

Upcoming Events

January 29th, 2015

Software-Defined Radio and Small-Scale Radio Astronomy at Shirleys Bay

Presented by Marcus Leech, Science Radio Laboratories, Inc. and the Shirleys Bay Radio Astronomy Consortium ([SBRAC](#))

In the past decade, software-defined radio (SDR) has experienced near-explosive growth in exploratory, prototype, and even production implementations of advanced wireless and radio-based systems. The application of SDR techniques to science applications, such as radio astronomy, has seen more modest use over that same decade. But in the area of small-scale radio astronomy experiments, SDR provides significant benefits.

We explore the use of SDR at the *Shirleys Bay Radio Observatory*, and discuss progress and challenges that lie ahead.



CRC Image 06-4607, Kennedy Antenna at Shirleys Bay

February 26th, 2015

Tanquary Fiord – Revisited by Victor Jones

Operation Tanquary was initiated by Dr. Geoffrey Hattersley-Smith, evolving from his initial exploration and mapping of the northern islands of Canada in the early 1950s. Activity formally commenced with the delivery of the materials for a base camp at Tanquary Fiord on Ellesmere Island in August 1962 by the CCGS John A. Macdonald. Hattersley-Smith gathered experienced Arctic personnel including Harold Serson and John Keys to lead the annual “Operation Tanquary” and encouraged university research in the High Arctic across a range of disciplines, based from the Tanquary Camp.

In concert with the scientific research and logistical program, summer students were brought on to assist. Numerous papers and publications emerged from the 12-year program. The camp was turned over to the Polar Continental Shelf Project after the 1974 season, and eventually became included in the 38,000 square km at the top of Ellesmere Island designated as Quttinirpaaq National Park.

Additional details to follow in our January 2015 Newsletter.

All events are in the **Private Dining Room**, Bldg. 4 at 1300 hrs unless otherwise noted.

Friends and spouses, Shirleys Bay staff all welcome.

Please join the Friends for lunch before the presentation in the Shirleys Bay Cafeteria, Bldg. 4.

Christmas Lunch 2014

The Friends met for a well-attended lunch at the Bistro 54 in Stittsville last month. As always, it was great to see the regular members, as well as long-time members Brian and Dorothy Clarke and Linda and Bob Warburton.

Our Spring Lunch is only a few months away... please consider joining us to renew old friendships and catch up personally on the Friends' doings!

Your Board appreciates your support by attending the presentations, field trips and lunches!



14-4794: Dorothy and Brian Clarke



14-4798: Rosemary Jull, Colin Franklin, Doris Jelly



14-4787: Jack and Denise Belrose, Colette Cole



14-4801: Gordon James, Bob Warburton



Image 14-4807a

All images courtesy John A. Brebner

Billowes' Rant Wasting My Time

It seems that almost no organization I deal with these days gives a fig about wasting my time. Almost every day, I encounter examples to prove this. Given that I may not have a great deal of time left, I deeply resent this practice.



Colin Billowes

Take telephone answering machines for example. Call any largish commercial organization and you are sure to be lead through an interminable set of options requiring you to enter choices or card numbers (usually at least 16 digits) or the like.

Worse is the fact that the morons who set these things up never seem to be capable of providing a short path to your destination. More likely, you will be required to answer all sorts of irrelevant questions before being told that they are going to have an “agent” deal with my issue. Then to add insult to injury, you are then left listening to ghastly, repetitive, computer generated noises which purports to be music, for 15 minutes before finally being cut off and have to start all over again. Quite clearly, the instigators of these systems simply do not create a logical path, nor do they test the systems on real people before launching them on the poor unfortunate public.

Another great time wasting villain are airports. I do quite a lot of air travel and am for ever being cajoled into arriving at the airport earlier and earlier. On the exit road to one airport I use a lot in the USA is a big electronic sign saying you must arrive at least two hours before flight time for domestic flights. If you do that you will be greeted by long line ups of pathetic people who complied with this absurd advice. What is more astonishing is that if the flight is international, they demand that you get there a half hour earlier in spite of the fact that the processing is identical because the departure process is identical for both domestic as well as international flights.

My practice is to arrive about five minutes before they close the gate when there is usually no line up at all. But this is not the end of the time wasting. Even if you do cut it fine, you will still be left sitting in the departure lounge for half hour, or more if the plane is late.

Then comes the boarding. I am eternally grateful that the idiots who designed the boarding system are not the same people who maintain the planes. Then half the population seems to want to bring all their worldly possessions with them into the cabin and the airline staff seem very reluctant to make them check their giant bags at the desk. The airlines load the plane by zones (it used to be seat numbers but that didn't work). The TV program “[Myth Busters](#)” did an excellent examination of how best to load planes and showed conclusively that it is much faster to do it by seat letter and zones so that all the window seats go aboard first followed by the centre then the aisle seats, starting at the back.

I could go on and on. I expect you all have your own pet peeves about the way our valuable time is being wasted in these, and many other, ways. I make a fuss about it whenever there is an opportunity but clearly the powers that be simply don't care.

[Colin welcomes your comments!](#)

The Most Northerly Ionospheric Stations

Continued from November, 2014 by John Gilbert

An Arctic Tragedy: 1949

Radio communications in northern Canada is subject to the vagaries of the ionosphere and has long been an area of research interest for DRTE and more recently the CRC. The ionosphere program at Clyde Inlet was one of the original DRTE stations starting, as explained in earlier newsletters, with the transfer of the station to Canada by the Carnegie Institute in 1945. Clare McKerrow and Jack Wyatt were two of the original Canadian staff in that year.

This article will explain my personal interest in the station. It will describe the tragic accident in 1949 which marks the transition from the station in its early days to a more expanded program through the 1950's which included other stations such as Baker Lake, culminating in the International Geophysical Year of 1957 - of which more in later issues of the Newsletter. There were changes at the Clyde Inlet station around 1950 which need to be researched further. Victor Decloux described the station in 1949/50 as, "the Clyde Ionosphere Station". Two years later, Dave McMillan describes the station as a regular DOT weather station (Call sign VCR) staffed by two radio operators, four weather men and a cook¹. The station is described interchangeably as Clyde River or Clyde Inlet in the various source documents. Perhaps the weather station carried out ionospheric soundings as was the case at Eureka in later years.

In 2004 I had the opportunity to visit and research at the Scott Polar Research Institute, in Cambridge, England. The Institute holds a photo collection of Frederick Spencer Chapman, an Arctic explorer, who had been my Headmaster at high school in the early 1950's. The Institute also had documented references to the Canada/US Joint Arctic Weather Stations in the journal "The Polar Record". While I was there the SPRI Archivist gave me the following news clipping:

"A.B. Neill and three of the staff of the Clyde Inlet Station, B.F. McManus, C.D. McKenzie and W. Groff, were killed on 22 August 1949 when the aircraft which was carrying them southwards crashed between Churchill and Winnipeg".



None of these names appeared in any of the archival documents used in preparing the long list of radio operators who had served on DOT stations in the post-war period, including the Ionosphere Stations such as Clyde.²

The late Victor Decloux, who retired in 1985 as DOC's Director of Spectrum Management Operations and had served at the Clyde Ionosphere Station in 1949/50, filled in some of the story:

"Transportation to Clyde River was from Churchill aboard an RCAF Canso aircraft via Coral Harbour on Southampton Island. After six or seven attempts out of Coral Harbour and returning because of weather conditions we made it into Clyde River. This was in 1949. The Canso that brought us in crashed on the way to Winnipeg. Everyone was killed including the guys we had relieved at Clyde. Two of the guys missed the plane in Churchill and were the only survivors of the Clyde gang that had preceded us!"³

An Arctic Tragedy: 1949, (continued from Page 4)

The Arctic Circular in the post-war period, edited by Mrs. Diana Rowley and the late Graham Rowley, is an authoritative source of information on Arctic activities. Diana Rowley confirmed that the crashed aircraft was RCAF Canso 11057 and identified the jobs of the people killed in the crash.

While the crash was reported in newspapers at the time, coverage stopped after a couple of days, perhaps because other news took preference. Curiously, there are only passing references to the crash in usually reliable sources. One of the people killed in the crash was a young physiotherapist named Constance Beattie. In 2004 a set of photographs, taken by her before the crash, came to light. Around the same time I had a call from Catherine Mitchell, Editorial writer with the Winnipeg Free Press who subsequently wrote two articles about the crash. Catherine Mitchell was researching the fate of seven Inuit who were being flown to King George Hospital in Winnipeg from Chesterfield Inlet via Churchill. Her articles are:

“Perspective: 57 years of silence”, Winnipeg Free Press, 12 April, 2009

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/57-years-of-silence-42868487.html?viewAllComments=y>

“Sorrow a great leveller”, Winnipeg Free Press, 19 April, 2009

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/westview/sorrow-a-great-leveller-43242132.html>

The Clyde Inlet passengers and the Chesterfield Inlet passengers were flown to Churchill and boarded the Canso there. The plane crashed east of Norway House in northern Manitoba.

All four of the Clyde Inlet crew were married men. Their jobs would have supported the station's Ionospheric program.⁴ They were:

Addison Neill: Officer-in-Charge, who had worked as an operator in the Arctic starting in 1947 and had come to Clyde from the DOT monitoring station at Glencoe, Ontario;

B McManus: radio operator of Halifax;

Cecil McKenzie: radio operator of Dartmouth, NS

W N Groff: station cook of Kitchener, Ontario

Readers may recall, from previous Newsletters, that Frank T. Davies had lived in Chesterfield Inlet in 1932-34.

This concludes John Gilbert's three-part series on the Clyde Inlet Ionospheric Station.

¹ McMillan, Dave, “CQ at 40 Below”, The Canadian Amateur Radio Magazine, July/August, 1991.

² See http://www.radioalumni.ca/index2_e.htm

³ See http://radioalumni.ca/x_DeclouxVictor.htm

⁴ S H Hitelman, also stationed at the Clyde Inlet Ionosphere station, was not aboard the plane. He had remained in Clyde Inlet.

Message From The Chair

Over the past year, your Board has worked to increase our range of activities. In addition to our twice annual luncheons, we have had a successful season in 2014 of presentations at CRC. We also had a great tour of the Diefenbunker in October. I think we're on the right track to achieving a good mix of activities, from technical talks at CRC, to twice-annual informal lunches and field trips to points of interest in the Ottawa Valley. It's a balancing act... while I suspect many of the "lunch" people do not attend our more "technical" talks, we think it's important to remember our scientific roots at DRTE.

Our continuing free access to our monthly talks at CRC may depend on those talks being relevant to CRC research and telecommunications history. Our field trips bring out members that attend no other event! Our twice-annual lunches are also very popular. I'd like to think that we have a balance of activities of interest for every member of the Friends. Do you have suggestions? Please let us know!

And having said that, your attendance and interest in our monthly talks from September through April each year is a strong indication to CRC management that it's still worthwhile to allow us to use their facilities.

Our talks are temporarily being held in the Private Dining Room by the Cafeteria in Bldg. 4, but once renovations in Bldg. 2 are completed in early spring 2015, we hope to be back in the main auditorium again. Your Board agrees that it's our best location for professional presentations.

Best wishes to all our members for 2015.

John Brebner, Chair etc.

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