



Sep 29 – Oct 22, 2023

Tristan Da Cunha Island

<https://lral.lv/zd9w/>

Hi there! We meet again with one of the LRSF latest DX-pedition's story. There has been already one more DX-pedition after ZD9W, however, I will talk about that another time.

The first plans to visit Tristan Da Cunha Island (ZD9) were already set in 2018. Initially it was planned to visit ZD9 with a four-operator team. However, couple weeks before starting our trip we were informed by island representative that there won't be any available berths for us on the ship. The regulations say that the first hand for berths on the ship is for islanders, followed by their relatives, then officials and our category as tourists are the last ones to pick.



Yuris YL2GM starting DXpedition from home in Latvia



"Lance"

After this came covid and the island was closed down for all visitors. All restrictions were lifted only in spring 2023 and immediately I started to communicate with the island administration. Opportunity came up, however, this time I decided to go alone because the chances to get berths for more operators were lower. I was offered a berth on a cargo ship "Lance" leaving Cape Town on 15th of September 2023. The return was planned with fishing vessel "Edinburg" on 24th of October 2023.

As I'm used to do, in a timely manner I acquired necessary plane tickets and together with them I posted all necessary documentation to South African embassy in Stockholm to

receive visa. On that day when I should have received back my documents and visa, instead I got returned mail with a mark that the recipient did not collect it. Remaining time window till plane departure was getting shorter and to mitigate risks I decided to go for visa in person and the next day I was on a flight to Stockholm. Unfortunately, the visa was declined because my passport did not have enough empty spaces. To receive visa there has to be at least two blank pages left. Flew back home and in a matter of urgency a new passport was made the same day for additional costs. One more flight to Stockholm and the embassy staff was already waiting for me, visa was ready later in the afternoon.



Yuris sitting in the captain's chair

On Monday 11th of September, the trip begins by boarding the plane from Riga to Cape Town. As usual, I have one extra bag of gear with me and this makes it difficult when I have to change terminals in Frankfurt airport by taking train between the terminals, baggage carts are no option there and all bags had to be carried by hands. After landing in Cape Town, I have three days to spend. I settle in a hotel and rent a car to visit my friend. During the visit I pick up antenna bag with *Spiderbeam*, *LBS* vertical and cables that I left with him during my previous visits.

Departure of *Lance* was planned on 15th of September 14:00z. The day before I brought all bags with equipment to the ferry station and in the morning the shuttle bus took me to the port. After passing through all travel formalities and boarding the ship, everyone was shown to their individual rooms. The ship left the port as planned and the ocean journey had begun.



Lance's chef

Later that day we were invited to lunch and got introduced to the captain. Afterwards the ship crew took us for a tour to great cabin, ship deck, engine deck, storage spaces and answered to all of our questions. We did also get the basic training regarding ship security. When the evening came, I started to feel sea sick and this continued for one more day. Chamomile tea helped and on third day I was feeling like nothing had happened.

During further trip I get acquainted with the ship's captain Oleg. He is a good man originally coming from Kaliningrad and has managed to complete international ship crew that works like a watch. His ship "*Lance*" is the

main supply ship for Tristan Da Cunha Island with its 234 islanders. Special shout out to "Lance" Indonesian chef, who prepares food for 18-man crew and other passengers. Food is served three times daily with lots of variety and imagination. Any restaurant would be grateful to have a chef like him.

The voyage continues and the initial plan to reach Tristan Da Cunha Island is one week later on 22nd of September. However, captain informs us that the weather conditions will be getting worse and in best case scenario we will reach our destination only by 26th of September. Also, this heavily depends from local weather on the island whether we will be able to disembark.



First sight of Tristan Da Cunha Island through fog

Internet on the ship is very limited only available every second day for one hour only for text messaging. No picture and video transfer possible. However, this is enough to inform our families that we are safe.

After rough sailing through high winds and waves, in the evening of 27th of September, we finally saw the contours of Tristan Da Cunha Island and when we reached the island it was completely dark outside. Next morning the weather was bad and we had to spend one more day on the ship. Bags are packed and we are hopefully waiting for next day to finally disembark. Around midday, the barge arrives and takes us ashore.



Waiting to disembark

Locals and Islands administration kindly welcomes us and show us to our homes. In my possession I have a guest house, however, there is problem with little space for antennas because the house is close to other house yards and roads. Nevertheless, I set up small vertical for FT8 and turn on the station. First expedition QSO is made with JE1RMI on 21 Mc 15:25. Then it starts to rain and the wind is getting stronger. There is no internet at the guesthouse so I have to go to town center where the internet station and its antennas is located. After receiving login credentials, I finally can contact home.

During the night weather conditions are getting worse and when the morning comes, I see that my vertical has



Guest house - first QTH location



Vertical bending in the strong winds

found different solution and arranged a room in the kindergarten building. Kindergarten works 5 days a week from morning till 3pm, with 3 baby sitters and 5 kids. With place for antennas and free horizon to main directions for US, EU and JA this place was ideal. For lunch and dinner every day I still went to the guesthouse where the meals were prepared by the hosts.

For the next three days the weather forecast was ideal so firstly I started with setting up *LBS* 18m vertical for low bands that was located inside fence perimeter and its 20m radials didn't trouble anyone. This was followed by *Spiderbeam* and 6m antenna that were placed closer to the station. Antennas for this expedition were prepared so I could set them up alone without help from others.

At this point I could have said that the station was ready and all that remained is just to operate. However, my work with the antennas didn't stop there. On Friday 11th of October, during midday the wind gusts got stronger. With high difficulties I managed to lower *Spiderbeam* and *LBS* vertical. For the next day antennas remained lowered and just before getting dark I raised *LBS* vertical to

been broken in half, however, the upper bands are still operational. Later, after raining stops, I find some time to fix the antenna. With the afternoon the rain and high winds return. The weather forecast with 50 m/s winds are starting to come true and I have to take down the antenna for the wind not to break it again. With morning the storm has passed and I return to work.

Tuesday morning, I went to tourism administration and talked about finding different location for me because this one was not suited for my activities. I asked for a place somewhere in town outskirts so there would be place for setting up antennas. Some of the guest houses were going to be vacated only on 15th of October when the next ship departures. In the end, we



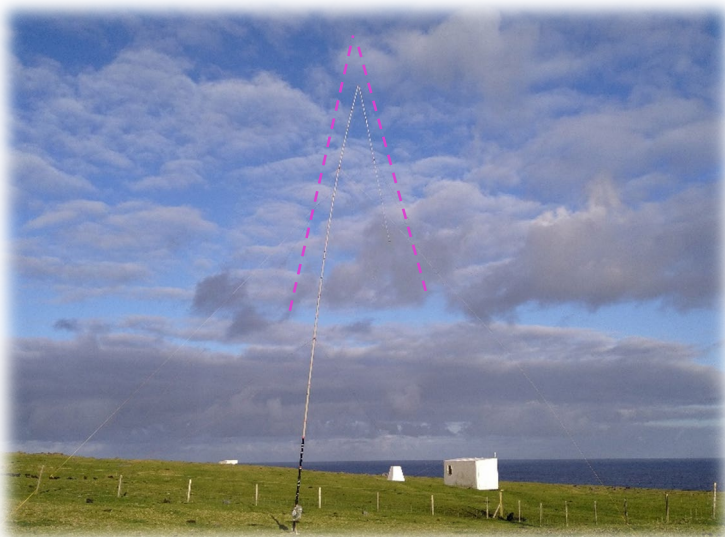
Antennas and the free horizon



Antennas and the mountain behind, station bottom-left



Broken Spiderbeam



Broken LBS vertical



Cows tangled in the Spiderbeam wires

work EU and JA on 80m telegraph. I was planning to do the same on low bands for the following night as well, however, the weather had different plans and the winds just got stronger. This continued for a week and during these days I lowered and fixed *LBS* vertical three times and similar situation was with *Spiderbeam* also. The 6m *Yagi* was beyond repairs.

On early morning of 21st of October, while there still was dark outside, *SPE* power amplifier switched off several times. It turned out that the antenna field got visited by cows and one cow with its calf tangled in the *Spiderbeam* guy wires and my last hopes to fix this antenna were gone with freeing them. Last expedition days were worked only with *DX Commander* and *LBS* vertical.

Initially my goal was to make 60k QSOs so it would qualify for a new Single Op record. However, on 17th of October, when this milestone was reached, my friend Girts YL2KL encouraged me to go for 70k QSOs. The #70 was also special because of my 70th birthday that was coming soon. Doing this was tough but in the end, I managed to reach this result on Sunday evening 20:27z by making the last 70112th QSO on 7 mc CW with CQ0ODX. During the dark I took down the *DX Commander* and packed my gear.

Ship *Edinburg* arrived on Friday, however, weather conditions permitted passengers to disembark only on Monday. Monday morning, after finishing all formalities in the immigration and tourism office, I visited the islands administration and then it was time for boarding. This time the ship was a fishing vessel that's used to catch lobsters that are being processed and packed right there in the ships factory.

Initially, the sailing was planned for 7 days but because of bad weather conditions it was 2 days longer and Cape Town was reached only on Thursday morning. After disembarking and travel formalities I drove to the airport that was followed by couple of flights and finally on Friday's evening I was greeted by my loving wife in Riga airport.

This time I was away from home for more than six weeks. Back home I will be only for one week before going to the next DXpedition VK9XY un VK9CY.

Thanks to all supporters and family. Thanks for going through all of this together with me.

73, Juris /Yuris /YL2GM

Expedition website: <https://lral.lv/zd9w/>



With Tristan Da Cunha's Island administrator

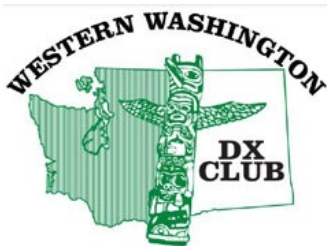
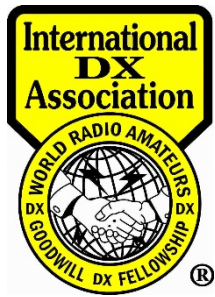


Me in shack



Tristan Da Cunha Island

Main DXpedition supporters



Willamette Valley



**Radioamateurs
du Luxembourg**



*W6RS, JI1WMI, K6NR, YL3FT, DM2HK, YL2KL, JA1ANR, JA1BK, HB9BAS,
N4II, WA7NB, JO7WXN, LY2BAW, WA1NXC, W3ACO, N7NR, EY8MM, K8FH
and other supporters...*

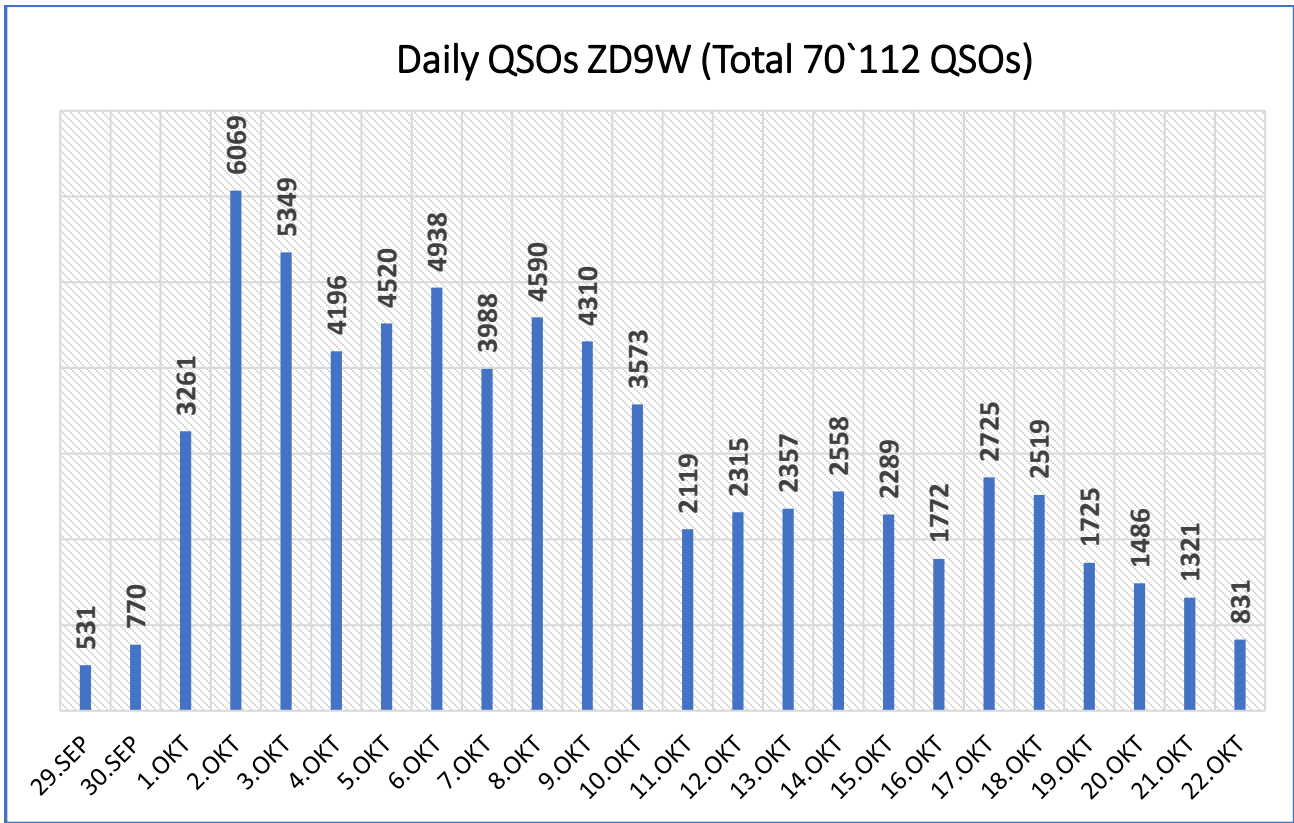


QSL card



STATISTICS

Daily QSOs ZD9W (Total 70`112 QSOs)



Band/Mode breakdown ZD9W

Band	CW	FT8	SSB	Total	Total %
160	114	1406	0	1520	2.2%
80	283	2484	0	2767	3.9%
60	0	0	0	0	0.0%
40	1195	7680	8	8883	12.7%
30	571	7161	0	7732	11.0%
20	490	7696	506	8692	12.4%
17	312	7566	257	8135	11.6%
15	1183	7926	534	9643	13.8%
12	1314	7724	631	9669	13.8%
10	2424	9681	952	13057	18.6%
6	0	14	0	14	0.0%
Totals	7886	59338	2888	70112	100.0%

DXCC by Band/Mode breakdown ZD9W

Band	CW	FT8	SSB	Total
160	33	57	0	58
80	44	77	0	79
60	0	0	0	0
40	57	108	5	109
30	57	108	0	110
20	48	111	56	116
17	50	115	40	119
15	82	109	55	117
12	71	111	66	116
10	85	118	73	131
6	0	4	0	4
Totals	105	139	94	153

Continent by Mode ZD9W

Band	CW	FT8	SSB	Total	Total %
AF	84	408	60	552	0.8%
AN	0	0	0	0	0.0%
AS	857	11921	60	12838	18.3%
EU	4411	29019	1825	35255	50.3%
NA	2175	15434	813	18422	26.3%
OC	26	664	1	691	1.0%
SA	333	1892	129	2354	3.4%
Totals	7886	59338	2888	70112	100.0%

Continent by Band ZD9W

Band	160	80	60	40	30	20	17	15	12	10	6	Total	Total %
AF	9	25	0	64	51	63	60	90	89	101	0	552	0.8%
AN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
AS	32	409	0	2160	2318	2150	1600	1704	1189	1276	0	12838	18.3%
EU	980	1448	0	3425	3011	3462	4007	5143	5797	7968	14	35255	50.3%
NA	448	726	0	2728	2042	2579	2171	2232	2232	3264	0	18422	26.3%
OC	0	5	0	124	106	129	80	119	64	64	0	691	1.0%
SA	51	154	0	382	204	309	217	355	298	384	0	2354	3.4%
Totals	1520	2767	0	8883	7732	8692	8135	9643	9669	13057	14	70112	100%