HF Manager's Report to Spectrum Forum 2010

General

In general few queries relating to HF matters have been raised during the year. The new band plan for 40m was the only issue that raised comment relating to PSK31 transmissions and other datamode and SSB transmissions not shifting upwards in frequency in accordance with the new plan. This is mostly on account of the delays in the release of 7.1 – 7.2MHz in some Region 1 countries and the need to wait for the IARU General Conferences in Regions 2 and 3 to consider whether to bring their 40m band plans into line with ours.

IARU matters

Apart from an informal meeting at Friedrichshafen the only event was the IARU Interim Meeting earlier this year. We discussed fresh proposals for Deliberate QRM and concerns over use of Internet Gateways/Remote operating. We defended proposals from DARC for rule changes for the IARU Contest and proposals for band plans for 5MHz and 500kHz (firm plans for these two bands would generally not be appropriate in Region 1 at present).

WRC-12 Preparation

Several meetings have been attended and papers submitted as UK inputs to the CEPT PT-C preparatory meetings on the agenda item that is considering a secondary allocation of up to 15kHz near to 500kHz for the amateur service. A paper has been submitted as a UK input to the ITU WP5A, also working on WRC-12 preparation.

Currently, the position on this agenda item is difficult as both the International Maritime Organisation and the Russian Federation are against the proposal, and several other administrations have voiced opposition to any allocation in the band 495 – 505kHz. The maritime community has a vision for a port safety and security system. We feel that for credibility early trials of the proposed MFSK system has commenced from a station near Brest, France. It operates between 498 and 502kHz so is causing the lower quarter of the band 501 – 504kHz that we have access to until 2012 to be un-usable. The IARU view is that the system design of the proposed 10kHz wide MFSK system is flawed.

The CEPT preparation process aims to find a consensus termed the "European Common Proposal" (ECP) by next summer. It will be difficult to find an acceptable compromise with the maritime community, where safety and security is of course important, as well as work within the existing aeronautical service's Non-Directional Beacon network. The latter is being gradually de-commissioned, although the timescale is unclear.

Our input to Ofcom's public consultation on the UK's WRC-12 preparation successfully caused them to raise the priority for this agenda item from low to medium.

5MHz

We successfully gained Ofcom's and MoD's approval to extending the NoV Experimental access to the 5MHz channels until 2015.

Proposal were sent to Ofcom last in 2009, updated in March 2010, with an aim of bringing the 5MHz NoV operating conditions more in line with the main licence, and hence other countries now on 5MHz. Ofcom have not been able to move this forward with MoD, who it seems have only wanted to put limited time to amateur matters.

Another significant analysis paper, using the 5MHz data, was presented to a professional conference by Marcus Walden, G0IJZ.

Major upgrade of the 5MHz database with the completion of work to identify and flag records with incorrect location data. Online export of beacon and QSO data selected on the basis of used defined propagation conditions is now possible.

The 5MHz Working Group agreed the following improvements to support our Experimental access to the 5MHz channels:

- Removal of the sounder pulse stream from the beacons
- New beacon build for GB3RAL
- Refresh of the web pages with particular attention to the analysis section

These will be implementation over the next few months.

HF Band planning

Apart from the harmonisation of the new 40m band plan matters has been quiet.

The Global Emergency Centres of Activity (CoA) on 20m, 17m and 15m have all been harmonised, see table below. The CoAs on 40m and 80m were intended only to be regional, so harmonisation was not intended. However, there could be benefit if they were in that the amateur community would then be more accustomed to the frequencies used for emergency response activities.

Region 1	**Region 2**	**Region 3**
3760	3750 or 3895	3600
7060 or 7110	7060, 7240 or 7290	7110
14300	14300	14300
18160	18160	18160
21360	21360	21360

John Gould, G3WKL
RSGB HF Manager