

Propagation Studies Committee

Continuing Projects

Two long-term projects continue: solar flare effects on VLF propagation and exploration of grey-line propagation at LF.

Beacon Developments

Pleased at progress on the RAL multiband project and on licensing of beacons at 40 60 and 70MHz, potentially giving the UK co-located beacons at 28-40-50-60-70MHz. It is hoped that once the cluster is fully operational it will stimulate similar projects elsewhere (Slovenia has an unused authorization at 40MHz.) PSC will be following up the potential for research based on this developing cluster. Meanwhile, the Committee is most grateful to all involved in negotiating with Ofcom on this matter.

PSC, via the HF beacon coordinator, continues to encourage the development of more 'state of the art' beacons and more time/frequency sharing beacons. However, the great majority of beacons remain fairly orthodox 'old-tech' in nature. These are not to be dismissed and can give excellent service for casual propagation-checking but are generally not suited to propagation research projects.

We are aware that the NCDXF beacon network, which has given, and continues to give, excellent service, is now relatively elderly and does not meet current best standards. However, we have no information about NCDXF's thinking on future development, on which it would be desirable to have a dialogue before any decisions are made.

PSC also notes with satisfaction progress made at Vienna regarding beacons below 14MHz. It is hoped that the three IARU regions can be encouraged to take a common line.

Interference with Beacons

There is continued concern about interference with the NCDXF beacons on 14100kHz. While this is occasionally attributable to cw operation the problem lies overwhelmingly with rtty/psk working at weekends and is by no means confined to the relatively small number of major contests. It is not suggested that this interference arises in RSGB-organised contests. The problem at 14MHz is probably most marked currently for cyclical reasons, but that gives rise to concern that it will affect the higher bands as we move up cycle 24. It is appreciated that progress on this front is essentially a matter for persuasion.

Propagation Forecasting

Where possible, forecasts are provided for working major international Dxpeditions.

RSGB Handbook/Yearbook

Revised copy submitted for the 2008 Yearbook. Revision under way for the Propagation chapter of the Handbook, with completion due by the end of June.