

OZ7IGY – Fifty years of beacon operation!

During the International Geophysical Year, 1957 – 1958, a lot of remarkable events took place. The most spectacular of these was probably when the Soviet Union launched the first satellite: Sputnik.

In the world of amateur radio a lot of European countries were granted access to the 50 MHz and/or 70 MHz bands for the duration of the IGY. Only a few countries were permitted to stay after the IGY.

Today 50 MHz has become a common and popular amateur band in Europe and the number of countries allowed to operate on 70 MHz is increasing.

In Denmark no such permits were issued at that time, so the "2-meter club" of Copenhagen and the EDR (The Amateur Radio Society of Denmark) dreamt up another IGY project initiated by OZ8T: A 144 MHz Amateur Radio beacon, - to monitor possible reflections from Aurora Borealis.

On the 30th of March 1957 (though tested on site a week or so before) the beacon transmitter: OZ7IGY, was officially put on the air on 144,006 MHz! The opening was transmitted on national radio and television and even reported in the leading Danish Newspapers! The original intention was to keep the beacon running for the duration of the IGY only. As it turned out: Such a device was too useful to close down!

We believe OZ7IGY to be the first official amateur radio VHF beacon.

In 1958 The OZ7IGY 432 MHz beacon on 432,018 MHz was activated. This was probably the first official UHF amateur radio beacon as well?

During the following 5 decades beacons on 1296 MHz (1978), 2320 MHz (1985), 50 MHz (1990), 5760 MHz (1992), 10368 MHz (1999), 70 MHz (2003) and 3400 MHz (2006) was added.

OZ7IGY was originally located in the Copenhagen harbour area (JO65gp). There it remained for 24 years. Then the beacon was moved west of the capital to Töllöse (JO55vo) where it stayed for another 24 years until the silo where it was located was condemned.

Two years ago we then moved OZ7IGY south, to Jystrup (JO55wm) into a minor closed down waterwork, where we hope to continue for yet another 24-year period?

Having been the owner and main supporter from the start in 1957, the EDR backed out from the project in 2004. At the same time it became apparent that in the future we would have to pay for the power consumption. In the past our hosts sponsored us. (In a flat country like Denmark, good radio locations nowadays = money!)

The loss of our main sponsor (EDR) presented a financial problem in the order of 1500 € per year! A supporting society (DAVUS – Danish Activity group VUShf) was formed initiating fund raising projects like membership fees, - and the OZ-70 MHz transverter, now sold to more than 100 amateurs Europe wide.

This combined with increasing support (again) from the EDR has guaranteed the existence of OZ7IGY for at least another three years.

Throughout its lifetime the supporters of OZ7IGY has been numerous but there have been only two beacon keepers: OZ9AC and OZ7IS. The initiator OZ8T is now 93 and still contributing to the project!

If you want more information check: www.oz7igy.dk – it is partly in Danish!

The Jubilee will be celebrated in different ways:

a) Two-way Radio activity from the present OZ7IGY site, using the beacon antennas on 144 and 432 MHz, running 25 Watt barefoot. (Same power level as the VHF/UHF beacons.)

We start on the 23rd of March and will be active to the 31st of March. Weekdays: 16 – 22 UTC. Weekends: 08 – 22 UTC. Times are approximate!

All contacts will be confirmed with a QSL.

- b) Re-activation of the two original 144 and 432 MHz beacon transmitters (on leave from the EDR museum!) from JO65gp, in the same period as above.
- c) The issue of a jubilee T-shirt. (A part of the fund-raising activities.)
- d) On the 31st of March the EDR gives an open reception in Jystrup celebrating the 50 years of OZ7IGY: The oldest amateur radio beacon still alive – and beeping!

Vy 73 de OZ7IS, *Ivan..*
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