

SHORTWAVE BULLETIN

Nummer: 1549. 31 oktober 2004.

Deadline nästa nr: 12/11 2004 (E mail 14/11 kl. 0900 SNT)

Hoppas nu alla ställt om klockan till normalt看 igen. Ganska skönt att få en extra timme på morgonen så man säkert vaknar. I den kommande veckan åker jag några dagar på kurs till Saebj som ligger på norra Jylland nästan ända uppe vid Fredrikshamn, totalt 56 mil om man skall köra, men snabbaste turen går över Göteborg, konstigt nog. Snabbfärjan tar bara 2 timmar. I övrigt har några få bidrag som väldigt letat sig hit. Det är ganska trist att konstatera att KV snart är tömd på intressanta stationer. Inte ens BM har på lång tid hört nåt utöver det vanliga. Som det ser ut nu så blir MV räddningen ännu några år. Längre fram står en del om digital sändningar och hur det låter kan man ju kolla på 3995 t ex. Men, vad gör man mer än försöker in i det sista! Så, håll till godo med nr 1549.

Keep on

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SWB-info

SWB online på HCDX: <http://www.hard-core-dx.com/swb>
Dateline Bogotá: <http://homepage.sverige.net/~a-0901/Dateline.htm>
SWB hot stuff: <http://homepage.sverige.net/~a-0901/> (på denna sajt ligger alltid senaste SWB).
SWB member information: <http://www.hard-core-dx.com/swb/member.htm>
Jubileumstidskriften: <http://homepage.sverige.net/~a-0901/> (html- + pdf-version).

QSL, kommentarer, mm.

Stig Adolfsson: Här kommer ett litet aktivitetstecken från södra Roslagen. Jag har lyssnat extra efter indoneser nu under Ramadan men inte hört en endaste stn förutom de vanliga. Hade hoppats på lite bättre utdelning då flera stationer brukar aktivera sina avställda sändare under denna period. MV är just nu väldigt bra med flera östkustare som vanliga gäster redan vid 22-tiden...

Jan Edh: Jag har kommit "hjälpigt" igång efter min lår-muskelskada och linkar nu på ganska duktigt, även om jag ännu behöver assistans för att klara av att komma igång ute i Fredriksfors. Bära ved och liknande är inte att tänka på.

De senaste lyssningstillfällena (21 och 23/10) har bjudit på tidvis strålände NA-konditioner liksom mot Västindien. Tyvärr har jag dock inte kunnat utnyttja dem som jag skulle velat, eftersom jag prioriterat pågående Nordx, då jag tycker att det är viktigt att engagera sig när det finns villiga arrangörer. Det har varit en kul, men vad gäller t ex Colombia för min del också frustrerande tillställning...

Men som sagt, NA och Västindien har blivit lidande som på söndagsmorgonen 24/10 då det fortfarande dundrade NA och inte minst kubaner ännu framåt 10 på förmiddagen. Då var jag dock för trött, splittrad och oskärt för att orka ta något riktigt grepp om många intressanta stationer som jag bara gav upp. Det blev med andra ord ett ganska högt pris att betala för Nordx...

28/10: Ännu ett besök i Fredriksfors och det såg bra ut "på papperet", men resultatet blev en jättebesvikelse. Bortsett från den jättemaffiga månformörkelsen, som jag linkade ut för att följa en stund i stället för att sura över vad som (inte) hördes. I första hand var det för att göra ännu ett försök att få igenom Bayrak till Nordx. Men det sprack nog. Igen. Jag var litet sen nu, men efter 19.30 UTC hade jag något som lät lovande (ännu en gång...), men det försvann för gott under Slovakien och Spanien. Jag slä kolla MD:n liet till, men knappast NA började lovande även om det bara var de vanliga NL-stationerna som sedan spreds även till litet annat i nordöst. Men redan vid 22.30 UTC började signalerna försämrats för att i viss mån ersättas av (likaså dåliga) signaler från Västindien/Venezuela. Vi (Dan Andersson och jag) tog litet sömn. 03.00 fanns knappt en NA-signal. Inget särskilt intressant på KV heller. Och bara Voz, Fé y Alegria och några jämförbara "fyror" på MV. Det blev sedan allt fler YV/HL, Puerto Rico, Cuba etc, men de flesta inte särskilt bra. Inte förrän efter 06 började det finnas litet NA igen och framåt 07 gick NA på massor av frekvenser, men då tyvärr i allmänhet för korta stunder. Hade jag inte behövt dra till jobbet kort senare är det dock möjligt att det gått att "plåga" fram en del spännande då.

Lennart Weirell: 16-17 var BIH och undertecknad i Österbo för att plocka länder för NorDX och en del av loggningarna hittas nedan. Ett par QSL att rapportera: **R Continental** – 6270 e-mail efter 1 v.

Dan Olsson: Hej där i höstmörkret. Kommer lite bidrag ifrån DO i Kävlinge. Först och främst lite QSL att redovisa: **Orion Radio 6267** e-brev och kort, **KWRN R Nordland 6308** E-brev, brev, visitkort och turistbroschyr på svenska!! (tysk pirat), **5930 R Guaruja Paulista 5930** brev, stencil, dekal och turistbroschyr samt **Sunrise Radio 6275** stencil och dekal.

I onsdags 27/10 blev jag uppringd ifrån R Romaniens engelska avdelning där dem gjorde en telefonintervju med mig. Helt glada blev dem kanske inte då jag sa att jag lyssnade mer på de inhemska programmen än på utlandsprogrammen. 17/11 kommer det ett TV-program om DX-ing. Det är i serien Anders och Måns som visas på SVT 2 21.30. Medverkande förutom jag själv är Ove Fransson, Per Lindholm och Roland Åkesson.

Så mycket lyssnade blir det inte för tillfället då den mesta lediga tiden går åt att lägga golv på min vind samt rehab-träna mitt dåliga knä. Var dock ute tillsammans med RÅ och lyssnade i Saxtorp 16-17/10. Inte mycket hördes om man undantar Puerto Rico på mellanvåg som verkligen gick bra - 4 nya PR-stationer på en natt.

Leif Råhäll: Skönt att du kommit igång igen. Växlande konditioner rätt länge, men den 28 blev det en rekordtidig öppning på 60 m och sen gick det vidare av bara farten.

LOGGEN - ALL TIMES ARE UTC

2310	16.10	1740	Alice Springs spelade "Wondering Star" med Lee Marwin. 2325 och 2485 gick också men inte lika bra. LWV
3324.998	23.10	1440	RRI Palangkaraya med bön och därefter cd. 2 SA
3344,8	28.10	1440	INS RRI Ternate blev bättre och bättre fram till 1455 då bärvägen från 3345 förstörde hela nöjet 1-2 LRH
3344.972	23.10	1445	RRI Ternate också med bön följt av "musik populär" fram till cd strax före 15. 2-3 SA
3925	28.10	1420	JPN Nikkei med bara prat // 6055 2 LRH
3935,06	28.10	1535	OID Troligen RRS enligt programgången med mycket prat och lite mx, hörs svagt också på morgonen. Kanske Björn har fått något ID på Gotland ? LRH
3960,9	23.10	1415	RRI Palu med muslimsk musik. QSA 3
3976	23.10	1400	RRI Pontianak med nyheter. QSA 4
4000,2	23.10	14.13	RRI Kendari kvinnlig sång. "Västerländskt på indonesiska". QSA 2 JE
4750	23.10	1315	RRI Makassar med muslimsk musik. QSA 3 JE
4790	28.10	1330	INS RRI Fak Fak med musl. mx 2 LRH
4925	28.10	1305	INS RRI Jambi med muslims mx 2 LRH
5019,9	28.10	1425	SLM Honiara hördes med relä av BBC 1-2 LRH
5019.884	Ofta	Em	OID men med största sannolikhet Solomon Islands med relä av BBC, // 12095. 2 SA
5025	16.10	2200	R Rebelde med ett reportage ifrån Santa Clara. Fidel var ju här några dagar senare och lyckades skada sitt knä i ett fall. Q 4 DO
5029	17.10	0624	University Radio med dixie-mx innan ID LWV
5040,4	28.10	1310	BRM Yangon med nat. mx 2 LRH
5428.00	Ibl	2040	NHK Mihara med tråkiga program efter sign on 2030. Hörs då A-index är låga och sändaren med modemtrafik inte är aktiv på denna frekvens. Sällan stark, inte konstigt då man bara har ett par hundra watt. USB. 1-2 SA
6010,1	28.10	0353	La Voz de Tu Consciencia (tillbaka?). Jag har i alla fall inte hört den på ett bra tag. Stark signal, men hopplöst under t ex BBC:s timme 04-05 etc. Gick med QSA 3-4 och nonstopmusik ännu 06.30. JE
6035	24.10	0235	LV de Guaviare blev räddningen när det gällde Colombia för Nordx. Kristen nonstop musik var dock inte mycket att glädja sig åt. Men MV-Colombianerna bara fadade. QSA 3, men en del splatter. 03 kom en station till på frekvensen och tog över. JE
6090	17.10	0058	University Radio med C&W mx innan ID LWV
6270	17.10	0655	R Continental spelade Super Trouper med ABBA LWV
7590	16.10	1635	AFRTS pratade om situationen i Irak och drog resultat ifrån NBA-basketen DO
9595	23.10	1155	Nikkei Radio // 6055 men mycket bättre (QSA 3-4) JE
11745	16.10	2330	Voz Christiana ID-ade LWV
11765	17.10	0812	KNLS med Post Card from Alaska LWV
15205	17.10	0730	KTWR ID-ade LWV

Propagation has been exceptional good this week. So, I've managed to hear several Radio Republik Indonesia stations on SW. The strongest station in the 90 mb yesterday October 29 1340-1435 UT was RRI Palangkaraya from Kalimantan broadcasting on 3325 kHz. Exotic local music really pleasing my hearing with the bw 5,5 kHz of my AOR. Signal strength even S8-9. After 1430 UT Quran chanting on this frequency and also noted on 3345 kHz Ternate and Jambi on 4925 kHz. 4790 kHz RRI Fak Fak from Papua went off the air with Love Ambon at 1357 UT. Also these RRI-stations noted 1330-15 UT: RRI Pontianak 3976 kHz. Pontianak is maybe the strongest Indonesian at my QTH. 4000,2 kHz Kendari; 4605 kHz Serui; 4750 kHz Makassar. (73's, Jouko Huuskonen Turku FINLAND via HCDX)



Bandscan from BM, Quito, Ecuador

Björn Malm, c/o Susana Garcés de Malm,
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Rx: JRC-535, Loewe HF-150, Sangean ATS-808

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Antenn: 12 m lw Ö/V, 24 m lw N/S + Lw Magnetic Balun + MFJ1025 phaser

The following stations have been uploaded during the last 14 days at <http://www.malm-ecuador.com>

Recording of **2640.04 kHz unID Peru**. Please listen to the ID on my recording and tell me your opinion.

I do not think it's Regional nor Cristal. Regional is mentioned at the very end, a nivel regional, and in the beginning, just as Levi suggests, it's Radio Excepcional. An exceptional name it is. /Henrik Klemetz

4698.70 kHz R. Amistad, San Pedro La Laguna (Guatemala) active this thursday evening with very weak signal and ID 0100 UTC. Reactivated?

Recording of **4779.98 kHz R. Cultural Coatán**, San Sebastián. Happy religious music and a very nice ID together with a photo: "Belleza Huehueteca".

PERU 5120.21 kHz Radio Sur Oriente, Quillabamba active this Wednesday evening. Talk OM up to 0000 UTC followed by ads from Quillabamba, ID "Radio Sur Oriente" and then close down. Is listed as "R.Ondas del Sur Oriente". Very weak signal, too weak to make a decent recording.

Recording of **6120 kHz CP15 R. El Cóndor, La Paz** (Daniel Camporini). This time another fantastic recording from Daniel Camporini, Buenos Aires of a LA shortwave station that ended their SW transmissions a long time ago: CP15 R. El Cóndor, La Paz (Bolivia) transmitting on shortwave 6120 kHz, Thank you very much Daniel!



Saludos Cordiales desde "La Mitad del Mundo"!

(When using my information give credit to: Bjorn Malm, Quito, Ecuador, SWB América Latina)

Stationsnyheter

BAHREIN: MARLO website latest advisories at <http://www.me.navy.mil/marlo/products.HTM> give CMF Radio this schedule: "Coalition Maritime Forces broadcast music and information helpful to mariners in the ongoing war on terror. Mariners may listen to these broadcasts by tuning into: 6125 kHz 0300 - 1400 (GMT) 15500 kHz 1400 - 0300 (GMT)"

The station has been monitored on 25 Oct on 15500U announcing the above schedule. They were heard using ID's Radio One, CMF Radio and Radio Malumat. In Pashto the ID was: "Da Radio Malumat day". (73 Jari Savolainen Kuusankoski Finland via HCDX)

GERMANY [and non]. Digital broadcast troublesome to some, experimental opportunity for others (Oct 26, 2004) --- A digital broadcast signal on 3995 kHz has prompted some members of the amateur community to contact ARRL to say it's QRMing the top 10 kHz of 75 meters and asking what can be done about it. Not much. The signal, from Deutsche Welle in Germany, is legal since radio amateurs share that part of the band with broadcasters in Region 1 (which includes Europe). The international Radio Regulations do leave the door open to request that the station reduce power or change its antenna pattern, however. Although the station has been broadcasting for some time on the same frequency in conventional AM, it's attracted more notice from hams since July, when it began testing using digital format --- also referred to as ``DRM,`` (Digital Radio Mondiale, French for ``Digital Radio Worldwide``).

Programming originates from Deutsche Welle's brand-new, all-digital broadcast center in Bonn. Of course, the vagaries of propagation will be a big factor as to the amount of interference US hams experience at any given time.

``Digital shortwave will revolutionize cross-border broadcasts and will initiate a worldwide renaissance of radio,`` Deutsche Welle Director General Erik Bettermann said this month during a panel discussion at Munich Media Days. Bettermann says Deutsche Welle plans to gradually shut down its analog shortwave transmissions as DRM receivers became more available globally --- something not anticipated until late 2005. Meanwhile, radio amateurs have been experimenting with programs such as HamDream, a DRM program adapted for Amateur Radio use by HB9TLK. It enables digital voice and data transmissions using bandwidths on the order of 2.3 to 2.5 kHz <http://www.qslnet.de/member/hb9tlk/> (ARRL Main Page via John Norfolk, dxldyg)

HONG KONG. A reminder that the HK to Nha Trang, Vietnam yacht race is about to start, and per 4-162 the first weather broadcast on 8749 USB will be 1033 UT Tuesday October 26; there will also be a morning broadcast at 0033; the race runs thru October 30, but I am not sure exactly when the last 8749 transmission will be. Lots and lots of info about the race, including some about radio communications on other frequencies via <http://www.rhkyc.org.hk/hkvietnamrace/instructions.htm> We'll be looking forward to any DX reports of this (Glenn Hauser, Oct 25, DX LISTENING DIGEST)

INDONESIA, 2960, RPDT2 Manggarai, Oct 16 1310 - Male announcer in Indonesian with a monotone delivery at tune-in. Many mentions of Indonesia. Soft Indonesian pop music 1352 (same artist & song as on 4790, but not parallel, just a coincidence). Female announcer 1356 reading a long list of items twice-- likely personal ads, with mentions of various Indo cities like Fak Fak and Manggarai. No ID at top of hour, but continued messages. Announcement by a different woman (I think) 1423 with mentions of Kalimantan, and into orchestral music. More messages to 1432 jaunty (almost country western) music bracketing a male phone caller or reporter 1434; multiple mentions of Manggarai 1439-1441. Lagu romantik tune at 1450 and pop music 1457. Love Ambon sign-off music noted at 1459:45, and sign-off 1501* without break-in announcement or ID. Signal initially fair at 1310, but improved to good later-- except for some TV harmonics QRM. A short clip of Manggarai can be heard here:

http://www.guyatkins.com/files/RPDT2_Manggarai_16_Oct_2004_1358.mp3 (Atkins-WA via HCDX)

INDONESIA 4604,86, 1306-, RRI Serui Oct 16 Excellent reception of network news in Bahasa Indonesia. Business news at 1306. USB spoiled by a ute. At 1309, the talking continued under music! I heard this several times after the TOH. Stopped a minute later. Mentions of Malaysia, 'bomba'. C & W music again over the YL at 13:13. When rechecked at 1316, no music again. (Salmaniw, Grayland, WA via HCDX)

INDONESIA 4790, 1338-, RRI Fak Fak Oct 16 Superb armchair level with EZL music. Very nice! Interesting how all Indo stations have that somewhat muffled audio. Very characteristic. Off sometime before 13:58 recheck. Will listen to the MD. (Salmaniw, Grayland, WA via HCDX)

JAPAN. 6055, Radio Nikkei, 1002-1007 Oct 24. Presumed the one with man talking in Japanese. Very casual - I was able to identify the language by the frequent use of "ano", a word used as a space filler in Japanese. (Sort of like 'ummm' in English.) (Don Moore, DXing at a MARE DXpedition near Brighton, MI, ICF-2010 and various long wire antennas, DX LISTENING DIGEST)

PERU: Ang Radio Municipal Panao

I SWB 1543 hade Henrik Klemetz funderingar kring huruvida Alfredo Albornoz Rojas har någonting direkt med stationen att göra, eller om han är ännu en s k QSL Manager med stort intresse för forellfiske. Jag vet själv ingenting, men det kanske kan vara av intresse att läsa ett e-brev som mottagits av Glenn Hauser och som publicerats i hans DXLD, i vilket Alfredo Albornoz Rojas skriver att han är tekniskt ansvarig för radions sändningar.

HOLA AMIGO DISCULPAS...ENCONTRE EN EL INTERNET TU DIRECCION ES POR ELLO QUE TE EMVIO UNA MIAIVA. TE AGRADESCO MUCHO POR TU REPORTE DE RADIO MUNICIPAL DE PANA O, MI NOMBRE ES PABLO ALFREDO ALBORNOZ ROJAS TENGO 34 AÑOS, SOY EL OPERADOR (TECNICO) ENCARGADO DE LAS TRANSMISIONES DE RADIO MUNICIPAL EN ONDA CORTA 3173 KHZ BANDA TROPICAL DDE 90 METROS, FRECUENCIA MODULADA 96.3, Y TELEVISION MUNICIPAL...LOS AMIGOS DIXISTAS QUIENES SINTONIZAN RADIO MUNICIPAL POR FAVOR EMVIAR INFORME DE SINTONIA PARA EMVIAR QSL A LA SIGUIENTE DIRECCION TACNA 385 PANA O PACHITEA, HUANUCO-PERU.AMIGO CUALQUIER INQUIETUD NO DUEDES EN PREGUNTARME TE RESPONDERE GUSTOZAMENTE. HASTA UNA PROXIMA, ESPERANDO TU PRONTA RESPUESTA ME DESPIDO UN AMIGO PABLO ALFREDO dalsmopl@hotmail.com DECEOS 73S (Oct 16, DX LISTENING DIGEST) (Via Hermod Pedersen)

SWITZERLAND: Wednesday, October 27, 2004, **Swiss Radio International (SRI)** is to broadcast its last shortwave and satellite radio programmes on October 30, 2004. As SRI goes off the air after nearly 70 years, a chapter in Swiss radio history comes to an end. swissinfo/SRI will in future focus exclusively on its multimedia news and information platform, www.swissinfo.org, which is available in nine languages.

Swiss Radio International first broadcast to the world on shortwave in 1935. The station made a name for itself as a neutral voice of authority during the Second World War and throughout the Cold War. Programmes were broadcast in nine languages (German, French, Italian, Romansh, English, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic and Esperanto). During this time, SRI established itself as one of the most high-profile and popular international radio broadcasters. (see more about this at <http://medianetwork.blogspot.com/>) (Mike Terry via HCDX)

THAILAND, 7260, R. Thailand, Oct 16 1057 - While monitoring R. Vanuatu towards their 1100* sign-off, R. Thailand's interval signal began at 1058. At 1100, a male announcer indicated 'This is Radio Thailand's Foreign Service broadcasting from Bangkok... The following program is in Vietnamese.' Good signal with Vanuatu underneath until Vanuatu's national anthem and sign-off. (Atkins-WA via HCDX)

VANUATU, 7260.11, R. Vanuatu, Oct 15 0950 - Reggae song 'Africa Unite' at tune-in; pop music, then female announcer with R. Vanuatu ID at 0957. Good to very good signal. (Atkins-WA via HCDX)

VANUATU, 7260.13, 1038-, Radio Vanuatu Oct 16 Strong reception, so obviously back to their previous reception, measuring S9 + 10 to 20 with lovely south seas music in Bislama. A live concert from the sounds of things, with brief intro by a Male between selections. Should propagate much further afield! Spoiled by Radio Thailand coming on at 11:00. Still relatively strong, however and still going at 11:05. Into NA shortly after and then OC. (Salmaniw, Grayland, WA via HCDX)

Övriga radionyheter

The future of Amateur Radio

The hobby is in decline. Not because the hobby isn't interesting but because there is still a fundamental misunderstanding about what it is and what it has to offer. Amazing after 80 years, isn't it? How might the future look and what changes might be necessary in the future? Interesting article at <http://www.innotts.co.uk/asperges/internet.html> (Mike Terry via HCDX)

Digital Broadcast Troublesome to Some, Experimental Opportunity for Others: ARRL, October 29, 2004.

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Radio amateurs meanwhile have been experimenting with programs such as HamDream <http://www.qslnet.de/member/hb9tlk/>, a DRM program adapted for Amateur Radio use by HB9TLK. It enables digital voice and data transmissions using bandwidths on the order of 2.3 to 2.5 kHz.

Source: The ARRL Letter Vol. 23, No. 43 October 29, 2004 Website: <http://www.arrl.org/> (Mike Terry via HCDX)

"Digital SW will revolutionise cross-border Radio" Monday, 25 October 2004

"Digital short-wave will revolutionise cross-border broadcasts and will initiate a world-wide renaissance of radio". This was the opinion of the Director General of Deutsche Welle, Mr Erik Bettermann, during a panel discussion at Münchner Medientage.

Bettermann, the head of the German international broadcaster - and instigator of the event - was not the only one to present an optimistic prediction of a "Digital Global Radio" development: The other panel specialists also emphasised the advantages of digitalisation in the so-called AM range, i.e. short-, medium- and long-wave.

The discussion was chaired by Peter Senger, Director of Distribution at Deutsche Welle and Chairman of the Digital Radio Mondiale (DRM) Consortium; and next to Erik Bettermann, BBC representative Mike Cronk, Dan D'Aversa of RTL Group and Phil Laven of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) were also participating in the debate.

Senger outlined the advantages of digital short-wave as follows: The world-wide accepted DRM standard provided an excellent audio-quality comparable to FM. In addition, the search for frequencies was obsolete, as the station identification tuned in to the designated

frequency and automatically switched to the best one. In parallel, it allows for the sending of accompanying programme information such as text messages.

"On top of everything, digital transmission technology saves a lot of energy and costs compared to the analogue one", Senger said. This would open up enormous opportunities, especially for international broadcasters.

For several years, DW - like many other broadcasters - has noted that listeners migrated from short-wave to FM or other new distribution channels in digital quality, said Bettermann. Deutsche Welle had to stay abreast of these changes. "According to test transmissions being operated by Deutsche Welle, we anticipate large area coverage in almost FM quality without interference such as jitters, induced power-noise or fading", the General Director stated. At the same time, not only stationary indoor reception, but also mobile reception in cars and with small portable devices is possible...(snip)..... Mike Cronk stated that the BBC had invested heavily in DRM and that they were now developing "a detailed strategy for its initial deployment, probably into Europe, in 2005". According to Cronk, DRM offered the unique combination of wide area short-wave coverage and FM usability and quality. As a consequence of using this digital medium, continuous direct delivery to the audience avoiding "political or other regulatory obstacles" will be possible...(snip).... (See more in a long article at <http://ukradio.com/news/articles/E69902218036498CA501E6A75DE7F8A5.asp>) (Mike Terry via HCDX)

NASA Science News for October 18, 2004

Something strange happened on the sun last week: all the sunspots vanished. This is a sign, say forecasters, that solar minimum is coming sooner than expected. FULL STORY at http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2004/18oct_solarminimum.htm?list673369 Science@NASA stories are available in Spanish at our sister site, Ciencia@NASA <<http://ciencia.nasa.gov/>>. Home page: <http://science.nasa.gov> (Fabrizio magrone via HCDX)

Could the next solar minimum arrive sooner than previously predicted?

American solar physicist David Hathaway thinks so. An article on the 'Science at NASA' website

http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2004/18oct_solarminimum.htm predicts that the next solar minimum could occur in late 2006, about a year earlier than previously thought. Hathaway bases his prediction on data from the last eight solar cycles, which show that solar minimum follows the first sunspot-free day on the sun by 34 months. In this solar cycle, the first spotless day was on 28 January this year and more recently, on 11 and 12 October, there were two more spotless days. David Hathaway goes on to say that the next solar maximum might also come early. "Solar activity intensifies rapidly after solar minimum. In recent cycles, Solar Max has followed Solar Min by just four years." If that is the case, the next solar maximum should be in 2010. (RSGB)

The Sun goes through a periodic rise and fall in activity which affects HF communications; solar cycles vary in length from 9 to 14 years. At solar minimum, only the lower frequencies of the HF band will be supported by the ionosphere, while at solar maximum the higher frequencies will successfully propagate, figure 1.4. This is because there is more radiation being emitted from the Sun at solar maximum, producing more electrons in the ionosphere which allows the use of higher frequencies.

(<http://www.qsl.net/g3yrc/hf%20propagation/hf%20propagation.htm>) (Mike Terry via HCDX)

Drake Spare parts

I had to get a new tuning encoder from the RL Drake coy for my R8B. Once again Drake's service was superb, from the rapid reply to queries, preparation of quotes to timely receipt of the part. The part arrived in my shack two calendar weeks after depositing the funds for the transaction. Very quick for this part of the world. The vital customs documentation, often not properly filled out by other suppliers, was correctly filled out in detail, ensuring a quick passage through customs with a minimal charge.

Americans might be interested to know how much it costs in the third world to get a tiny part weighing only quarter of an ounce: \$12 cost of part, \$23 postage and packing, \$20 bank charge for teletransferring funds to Drake's bank in USA, \$6 customs clearance and sales tax = \$61 TOTAL.!!! (John Plimmer, Montagu, Western Cape Province, South Africa via rec.radio.shortwave)

LOCAL QUALITY RECORDINGS OF THE BBS IN BHUTAN.

Hi folks, For those of you that like me share an interest in exotic radio station recordings made locally, I would like to start trading these recordings with you. Because of a really neat website which allows one to store a gig of material on it absolutely free for seven days, recordings need no longer be limited to 20 or 30 second clips that you send as an E-mail attachment. Now you can record entire shows if you want, and send them up to this website, and once the files upload, you'll be given a special link to send to your friends so they can access this material and download it for themselves. If you'd like to know more about this website, please feel free to E-mail me.

The areas of the world that I am interested in recordings from include the entire Arctic, especially Alaskan radio stations, the further north the better, recordings of KNR in Greenland because I have nothing of them at all, and any other Arctic stations, in Asia, stations from Nepal and Bhutan and English stations in Kuala Lumpur, and the entire south Pacific Island region. In Australia, I am always looking for Northern Territory recordings, and in New Zealand, my interest is Christchurch and South Island stations.

One radio station that has always fascinated me, is the BBS in Bhutan. I always dreamed of somehow getting a local recording of the station from someone in Bhutan, and in fact someone from the BBS was actually going to send me a CD of their programming but it just never happened. But in October of last year, I discovered that their ten minute English news bulletins plus their local community announcements were being put on their website and updated daily as WMA files. And so I grabbed them, every time I thought about it and could log onto the site. Naturally there were some days when the site was down. Then in mid April, the files just vanished. The links were still there, but there were no audio files. But at the end of September, the files were back, only now they were wave files, a completely ridiculous way to store audio material given their huge size and slow download time. The female presenter of the BBS Internet On The Radio program was actually suggesting to her listeners that perhaps they should try to download these files at night and on weekends when the local server wasn't quite as busy. But at least 90% of Bhutanese people only have Internet access at their offices. Even with my high speed cable connection it took me nearly 13 hours to download one of their Internet On The Radio programs, so can you imagine how long it would take in Bhutan? Naturally I converted that 183 meg wave file into a much more manageable 13.9 meg MP3 file as soon as I got it.

Well, when I'm enthusiastic about something, I guess I sometimes figure that everyone else will be just as enthusiastic about it as I am. I offered a couple of New Zealand DXers these files, and they didn't really want them. But if any of you have a real interest in the program content of the BBS, and would like to hear a 20 minute Internet On The Radio program along with a number of their newscasts and community announcements spanning the period October 2003 to October of this year, and you can handle downloading a 52 meg zipped MP3 file, you are welcome to them. They will be at the following link until at least Wednesday November 3, possibly Thursday the 4th. So if you'd like these locally recorded news and announcement files direct from the BBS website, mostly as WMA files, with a couple of MP3 files thrown in which were originally BBS wave files, feel free to go to this link, and enjoy hearing this exotic radio station like you've never heard it before.

<http://s14.yousendit.com/d.aspx?id=6693C2CE5E015C3913D5785568C46016> (Sam Ward, a new member in Georgetown ON, Oct 29, dxing.info via DXLD)

BBC Far Eastern Relay, By Richard G3VGW

When I joined the BBC in 1962 at Daventry there were just the two overseas relay stations for BBC World Service transmissions, at Cyprus and at Tebrau on the southern tip of Malaya. At Daventry we had a special huge array, an HRRS 8/6, and two transmitters in parallel on 17.79 MHz. that was used mainly for feeding Tebrau with programme. For political reasons, after Singapore split from the Malaysian Federation, the Tebrau station closed and a new station was built at Kranji on Singapore Island.

In those days I never dreamed that I would one day visit the area at the other end of that beam! Even travel to Europe in those days seemed only for the rich! A few years ago I was able to visit my brother - in - law Robert (G4BWB) who was living in Hong Kong at that time and was able to visit the BBC relay station there not long before it closed.

Robert has now moved to Singapore where he is a TV producer and he invited my wife and I to visit him and his family this autumn. We went out there, taking in Dubai and Hong Kong on the way to see if there had been any changes since our last visit. We arrived in Singapore in mid-November for a 2 week stay with Robert and his family. I had already contacted Kranji by e-mail and they had kindly offered to let me visit the station during our stay.

I must admit that before my first visit to Hong Kong I had assumed that it was totally covered with buildings, as this is the impression given by all the tourist photos. I was surprised to find how much countryside there is in the territory. I had the same impression about Singapore and a casual visitor to the island would tend to agree, as there are large areas of high rise apartment blocks, apparently covering every inch of the island.

Once again, my impression was proved wrong. I telephoned Kranji to arrange a time for my visit and they warned me that I might have difficulty finding them and gave me detailed instructions, as they doubted that even a local taxi driver would know where they are! The address of the station is 51, Turut Track, which might give the impression that there are many other buildings along that road.

However, consulting Robert's street directory, page 39 revealed that Turut Track was in the middle of a blank page, with only one other building shown.

There is an excellent Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) rail system in Singapore and one of its stations is Kranji. Robert and I set off on the MRT and as the train approaches Kranji you can indeed spot the red and white towers of the radio station over to the West, looking as though it would be only a short walk to reach it. However, the map reveals that in the way is the large Kranji reservoir.

We eventually managed to hail a taxi and sure enough the driver had never heard of the place or even of Turut Track. With the aid of the map I was able to direct him, which involves driving north to the coast, with its views of Johore Baru across the strait, then crossing over the dam at the reservoir and then heading south down a lonely road surrounded by green countryside. In fact it could almost be an English country road were it not for the banana and palm trees!

Eventually a small sign on the left proclaims 'BBC Far Eastern Relay Station' and Turut Track turned out to be just that, a narrow track that winds past the radio station owned by the local Singapore radio authority and then ends abruptly at the gate of the BBC station.

We were greeted by the operations manager, Yong Wui Pin, who took us to his very pleasant air conditioned office and introduced us to the two charming ladies who look after the administration there. One of them, Cindy Yeo, told us that she had been there almost since the station had opened and she invited us to sign the visitors book. They seemed genuinely pleased to see visitors and I was quite surprised to see that my name was the first entry in the book for 2001.

Obviously, given their location, they do not get many people passing by! In fact, the previous signature in the book was that of Mark Byford, the World Service boss, so we were in illustrious company.

Mr. Yong then showed us first around the stores and workshop areas, all nice and cool and air-conditioned. It was quite a contrast when we went out into the transmitter hall. Here it was very hot, even though our visit coincided with the 90 minute period when the station is shut down for maintenance.

To me, apart from the heat, it was a moment of great nostalgia! Way back in 1963 I was transferred from Daventry to Woofferton, the station located near the Welsh border, which at that time was primarily a Voice of America relay station and was just in the process of having its World War 2 vintage 50 kW RCA transmitters replaced by then brand new 250 kW Marconi BD272 units.

Nearly 40 years later, it was a bit of a shock to step into the sender hall at Kranji to see almost a replica of Woofferton, with those Marconi units still giving sterling service. The BBC has always called its short wave transmitters 'senders' for long forgotten reasons and at Kranji they are numbered Senders 102, 103 etc..

The BD272 units need manual wave changing, which in practice means they need to be closed down for 15 minutes at a minimum to manually remove some very large, heavy (and hot!) coils, insert ones for a different band and then tune up the sender on its new frequency. The final anode coils for the 41 & 49 metre band are very impressive, the antenna coupling coil is a single turn over a metre in diameter and made of tubing about 12 cms. across - quite a beast! Doing a rapid wavechange at Woofferton in cool England made you sweat profusely, I can imagine in the heat of Kranji, you rapidly lose some weight!

Power for the station is supplied by the local electricity authority and is transformed and rectified down to 11,000 volts D.C. to supply the anodes of the two BY1144 triode valves in grounded-grid configuration in the final stage of each sender. At full power these draw 26 amps. anode current, so some quite serious power is being consumed. The senders use high level modulation, which means they need something in excess of 125 kW of audio to give 100% modulation. This is provided by two more BY1144 valves in class B configuration. This means that the current they draw varies wildly with the modulation, thus the current being drawn by the station is not constant, particularly if all the senders are carrying the same programme. I remember that in Ludlow near to Woofferton, all the lights in the houses flickered in time with the modulation and when the Greenwich Time Signal 'pips' were broadcast at the top of the hour, you could check your watch by your house lights!

The sender hall is raised above ground level and when we went out of the hall we found ourselves on a balcony overlooking the aerial farm. I soon realised the reason for not going down into the field, the lush tropical vegetation is infested with some very nasty snakes - not a problem I had doing aerial switching at Woofferton! I was told that crocodiles had also been spotted in the area. Thus their 4 aerial rigging staff had to take great precautions when going out to their tasks in the field. All the aerial switching is done by air operated switches remotely controlled from the building, which must be a great relief to the staff!

Although the station is now operated by Merlin, the station still has a BBC 'feel' to it and I was interested to learn that the station operates on a three shift system with similar hours to that worked at the UK stations. Day shift is I think 09.00 to 17.00, evening shift is a short one until 23.00 and the night shift is the long one until 09.00. This used to be quite a good system, well liked by most staff, as it meant on evening shift you had most of the day free and could still be in bed by midnight.

Programme feed to the station is by satellite, via AsiaSat, and I was interested to hear that they now have no HF receivers for back-up if the satellite feed fails. BBC World Service in English is available for local listeners on 88.9 MHz FM, the programme feed for this is received at Kranji but is fed on to a site located with all the other domestic transmitters in the centre of the island.

I asked if they receive many reception reports at Kranji from SWLs and was told that they are forwarded to Bush House, London. (You know what happens to those!) I mentioned that while I was working on Ascension Island I used to answer reception reports personally, but I am not sure if this will have any effect at Kranji!

Interesting smells coming from the kitchen announced that it was nearing lunch time for the staff, so we bade our farewells to our hosts and suggested we phone for a taxi. The manager said that taxi drivers would never find the place, so he very kindly drove us to Kranji MRT station. A fascinating visit, full of nostalgia for me, with grateful thanks to the very friendly staff who took time out to show us around. Having now seen the Hong Kong and Kranji relays, I must now persuade my wife that we need to visit Thailand next!

73, Richard G3VGW <http://www.innotts.co.uk/asperges/whatsnew.html> (Mike Terry via HCDX)