

RADIO TODAY

News about amateur radio compiled by Richard Lamont G4DYA

BELGIUM BANDS AXED

Belgian amateurs have lost three microwave amateur bands, and they face new restrictions in every part of the radio spectrum.

Officials of the *Union Belge des Amateurs Emetteurs* (UBA) were summoned to a meeting on June 24th by the Belgian Government, and told of several changes to the amateur licence that would come into force on July 15th. The 70cm band was cut from 430–440 to 434–438MHz, making international and amateur television contacts more or less impossible.

The 1.3, 2.3 and 5.6GHz bands were cut completely. On 10GHz and above, there is a new power limit of

100mW.

The Class C licence, which allowed 500W on the HF bands, is being scrapped. All Belgian amateurs will be restricted to 125W. On 2m and 70cm, the power limit is cut from 125W to 30W output.

The Belgian Government is bringing in a new 'introductory' licence, which will allow people to use 15W of FM, anywhere in the 2m band, with minimal technical qualifications.

The official reason given for these 'changes' is to protect other users, including *Syledis* on 70cm.

Comment: the address of the Belgian Embassy is 103 Eaton Square, London SW1.

RADIO DEPT. RESHUFFLE

The Radio Regulatory Department (RRD) has been transferred from the Home Office to the new combined Department of Trade and Industry. This is a result of Mrs. Thatcher's post-election Cabinet reshuffle.

The new Department, headed by former Tory Party Chairman Cecil Parkinson, will (according to the Home Office's final press handout on the matter) take over "band planning and general use of the radio spectrum in the UK; representation of the UK in international frequency negotiations and liaison with foreign administrations; frequency co-ordination with neighbouring administrations; licensing of the civil use of radio; and general responsibility for the Wireless Telegraphy Acts, including enforcement and the control of interference".

British Telecom will eventually disband its Radio Interference Service, and it will cease to carry out the amateur morse test. As yet the DTI has not said how, or when, it intends to replace these functions.

Alex Fletcher MP is the new Parliamentary Under Secretary for Corporate and State Affairs at the DTI, and "radio frequency regulation" will be one of his (many) responsibilities.

The Home Office is still responsible for broadcasting, including satellite and cable TV, and its Directorate of Telecommunications will still look after the communications systems for police, fire, nuclear early warning and civil defence services.

AUSTRALIAN TV SNAG

A plan to broadcast films about amateur radio and courses for aspiring amateurs on amateur TV has raised eyebrows at the Australian Department of Communications and upset local commercial broadcasters.

The plan made headlines in one Sydney newspaper which described VK2DTK, a club station, as "an alternative to the soapsies" and "television for the boffins".

It appears that amateur service regulations do not allow for this type of operation where the signal is not directed at one or more particular known stations.

The plan now depends on the DoC's interpretation of the regulations. The question of the legality of broadcasts by amateur stations also brings into doubt the weekly Wireless Institute of Australia broadcasts.

— Amateur Radio Action



Photo: Mike Ellis G4ROM

23cm aerial used by the South Manchester Radio Club on High Edge, near Buxton, Derbyshire for VHF NFD. All four of their contest stations managed to break down at some point. The 70MHz transverter would only work with the lid off, and it didn't care too much for the local beacon. The 2m transceiver was less subtle — it just packed up. On 70cm, the preamp switching failed. On 23cm, the dish had to have its rotator repaired at midnight!