signal-copied-in-the-uk>

On May 2, 2014, a 2 meter FSK441 signal from the UK was reflected off the structure of the International Space Station (ISS), and it was heard across the Atlantic. Tim, G4LOH, in Cornwall (IO70jc), and Roger, VE1SKY, in Nova Scotia (FN74iu) attempted the contact. VE1SKY was able to copy G4LOH at a distance of approximately 2,753 miles. This was the first signal received via ISS bounce from Europe to North America, and the first intentional signal heard via ISS reflection in any direction across the North or South Atlantic. While two-way communication did not happen, the reception seems to be a DX record for satellite reflection. Later in May, Tim, operating as GK4LOH and transmitting in CW, was received twice in the much-closer GN37 grid by VO1HP at VO1FN in Newfoundland.

See: <https://www.eham.net/article/36882>

There was a claimed Transatlantic contact in March 2002 by a husband and wife ham team, Alexander Dutkewych, N2PIG, on the Avalon Peninsula in Newfoundland and Debra Dutkewych, VA3PIG, in County Kerry, Ireland, but the team failed to provide the IRTS awards committee with sufficient evidence of the successful two-way contact. Below is a link to a summary of the circumstances by the OK2KKW VHF Contest Group:

https://www.ok2kkw.com/n2pig_rejected.htm

Subsequent to these two attempts, the ARRL published a QST article by Ev Tupis, W2EV, relating to the Brendan Trophy in May 2002. His article discusses various modes of propagation that might come into use for a Transatlantic attempt as well as some suggested methods of tracking signals. See:

<https://www.arrl.org/files/file/Technology/tis/info/pdf/0208036.pdf>

There have been no new expeditions to Newfoundland for the western side of the contact that I could locate, but I have had correspondence with Larry, VO1FOG, who has had a receiving

station established in Newfoundland for some time to listen for digital mode signals from Europe. Larry is an avid commercial FM band listening enthusiast, and he has logged many FM band openings from his location in Newfoundland.

Tony, EI8JK, in Bantry, County Cork, Ireland, had a beacon on the air with digital modes for approximately five years. There are other efforts which have been undertaken by Tim, G4LOH, who operates exclusively on 2 meters from Great Britain, and it was his station's signal that was received by VE1SKY back in 2016 as noted above.

A southerly route across the Atlantic from D41CV in Cape Verde to FG8OJ in Guadeloupe occurred June 16, 2019, a distance of just over 2,400 miles (image from the EI7GL blog):



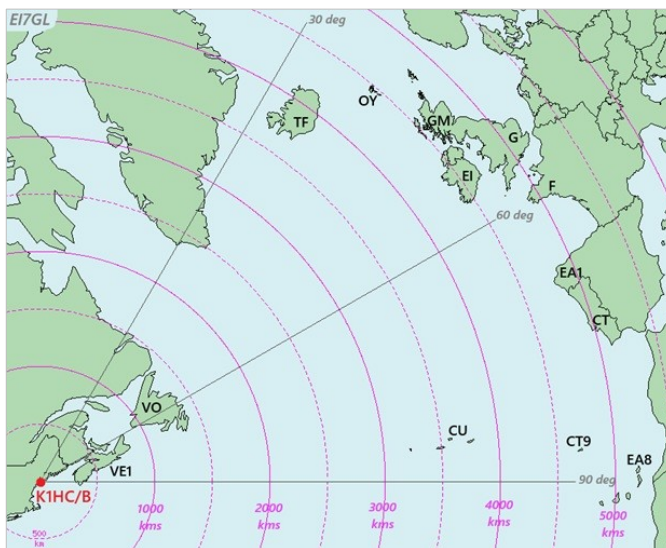
See the D41CV contact summary (Cape Verde to Guadeloupe) at:

<https://forums.qrz.com/index.php?threads/historic-trans-atlantic-contact-made-on-144-mhz.662689/>

and

<https://ei7gl.blogspot.com/2019/06/historic-trans-atlantic-contact-made-on.html>

John, EI7GL, calculated the pattern of my northeast 2 meter array (estimated gain of 22 dBi):



So, while it is uncertain if this path will ever be successful for a Transatlantic crossing, I have at least received good signal reports for the beacon from VE1SKY and VO1NO, two of the five hams who participated in the expedition to Newfoundland in 2016. I will continue to watch for tropospheric ducting opportunities that might combine with sporadic E propagation. Thanks to sites such as the ON4KST chat page (<http://www.on4kst.com/chat/start.php>), hams are able coordinate contacts on VHF and UHF bands when propagation conditions are favorable. I'll continue to experiment, and I plan to alternatively use my station with digital modes such as FT8 using the northeast array at times as well. I recently had FT8 contacts of over 700 miles and reception of FT8 stations over 1,300 miles away on my identical southwest array on 2 meters, so it is surprising what can be accomplished on the 2 meter band! 73 from Dick, K1HC



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Why not help someone become a licensed Amateur Radio Operator and join us all in this great hobby.



QCWA Chapter 134 Information column



The QCWA Pine Tree Chapter meeting was well attended at the ARRL Maine State Convention in Augusta and it was good to get see chapter members and a few guests in person.



Meeting Attendees

The guest speaker was John Facella, K9FJ, a chapter 134 member and member of the QCWA Board of Directors. He got us all up to date on what BoD is attempting to do and what planning is going on to increase participation in national organization and in turn the various chapters around the country. We were advised that we were one of the most active chapters in New England and hopes that continues and increase our ranks in the process.



We want to thank Convention organizer Cory Golob, KU1U and his team for making it possible for us to have our yearly meeting at the convention.

We hope to see more members at the next chapter meeting.



Come Finish your Summer at the WINDSOR HAMFEST!



The Lincoln County ARC's Windsor Hamfest is a day filled with activities, learning, and networking. Whether you are an experienced ham radio operator or just starting out, this event offers a great opportunity to connect with fellow enthusiasts, explore new equipment, and participate in various activities. Don't miss out on this exciting event at the Windsor Fairgrounds, Saturday **September 6th**.

- Admission \$5.
- Gates open at 8am.
- VE ham radio exams
- NTS Traffic Nets meeting
- Talk-In: 146.985 PL: 136.5 and 146.520

Come one come all. The more buyers, sellers, traders, the better! It is always a fun and social event.

