

was coming in on about 50.1MHz. He was a right thumping signal. I asked him to turn his signal down because it was distorting. At 10 Watts it was beginning to get comfortable."

He complains "there are an awful lot of people who should have been given tickets in view of their experience and facilities, many of them holding awards for VHF working.

"If the RSGB was responsible for choosing the callsigns to go before the Home Office in the first instance, thus rejecting the large majority, this is wrong. The RSGB should have been a clearing house, leaving the Home Office the responsibility of deciding who gets the tickets. There would have been no harm in the RSGB rubber-stamping forms that they know are correct and from people they know are experienced."

In March 1981 the RSGB's then Telecommunications Liaison Officer, the late Roy Stevens G2BVN, sent a confidential letter to 25 amateurs known to be interested in 50MHz operation, inviting them to apply for the out-of-TV-hours licences. Apparently it's taken from then until now because the BBC, which is the primary user of the band, called a halt. The BBC will remain the primary user of Band I until 1986, with six CH2 405-line TV transmitters still on the air until at least 1984, including the high power ones at North Hessary Tor, Holme Moss and Rosemarkie. However the Merriman Committee's report on the future of TV bands I and III has recommended that the 405-line transmitters be closed down at the end of 1984. As reported in the January issue of *Ham Radio Today*, the committee

also supported the RSGB's request for an amateur band in the 50-54MHz range. The Secretary of State William Whitelaw recently promised Parliament a statement on the Merriman proposals "as soon as possible." All things considered it looks as though 50MHz could be clear for full amateur use by the end of next year. There is, however, a snag.

Broadcast Ancillaries

The BBC also uses 50MHz for a variety of systems used in television programme production - radio microphones, talkback systems and so on. The idea of the limit of 40 stations is that BBC engineers could pinpoint any interference to these systems from an amateur station quickly. The official view is that this would not be possible with more people on the band.

Keith Fisher says that he realises that having only 40 permits is unsatisfactory, but that the choice is either 40 or none at all. While the band is BBC territory, the Home Office attitude is that what the BBC says sticks.

There do appear to be some oddities about the distribution of the 40 stations - there are none in London, yet two in Dunfermline! There are also no stations in the North of England. Keith Fisher says there were not any "suitable" applicants from the North of England, and although London is densely populated it is geographically small compared to Scotland, which has ten licensees.

The RSGB is seeking reception reports of six-metre activity, including reports of the GB3SIX beacon at Anglesey on 50.02MHz. Reports should be addressed to the VHF Committee, RSGB, Alma House, Cranborne Road, Potters Bar, Herts. EN6 3JW.

There is a 50MHz users' net on 3.718MHz at 0830 daily.

MORSE TEST CENTRE CHANGES

British Telecom says there will not be any change in the list of test centres used for amateur morse tests for about two years.

A question mark over the future of the test was raised by BT's proposal to automate its coastal HF radio stations, (which are used as test centres) and concentrate operational staff in two central complexes.



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