

BANDSCAN

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IRRS Emerges

After a short period of testing, the Italian Radio Relay Service has come on the air as planned. The 10kW Siemens transmitter was first noted on Saturday 19 November 1988 with a reasonable signal in Northern Europe. So far the station has got some American religious organisations and Radio Earth as clients. IRRS has an f.m. station in Milan which has been active since 1982, but the short wave venture is new for them.

The station is one of the few international broadcasters to use a reduced carrier a.m., and is best listened to on one of the sidebands. The frequency of 9.810MHz was active at the time we went to press, but other channels may now be used. For current details you can phone the station's answering machine in Milan. The number from the UK is 010 39-2-266 69 71 or write to: IRRS, PO BOX 10 9 8,0, 20110 Milan, Italy.

Relay Corner

I think that 1988 will go down as the year of the relay agreements. In fact, 1989 will probably be just as busy. In April, RCI Montreal and Radio Beijing should start swapping, and we may see further relay expansions on m.w. from Radio Antilles in the Caribbean.

One of the more curious relays of taped KGEI programmes by Radio Nacional de Chile on 15.140MHz may resume this year. A three month experiment by the religious US short wave broadcaster took place in late 1988. Tapes of Spanish language programmes were broadcast from Chile to other stations in the southern part of South America between 2330-0330UTC.

KGEI told us they booked a three month experimental relay back in July, and after some tests on 9MHz (31m), the

Welcome to the first column for 1989, and with the sunspot maximum possible later in the year, things are getting better and better for the international short wave broadcast listener.

transmission was moved to 15.140MHz. Because of the Chilean elections, the tests were suspended, but resumed in October as there were some compensation days to make up for. Now KGEI wants to evaluate the relay experiment, but hopes to resume the agreement in the near future.

Expansion Down South

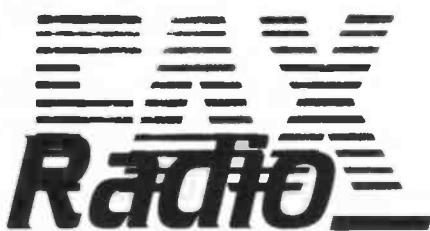
The use of the 25MHz (11m) band by South Africa is usually a sign that sunspot numbers are on the way up. Radio RSA, the Voice of South Africa, has started announcing several last minute changes to its winter schedule. It started an English service to India, Pakistan and the Far East at 1300UTC on 21.590 and 17.755MHz. A 25MHz (11m) band frequency to North America started too between 1400-1600UTC, namely 25.790MHz. There is only a very poor propagation path from South Africa to Australasia so it is not expected that RSA will try to resume broadcasts down under. The recent resumption in the station's glossy programme schedule is a sign that they are stepping up their public relations campaigns abroad.

Phone-Ins

Following the increasing use of the phone for international broadcasting, there is now a monthly "phone-bridge" programme on Radio Moscow called Calling Moscow. The next programme

6205 Daytime

1611 Nighttime



- **Broadcasting 1st-4th April** and from 11th August 1988: 230 watts rf: 6205 full wave dipole, 1611 directional sloper system.
We confirm and acknowledge with thanks your reception report for the above.
- **On the air** to demonstrate the sort of daily service we would like to provide from abroad or, with a licence, from England.
- **Application** to UK Home Office for a licence - August 1986.
- **Renewed Application** - January 1988.

Studio Presentation

Trevor Brook ● Holly Robson ● Maggie Stevenson
Andy Burnham ● Juliet Masters ● Helen Songest
Reporting
Eddie Caffrey ● Henry Dulat ● Bob Tomalski
Engineering
Surrey Electronics Limited

the trade station
The Forge, Cranleigh, England. GU6 7BG

will air on the last Friday of each month at 0300UTC. Callers in the US get onto the programme by dialling radio station KPBS in San Diego, California.

VOA Modernisation Criticised

Back in the 1970s, VOA identified transmitter sites at the beginning and end of a transmission period. Now all we hear is that programmes "come from Washington". VOA will QSL transmitter sites if you ask politely and are willing to be patient.

One of the influential broadcasting magazines in Washington recently published a rather damning report about the modernisation programme of the Voice of America. The US Information Agency's Inspector General says that the whole process is going too slowly, and money has been wasted. The original programme a few years back approved 1.3 billion dollars to upgrade Voice of America's audibility, but so far only 365 million dollars has been appropriated, and most of the investment is in short wave.

Dr Robert Frese, Director of the office of engineering and technical operations at the Voice of America says results of modernisation will begin to bear fruit in two years. At the end of 1988 they completed a satellite system that will enable programmes from Washington intended for VOA relay stations in Thailand and Botswana to be fed by satellite, not short wave.

Out of the Out-of-Band

Sadly, the Radio Frequency Service in New Zealand has withdrawn the out-of-band use by Radio New Zealand International of 12.045MHz. Between 1730-2015 and 0900-1115UTC they're now using 11.780MHz instead. This is a great pity as the small 7.5kW transmitters from the land of the Kiwi have now been buried under the noise.

Meanwhile, the BBC has started using an out-of-band channel for the European service which hasn't been widely publicised. Few people would look for them on 5.875MHz between 1715 and 2000UTC. That really is a way-out-of-bander.

Radio Netherlands Asian Relay?

There have been further developments in the plans to improve the Dutch coverage of the Asian continent. In the middle of 1988, Radio Netherlands completed a £60 000 study which went into quite a lot of detail as to the options available, including recommending possible countries for a relay station. The report was then presented to the Dutch Minister for Culture, Elco Brinkman. It seems the Minister feels the station must seek a partner to build a relay station in Asia. Some sites have been evaluated but not announced. Radio Canada International

has also said that Asia is on its priority list. Maybe the two will work as partners?

Back in November, BBC Monitoring filtered this item out from news agency copy. The story has since gone quiet, though subsequent checking indicates it may well go ahead. It seems that the former Director of Radio France International and the first TV channel in France TF1 says that he's just signed an agreement with the authorities of the Cape Verde Islands off the West African coast. Herve Bourget told reporters of the French news agency AFP that the plan called for three high-powered, shortwave transmitters which will be capable of beaming programmes to Latin America and Africa.

It seems the operation will be similar in style to Africa's Number One station in Gabon. It puts out its own programmes, as well as relaying satellite fed material from Radio France International, Radio Japan and Swiss Radio International. The report quotes him as saying that the relay time will go to the highest bidder, whoever it is. Even Radio Moscow would be welcome it seems!

No Room for Local Short Wave

The British government White Paper entitled *Broadcasting in the Nineties, Competition, Choice and Quality* received a lot of media attention when it came out a few months back. Most of the discussion focussed heavily on what the government plans to do with television. Radio wasn't given much of a mention, and short wave was left out altogether.

A British group have just finished hiring airtime on an Irish transmitter to broadcast programmes to those interested in technology in Europe. It was called Radio Fax, and only existed because the Irish did not crack down on the pirates until the start of this year. Trevor Brook, the head of Radio Fax says he is disappointed that, despite several letters, the new White Paper doesn't seem to have considered his idea for legal low power short wave broadcasting at all.

Middle East Mystery

At the time of going to press, Jordan's high-power, shortwave facility still has not materialised, but after years of a stop-

start situation, Abu Dhabi has restarted its English service. Note that this is not the same station as the popular UAE Radio in Dubai, also in the Emirates.

English test transmissions to North America are noted at 2200UTC on 6.170 and 9.595MHz, though they suffer co-channel jamming because these frequencies are used by Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe.

During the day, the channel on 25.900MHz is excellent at 1030UTC, but then you need an active knowledge of Arabic!

Norwegian Helping Hand

Radio Norway International has offered airtime to their Danish colleagues. By eliminating the 15 minute gap between each Radio Norway International broadcast, and re-organising the schedule to maybe 30 minutes of Norwegian transmissions, a lot of spare capacity is available.

Denmark Radio feels the short wave service for Danes abroad should be funded by the Danish government, so the officials in Copenhagen now have to decide if a relay of Radio Denmark via Norway is a good idea. Denmark's short wave service is currently enjoying some success with a 25MHz (11m) band broadcast on 25.850MHz between 1200-1252UTC.

It seems that the relay exchange between Radio Beijing and Radio France International has now started up, although the promised new English programme to India from Radio France is still in the planning stages. Radio France's next priority is programming in Vietnamese, Laotian and Chinese. Radio Beijing on the other hand has got airtime from French transmitters in French Guiana for North and South America. Programmes for Radio Beijing in East European languages are also going out from transmitters in France.

Audience Researchers Meet

A meeting of audience researchers recently took place at the headquarters of Radio Deutsche Welle. The radio building is on the southern side of Cologne, and from the top 31st floor there's a commanding view of the historic city and the river Rhine. The BBC, Radio France

International, VOA, Radio Netherlands, Radio Deutsche Welle (which no longer calls itself the Voice of Germany), Radio Canada, and Radio Free Europe were seated round the table.

Letters - A Problem

One of the most interesting points of the meeting was that many stations now regard listener mail as a problem. It is great for programme producers looking for praise, but because it tends to be more positive rather than negative, researchers think they should no longer draw too many conclusions. It is important to stress though, that we are talking about the audience researchers attitude to listener mail.

There are other methods that are used. Research organisations like Gallup are often commissioned to do quantitative studies, in other words tell the station how many listeners they have in a particular country. They can be fiendishly expensive, and apart from a number, tell the station little or nothing about what people want to hear.

When it comes to judging programme reactions, some stations still rely on a panel of selected listeners. They're chosen on the basis of education, age and sex to be representative. Whilst it works for a one-off survey, people move and change interests, so long term panels such as those the BBC used to run have been discontinued.

For qualitative analysis one of the most popular methods is a focus group. You arrange for a cross-section of the audience to be invited to a radio studio or a hotel in the target area, and ask them in depth questions about their listening habits.

The conclusions? If you write to a radio station, the more specific your request, the more chance it has of being answered. Letters that react to programme content get priority over requests for stickers and souvenirs. Postage costs and manpower cutbacks mean that many stations are being very selective as to who they reply to. If you can't write, as many as 14 international broadcasters now have a listener answerline. Try ringing 010 43 222 82 913636 outside office hours for the latest addition...Radio Austria International.

At the Cologne meeting in Cologne, both the BBC and Radio Free Europe reported a growing number of calls from Eastern Europe. Bulgaria tops the list, with the BBC reporting some 5000 phone calls from that country in the last 6 months. In Czechoslovakia, many of the calls to Radio Free Europe in Munich seem to get cut off, but some 2000 calls still made it and were analysed by researchers. Of that, 3 per cent had negative comments about the station, 11 per cent were pro, 6.6 per cent had music requests, and 3 per cent rang up with political jokes.

In general, radio stations are taking audience research more seriously, but, at the same time, there's a growing divide between those who can and cannot afford to do it scientifically. □

Abbreviations

a.m.	amplitude modulation
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
f.m.	frequency modulation
IRRS	Italian Radio Relay Service
kW	kilowatt
m	metre
MHz	megahertz
m.w.	medium wave
TV	television
UTC	Universal Co-ordinated Time (=GMT)