

AN AMERICAN DXER IN EUROPE

by Bruce Portzer

In late September and early October, my wife and I took a three-week vacation in nine European countries. Naturally, I brought along my trusty Sanyo RP-7220 AM/FM/SW portable and a cassette recorder. I didn't hear nearly as much DX as I'd hoped, due to things like sleeping and sightseeing, but what I did get in was very interesting.

A big problem in DXing in Europe is the large number of languages on the dial, which makes it tough to identify the stations coming in. To add to the fun, my radio's dial is calibrated every 100 kHz at the low end, and every 200 kHz at the high end. As a result, I had gangs of fun just trying to figure out what frequency I was on, let alone what it was I was hearing. Things weren't too bad in London, where I had several EE locals to serve as references. But by the time we got to Italy, most of the DX was either in Italian or some unknown east European language and oh gee that was fun.... next time I'll bring a rig with digital readout.

One of the more positive things about DXing in Europe was the lack of local stations in most cities. London had the most cluttered dial of the cities we were in, with about 10 locals or semi locals (648,693,720,909,1053,1089,1152,1215,1458,1548). And only about half of those are on 24 hrs. One real shocker is Paris, with only one major AM local (864 kHz), and it signs off at midnight! That's a bit of a shock by our standards, for a city the size of Chicago. The FM dial in Paris makes up for the AM dial, though, especially since Miterrand began to allow privately-owned stations.

I made a point of taping time pips and interval signals whenever I could. The French don't seem to believe in time signals. I spent many tops-of-the-hour listening to one of the RTF outlets and never heard any blips, bleeps, or whatever. They just continued their talk, music, etc right across the hour, undisturbed. The British seem to be at the other extreme. The BBC ran six pips every hour on the hour without fail. I even heard the pips in the middle of songs, etc. I wouldn't be surprised if the BBC runs pips after signoff, if the particular station has its OC on. The Italian network, RAI, runs time signals, too. They're run almost every hour (but not always every hour) on the hour and sometimes on the half hour. The signal consists of some high, fast-pitched audio tones (probably some sort of digital time-code information), then 6 pips; (.....) & TC. I taped a few other time signals on other stations, but didn't hear any often enough to establish a pattern for a given station/network.

In case anyone is wondering, the Italian network, RAI, is split into three programs (as noted in WRTH). Radio Uno is the middle-of-the-road outlet, featuring news, sports, drama, discussions, and various kinds of music. Radio Due ("Doo-way") has lots of rock/pop/jazz mx, but can also have nx, cl mx, etc. at various times. Radio Tre is exclusively classical mx, opera, cultural pgms, etc. and signs off at 2300 UTC (not 2230, as listed in WRTH). RAI also has a Slovene service in Trieste (981 kHz plus FM), a German service in Bolzano (not listed in WRTH, probably FM only), and several local and regional services. I'm not sure which freqs the latter use, but I believe most simply cut in to one of the three national networks. RAI's radio & TV schedules are published in a weekly magazine called "Radio-TV Corriere" which sells for 600 lira (about 55¢)--its 160-odd pages are about half advertising, the rest is schedules, articles on pgms, the R. Due Top-20 and so on. RAI's 3 national networks have a very unusual pre-signon IS: 55 "pips" which sound like someone beating a hollow wooden box with a stick, followed by a three second tone; the whole thing takes about 40 seconds and is repeated over and over until the station finally signs on.

The bp award for redundancy in programming goes to the BBC--in London, between 6 am and 7 am, 5 of the AM locals are operating in parallel! It seems Radio 1 relays Radio 2 during that time, and R. London (1548) relays Radio 2 from early evening until 7 or 8 am.

Now for the DX. My location at the time is indicated by a letter at the end of each logging: (A) Amsterdam, (F) Florence, (I) Innsbruck, (L) London, (R) Rome, (S) Arth, Switzerland (near Lucerne), (V) Venice. All times are in UTC. All British loggings, and all continental European loggings before (or on) 9/26 were made while the station was on Daylight Savings Time, so those loggings will be an hour off from what they are now

POLSKIE RADIO I TELEWIZJA

- 520 AUSTRIA, Innsbruck, cl mx to 1758 9/28, then GG YL w/titles of selections, 3-note IS & "Osterreichisch Einst" ID repeated a couple of times 1800, into big band fanfare & GG talk. OC 0445 9/29, began repeating 3-note IS & "Osterreichisch Einst" ID 0455, s/on 0500. (I)
- 531 ALGERIA, Ain Beida, good //549 w/AA mx, single pip in middle of tune 0500 9/27 (S). This & 549 dominated their respective freqs everywhere I went, except for Amsterdam, where the Germans dominated.
- 531 SWITZERLAND, Beromunster, OC 0555 SM 9/27, straight into man w/GG nx 0600, no fanfare, s/on, pips, etc at top of hour. Same thing at 0500 s/on MM 9/28. (S)
- 531 DDR, all alone w/no sign of Algeria. Man in GG 2020 9/23. (A)
- 540 BELGIUM, good 1800 9/21 w/pop mx, 6 pips, then YL ancw w/heavy rr mx(L)
- 549 GFR, DLF, dulcimer mx //756/1269/1539 0545 9/27. 1539/756 strong, 549/1269 so-so. (S)
- 549 USSR, opera 2020, RR talk & "Midnight in Moscow" chimes 2030 u/Germany 9/23. (A)
- 567 IRELAND, Tullamore, man (sounded about Ernie Cooper's age, so definitely not an OM, hi) w/1950's pops 2155, no ID or pips 2200, straight into nx by YL (sounded about my age, so....) 9/21. (L)
- 585 SPAIN, Madrid, RNE, 6 pips, last one prolonged, then Big Ben riffs on horns 1930 9/19, then sports in SS. Very good signal. (L)
- 630 UNID, screamer het here everywhere I went, every night, making 630 unlistenable. Someone's apparently still on 629.
- 675 HOLLAND, is mostly rock mx. 6 pips & DD talk o/France 2100 9/23. (A)
- 720 UKOGBANI, BBC4, pgm of Hindi mx w/Hindi ancw to 0645 SM 9/20, then pgm of Church bells from a church in Bristol. Now there's a pgm trans-ition you don't hear very often, hi. (L)
- 702 MONACO, Monte Carlo, good w/heavy rock mx, lively II DJ, R Monte Carlo IDs 1710-1730 10/1. (F)
- 711 FRANCE, Rennes, midwest pgm //792 0417 9/21. (L)
- 720 UKOGBANI, BBC4, OC w/single tone (resembling a sonar bleep) every 10½ secs 0450 9/21. Suddenly gave ID & date 0453½, then orchestral mdeley based on "Rule Britannia", s/on anmt 0459 mentioning 200 kHz, VHF, & list of cities w/MW service. Pips & woman w/nx 0500. (L)
- 738 SPAIN, Barcelona, RNE, good w/"My Way" by Elvis, Spanish inst mx w/voice-over by chatty SS YL, then R. Nacional de España ID by man 0355 9/20. (L)
- 747 HOLLAND, anthem s/off 2102 9/22. Two-note doorbell tones (in case anyone is still unconvinced that's them) to 0345 9/24, then woman in DD. Oddly enough, they had TT at several rechecks 0400-0430, but were back on RS after 0430. (A)
- 765 SWITZERLAND, Sottens, mx box IS (approx. 30 notes) repeated over & over, then chimes & s/on w/"R. Suisse Romande" ID 0400 9/20, into nx in FF. Same thing 0500 10/7. (L) Fair days w/DLF-756 nulled (S)
- 810 UKOGBANI, R. Scotland good w/rock mx 9/22 2145. (A)
- 819 ANDORRA??, nonstop FF pops 2145-2200 9/23, 6 pips & anthem 2200, then off. No anmts whatsoever! (A)
- 837 UKOGBANI, R Leicester, fair-poor w/nx o/u France, then ID "Monday morning on R. Leicester w/Graham Conway", into pop mx 0605 9/21. (L)
- 846 ITALY, Roma, strong w/2 men in II //900 2146 9/22 (A). Potent w/time pips, II ID, II nx 2300 9/24, ID as "RAI (pronounced 'Rye'), the Italian Broadcasting Network" 2303, into nx in British EE, //900.(P)
- 864 FRANCE, Paris, AA pgm w/mideast mx 0358-0402 9/26, no pips 0400. Unid mideast lang (Turkish listed) 0425 recheck. II noted in passing 0437.(P)
- 873 GFR, Frankfurt, AFN, good w/Michigan-Notre Dame football 1854 9/19 (L)
- 873 USSR, fair w/RR talk & chorus 2145 9/22 (A)
- 936 USSR, R. Moscow good in EE 2310 10/3 w/the usual jive about the U.S. being a threat to world peace. (R)
- 981 ITALY, Trieste, TT 0455-0558 10/1, church bell melody 0558, s/on by man in Slovene, giving AM & many FM freqs, (...) pips 0600, into more talk. Local-like signal. Also, 1735 9/30, w/bizarre combination of Andean flute mx & Slovene anmts! (V)
- 1008 HOLLAND, piano mx, 6 pips, ID in DD 1900 9/19 o/unid w/4 or more slow pips & horn fanfare. (L) Man in DD interviewing another on the phone re Ronald Reagan 9/22 2155, into mx. "Hilversum Een" ID, pips, & nx 2200. Apparently not 24 hrs (as listed in WRTH), was noted off 0345 9/23. (A)
- 1008? ITALY, (possibly 999 or 1017) unid R. Due outlet good //1035, not listed in WRTH. (V)
- 1017 ITALY, Venezia, RAI local, listed here in WRTH, not hrd here or any other AM freq 9/29-10/1. Possibly on FM, if it exists at all. (V)



- 1035 ITALY, various locs, rock mx 1755 9/29, "R Due" ("Doo-way") ID during exchange between 2 male DJs w/inst mx in background 1800 w/no pips. Then more rock mx. S/on w/IS consisting of 55 low-pitched pips & 3 second tone repeated over & over to 0458 10/1, then melody on church bells & s/on anmt by woman. (V) TC & ID 0530, into nx; pgs at this hour included lots of talk/nx/features in II -- a few bars of inst version of "Here Comes the Sun" noted at various times, possibly their theme song at that time of the day. 10/2. (F)
- 1089 UKOGBANI, BBC1, jazz. pgm to 2100 9/20. At 2058 ancr said BBC1 MW listeners should tune to VHF because the AM was going off until 0400 (5 am local time). Sure enough, at 2100 the song ended and was followed by 6 pips & OC. TT began 2102. (L)
- 1170 YUGOSLAVIA, Koper-Capodistria, local-like w/nx in II 9/30 1738, wx 1745, into pop mx (including one or two EE songs) 1747. Long s/off anmt 1758½ giving "R Koper-Capodistria" ID, mention of 1170 kHz & several FMs, gave sked as "7-7" (0600-1800, UTC), 7-note IS at beginning & end of s/off, carrier cut 1800½. Very strong considering the distance (65 miles, water path), equal to the 3 RAI locals. (V)
- 1197 GFR, Munchen, VOA, good w/EE nx 1724 9/30. Into E. European lang 1730. Some splatter from Yugoslavia-1170. (V)
- 1215 UKOGBANI, BBC4, s/on 0552 9/22 w/"sonar blips" (see 720), then piece of chamber mx, quick ID 0555, then wx. (L)
- 1287 CZECHOSLOVAKIA, R. Prague strong w/DX Letterbox pgm in EE, moderately interesting discussion on Czech SW ECing in the 1930's 2145 9/30. Inst mx 2158, 6 pips 2300, then trumpet IS (first 10 notes of the one shown in WRTH). II pgm followed, opening w/horn fanfare (the whole thing shown in WRTH). (V)
- 1296 UKOGBANI, good w/talk re Reagan & Gromyko in sing-songy Germanic lang (Hungarian listed) 0541 9/23, BBC World Service ID & Big Ben Chimes 0545, into "World Today" in EE. (A) Financial nx in EE after Big Ben chimes 2330 9/24. (P)
- 1368- ITALY, Radio Tre, "Giornale R. Tre" pgm (world nx) in II 2258 9/29. Weird noises 2300, then talk. 2303 s/off by YL, then anthem. Carrier cut 2304. (V)
- 1386 USSR, R. Moscow good but deep fades w/propaganda in EE 2230 9/24. (P)
- 1440 LUXEMBOURG, good w/punk rock, British DJ, ads for drag race & teen magazine, "208" jingles, ray gun noises, promo for "Big L Marlboro Country Show" 1915-1923 9/19. If top-40 radio died in the U.S., it's still alive & well in Luxembourg, hi. (L)
- 1458 ALBANIA, Lushnje, IS on trumpets (as per WRTH) to 2230 9/28, anthem, into unid germanic lang (Czech listed) w/possible ment of Tirana. Moderate Monaco-1467 splatter. (I)
- 1467 MONACO, Monte Carlo, TWR strong w/Scandinavian lang (Faeroese listed) to 2245, ID by British EE male, trumpet fanfare, into EE rlg's pgm 9/28. (I)
- 1476 AUSTRIA, Wien, waltzes //520 0548 9/29. (I)
- 1503 POLAND, good w/end of EE pgm 2257 9/28, then piano mx. Piano IS (about 9 or so notes) & "Radyo Polonia" ID repeated several times 2300, then off. (I)
- 1503 YUGOSLAVIA, "R. Televizija Beograd" ID weak w/Poland 2300 9/28, then seemed to repeat electronic IS. Matches listed s/off time. (I)
- 1530 VATICAN CITY, IS repeated several times to 0630 10/4, then Vatican bells, "Radiofonica Vaticano" ID, into Latin mass with intro remarks in several langs. Also 2340 10/4 w/light pops & "Vatican Radio & you, in the night" ID in EE, similar IDs in FF & II. Apparently AN. (R)
- 1539 GFR, "Radio DLF" ID, no pips 2000 9/26. (S)
- 1566 SWITZERLAND, Sarnen, //531 at various checks 9/25-26. Pathetic signal in Lucerne area considering listed power (300 kw) & distance (about 20 miles), sounded more like 3 kw! (S)
- 1593 GFR, WDR good w/5 short & one long, high-pitched pips 0600 10/7, into long GG nx story re Sadat assassination. (L)
- ???? SPAIN, Barcelona?, 10/2 sometime after 2130, good w/some EE/SS pops, lots of telephone talk in SS, several 2-note doorbell chimes, two mentions of "Cadena Catalana", (including once after a nxcst), QRM from unid cl mx stn & at one point I hrd 6 pips & IS but not sure who had what. At least one mention of Barcelona hrd. I somehow managed to tune this in & turn on the tape recorder in my sleep, so I have no idea what freq it was! Several Barcelona stns listed in WRTH, but no mention of Cadena Catalana that I can find. Any ideas? (F)

LIETUVOS

TELEVIZIJA IR RADIJAS.
VII NIŪS