



EDXC Conference Report

By Chrissy Brand and Alan Pennington



The 2014 European DX Council (EDXC) Conference took place from 19 – 22 September in the south of France, in Nice and up in the mountains at St Dalmas de Tende. A total of 29 DXers and spouses attended a busy and scintillating programme of events in wonderful surroundings (eight from Finland, six from the UK, four from Denmark, two each from Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Russia and Sweden and one from France, including seven BDXC members).

Nice was a great place to start and finish, with its belle époque architecture, characterful alleyways and boulevards which offer a wide range of dining, shopping and cultural options. With temperatures often in the high 20°Cs it was no surprise to see people swimming in the Mediterranean at night, while buskers performed by the beach and promenaders took in the sights. Along with historical landmarks such as Garibaldi Square, the Opera House and art galleries featuring Matisse and Chagall, Nice has made a niche for itself with its modern art. The most talked about probably being on Place Masséna where seven resin statues change colour at night – each statue representing a continent. There were three continents represented when the EDXC delegates assembled on Friday afternoon, from Europe, Asia and Oceania. A memorable coach journey followed along the Cote D'Azur, briefly into Italy and up a twisting mountain road, giving stunning views, while many on board scanned the FM bands for local catches.

The conference was declared open by EDXC Secretary General Kari Kivekäs and local organiser Christian Ghibaudo in the courtyard of Le Prieuré, the conference hotel which was set in a former monastery in St. Dalmas de Tende (*photo right, Kari with EDXC flag*).



This was followed by aperitifs and canapés and a presentation by Italian DXers Dario Monferini and Roberto Pavanello on their travels in Brazil in 2013. Their epic tour across this vast country took in dozens of radio station visits, including stations in the cities of Belem, Salvador, Belo Horizonte, Recife, Olinda and Rio de Janeiro. Radio Globo and Transamerica were among the big networks visited along with smaller outlets such as Radio Excelsior, Vida, Metropole, Terra FM, Amazonas FM, Rio Mar etc. An amazing array of their photos illustrated the breadth of station logo designs and studio set ups. The trip took a

lot of organising, contacting the dozens of stations in advance to arrange visits – as with most radio stations anywhere, you can't simply turn up unannounced and expect to be shown around. There are around 200 photos of the trip on Roberto's Facebook page.

After an enjoyable evening in the charming slightly rustic hotel restaurant, the Saturday session started with updates on EDXC topics. This included the EDXC's connections with the annual UNESCO World Radio Day, and the International Radio for Disaster Relief project. This was successfully tested at a media summit on climate change in Jakarta in June and it is hoped that the frequencies of 15650, 17500, 21840 plus a 6 MHz frequency be allocated for sole use in such emergencies.



David Ricquish then gave a talk on radio from New Zealand and South Pacific, starting with the answer to his overnight homework question of how many Pacific radio countries are there listed in the current WRTH? Mike Terry correctly stated 30. David runs the Radio Heritage Foundation website, which is packed full of news and views of radio, mostly in that part of the world but not limited to it. <http://www.radioheritage.com/> He gave us news of some Pacific MW stations and also voiced a point - which is becoming ever more heard in DX circles - that the future of DXing may well be that of a heritage hobby, documenting and celebrating the past.



We then all caught an Italian train a couple of stops up the line to the picturesque town of Tende, with many of its medieval buildings intact, built among the mountains with houses performing amazing balancing acts as they stack up on each other in the rocky terrain. In beautiful sunshine we ate al fresco at a restaurant popular with locals enjoying a leisurely Saturday lunchtime.

Christian took us for a tour, winding ever upwards along narrow streets, visiting three churches (Our Lady of the Assumption, Chapel of the annunciation of

the White Penitents and Chapel of Mercy of the Black Penitents) and admiring stunning views as we went. Although the Catholic churches were stunningly decorated inside, the most exciting find of the afternoon was probably the three vintage French radios on display in a small cave-like museum that also displayed agricultural implements, kitchen items and old typewriters. The most dramatic was an Excelsior 55 (MW/SW set – photo above), made in 1954 by SNR (Societe Nouvelle Radio). Also on display was a late-1950's Schneider Ménestrel 2-band portable.



After a few hours in the sun, we returned by train to Le Prieuré, where we reconvened for an update of the EDXC country list which is being updated by Kari Kivekäs and Jan-Mikael Nurmela. This was followed by a fascinating talk on the history of Radio Monte Carlo from Christian Ghibaudo (see p.14).

Anker Peterson from the Danish SW Club International (photo right with Jo d'Errico (NZ)) then gave a presentation on the radio stations he heard while on a cruise from New York to the Caribbean. While reception was not possible in his cabin, he was pulling in many signals from passing islands up on deck.

Alexander Beryozkin showed us photos of the new clubhouse that the St Petersburg DX Club are building and also proposed his home city as the host for EDXC 2015. Things were rounded off with a moving film of the Horby transmitter site in Sweden.

The conference sessions concluded with some more high quality canapés, cassis and grenadine and then the traditional evening EDXC “banquet” dinner.



On the Sunday we enjoyed a “three countries on one day tour”, arriving for a morning coffee break in the Italian coastal town of Ventimiglia, before heading on for a hot afternoon in Monaco, which gave something for everyone, be it a tour of the Royal Palace, a lunch and a beer on a shaded terrace or a gawp at the impossibly large and expensive ships in the harbour. The evening saw us all back in Nice with another chance to try out more of its many good restaurants and bars and to sample the atmosphere of puppeteers on the Rue St Francoise de Paule, singers on the Quai des Etats-Unis and a bustling old town centre.

On Monday we had another packed day in Nice, starting with a visit to Jewish community radio station Radio Chalom Nice 89.3 (RCN), which celebrates 30 years on air in November. Our guide around the well-hidden studios, off the Place Masséna, was Yossi Benavraham who had to interrupt the tour to make on-air announcements! As well as on FM 89.3 MHz (2 kW from Mont Leuze, Nice) RCN will launch on DAB+ in November.



Boarding the City of Nice Tourist Train, we then took in many of the sights of the old town before a wine tasting and Nicoise buffet for some, a tasty vegetarian Lebanese lunch for others.

Later that afternoon we visited Christian community station, Radio Chrétiennes Francophones (RCF) which broadcasts throughout France (and Belgium) on FM. Their local studios in Nice are on the first floor of Le St Paul Hotel in Nice, where some of us had been staying, unaware it was

also home to a radio station! RCF engineer, José Garcia told us they broadcast four hours daily of local programmes, carrying network programmes at other times. RCF could be heard locally on 96.6 MHz (Nice - Mont Alban 1 kW) and 96.8 MHz (Cannes 1 kW) – confusingly the RDS on the Cannes frequency was ‘RCF-NICE’, and on the Nice frequency, just ‘RCF’! RCF had no plans to go on DAB+ because of the expense. José was also a DXer as he produced a small Tecsun 310 from his pocket and admitted trying to hear Italian private station AM1 on 1350 kHz recently! After a photo call in the studios, we said thanks to José, bid farewell to those delegates flying back home and thanked Christian Ghibaud for organising such an enjoyable conference!



Above left: at RCF studios: Alan Pennington, Dario Monferini, Jan-Mikael Nurmela, George Brown, Mike Terry, José Garcia (RCF) and Antti Hemmilä. Above right: on air announcements at Radio Chalom studio.



Outside the Palais Princier in Monaco: (l-r) Nobuya Kato, Arto Mujunen, George Brown, Henri Ekman, Ritva Honkola, Ydun Ritz, Jan-Mikael Nurmela, Christian Ghibaud, Risto Vähäkainu, David Ricquish, Chrissy Brand, Kari Kivekäs, Raimo Kaksonen, Mike Terry, Bengt Ericson. Christine Terry, Gunnel Ericson, Dave Kenny, Antti Hemmilä, Kaj Bredahl Jørgensen, Valentina Beryozkina, Anker Petersen & Alexander Beryozkin (photo: Alan Pennington). © British DX Club October 2014