



# Looking Back

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*Looking Back is a nostalgic reflection on the shortwave scene of yesteryears, written from the personal experience of the author, who has been DXing the shortwave bands for over seven decades.*

## The Z Callsigns

In the "good old days", stations on the shortwave broadcast bands used to use their callsigns regularly in announcements, to facilitate identification. Yours truly has made many an ID of Latin stations by their call letters. Alas, those times are well past.

Still, today, old-timers will get an immediate recognition of the late British Empire from the mention of the Z callsigns of the past (almost!).

Regretably, not only have the call letters disappeared from many stations, but also the stations themselves have left the air, usually for FM. Some come to mind readily, such as ZQI Jamaica, ZFY Guiana, and ZBW Hong Kong. The first two were quite regularly logged on the 49 and 60 meter bands, while Hong Kong might have been heard, under good conditions, with yacht race weather reports on the 90 meter band. ZFY is now simply the Voice of Guyana on 3290 kHz and is heard frequently. ZBW is inactive, although the possibility of temporary broadcasting with yacht racing weather is always possible.

From Africa, what used to be the Gold Coast, in Empire days, ZOY was and still is, a regular signal on the 60 meter band (now Ghana 4915 kHz). It and ZQP in Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) continue broadcasting without callsigns. Zambia is often a good signal in the early nighttime on 4910 kHz and even better on 49 meters in the past (now Radio Two on 6165 kHz). They have an impressive interval signal of the call of the Fish Eagle.

The last one I have chosen to review is an unusual station indeed - ZLXA at Levin, New Zealand. As far as I know they are still on the air on 3935 kHz in the 75 meter band. They are staffed by volunteers and read the NZ newspapers over the air for the print handicapped. ZLXA has only 1 kilowatt of power, so they are indeed a DX catch in North America. I have heard them here in Ontario; try for them in the morning (they operate 24 hours) and send a report for their nice QSL card.

Good listening!

