Here is what I remember to be the start of the Caribbean Amateur Repeater Linking System

<div align="right">by Klaus Rung VE3KR</div>

Info: This is prior to VOIP Internet linking systems like IRLP or Echolink were available.

Since I visited the whole Caribbean Island Chain regularly for work I made contact with many Hams in each Island to pass my time after hours.

Dominica:

The first was Dominica and I met Clem James, J73CI and another Ham at the Fort Yonge Hotel looby the first time.

During one of my visits in 1988 I brought to Dominica 2 UHF Yagi Link Antennas, a small 12w GE MVP homebuilt UHF Repeater, and a UHF 8 bay dipole antenna.

During that same trip I also had to visit Grenada and then back to Antigua. By the time I got to Antigua the following week
Clem and the Mountain Crew had already hiked up Morne Anglais in the south of the Island to install the UHF repeater, antennas and link yagi at 3500 ft absl and power the equipment via solar panels and batteries.

During my stay in Antigua I went to Shirley Heights a popular location for tourists that overlooks the ocean to the south by about 400 ft. to see if I could hear the repeater. To my surprise I could key up and work the repeater regularly from this specific location in Antigua using only my HT with rubber duck antenna. I experimented with various power levels and was using 1w to have a clean full quieting signal to Clem in Dominica. Experimenting with power levels I was able to still be understood while using 20mw of power to the rubber duck antenna on my Yaesu Ft-51R HT. This proved to be repeatable during subsequent visits to Antigua since we thought it must have been a fluke and was only possible during an good inversion to help the signal along such a long path of 123 miles to Dominica.

I also shipped a 4 bay Sinclair SRL-224 VHF Repeater antenna to Clem for their then VHF repeater system located on Mont Anglais.

In 1999 I heard about a new linking system that was able to link repeaters together using the internet and VOIP called IRLP (Internet Repeater Link Project), using (Voice Over IP). On a trip to Dominica that year I discussed this system with Clem J73CI and it became clear that if we both set up an IRLP system computer on our respective repeaters, theoretically he could be driving in his mobile in Dominica talking on his repeater and I could be driving in my car in Canada and talking on my repeater system and we would have a perfect link between the two repeaters, dialable at will using touchtone commands from either end. This sounded impossible at the time but we thought we would give it a try. I purchased the kit from Dave Cameron the designer of the system out of British Columbia and Clem did the same. By Feb of 2000 I had my node up and running in Toronto node number VE3RAK 2450 that covered all of the Toronto and surroundings area and Clem was 2 weeks behind getting his node on the air. The connection worked and we had perfect quality audio between the two repeaters and J73CI node number 7000 on repeater J73D was the first IRLP node in the Caribbean and the 26th node on the air in the IRLP System Worlwide. Now there are over 8000 nodes in practically every country in the world reachable by a
simple touchtone code sent to your local repeater to make the connection possible. After this, we started a quest to add IRLP nodes to every island we could and Antigua was the next to receive an IRLP node PC and link radio on one of my visits to that Island. This node was sponsored by Clem and I.

St. Kitt's:

Also about 1988 or 1989 I be-friended Joel Liburd V44KAI in St. Kitt's. He was the principal tech guy that maintained their 146.820 repeater. Clem shipped Joel one of the two UHF yagi antennas I brought to Dominica and

Joel used it to link to the Dominica UHF Repeater for a period of time. We also made a link from St. Kitt's to Montserrat and had communications from Dominica to St. Kitt's and then to Montserrat. This dialable 3 Island RF Link system eventually went off the air due to the St. Kitt's equipment being shut down.

Montserrat:

About 1988 or 1989 I built a VHF Repeater VP2M for the Montserrat Club and it has been running since then first at Silver Hill in the north of the Island at about 1100 ft absl and now it is located on the south east of the Island on Garibali Hill. The pricipal Ham in Montserrat was Victor VP2MQ the equipment officer for the Montserrat Amateur Radio Club that helped spearhead and maintain the equipment on Montserrat.

Antigua:

In 2003 I provided a VHF repeater on V21ARC 147.00 mhz Pl 103.5 hz for Antigua and is located at Boggy Peak, now called Mount Obama. The principal tech in Antigua is Renvil Watkins V21RW. An IRLP node was installed in 2003 at ACT a fully backed up data center on the island to transmit the IRLP signal up to the VHF repeater at Boggy Peak. A special irlp ham developed Linux Echolink software system was added to the IRLP software in 2003 so both irlp and echolink could be accessed on their vhf repeater.

A second repeater on a UHF frequency of 443.125 mhz Pl 103.5 hz was installed on Aug 15, 2015 at Monk's Hill in Antigua. This repeater was installed to cover the south east of the Island and is full time linked back to the 147.000 repeater at Boggy Peak so it also has IRLP/Echolink capabilities through node 7200.

Curacao:

Brett PJ2BR in Curacao came on board with his node 7992 in the mid 90's. and connected it to their local repeater providing a link between St. Martin and Curacao and the rest of the world. We also modified this repeater to run EchoIRLP dual node system.

Jamaica:

6Y5RA Jamaica node number 7673 was installed May 1st 2006 by Basil Davidson of Jamaica. It has been replaced with a more modern pc by Ivor Barrett KJ4YDW.
Unfortunately the node has been on and off the air over the years.

St. Martin:

In Oct 2002 we installed the VHF Repeater PJ7R 146.760 at Pic Paradis on the French side of the Island. In 2003 we installed IRLP/Echolink node 5830 to work with this repeater. Subsequently the repeater had to be moved to the Dutch side of the Island to St. Peter's Hill where it was licensed. It is overlooking the airport and Cole Bay and located at the St. Peter's commercial communications site.

In Nov. 2016 a new repeater was installed at Pic Paradis on the French side. This repeaters call is FS5ZMG and is still a work in progress and is presently off he air. This repeater has a more sophisticated 3 port controller to have 2 link radios connected to it's ports allowing for uhf rf links to Montserrat and from Pic Paradis over to St. Peter's Hill to link the French repeater FS5ZMG to the St. Peter's 146.760 PJ7R.

Carriacou Grenada:

This node I built for Jasper Griffith J39GJ but it had a short month or so life before going dormant. I see it is logged on again but is not accessible due to internet issues. Hopefully we can get that one back online and working correctly.

Trinidad:

9Y4AT in Trinidad had node 7500 for a number of years on a UHF/VHF repeater combination but has moved out of the island and the node has been off the air since. Jeffery was instrumental for getting a number of the nodes on the air in the Caribbean as he was instrumental in the setup of a node in Nevis to be installed but it has been turned into a private node that seems to be inaccessible. He also helped with Curacao and Grenada. Grenada has gone off the air years ago.

Barbados:

In Jan 2000 Ron Armstrong, his rigger, a helper and myself, did a test from the highest site in Barbados at a commercial site owned by Ron, to see if we could reach the Dominica UHF repeater for linking Barbados with Dominica. This test was successful and we were able to have a 2 way conversation between the Dominica UHF Repeater J73D on 442.100 mhz and Barbados. This link was never established from the Barbados end after proving it was possible to link via UHF RF that distance.

New Dominica Node PC and Link Radio:

Nov 2017 I built a new node and link radio J73D for Dominica to replace the Sept. 18th 2017 Maria storm damaged computer equipment. The equipment box included a Neoware CA-10 Mini pc, Taitt UHF commercial 4 channel link radio and associated cable harnessing. It was shipped from Huntsville Ont. Can. to a ham in Texas that was flying into Dominica on 8th Dec 2017 with a single engine aircraft. He agreed to carry the package to Clem J73CI. The Hams name was Brian Lloyd WB6RQN.
This is Brians website: http://projectameliaearhart.org/

Barbados:

In May 2018 I was contacted by Raf, 8P6RR in Barbados as he was eager to establish another irlp/echolink node in Barbados for a new Ham Club he was spearheading with others on Barbados. I built and shipped a node 8P6RR irlp 7943, Echolink 152150 to Raf a few weeks ago and it is successfully running on Barbados with excellent audio quality. This node will be connected to a new Bridgecomm repeater shorly to transmit the signal island wide.