

Spectrum Forum Meeting 28th January 2006

Those present were Colin Thomas, G3PSM, Spectrum Director and chairman, Mike Dixon, G3PFR, RSGB Microwave Manager, Dave Butler, G4ASR, RSGB VHF Manager, John Gould, G3WKL, RSGB HF Manager and Murray Niman, G6JYB, Deputy Microwave Manager.

1. Apologies

Not applicable as all members were present.

2. Notes of the meetings of 15th January 2005 and 9th July 2005

The minutes of the 15th January 2005 were adopted unchanged

The draft minutes of 9th July 2005 were reviewed and some minor amendments suggested. G3PSM agreed to arrange for the draft to be updated and issued. **Action G3PSM**

It was noted that the date for the next meeting of the Spectrum Forum was 10th June 2006 (11am at RSGB HQ)

3. Matters Arising

Actions from 15th January 2005 meeting had either been actioned or would be discussed elsewhere in the meeting.

4. Spectrum Matters not on the Agenda

4.1 HF

Railway Euroloop communication system: G3WKL outlined his involvement representing IARU Region 1 at CEPT SE24 on compatibility discussions concerning a proposed 9 to 18MHz short-range spread-spectrum communication system and existing HF users. The Euroloop proposal was for a high-speed data transmission between trackside and rolling stock for pan-European railway application. G3WKL commented that his modelling calculated the potential aggregation effect of many Euroloops transmitting concurrently. The model indicated a possible increase in noise floor from skywave propagation at sites far removed from the Euroloops. Further modelling was planned to assess the effect of lower Euroloop power levels and field tests were planned to validate the model.

5MHz: G3WKL reported that useful experimental use of 5MHz was still being carried out by a number of the NoV holders. Whilst creation of a database of station logs was preceding well all attempts to get academic help with the analysis had not so far been productive. On the more practical experimental front, the use of the channels for experimenting with emergency communications was proceeding well, and there was a significant emergency communication exercise between Radio Amateurs and a the Territorial Army planned for later in the year. Both experimental activities needed continued access to the channels, and a meeting between MoD, Ofcom and RSGB was expected shortly to see if agreement would be reached on extending amateur access to the channels. **Action G3PSM & G3WKL**

500kHz: G3WKL reported that there had been no change since July meeting in respect of the RSGB's proposal to Ofcom re amateur access to frequencies around 500kHz. G3WKL commented that temporary access would be a successful outcome as RSGB had been aware in making the request to Ofcom that the frequencies around 500kHz were due to be considered at WRC-07. It was agreed that RSGB should seek a formal response to their proposal of September 2004 at the forthcoming Ofcom Forum (March 2006). **Action G3WKL**

The German experimental licence for transmission at 440kHz has been extended for a year (to end 2006).

LORAN-C interference on 136kHz: G3WKL reported that despite comments in the RadCom LF Column (Feb 2006, p48) that a large part of the LORAN-C network in NW Europe was expected to be closing at the beginning of the year, correspondence received by RSGB HQ from Trinity House and the Northwest Europe LORAN-C System (NELS) website now suggested the opposite. This was because of a change of view within NELS, who had convinced Norway and Denmark to keep their chain operating, at least in some instances for the short-term.

The concern to Amateur Radio in the UK is related to the high levels of interference on 136kHz, across much of the UK, that is thought to originate from sidebands of the LORAN-C transmitter installed at BT Global's transmit site at Rugby. RSGB is planning a follow-up meeting to the Trinity House's letter to press its concerns about the interference to 136kHz. With interest to extend this CEPT allocation across the remainder of Region 1 and into Region 2 and 3 (ref. agenda item 1.13 on the WRC-07 Conference agenda) this compatibility issue with LORAN-C needs to be resolved.

4.1 VHF/UHF

VHF Convention: G4ASR said that there had been no VHF Convention for some years and he was interested to explore ways of re-staging a VHF event. It was noted that VHF Contest Trophies had been presented at the annual HF Convention in the last two years, and whilst efforts had been made to have VHF related items on the programme the organisers had been unsuccessful in attracting any presentations. It was agreed that G4ASR would discuss the situation with the new chairman of the HF Convention Organising Committee, Dave Wilson, M0OBW, before further considering an approach to RSGB HQ and/or RadCom. **Action G4ASR**

Special Research Permits (SRPs): G4ASR wanted clarification on the process of issuing of SRPs. G3PSM said that the preferred route was to obtain the appropriate forms from either himself or from the RSGB VHF Manager (G4ASR), who would then seek to monitor the progress and outcome of the SRP as Ofcom processed it.

Integrity of digital EME QSOs: G4ASR reported a question to him from G4DHF regarding the integrity of digital EME QSOs using JT65 and the deep-search algorithm. The Forum felt that this was perhaps a little outside its terms of reference. However, it considered that detection of the signal or whether determining whether information was communicated could differentiate such contacts. Whether such contacts were valid for awards or contests was a matter for the sponsors of the specific awards or contests. G4ASR agreed to raise the matter with those responsible for VHF contest and awards. **Action G4ASR.**

RSGB VHF/UHF Bandplan: G4ASR commented that the way in which RadCom and the RSGB and Spectrum Forum published the new IARU Band Plan meant that the preferred mode usage for various sub-bands was not clear. He also stated that there were some references to mode usages that were now out-of-date. It was agreed that G3PSM and G4ASR would review possible improvements and G4ASR would consider drafting guidance notes and current practice that could be uploaded to the websites. **Action G4ASR and G3PSM.**

4m Power Limit: G4ASR asked whether it was likely that the 4m-power limit could be increased. G3PSM agreed to raise the matter at the forthcoming meeting between MoD, Ofcom and RSGB. **Action G3PSM.**

Band planning for digital voice: G4ASR suggested that the Spectrum Forum ought to consider band-planning implications for digital voice in anticipation of the IARU Region 1 Interim Meeting (Vienna, 2007). It was agreed that G4ASR would draft a short discussion paper outline the issues and possible options to initiate discussion within the Spectrum Forum. **Action G4ASR.**

Accuracy of VHF Beacons: G4ASR mentioned that he had received comments suggesting that the frequency-accuracy standards for VHF Beacons ought to be increased. It was suggested that G4ASR should refer the matter should be passed to Martin Harrison, G3USF, IARU Region 1 Beacon Coordinator. **Action G4ASR.**

4.3 Microwaves

1.3GHz: G3PFR reported that whilst the initial Galileo satellite had been launched the threat to the 1.3GHz Amateur band had yet to be assessed as the as the initial transmissions from the satellite had been outside the amateur band.

2.3/2.4GHz: no change from July 2005 report

UWB devices: A joint response on the proposed use of 3.4 – 10GHz had been sent to CEPT. There were some indications that filtering of the UWB signal might be implemented that could reduce the potential interference to small sub-bands within the amateur allocations.

10GHz: G6JYB mentioned the concern from the decision by MoD to offer frequencies around 10.5GHz for re-allocation. Appropriate responses to protect Amateur Satellite interests will be prepared.

24GHz: This band is still subject to problems of co-existence with vehicle radar. There is no change to the long-term plan that 24GHz would be phased out and the technology moved to 77GHz.

New microwave Amateur bands: G3PFR reported that an expression of interest had been sent to Ofcom in relation to possible Amateur allocations at 28, 32 and 40GHz bands. A full proposal was being drafted.

75.5 – 76GHz: G3PFR mentioned that Ofcom had issued a public statement following the 79GHz Car Radar consultation to the effect that EU35 would be

implemented so that Amateurs will retain primary status on 75.5 - 76GHz after 1st Jan 2006. He reported that this position was awaiting ratification in the regulations. Colin G3PSM had recently reminded Ofcom about this commitment, but it needs the National Frequency Assignment Panel to approve the change. **Action Colin G3PSM**

Microwave Beacons: G3PFR raised the issue of delays for new applications or change of sites for microwave beacons. G3PSM agreed to follow-up. **Action G3PSM.**

G6JYB mentioned concern about NoV licensing (initial and renewals) for beacons, as cost could inhibit some of the experimental use of such NoVs. G3PSM said that he would take note of the concern during the ongoing discussions with Ofcom. **Action G3PSM.**

Microwave Awards: G6JYB raised the issue of the transfer of the microwave awards to the UK Microwave Group. Some of the awards and certificates were outstanding and that some of the trophies were still under the control of the VHF Contest Committee. G3PSM asked for G6JYB to provide a list of items that needed further consideration. **Action G6JYB & G3PSM.**

RSGB Yearbook: G6JYB suggested that the RSGB Yearbook ought to include a few pages on microwave operating. It was agreed that this was a good suggestion. It was agreed that G6JYB should contact RSGB HQ. **Action G6JYB.**

5. IARU Region 1 Conference outcome

5.1 HF

HF Band Planning: G3WKL commented that most of the changes in the HF band plan had been accepted without too much difficulty. The main concern was the continuing complaints about the fact that the Band Plan is not mandatory, which resulted in it being abused during some major contests. It was agreed that G3WKL would seek wider views on whether RSGB contests could conform to the IARU Band Plan as a matter of principle. Separately, he would rehearse again what others had done before, and raise the issue with other IARU Region 1 HF Managers to see if there could be a consensus view to seek a stronger Region 1 position on the matter at the next IARU Region 1 Conference in 2007. **Action G3WKL**

Beacons on 10MHz and below: Concerning the recommendation that beacons should be discouraged below 10MHz, G3WKL commented that whilst the RSGB had been right to support the proposals on this matter, it did mean that the development of proposals for beacons at 3.5MHz and 7MHz to support inter-UK propagation study on 5MHz had had to be cancelled. However, support for this had come from some of the IARU Region 1 national societies and also the IARU Region 1 Beacon Coordinator. He commented he would be working to see if a limited exemption could be agreed within IARU Region 1 before the next IARU Region 1 Conference in 2008. **Action G3WKL.**

4 – 10MHz Spectrum Review: G3PSM reminded that whilst the IARU policy was for a further 100kHz at 7MHz it had become clear that CEPT were not prepared to support re-opening discussion on 7MHz. However, CEPT had indicated that they might support a further 100kHz elsewhere between 4 and 10MHz.

5.2 VHF/UHF

VHF allocation for FSK441: G4ASR reported that the sub band 144.160 – 144.180MHz for FSK441, agreed at the Davos Conference, was not being used. G4ASR reported that he would work to reverse the decision at the IARU Region 1 Interim Meeting (Vienna, 2007). **Action G4ASR.**

5.3 Microwaves

G3PFR commented that generally the conference went well from the UK perspective.

6. Website

G4ASR reported that work to complete checking and editing of content for the VHF section was nearly complete. **Action G4ASR.**

G6JYB raised concern over the printability of the new band plan page. He commented that it does not render properly with the Netscape browser. It was agreed that the website would revert back to using pdf files, with a different file for each band. **Action G3PSM and G3WKL**

G6JYB commented that the “News” page needs editing. **Action G3WKL.**

G4ASR asked for information on usage. G3WKL agreed to issue statistics on usage to the Forum. **Action G3WKL**

7. AOB

G6JYB commented, on behalf of Amsat-UK, that a response to their discussion paper on 2m satellite linear transponders, tabled at the Spectrum Forum meeting in July 2005, was outstanding. The paper had suggested using the sub-band 144.34 – 144.40MHz for this purpose as it was thought by AMSAT to be under-used. G4ASR’s initial view was that this sub-band, used for meteor scatter, was not a suitable choice. He agreed to respond to the paper. **Action G4ASR.**

8. Date of Next Meeting

The 10th June 2006 meeting for the core and co-opted members had already been agreed.

The date for the core meeting in early 2007 would be agreed when RSGB Board meetings and the IARU Region 1 Interim meeting were known. **Action G3PSM.**

2nd February 2006