

Operating on

23 cm

By Angus McKenzie
G3OSS

Many amateurs tend to imagine that 23cm contacts are only made in general by one station telephoning another, arranging appointments on 70cm for beam alignment then switching over to 23cm for a contact which could equally well have been made on a lower frequency.

This legend was indeed true even ten years ago, and the earliest innovators, including such famous callsigns as G5DT, G2RD and G3FP were often heard attempting their link ups using 70cms for talkback in the early 60's. They were pleased to get a useable range of ten or fifteen miles using home made aerials and all valve transmitting and receiving equipment which each stalwart had carefully made in his own home.

In 1983 23cm as a band has changed possibly more than any

other lower band, with a population at least ten times greater than it had six years ago. If we contrast a 23cm station of yesteryear with one of today, comparisons are absolutely fascinating. Typical transmitted ERPs are at least 20dB higher and receiving systems, again including aerial gain, are at least 25dB better, if one ignores the very top stations of some years back. These staggering improvements have shed an entirely new light on the band.

It is now not unusual to have

QSOs of 100-200 Kilometres quite regularly on SSB which are equivalent to many 2m SSB QSOs. Unusual propagation is often experienced on 23cms allowing contacts with many other countries, and right over obstacles such as very tall hills which would have been regarded as insurmountable ten years ago. 23cm can now be regarded as a very reasonable band. This article was written in the hope that my own enthusiasm will influence you to have a go on this fascinating band.