



and Fig. 1 shows, in graphics form, the number of European QSOs per month made over this period on the three main DX bands. It should be borne in mind that, although preference was given to answering European calls when the bands were open to Europe, many QSOs were also made with other areas of the world when propagation conditions permitted. Daily average operating time over the six month period analysed was approximately two hours. Since CX5RV is only active during the Spring, Summer and part of the Autumn months here in the Southern Hemisphere, it is not possible to give first-hand experience of DX conditions during the late Autumn to early Spring period. Nevertheless, DX conditions here follow the same trend during that period as they do in Europe.

### Operating conditions

What is it like to operate from Uruguay? It is 2000 hours CX time (2300 GMT) on a February evening and in the cloudless night sky the myriads of stars seem to shine with greater brilliance than they do in the Northern Hemisphere. Off the far end of my G5RV antenna the Southern Cross is in its station and a quick listen on the 14 and 21MHz bands shows both to be lively. A short 'CQ DX' call on either 14 or 21MHz CW brings a shoal of calls from USA stations — many anxious to work their first CX. Signals from many States are strong, mostly around RST579 to 599, background noise is low and the only problem is to pick out one from the crowd for a quick QSO. Generally, the callers are well behaved and await their turn and

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QSOs proceed at the rate of one every two minutes! No time for chatting. Most are excellent CW operators and about 20 to 25wpm is normal speed. QSY to 7MHz at about 2130 local time (0030 GMT) brings calls from PY and LU with 599 signals while, QRN and QRM permitting, East Coast to Mid-West USA can be worked. In the very early morning hours, from about 0100 to 0330 CX time, European stations can be worked but signals are usually rather weak. DX QSOs on 3.5 MHz are even more difficult and, at most times of the year, QRN is very strong. However, at least one Uruguayan amateur, Julio CX6CW, has made DXCC on CW on both the 7 and 3.5MHz bands. When propagation conditions are unusually good on the 14 and 21MHz bands for Europe and the Far East (Siberia and Japan especially), strong signals from these areas sometimes have quite audible round-the-world echo on them when both the long and short paths are open simultaneously.

### And on VHF . . .

The 2 metre band is used for both fixed and mobile operation by a number of CX amateurs who live in, or relatively near to, the main towns along the coast. Four 2 metre repeaters exist; one in Montevideo, another in Piriapolis 65km to the East, a third at Nueva Helvecia 115km to the West of Montevideo on the River Plate. The fourth is at Minas 60km to the North of Piriapolis. The Nueva Helvecia repeater also provides a 2 metre link to Buenos Aires across the River Plate, some 110km distant. However, for those amateurs who live on *estancias* well into the interior or in remote towns, the scope for VHF operation is very limited.

Even after 55 years of operating, it still seems like a miracle to hear signals that have travelled 6,000 miles from the UK, perhaps from a fellow amateur in one's home town, spelling out a message of friendship engendered by the common interest in our great and fascinating hobby.

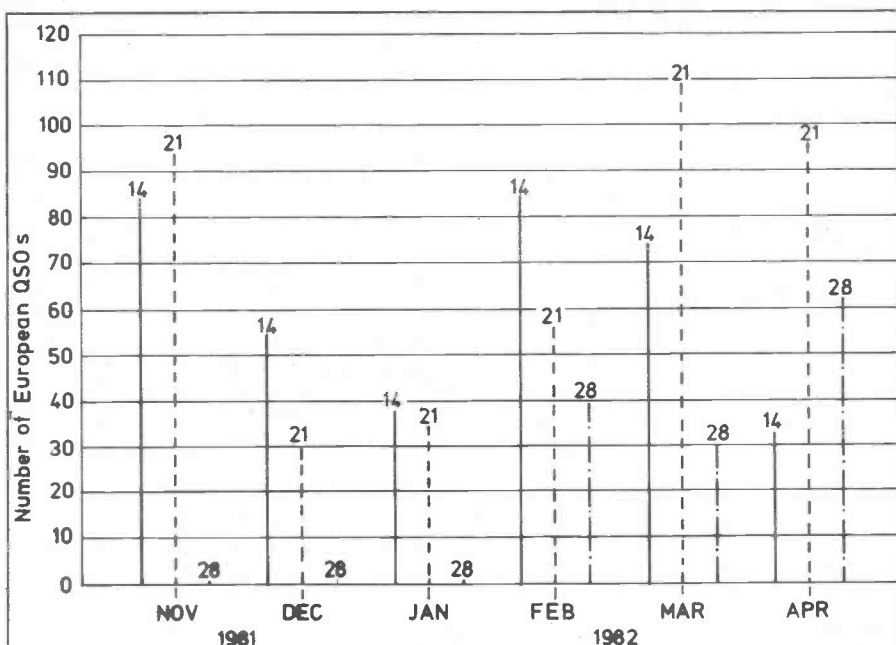


Fig. 1. European QSOs made on 14, 21 and 28MHz (CW) by CX5RV during November to April 1982 inclusive