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Public Database on Radio Masts

Following from one of the recommendations of the Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones and Health, which was chaired by Professor Sir William Stewart, the Government is now committed to developing a database of Mobile Phone radio sites. This will be publicly available over the Internet to enable householders to find the location of any Cellphone sites near their house, school or whatever.

The initial launch of the database is expected early in the New Year. JRC is represented on the group developing the process as it is expected that in due course other radio services will be added to the database. Radio users are concerned at the level of detail to be included on the public database and whether the name of the Licensee will be revealed. The question of what use will be made of the database is also important, as it may result in a large flow of enquiries from worried members of the public to which companies would then have to respond. <http://www.iegmp.org.uk/>

PMR into the future

JRC attended a Seminar and Workshop at Daventry this month hosted by the RA and the Federation of Communications Services (FCS) to review the future of private mobile radio systems. The response was very positive, the main interest for JRC being that the delegates included some of those working on a new Digital Mobile Radio Standard being developed by the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) DIIS Digital Interchange of Information & Signalling Standard. The work has great potential and JRC will be keeping a weather eye on its progress.

<http://www.radio.gov.uk/>
<http://www.fcs.org.uk/>

Alleged interference from ST installation into domestic TV

JRC and one of its member companies is working with RA to resolve an incident where a householder is claiming that the telemetry installation at a nearby electricity sub-station is interfering with domestic television reception. The telemetry system is operating within its licence parameters and should not be a source of interference. The problem is thought to originate in the householder's new TV installation where two aerials have been combined into a distribution amplifier, but since the two occupants are both elderly and vulnerable, confirming the precise details has proven difficult.



As the picture shows, the two antenna systems are quite close to each other – the ST antenna visible on the right of the picture is actually the receive antenna – the transmit antenna is 1m below and hidden by the roof of the bungalow.

R&TTE Directive affects MPT1411

You will recall that the Radio & Telecommunications Terminal Equipment Directive was implemented in April 2000. This Directive is intended to remove technical barriers to trade and facilitate the operation of the Single European Market. One year was allowed for parallel working with existing national Type Approval procedures. It follows therefore that purely national standards, such as MPT1411 cease to have effect from April 2001. JRC is working with RA on the procedures to put in place to enable a move to the new regime from April 2001 without disrupting existing arrangements, which have stood the test of time.

MPT1411 will be replaced by a mandatory Interface Regulation associated with the Wireless Telegraphy Act Licence, a Voluntary National Specification governing the type of equipment that may be used in

the band, and Frequency Assignment Criteria. In addition, JRC will need to work with RA to produce a Scanning Telemetry Licensing Manual required under the European Union Licensing Directive.

JRC and RA hope to make the transition as seamless as possible to users, and ensure that the new regime accommodates the new generation of Digital Telemetry and Telecontrol equipment capable of providing 9.6 kbit/s data rate in the 12.5 kHz UHF telemetry channels.

<http://www.radio.gov.uk/busunit/ftslu/cttee/ir2037.htm>

RA Roadshows



The RA has now completed its autumn series of Roadshows "Joining in". Most JRC member companies attended one or more events, and will have noted that Mike Goddard, Director of International Affairs specifically referred to the protection that RA had secured for JRC members at the World Administrative Radio Conference in 1992 (WARC92) when the allocation to the mobile Satellite Service was introduced into 148-150 MHz. Work is still in hand with RA to assess the potential interference from the Orbcomm Little LEO system into JRC members' PMR networks. An RA Project Review Report is expected shortly.

JRC continues to attend meetings of the Conference of European Posts and Telecommunications (CEPT) to ensure that the other Little LEO systems planned for this band - mainly ESAT and LEO ONE - are correctly examined to assess their potential for interference to PMR systems operating in this band.

Stormy weather

JRC has been seeking information on how radio systems have performed during the recent heavy rain and floods. Reports indicate that most radio systems stood up well, but millimetric microwave fixed links were the most vulnerable element, suffering rain induced fading at the height of some of the worst weather.

If any member company has any interesting media coverage they could provide to JRC for general background, or specific instances of microwave fading, we would be most grateful. JRC participates in the RA research Project examining rain fade on microwave links, but real world data is difficult to find.

World Radio Conference (WRC) 2000

As mentioned in the last Newsletter, WRC2000 took place in Istanbul this summer. World Radio Conferences, held every two to three years, are organised by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), one of the oldest organs of the United Nations. The output has international Treaty Status

and it covered use of the radio spectrum from 14 kHz to 956 GHz.

Over 2000 delegates from 150 countries attended, including 60 from the UK. However, the UK delegation was modest compared to the 150 from the USA. There were 320 observers from 95 organisations, plus representatives from 83 commercial companies. Overall, there were in excess of 2800 people accredited for the conference.

Detailed business was conducted in some 50 Working Groups, up to 10 of which worked in parallel at any time of the day or night. In spite of extensive use of electronic means of communications, 25 million sheets of paper were consumed during the four weeks of the Conference.

Although Utility interest focused mainly around Little LEOs, the key politically sensitive issues were a world-wide allocation for third generation mobile systems, and spectrum for satellite systems.

The UK was successful in defending spectrum below 1 GHz from further attempts by satellite operators to either relax the protection for terrestrial services operating in shared bands, or make new allocations, specifically in the 450-470 MHz band.

The next World Radio Conference will be in 2003, when items of interest to utilities include:

- another review of spectrum below 1 GHz to assess suitability for sharing between terrestrial services and the mobile satellite service; and
- a proposal to make a shared allocation in the 1.4 GHz band between terrestrial microwave fixed links and feeder links from earth to non-geostationary satellites.

Orbcomm Struggles

Orbcomm, the only 148MHz Little-LEO Company with an operational system, is still struggling with financial problems. The company has been dogged by poor sales of terminals and recently asked for "Chapter 11" protection from its creditors while it attempted to recover from crippling debts. Staffing levels have dropped significantly over the past few months with further losses in the pipeline. Meanwhile DBSI, operators of the rival E-SAT system, have claimed that a recent Surrey Satellite SNAP1 microsatellite launch included their first payload. Another rival operator, LEO-1 continues with ambitious plans to introduce services in the 148-150MHz band.

<http://www.orbcomm.com/>

<http://www.sstl.co.uk/>

<http://www.leo1.com/>

Christmas Closure

The JRC Office in London will be closed over the Christmas period. The dates between which the office will be closed are: From close of play 22nd December 2000 to 2nd January 2001.