

## **HF Manager's Report, November 2011**

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The following are the main activities and issues related to HF matters.

#### IARU

The IARU Region 1 General Conference was held in Sun City, South Africa in August 2011. Recommendations from Committee C4, which deals with HF matters, dealt with band planning, contest operation, deliberate interference, and possible expansion of HF frequency allocations. The RSGB presented 5 papers, all of which were accepted, one with some modification.

There will be an Interim Region 1 meeting in just over 12 months time, and work defining and drafting RSGB inputs for this will need to be undertaken in the coming months.

#### PLT

The proliferation of Home-Plug style PLA adapters continues to be a source of serious concern on the noise floor of the HF bands. Although these devices are supposed to be notched at amateur frequencies, these units are not compliant with the relevant EN standards elsewhere and have the potential to cause serious degradation of the noise floor at many HF frequencies, and higher. There has been some success with complaints to Ofcom in specific cases resulting in the removal or replacement of these devices, but many more cases go unreported.

The incompatibility of these systems with radio services is now recognised at the ITU and the Amateur Service is supported in this matter by other services covering broadcasting, aviation, and space research. We need to continue to apply pressure at all levels to limit the damage that PLT systems can cause.

#### Band Planning

A number of band planning matters have been raised over the last year, mainly dealing with compatibility between contesting and non-contesting activities, and the increasing proliferation of digital modes. The main issues are outlined below:

The 40 metre 7000-7025kHz contest-preferred segment was deleted at Sun City 2011 as very few contests had implemented it. The reasons being too high levels of activity during contests in a relatively narrow band allocation, and incompatibility with Region 2 & 3. Although the new recommendation requires contest organisers to specify a contest-preferred segment within the rules, there is concern this could be easily ignored.

Concern was raised from the QRP community that the 7030kHz QRP centre of activity might be moved to accommodate a CW contest-preferred segment higher up the band. Although the potential conflict between contests and QRP activity is recognised, the general view is that the QRP community do not wish to change the CoA.

With the expansion of the 40 metre band to 7200kHz in most parts of Region 1, Cavtat 2008 recommended that the digital mode segment of the band be moved to start at 7040kHz. There

is still significant digital mode activity, especially PSK31, in the old allocation around 7035kHz. Whilst the band plans correctly do not specify frequencies for each digital mode, it may be worth publishing centre of activity frequencies for the most popular modes such as RTTY and PSK to encourage a faster transition to the revised digital segment of 40 metres. This would also allow the correct frequencies to be identified from a relevant search on the Internet.

30 metres is the narrowest band in the HF allocation, and the digital segment in Region 1 from 10140-10150kHz is suffering from the proliferation of different digital modes, resulting in a rapid spread of digital activity below 10140kHz. The Region 2 allocation for digital modes, which starts at 10130kHz tends to encourage this. As 30 metres offers propagation to many parts of the world 24 hours per day, coordination of the band plan and commonality between all 3 regions would seem to be necessary.

### 500kHz

The possibility of a new amateur allocation around 500kHz is being addressed at WRC12 next year. Preparatory work within ITU and CEPT is all but complete. The RSGB has been particularly active as a part of the UK Delegation and we are pleased to say that our recent proposal for what is termed a "European Common Proposal" for a band between 472 and 480 kHz has gained the informal support of a number of Region 1 countries at a recent meeting. It is likely to be formally accepted by CEPT in November. This means that the proposal goes forward to WRC12 with the support of the 48 member states that comprise CEPT.

### HF Operating Standards

Concern continues to be expressed over the deteriorating operating standards on the HF bands. The current focus is on education and training with active efforts to promote the DX Code of Conduct by national societies and major DXpeditions.

### Beacons

A small number of beacons appear from time to time in the bands below 14MHz, notably 7MHz and 10MHz, against IARU recommendations and sometimes against license conditions. In at least one instance, a beacon appeared in the 30 metre band with a valid UK call. In these instances, the normal approach is to advise the operator that this may be in contradiction of license conditions, especially if left unattended. The 7MHz beacons seem to mainly be Russian single letter CW beacons which are well known intruders into the 40 metre band.

### 5MHz

Little movement has occurred on our proposals to increase bandwidth available to NoV holders and also to harmonise the NoV clauses with the operating usage by amateurs from other countries. Whilst drafted in early 2010 our proposals were put to MoD by Ofcom in December 2010. As reported recently on GB2RS MoD are not able to agree to our request for a band,

similar to that used in some other countries, but consideration of our proposal is to continue on the basis of some additional channels.

The data logging aspect of the 5 MHz Experiment continues. A further analysis paper of our 5MHz data has been given to a professional radio conference by Marcus Walden, G0IJZ. Alan Messenger, G0TLK, has launched a program that allows 5 MHz data from the database to be viewed in a number of different analytical ways.