

Listening In Articles

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“THE IRISH MIND”

Excerpts from an address to the Empire Club of Canada, by Dr. Thomas Joseph Kiernan, Ambassador of Ireland

March 14th, 1957

An expression of the mind of a people can be discerned by its use of radio. I spent six years in charge of the Irish broadcasting service and can speak of it from firsthand knowledge. The most obvious difference between radio programmes in Ireland and in Canada is that we have no commercial stations. We have had tantalising financial offers in this field; but the fact remains that we have no commercial stations. A very limited amount of commercially sponsored broadcasting is permitted within the general framework and this service is limited to Irish manufacturing concerns.

From my experience of radio in Ireland and in other countries-because I made it my job to study the details of broadcasting in other countries and the public reactions -I am convinced of the ready response the listening public is prepared to give to good-class entertainment. There is a tendency to play down to sections of public taste, and to underrate the mental capacities of the general body of listeners. What the listeners want is analogous to what a diner wants when he goes into a restaurant. He doesn't quite know; except what "disagrees" with him. He has to have a look at the menu; and an individual's tastes vary from day to day or so. But if the restaurant can provide him with good fare, his appetite will be stimulated by it. "I wasn't hungry till I sat down to eat" is often the way it is with radio listeners; and if they can draw on a menu of good music or well-constructed radio drama, well-acted for the ear, their taste grows, and in fact their taste is being formed. Cheap stuff on the air forms a cheap national taste.

Our programmes are bilingual, with items in Irish and English. We have a big listening public in Scotland and

in Northern England; and with the near-by competition of the more richly-financed British Broadcasting Corporation's and the European programmes, we find that the more Irish our programmes are, the greater their appeal. We arrange interchanges of programmes with the B.B.C. as well as international programmes; and are easily able to get visiting conductors and soloists of international reputation. Our programmes, judging by the general terms of criticism, have been improving year by year since broadcasting was started; which is what one should expect, since broadcasting, properly used, should broaden and intensify the listening interest in good material, and there is an unlimited field for improvement in every country.

I found that the radio, far from destroying interest in local amateur efforts, can be used to stimulate them and to arouse a healthy local competition. The recent growth of local festivals of music and drama in Ireland is not unconnected with the influence of radio. ❖



On the
shortwaves.com

<<http://www.ontheshortwaves.com>>

Under "DX History/Clubs & Publications": If you were in the know about shortwave in 1931, you were a member of the International Short Wave Club, Klondyke, Ohio. It was early days for shortwave broadcasting, and hard news about stations and frequencies was hard to come by. The ISWC, founded in 1929, was the best source. Here is the January 1931 issue of the club's bulletin. It contained some information about hams and commercial stations too, but SWBC soon became its focus. -- And under "Specialized Resources," we have updated the PopComm Index through May 2009. ❖

Radio Broadcasting in New Guinea - Early Wireless Stations

by Adrian Peterson

THE island of New Guinea, located north of Australia, is considered to be the second largest island in the world, with only Greenland larger. New Guinea is about 1500 miles long with an area of a little over 1/3rd million square miles, much of which is not yet totally explored. The shape of the island, according to many people who live there, is like one of their national birds, the Bird of Paradise. It is a very rugged island with high snow covered mountains in the interior, deep forested valleys, and low lying jungles along the coastal areas that are hot and humid.



The total population of the entire island of New Guinea is around nine million people, most of whom are Melanesian and Palauan whose ancestors migrated in pre-historic eras from South East Asia. In addition, there are several minorities whose ancestry is European, Asian, Indonesian or Australian. The peoples of eastern New Guinea speak more than eight hundred and fifty languages with three nationally recognized languages; English, Tok Pisin, and Hiri Motu. On the western side, there are more than three hundred languages, with Indonesian as the government language.

History tells us that the first European to visit the

island of New Guinea was the Portuguese governor of the nearby Molucca Islands, Jorge de Meneses, and this was in the year 1526. He named the island "Papua", a Malay word meaning "frizzy hair". However, twenty one years later, a Spanish explorer, Ynigo Ortiz de Retez, visited the island and he named it New Guinea, due to the similarity to the people he had seen in the country of Guinea in Africa.

The first European settlement was established by the English at Fort Coronation at Doreri Bay in 1793, but it was abandoned two years later as untenable due to the poor export quality of the local produce. This settlement was located near the top of the head of the Bird of Paradise map, at Manokwari in what is now Irian Jaya.

Following the introduction of European settlements in several locations around the island, the three major powers in the area, Holland, England and Germany, agreed to partition the island; the western half to Holland, the north eastern quadrant to Germany, and the south eastern quadrant to England.

However, at one stage, the Australian colony of Queensland laid claim to the south eastern quadrant of New Guinea, and after the Australian colonies were federated into one country, England passed on to Australia the administration of its territory in this bird shaped island. Then, after the end of World War 1, the League of Nations granted the German territory, North East New Guinea, as a mandate under the Australian administration.

During the Pacific War, Japanese forces landed on the north east coast of New Guinea in mid 1942, and three months later their overland forces came within just thirty two miles of Port Moresby itself. It was claimed that they could see the lights of Port Moresby from their mountainous viewpoints. A year or two later, American and Australian forces reversed the situation and reclaimed this strategic island.

After the Pacific War was concluded, the two eastern territories on the island of New Guinea were combined under the Australian administration as Papua New Guinea. In 1973, Papua New Guinea was granted self-government for its internal affairs; and on September 16, 1975, Papua New Guinea was granted complete independence.

When Indonesia assumed independence in 1949, it laid claim to the western half of New Guinea; and ultimately, it became a province within Indonesia as Irian Jaya, though these days, the entire territory is now administered apparently as two provinces, Papua and Papua Barat.

The very first attempt at wireless communication in New Guinea took place in Port Moresby in March 1911. The Australian born Catholic priest, Father Archibald Shaw, had joined a search party that went to Port Moresby looking for a group of lost Australian officials. He brought with him some electrical equipment manufactured in his own factory in the Sydney suburb of Randwick. He installed this equipment temporarily at Paga Hill, Port Moresby, and tried unsuccessfully to contact a wireless station on Thursday Island.

In the era before and during World War 1, a total of four different permanent wireless stations were established in the mainland territory of Papua New Guinea, though the advent of wireless in the Dutch side of the island was not implemented until after the conclusion of the European conflict. These very early wireless stations were located at Port Moresby, Aitape, Madang and Morobe. The equipment for these stations was assembled in Australia, using a mixture of Telefunken apparatus imported from Germany, items of electrical apparatus manufactured in Sydney by AWA, together with some additional items from the Randwick factory of Father Shaw. All of them at this stage were spark wireless stations which we would describe these days as being electrical transmitters, rather than electronic.

The first of these new permanent stations was installed on the edge of Port Moresby, Papua. It was a 5 kW Telefunken transmitter and the receiver was a simple crystal set. It should be remembered that all of the spark transmitters anywhere in the world at this stage were operating only in Morse Code.

The Port Moresby station, VIG, was installed and operated by Sydney based AWA and it was intended to be a gathering point for news, information and messages from other stations in the New Guinea area for onward relay to the AWA station located at Pennant Hills, near Sydney in Australia. Station VIG was also intended for use in communication with

nearby shipping approaching or departing the harbor at Port Moresby. Station VIG Port Moresby was officially taken into service on February 26, 1913.

Photographs of the Port Moresby wireless station taken on the opening day of the European Conflict in August 1914, show two buildings, both about the same size. Perhaps one housed the technical equipment and the other was for use by staff personnel. The station was located in an isolated area beyond the edge of Port Moresby; and the aerial mast was a little under one hundred feet high.

The second wireless station installed on the New Guinea mainland was VZX Aitape, and this unit was installed in 1914. The station was located on a flat area in between a muddy river and the ocean beach; and the town itself was built on a rocky headland overlooking two islands in the bay. Aitape town is situated on the north coast of New Guinea a little over a hundred miles from the Dutch/Indonesian border of Irian Jaya. At the time when the station was installed, there were some seventy five foreigners in the town of Aitape, mostly Dutch or German.

Station VZX was built to enable the local administration to communicate with government headquarters in Rabaul, and initially the Morse Code messages were relayed to Rabaul via an intermediate Morse Code station on Manus Island.

The third wireless station installed in New Guinea was located at Madang, under the callsign VIV. By this time, World War 1 in Europe was well underway and the Australian government moved quickly for the installation of this facility.

Madang was settled originally by people from Germany in the year 1884. The town is located on a peninsula overlooking a beautiful harbor on each side and it was finally ridded of deadly malaria mosquitoes twenty years later. The wireless station, VIV, was quickly installed by AWA for the Australian government in 1916.

The fourth wireless station installed in mainland New Guinea during this very early era of wireless communication was station VZK at Morobe. The town of Morobe was originally named by the German settlers as Adolphhafen and it was located a little south along

the coast from Lae. Station VZK Morobe also came into service during the year 1916.

Each of the three smaller regional wireless stations in mainland New Guinea was described as having a normal coverage range of two hundred miles, whereas the main station at Port Moresby had a range of five hundred miles.

And that's the story of our first introductory presentation on the long and interesting research into the history of radio broadcasting on the island of New Guinea.

Radio Broadcasting in New Guinea: The Port Moresby Story - VIG & VHSU

In recent time, we have begun a series of progressive topics here in Wavescan on the story of radio broadcasting on the island of New Guinea. Thus far, we have shared with you the early origins back in the era of the old spark wireless stations; and on this occasion, we take a look at the New Guinea story, in Port Moresby itself.

You will remember from the previous program on this topic that the first wireless station located at Port Moresby in the Papua section of New Guinea was a temporary facility erected on Paga Hill in March 1911. A permanent spark wireless station was erected on the edge of Port Moresby two years later. This permanent 5 kW electrical transmitter was constructed from equipment provided by Father Shaw and his wireless factory on the edge of Sydney in Australia.

Wireless station VIG in Port Moresby was installed for the purpose of Morse Code communication with shipping in the waters nearby to Port Moresby, for contact with Sydney with commercial traffic and government messages, and for inland communications throughout the eastern half of the island of New Guinea. The long distance communications with Australia were often handled via intermediate stations that relayed the Morse Code messages on to the next nearest wireless station. These intermediate relay stations were located at Cooktown

and Townsville, on the Pacific coast in the northern areas of the state of Queensland.

In October 1915, all wireless stations throughout the Commonwealth of Australia and all neighboring islands were placed under the control of the Australian navy, which formed part of the British navy at the time. It might be added that Port Moresby was a quite small town during this era, and it was described as having the character of a small outback town in Queensland.

Station VIG in Port Moresby was taken over by the Australian government soon after the end of World War 1, though it was transferred back to the original owners, AWA in 1922.

It was around the year 1925 that the spark wireless stations in coastal areas of Australia and nearby islands were modernized with the installation of electronic transmitters utilizing the recently introduced valves, or tubes, made in England and the United States. The Port Moresby station, along with all of the others in the maritime service throughout the South Pacific, was upgrade with the latest available electronic equipment.

In March 1931, AWA installed a high speed telegraph centre in Main Street, Port Moresby which keyed a new out-of-town facility that contained a 5 kW transmitter and a three mast antenna system beamed on Sydney.

With the progress of the Pacific Conflict, the civilian population in the city of Port Moresby was evacuated to Australia in December 1941, and the main operating facility for the radio station was transferred into Wonga Cottage, at a place called Five Mile, which was of course, 5 miles out of town. Wonga Cottage was in earlier times a quite famous vacation home for a wealthy family living in New Guinea.

That was the story of the AWA communication station VIG, from its earliest installation up to the early 1940s.

However, it so happened that AWA established another radio communication station in the province of Papua during this same era. It was an air radio facility for communication with aircraft and it was

operated by AWA on behalf of the government Post & Telegraph Department.

Initially this station was on the air under the callsign VHPM, with the letters VH indicating an Australian aircraft facility and the letters PM obviously indicating Port Moresby. Following the initial series of test transmissions, the callsign was changed to VHSU.

Communication station VHPM/VHSU was heard in Australia, New Zealand and the United States when it was on the air with aircraft communications and also when it was in contact with a similar airways station located at the regional air strip near Salamaua in New Guinea. It was noted in Australia with traffic for various communication stations in New Guinea and Australia, and the messages were read very slowly, and sometimes specific words were spelled out.

Airways station VHPM/VHSU was active from September 1938 to around June 1940. There are no known QSLs from this station.

During this era around the middle of last century, the main AWA shortwave station at Port Moresby, station VIG, was often heard in the same three countries, Australia, New Zealand and the United States. On some occasions, it was noted with communication traffic, and on other occasions it was heard with program broadcasting.

Somewhat independent from the AWA shortwave facility was a new mediumwave station which was on the air under the Australian callsign 4PM, and shortwave station VIG sometimes carried a relay from this mediumwave counterpart for the benefit of distant listeners. Every now-and-again, an old QSL card from the AWA station VIG turns up, though these days they are quite rare.



Picked Up by Radio

Listen to 66 Stations on Mount Spokane Test

North Central Boys Pick Up Remarkable Series of Calls in All-Night Test

Spokane Daily Chronicle, October 2, 1922

Fifty-six radio broadcasting stations, representing every district of the United States and some from Canada, were picked up at the summit of Mount Spokane last night in one of the most remarkable receiving demonstrations on record in the northwest.

Three Spokane men, two of them North Central high school students, conducted the tests, which extended from 6:10 last evening to 3:56 this morning. E.B. Craney of the Radio Supply company, one of the three, reported the results to the Chronicle. Frank Curtin and Leslie Graham were the other members of the party.

Schenectady, N.Y.; Wilmington, N.C.; Edmonton, Alta., and the Catalina Islands were among the stations received. The list includes code and concert broadcasting points.

The three left Spokane Sunday afternoon in time to erect an aerial at the summit of the mountain and be ready for reception at 6:10. It was impossible to secure a ground and 90 feet of ordinary electric light twisted and insulated wire was thrown out in a counterpoise. The aerial was a single wire 95 feet in length and 15 feet from the ground, strung from a small tree to the automobile in which the trip was made.

A Grebe CR-9 set was used and was kept in constant search of new stations. Some of them were picked up as rapidly as two a minute.

The first station picked up was WGY at Schenectady and the last, which came in at 3:56 this morning, was 9BHK at Dallas Center, Iowa.

(<http://radiotowers.info/19221002-sdc-dxpedition.jpg> via Bill Harms, DX Listening Digest)

Maritime Radio Historical Society "Night of Nights"

This will be the tenth annual Night of Nights!

Every year on 12 July (US time) many famous coast stations return to the air to commemorate what was then thought to be the last commercial Morse stations in the USA.

Since then MRHS coast station KSM has taken to the air and three other commercial coast stations have received licenses for operation in the MF band (KNE, KDR and WFT). Historic ships have reactivated their radio consoles and are active on MF and HF.

The purpose of Night of Nights is to emphasize the objective of the MRHS: to preserve the skills, traditions and culture of the men and women who came before us and who made the profession of radiotelegrapher one of honor and skill.

This year stations KPH, and KSM will be on the air. We anticipate that KFS will be on the air as well. We hope that US Coast Guard stations NMC, NOJ and NMN will join us as they did last year.

Amateur station K6KPH will guard 3550, 7050 and 14050kc for reception reports.

Preliminary information has been posted on the MRHS Web site:

<http://www.radiomarine.org>

(via Mike Terry, DX Listening Digest)

Garrison Keillor: The Man on the Radio with the Red Shoes

by Scott Knopf

May 14, 2009

2008, Un-rated, 86 minutes, Peter Rosen Productions/PBS

via Mike Terry, DX Listening Digest

For those unfamiliar with "Prairie Home Companion," the film gives an appropriate amount of background of the popular radio show through telling the story of its host, Garrison Keillor.

A natural-born storyteller, the Minnesota native narrates his own film with monologues just like he's delivered over the radio waves for the past thirty-five years. Voicing his thoughts and narrating his life comes easy to the man who's self-admittedly too ugly for television. The camera crew follows Keillor as he parties it up with some rhubarb-loving Minnesotans who make astute statements about loving life and finding happiness in your own backyard.

Rosen allows Keillor to do most of the talking. An introspective film, "Red Shoes" serves as another entry in the series of storytelling ventures that Keillor has undertaken throughout his life. Known for his radio programs, live performances, and numerous novels, he branches out for the second time into the world of film. With an abundance of well-shot footage, the director has crafted a portrait of a complex individual. The film examines both the public persona of the Midwestern entertainer and Keillor the caring husband and father.

Never giving up on the project he formed in 1974, Keillor has endured on the radio through the decades which saw its competitors fade into history as the public's interest in the medium dwindled. One of the highest points of the film comes when Robert Altman, who worked with Keillor on the Prairie Home Companion film, blames "I Love Lucy" for the murder of radio. Keillor responds with an inquisitive and humorous, "Radio's dead?"

Examining a world of state fairs, impromptu jam sessions, and Lutheran church services, Rosen's film, like the show it's focusing on, combines some good old fashioned storytelling, bluegrass music, and Americana. It's a movie praising Keillor and "Prairie Home Companion" that probably won't be overly enjoyable if you don't already praise them yourself. The looks into Middle American life are interesting and Keillor is an interesting subject, but after about thirty minutes in, the film loses its captivating hooks and unfortunately begins to drag for the last two acts.

<http://www.filmthreat.com:80/index.php?section=reviews&id=11726>