

# FORUM

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VFO controlled then you could opt to move to the calling station's frequency, or carry on split working.

This naturally resulted in much split-frequency operation as SSB was the exception, with FM and AM dominating the band. It was only in 1966 that a specific national calling frequency was adopted for SSB, 145.41MHz. Alternatively you could use SSB within any of the regional Zone sub-bands. 1966 was also the first year that the CW-only portion was fixed, then at 144.0-144.1MHz.

## Any advantage in zoning?

I personally think that this method of working has distinct advantages over today's channelised operation, certainly for DX working. For one, both ends of the QSO knew where to look for each other, and you were more likely to hear each other spread out over a range of frequencies, than on a small number of individual numbered channels. You could also tune the band from low to high (or the other way round) look for contacts and decide which station you were going to reply to. All of this would be announced during your CQ for the benefit of the listening stations.

So many people forget nowadays to state where they are located, when

calling CQ on FM. It is to your own advantage — if you are in Sussex and hear G6ZZZ (apologies to the eventual owner) calling CQ, you may ignore him during a lift. If he says G6ZZZ located in Cumbria, your reaction may change. So, always give your location, even if it is only a brief call on S20 — you never know who is listening, or what the state of propagation is at any moment.

## Goodbye zoning

This geographical zoning was eventually abandoned in February 1974, in favour of a bandplan very similar to that which exists today. This came about as a result of the changing uses of the band, and to fall in line with European practices.

In 1968, the Class B licensees were given access to the two metre band — prior to this they were permitted only to use 427MHz and above (yes — 70cm was even wider then). This in itself brought more use to a quiet band, but the real changes started in 1970 with the appearance of the FT2-F from Bill Lowe, retailing at around £80. For the first time, a reasonably cheap commercial FM mobile/fixed station rig was available, and a lot of those who didn't want to face construction opted for purchasing one of these.

They came with Japanese FM channels fitted, including 144.48, 144.6 and 145MHz — this might explain why you get some odd frequencies in older fixed channel rigs.

More black boxes started appearing over the next few years with a consequent dramatic increase in the level of activity on FM.

## Some say the start of the end...

In 1972, an experiment started which was to result in more controversy than possibly any other aspect of the hobby. The first repeater station, GB3PI, was commissioned on a short term licence for a feasibility study. This was a success, and in the ensuing years more followed, to the present level using all 8 repeater channels.

As the number of repeaters grew, so did the number of operators, and the available commercial equipment. By 1974 it was already obvious that the bandplan needed some sort of alteration to cope with this new phenomena, and also the growing use of SSB. Zoning was totally abandoned as unsuitable, in favour of a mode-oriented bandplan. A national calling frequency of 145.5MHz (S20) was adopted together with 3 other simplex channels (S21-S23). As you all know, more were added later. Use of 145.0MHz as a mobile calling frequency in the UK was deprecated by the Europeans as it interfered with R0 operations — needless to say, many people carried on using it rather than buy a new set of crystals!

Fig. 1. 2m band plan until 1974

Zone 1	144.0 — 144.1 MHz	CW only Nationwide
Zone 2	144.1 — 144.25MHz	Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Berkshire, Dorset, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Channel Is.
Zone 3	144.25 — 144.5 MHz	Brecon, Cardiganshire, Carmarthenshire, Glamorganshire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Monmouthshire, Pembrokeshire, Radnorshire, Worcestershire.
Zone 4	144.5 — 144.7 MHz	Kent, Surrey, Sussex.
Zone 5	144.7 — 145.1 MHz	Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, London, Middlesex.
Zone 6	145.1 — 145.3 MHz	Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Leicestershire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Rutland, Suffolk, Warwickshire.
Spot Frequency	Single Sideband	145.41MHz
Zone 7	145.3 — 145.5 MHz	Anglesey, Caernarvonshire, Cheshire, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Merionethshire, Montgomeryshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire.
Zone 8	145.5 — 145.8 MHz	Derbyshire, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire.
Zone 9	145.8 — 146.0 MHz	All Scotland, Isle of Man, N. Ireland, Cumberland, Co. Durham, Northumberland, Westmorland.

Prior to 1966, Zone 1 was allocated to Cornwall, Devon and Somerset.  
CW was allowed in any Zone as well as the exclusive Zone.