

Saxon **BERG-KURIER**

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Family holiday with Bergfunken in the north of Spain

by DL7CX

For the last 20 years we have commuted between South Tyrol and Jutland for our summer holidays. In recent years, however, my girls have been calling for a change of scenery. The family council decided on a combination holiday to France/Spain. During the further planning, it became clear quite early on that 2 weeks would not be enough here, as we wanted to travel by car. So an additional week of holiday had to be set aside so that there was enough time for a stress-free arrival and departure. My wife's idea of planning 3 stopovers in France turned out to be brilliant.

So we set off early on July 5th for the tranquil Alsace region, planning an extended hike in the early afternoon. Since the SOTA mountain Le Stauffen FL/VO-093 was very close, a short activity was planned here.



The 50 QSOs were quickly logged, so there was still enough time for a coffee party in picturesque Eguisheim

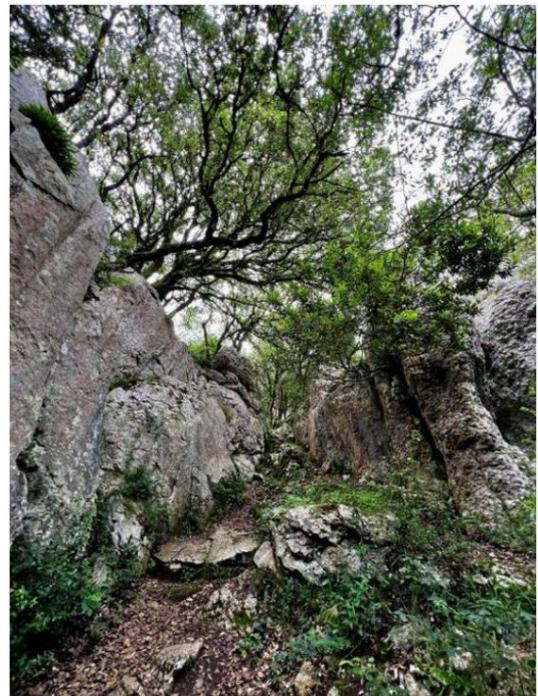
We travelled via Vienne and Bergerac, both historic cities worth seeing, to the coastal area between the Basque Country and Cantabria. We arrived there safely on the afternoon of July 8th after a stress-free journey.

The north coast of Spain offers beautiful stretches of beach with secluded bays, but also a large number of mountains close to the sea. The density of SOTA mountains is enormous here, but it takes physical effort to activate them. Easy mountains with parking spaces close to the summit are rare here and not desirable for me.



View of Santoña (right) and the city beach of Laredo

Inspired by the mountain couriers of Bernd (DL2DXA) from 2017, I set out the very next day to activate two mountains that were supposedly close by. My XYL dropped me off on the way to the beach of El Brusco in Santoña. The peninsula of Santoña with the SOTA mountain GANZO EA1/CT-096 and the GMA summit MONTE BUCIERO EC/CA-002 is densely overgrown, rocky and part of the nature reserve EAFF-0086.



Bizarre rock formations and laurel bushes cover the Santoña peninsula

So it was quite a steep climb, past the Fuerte de Napoleon to Monte Buciero, which I left to activate the Ganzo first. The rocks became more rugged, the laurel forest became denser and denser and at some point the narrow hiking trail disappeared. The rose plants and the crevices just before the summit almost made me despair, but somehow I had installed the 7m mast with the 20m long EFHW and started my FT-818. Fred,

DL8DXL, was my first QSO partner in EA, with him 69 more came into the log of EA1/CT-096.



View of the Ganzo from Monte Buciero

The return to the Buciero was quite quick, the YL's warning WhatsApp and the approaching „ please hurry up” and drizzle only allowed for a short activation. Here, too, Fred was among the 7 connections. Bernd had referenced the GMA mountain in 2017.



View from Monte Buciero to Santoña with the Montehano in the background



Location of EC/CA-002 with the EFHW in INV V position



On the way to Playa Berria in El Dueso

We had agreed that I would come to the beach after the activities. Although it was almost all downhill, it was sometimes difficult and the path was long. The signposts weren't always helpful either, but mapy.cz worked perfectly here too! After 20,000 steps and although it was now overcast and windy, I absolutely had to climb the waves of the Mare Cantabrico - 22 degrees, crystal clear, what more could you want.



Playa Berria

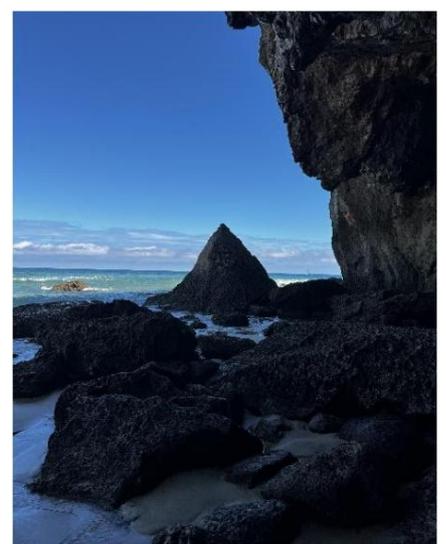
Today I have planned a radio-free day, with family on the beach. I am lying in the sun tent and reading the mountain couriers from 2017 sent by DL2DXA. The water is wonderful, the waves are great and there are hardly any tourists. It is good that my radio equipment stayed in the holiday QTH, because Bernd mentions a wonderful lighthouse on the Santoña peninsula. After 2 very relaxed

I can't stand spending hours on the beach any longer and I set off for a short walk. In the end it turns out to be a 12 km hike including visiting 2 lighthouses: Faro del Pescador and Faro del Caballo.

I was happy to climb the 750 steps to the latter, an unforgettable place...Bernd will confirm it...



View of our beach – at the western end of Monte Brusco EA1/CT-102



The hike was worth it! They even let me go into the cooling sea again...

The weather is stable again today. My plan to get dropped off between Argaños and Noja so that I can later get to our favorite beach in El Dueso is approved. I set off shortly after 10 a.m., walking through fragrant eucalyptus forests and easily reaching Brusco in 45 minutes. As a SOTA mountain, it promises quite good QSO numbers, even though it is still midweek.



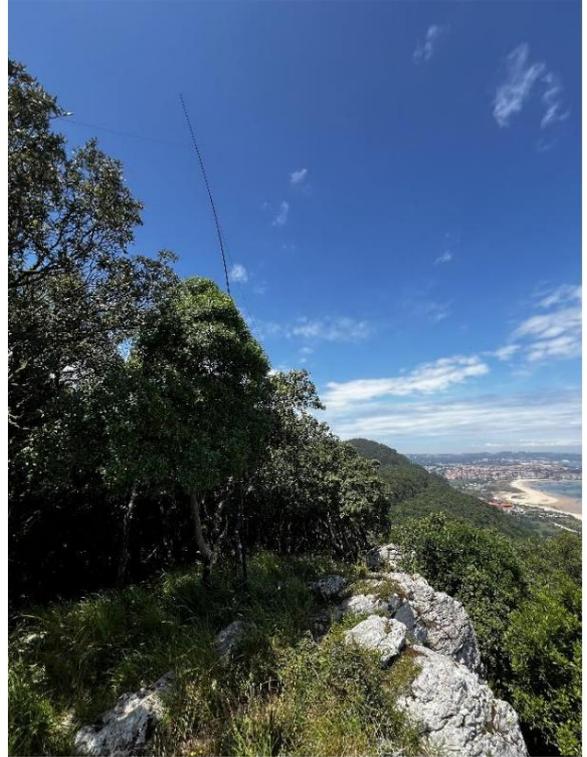
The Brusco EA1/CT-102 is surrounded by eucalyptus trees. The column marks the highest point.

In one hour I make a good 50 QSOs. In addition to Bernd, dl2dxa, many friends call. Connections are made from the Canary Islands to Finland, not an everyday occurrence with 5 watts. Due to the increased solar activity, the daily attenuation is quite high, so it is not a given that the log will be full.



Brusco: View to the north-west towards Noja

In addition to the Brusco, there are two other peaks on the small mountain range. The evening before, I took the liberty of referencing the Pico Miravalles as the new GMA mountain. EC/CA-006 is a rock formation and has a fantastic view of both adjacent bays. A small stone pyramid serves as a summit marker.



Pico Miravalles is definitely the more beautiful peak.

The midday attenuation has already set in, 40m is unusable, but I still manage to make over 40 QSOs on 20/15m in 45 minutes. I can already see our bay and am looking forward to a few hours on the beach with a cold cerveza.



View to the east: on the right on the horizon the Monte Buciero and Ganzo



The Prayer

From Pico Miravalles you can reach a wonderful rock formation via Cueto Cabrero: La Oracion. The path is quite narrow and covered with juniper, but the view makes up for it. Our blue beach tent should be at the end of the beach. It doesn't look far, but it still takes me over an hour. With almost 100 QSOs in perfect weather, I enjoy the rest of the day on the beach and look forward to our delicious dinner in the small bar La Tienduca in Limpias.





On the way back from the beach to our QTH I see the Montehano – a SOTA mountain

The weather forecast for July 12th was mixed, but I set off at 6:45 a.m. for Montehano EA1/CT-10 anyway. It was foggy, but dry. On the way there, it poured with rain. It was quite easy to go up and not very far, but tall grass and low-hanging branches meant that I was completely soaked. There was an old flagpole near the summit, which I could use as a pole holder. A few raindrops fell, but a large umbrella kept my equipment dry.



Montehano EA1/CT-103 in the fog



The path up touches old trenches from the time of the Spanish Civil War



The beach umbrella was ideal today.

At 8:00 a.m. local time, my station is up, 20m is open to VK and the signals are loud. My friend Dave, VK5MRD, hears my quiet signal and is almost happier than I am. I stay on 20m and call CQ. Over 20 contacts in SSB are recorded in the log, including Tony, VK3YV – who is himself a passionate portable radio operator. Before I switch to the CW area, my college friend Martin, OZ/DH5CM (portable on Bornholm) and I manage a grass-covered QSO... both of us with EFHW and FT-818 - what a joy! In the end, 50 QSOs with countries from 3 continents are in the log. I pack up, the weather temporarily clears up and I even find time to inspect the old bunkers near the summit. I'm wet, but overjoyed and looking forward to breakfast with my girls.



In northern Spain, a change in the weather is not uncommon...



An expanded position "Bunker de la Guerra Civil" from 1937

I'm back at the car at around 9:30, huge clouds are moving inland from the sea. I arrive in Limpias at 10:00 sharp for breakfast together. Martin starts a short video call from Bornholm, we're both happy about our QSO. A look at the RBN shows the good condx... I even got a readable 13 dB on ZL4YL, so let's keep it up.

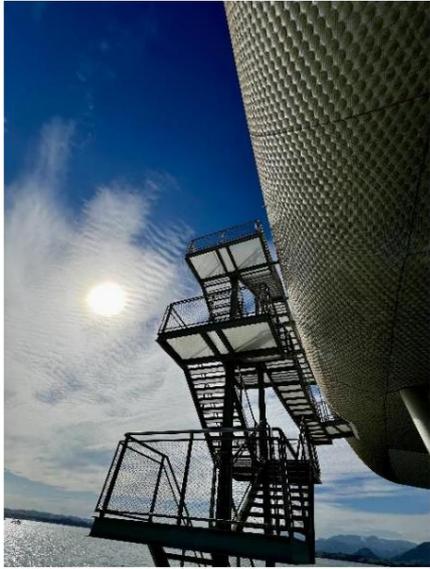


View of Monte Buciero and Ganzo on the descent from Montehano

		2364 mi	14062.0	CW	CQ	26 dB	23 wpm	0649z 12 Jul
		1006 mi	14062.0	CW	CQ	28 dB	23 wpm	0649z 12 Jul
		1088 mi	14062.1	CW	CQ	28 dB	23 wpm	0649z 12 Jul
		933 mi	14062.0	CW	CQ	25 dB	23 wpm	0647z 12 Jul
		897 mi	14062.0	CW	CQ	23 dB	23 wpm	0644z 12 Jul
		1154 mi	14062.0	CW	CQ	9 dB	23 wpm	0644z 12 Jul
		1806 mi	14062.0	CW	CQ	11 dB	23 wpm	0644z 12 Jul
		849 mi	14062.0	CW	CQ	14 dB	23 wpm	0642z 12 Jul
		12394 mi	14062.0	CW	CQ	13 dB	23 wpm	0640z 12 Jul
		3402 mi	14062.0	CW	CQ	12 dB	23 wpm	0640z 12 Jul
		1047 mi	14062.0	CW	CQ	4 dB	22 wpm	0640z 12 Jul
		995 mi	14062.0	CW	CQ	5 dB	23 wpm	0640z 12 Jul
		834 mi	14062.0	CW	CQ	8 dB	23 wpm	0640z 12 Jul
		1012 mi	14062.2	CW	CQ	9 dB	23 wpm	0639z 12 Jul
		737 mi	14062.0	CW	CQ	7 dB	23 wpm	0639z 12 Jul
		1302 mi	14062.0	CW	CQ	17 dB	23 wpm	0639z 12 Jul
		3402 mi	14062.0	CW	CQ	10 dB	22 wpm	0639z 12 Jul
		908 mi	14062.0	CW	CQ	12 dB	23 wpm	0639z 12 Jul
		1069 mi	14062.0	CW	CQ	9 dB	23 wpm	0639z 12 Jul
		977 mi	14062.0	CW	CQ	12 dB	23 wpm	0639z 12 Jul
		1138 mi	14062.0	CW	CQ	10 dB	23 wpm	0639z 12 Jul
		1154 mi	14062.0	CW	CQ	26 dB	23 wpm	0639z 12 Jul
		3661 mi	14062.0	CW	CQ	12 dB	22 wpm	0639z 12 Jul

Early activations have significantly less attenuation - short excerpt from the RBNetwork ... 5 Watt

13.07.2024: since we are not only going on holiday to swim and have fun, today we are going to the capital of Cantabria: Santander



Lots of beautiful architecture, culture and you certainly won't starve here...



just a few km west of Santander there are other enchanting beaches



with fascinating sunsets

We have been here for almost a week now and a family trip to the mountains is planned for Sunday, July 14th... the Pico de las Nieves EA1/CT-081 with its small church on the summit would be a worthwhile destination.

...to be continued