



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.

Micro Europe

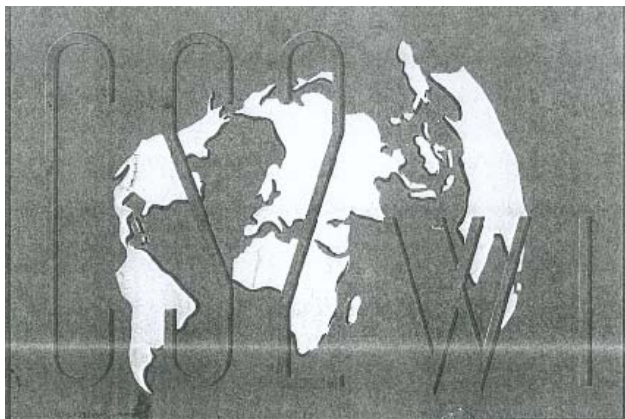
Looking back over the years, the tendency of SW broadcasters to use ever higher-powered transmitters becomes very obvious. What was, in my youth, considered to be high power was in the order of 10 to 50 kilowatts!

Nowadays that would be thought suitable to local coverage only. But still, there have been, until quite recently, some QRP (the ham radio term for low power) stations. Examples are Voice of Europe, Pordenone, and IRRS, Milan, both from Italy.

The trend today, however, is to use mediumwave or FM transmitters for local coverage, or even to buy time over one of the high-powered relay stations.

As for me, I can't help feeling that the current shift to FM, satellites, internet, etc., has yet to be worked out to an agreed pattern. FM has limited coverage and serious geographical hazards. Not all the world can afford to use the internet and computers for listening to their favourite "radio" programmes (indeed a little more attention to programming would make shortwave much more attractive; much of it is repetitive from station to station).

I hope the illustrations accompanying this column will interest you. And keep an eye open for any IRRS station (tho' they have been using a 100 kW relay in recent times). Check out your antenna and receiving equipment, which need to be in good shape for these "micro power" outlets.



Back in pre-WWII days there were stations such as Radio Clube Portuguese at Parde (250 watts) [above illustration] and Australia's RWR [illustration top right] with 800 watts. They would have a hard time today to be heard between the international stations running 250 to 500 kilowatts! So, in reality, the remaining low powered stations today are mainly in Third World countries and also Brasil.

73...best QRP,
Tom

Forecasting future developments is a dangerous game and very much a matter of personal opinion.

