

Spectrum Forum Manager's Meeting 13th January 2007

HF Manager's Report

1. Actions not covered elsewhere from previous Spectrum Forum meetings

1.1 HF Band Planning – adherence to IARU Band Plan during contests.

The action to seek a stronger consensus on adherence to the IARU Band Plan with other IARU Region 1 HF Managers was an ongoing issue. The draft change to the chapter on HF Contests in the IARU Region 1 HF Manager's Handbook is a part of this action. The paper would be taken at the forthcoming IARU Region1 Conference.

1.2 Beacons on 10MHz and below

The action had been cleared as a paper had been submitted for consideration for the forthcoming IARU Region1 Conference.

2. Spectrum management issues

2.1 WRC-07: Agenda item 1.13

This item deals with the review of allocation to services in the band 4 to 10MHz, excluding those allocations in the band 7.0 – 7.2MHz. There are strong pressures emerging in CEPT's pre-conference planning that indicates that it will make progress on IARU's 7MHz expansion requirement at WRC-07 difficult.

RSGB has supported IARU Region 1 in its quest to gain a small band, on a secondary basis, at 5MHz within this wider review. IARU sees this as an un-related matter their requirement for 7MHz expansion. Progress in CEPT's pre-conference planning is more positive that on the 7MHz expansion issue above.

2.2 WRC-07: Agenda item 1.15

This is to consider a secondary allocation to the Amateur Service in the frequency band 135.7 – 137.8kHz. There appears to be little opposition to this item.

2.3 500kHz

Action cleared from 26th Jan 06 meeting to discuss with Ofcom on gaining a formal response in respect of the RSGB proposal of September 2004.

The proposal for experimental access at 500kHz, submitted by RSGB in September 2004, is still being considered by Ofcom and several points of detail have been discuss over recent months. This matter is still extant.

Whist the RSGB continues to press for either Special Research Permit or NoV access, it is separately supporting and providing some leadership within the IARU 500kHz

Working Group to secure IARU & national administration support for either raising the matter at WRC-07 under Item 1.14, or getting the issue on the agenda for WRC-10/11.

2.4 5MHz

Action cleared from 26th Jan 06 meeting to discuss with MoD & Ofcom extending the period of the 5MHz NoV.

Ofcom has issued currently 760 NoVs for 5MHz. The new arrangements for considering and approving applications appear to be working effectively for all concerned, and the process is more efficient.

The experimental transmissions on 5MHz of the GB2RS news service, by G3LEQ, G4HPE, GM4NTL and M0AFJ, has proved to be very popular with listeners and NoV holders across the UK. Following the news broadcast the newsreader forms a net and exchanges SINPO and QTH Locator reports. Overall the combination is a valuable part of the 5MHz Experiment as it possibly involves the greatest number of NoV holders than any other 5MHz activity, and uses newsreaders purposely scattered geographically across the UK.

The 5MHz Experiment continues with around 400,000 records on the 5MHz database. Despite the large number of NoVs few submit logs for inclusion in the database and of those submitted the error rate on entries is relatively high. Analysis of the database has not started as the focus is on improving data quality. There are currently no issues with the cadet involvement; a re-launch within the Air Cadets is planned to promote the experiment.

The HF Manager apologises for the lack of comment about the experimental Emergency Communications at 5MHz; the positive news is that no issues have been notified amongst members of the 5MHz Working Group in recent months.

2.5 136kHz

Experimental work is still active on 136kHz, though some UK amateurs have had to limit or curtail activity on account of continuing interference problems from an additional transmitter, located at Rugby, in the NW Europe LORAN-C chain. As was reported in the July Spectrum Forum meeting this matter has been subject to some discussion between RSGB HQ & the company sponsoring the transmitter; it is now considered necessary to exert greater pressure in order to reduce the spurious emission levels from the Rugby transmitter within the 136kHz band.

2.6 Provision for MT63 on 160m, 80m and 40m

The use of MT63 for the GB2RS news service on these bands has highlighted the problem that the provision of bandwidth, within the IARU Region 1 Band Plan, for such digimodes is insufficient given the pressures from other forms of operation.

The Spectrum Forum needs to take note that the wider issue of the development and increased usage of digimodes represents a trend that may require some re-adjustment

of the current boundaries of the bandwidth-defined band-planning segments may need to be considered. Such changes will of course not be easy to agree, however, it is a marker that the matter of balancing the needs of the various users ought to be investigated, and then addressed at the next full IARU Region 1 Conference.

2.7 Euroloop

My previous report to the Spectrum Forum outlined the consideration that CEPT has been giving to the spectrum engineering aspects of a proposed HF spread-spectrum system, called Euroloop, which is part of the European Railway Traffic Management System. Having attended 5 meetings of CEPT's SE24 Working Group, written several technical papers on the issue and with others have undertaken experiments during the past year, I can report that the matter now rests with CEPT's Frequency Management Working Group. On the spectrum engineering aspects, following around 14 months of effort, it was agreed to set limits some 14 dB lower than those initially requested.

Considerable support was given by RSGB and DARC during the public consultation, which helped to secure the final position. Although Euroloop is unlikely to be installed within the UK, the final levels that have been agreed mean that we will be unlikely to get any interference from installations within Europe, except under very exceptional circumstances during the very peak of the sunspot cycle. The lower level that was agreed, will assist our continental "cousins" by reducing the area around the railway track where the noise floor will be increased by the system.

3. IARU Region 1 Interim Conference

Several papers have been written for the RSGB to submit for the Interim Meeting that takes place in Vienna between 24 and 25th February 2006. The papers are currently available via the web¹ and are being discussed via the "UK C4 Discussion" yahoo group².

- Beacons below 14MHz
- Deliberate QRM
- Preserving the HF Noise Floor
- Draft re-write of Chapter 7.1.2 "Guidelines for HF Contests" of the IARU Region 1 HF Manager's Handbook
- Amateur band at 500kHz

G3LAS has written a short piece for the CDXC Journal to encourage members to comment on the Deliberate QRM paper.

¹ See http://www.rsgb-spectrumforum.org.uk/iaru_reg_1_c4_committee.htm

² See <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/ukc4discussion/>.

4. HF Beacon & Internet Gateway Management

Data for the RSGB Beacon database covering the three beacons on 5MHz and the GB3RAL beacons on 24, 28, 50 and 70MHz (a little out of my patch) has been forwarded to Murray, G6JYB, for entering into an RSGB beacon database.

Support and advice has been give to several requests about un-attended HF beacons, including that given to the Poldhu Radio Club in their application for an un-attended 160m beacon to investigate Guglielmo Marconi's claim that he was the first to receive a wireless signal across the Atlantic.

Advice has been given on the application for a Special Research Permit/NoV to study the technical and operational challenges that an Internet/HF Speech gateway system poses for Emergency Communications.

5. Spectrum Forum Website

The action to edit the "News" page and to provide a printable version of the bandplan for download had both been cleared shortly after the respective meetings.

The website has been regularly updated with general news, Band Plans, items concerning spectrum regulation, matters relating to the 5MHz Experiment, etc.

The Webmaster has received no complaints on other than broken links from other websites.

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RSGB HF Manager
13/1/07