

KEN'S DX DIARY AND LOGS - THURSDAY 27th MAY 2010**MW MONTAGE OF COMMON STATIONS 0300 AND 0200 TODAY:**

Some respectable signals for mid summer this morning. So much so I have produced another montage. It is about 2 meg, and contains some really great signals at 0300. The last 3 are 0200.

1580 CKDO, 1320 CJMR, 1650 SHALOM, 1660 WWRU, 710 WOR, 660 WFAN, 540 CBC, 800 VOWR, 950 CKNB, 970 WZAN, 1060 WBIX, 1130 WBBR, 1180 WHAM, 1520 WWKB, 1370 WDEA (0200), 1650 CINA (0200), 620 VOXM (0200)

100527_montage_of_common_stations_0300_and_0200.mp3

KEN'S DX DIARY AND LOGS - WEDNESDAY 26th MAY 2010**OIRT FM OPENING:**

Well I have never had such an opening on the old communist OITR band 66-73mHz. But tonight the band was jumping till around 1745. Maybe it will come back. Who knows. Lots from Belarus.

Some may not see this as exotic, but I have to ask, when last did you hear the following?? I had a strong Arabic sounding network also, as well as a very quiet station with flat music and poor audio up on 73mHz. It never stayed long. It was like a window on a different world tonight. And a very welcome change.

Now I have to try and ID them properly. 68.0 is the only one I'd say with confidence is good, and is Belarus Radio.

100526_69.7_radio_bresst_unid_country.mp3 - (UPDATE - Radio Brest, BR 17kw)

100526_1605_69.5_radio_bress_or_similar_id_at_end.mp3 (UPDATE - BLR Brest Radio Brest. Nearest 69.68)

100526_66.2_1730_unid_qth_canal_culture.mp3 - (UPDATE - BR2 Kanal Kultura HR 17kw)

100526_1722_69.3_radio_stalitsk_tk_on_minsk.mp3 (UPDATE - Radio Stolitza HR 17kw)

100526_1608_68.9_radio_stalitsa_unknown_qth.mp3 (UPDATE - BLR Hrodna Radio Stolitza HR 17kw)

100526_1700_68.0_belaruskie_radio_good_id.mp3

100526_1634_67.5_radio_mayak.mp3

100526_1729_66.1_radio_rossi_tent.mp3

100526_1610_67.8_slova_radio_or_studio_something.mp3

100526_1600_70.1_unid_poss_ukraine.mp3

FRENCH TV SOUND ON 54MHZ AM:

I thought I was told this was not off, but obviously not. Logged the other day, and also today, though todays signals were scrambled.

100519_wed_54030_ff_tv_snd_am_mode.mp3

TVDX SEASON WELL AND TRULY STARTED NOW:

After what seemed like a couple of sluggish seasons, and late starters etc, this year has been refreshingly interesting. Last night when I was going to turn in, I was looking through the web, and noticed some dxers in the UK had a band 2 opening to Sweden late on, around 2230?? I was watching some junk on TV at that time, but quickly checked TV band 1, and FM. I had late night Nova on R1, and something with a 5 in the top right. This "5" station seen on R1 just at turn in time, which was 0100utc. I don't think I have a decent caption of this, but I am told it is St Petersburg.

At around 0700 today, R1 showed a station with a large 1 in the left hand corner, see below. This was seen at lunchtime later in the day and turned out to be Belarus.



Also today, Jordan was seen and heard on E3, with sound, Unid AA on E2 sound only.

I have started a 2010 log table for band 1 TV. I will try and keep it up to date this summer, but I am easily distracted.

[CLICK HERE FOR TABLE](#), or click on tvdx menu

CHANNEL R1 / E2 QRM:

One of the big problems on channel R1 is both European and local hams. Sometimes they seem as though they are running such high power, and are forever calling CQ, followed by a 2 second gap, followed by another CQ call. IE they never seem to listen to the band, but rather continually call CQ. At one time I thought having a 50mhz receiver capable of SSB would be enjoyable to listen to the ham band, but really for a TVDXer, they are only QRM. The initial thrill has gone!! (This comes from someone with a call sign as well, MMOHSV!!) The interference is seen as broad QRM black lines going across the screen.

I met the worst offender from our area at the rally a few weeks ago. Davie knew the chappie concerned, and introduced. TVI at 15 miles distant didn't worry him either!!!

The bad QRM we had last summer from a baby alarm has gone. I know Davie recently dismissed it as trivial but it was so bloody annoying, that one dreaded alarm can cause such grief. And it did certainly did drag on and on throughout the summer.

I don't know when, but the clever lassie that knew her house was bugged when it was on, has left the village!! I only found this out at the weekend. A pal of mine has seemingly got the house and has NO kids, and hence no baby alarm. Yippee.

Two years ago, a friends daughter had a baby, and then one of the qrm causing baby alarms. I told her at the time that the sounds from her house could be heard by anyone. She found it amusing. So on Sunday I posed the hypothetical question to her old man and uncle who I was drinking with in the pub. (We were talking of these bugging devices/ baby alarms)

"If you were told a gaget you had allowed anyone with a basic receiver to listen in to what went on in your house, what would you do?"

1. Giggle vacantly and leave it on?
2. Immediately take it outside and tramp on it with big boots and make bloody sure it would never work again.

We all agreed on option 2. Therefore having a house bug knowingly must be a girlie thing!!!! lol

STUDIO LINKS:

I have never really properly identified any Italian studio links before, but today two were strong.

See links to audio clips.

61.040 approx VIRGIN RADIO with ads in Milano

61.250 approx RADIO PUNTO ZERO - Treiste

NEW VHF GROUP:

David Hamilton has started a new VHF group called 25mhz and up, for TVDX, ham, CB, band 2 etc!!!

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/25mhzandup/messages>

KEN'S DX DIARY AND LOGS - MONDAY 24th MAY 2010

NRD 545 FOR SALE:

I have finally decided to follow many of my fellow dxers and part with my former main

receiver before the arrival of the Perseus.

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL DETAILS AND PHOTOS](#)

It is a strange thing for me to flog anything. This must be the first time I have tried to sell anything. I have only ever traded one receiver, AOR 7030, for an Icom vhf receiver, and I was sweating that day. Usually I hoard. And hoard, and hoard.....

KEN'S DX DIARY AND LOGS - FRIDAY 21st MAY 2010

MW DXING IN MID SUMMER IN SCOTLAND:

Well we go from much colder than normal for May, to short trousers weather in a couple of days!!!! If mid July is classed as mid summer, then so must mid May, when you think about it.

Yesterday morning at 0300 produced some quite strong signals on the band. I will give a short montage again of some common signals, and apologies if I keep giving WWKB, but sometimes the signal is quite alarming this side of the Atlantic, and such a growl from the "WWKB..BUFFALO" voice over.

Stations on this 1.4 meg file are: WBBR 1130, WWKB 1520, WWZN 1510, FF 1570, WUNR 1600, WWRU 1660, WDEA 1370, DISNEY 1560, WJCC 1700

All bar WBBR was recorded yesterday at 0300. WBBR was recorded today at 0300.

All received on a Perseus with 500m beverage.

100520_and_21st_montage_common_mw_stns.mp3

PERSEUS QUICK START GUIDE FOR WINDOWS 7:

I have created a page with a quick start guide to installing the drivers, using Windows 7. Some users seemed to be having trouble with Windows 7 install, which seemed to work slightly different from I would have expected with Windows XP. For dxers not used to being in the depths of their PC operating system, click below for an easy step

by step guide with screenshots.

perseus_installation_windows_7.html

PERSEUS RSGB ARTICLE:

Well what a surprise with that RSGB test on Perseus. The straightened up PDF I reloaded last week had over 600 downloads!!!! It just goes to show!!!!

PERSEUS WORKING AS A VHF RECEIVER NOW, BUT ONLY JUST:

I have been again messing with the ICOM ICR-7000 receiver and it's 10.7mHz IF out feeding the Perseus aerial socket. If I added 10.7mHz to the freq the receiver is tuned to, 137mhz, I receive the local air band, with accurate freq readout.

I am using the 60 day trial with this screen shot. The main PC with the Perseus software is long over the 60 day trial. But at least I have learned how to make the freq readout accurate. The screenshot shows the settings for the freq pop up. I guess it is not worth my while buying the 40 euro rights, as the rx is too narrow for wide FM. This was only an experiment.



PERSEUS YAHOO GROUP - OBNOXIOUS AMERICAN BANNED:

Some big mouth American has been causing problems on the Perseus Yahoo group lately. As of today Nico has banned him from the group. It had been a long time coming. The guy is probably a cop, or a customs officer, or someone equally as ill mannered. He is not alone. I see a lot of these know alls on various message boards on the web. I would like to see these loud mouths come into my local bar and start mouthing off like that face to face. It would be very amusing, and fun I think.

There is a Pirate radio board here in the UK that seems to have only dubious contributions from people like the American guy on the Perseus board. It began as a radio enthusiasts board, with worthwhile contributions and historical discussions, but now it has been hi jacked by ignoramuses that can't even string a proper sentence together without being abusive and down right rude.

I think the worst I ever saw was a really obnoxious Frenchman who posted a string of anti-American and anti "English speaking world" dribble, even voicing support for Al Qaeda. This was posted in English I hasten to add. That misguided troublemaker was still kept on as a MW Circle officer, even after this outburst. What kind of publicity is that for a supposedly reputable dx club??

When I was in Holland and Germany in 2009, I was completely overwhelmed by the manners of our European neighbours. I never met a rude or obnoxious person over the whole time I was there I don't think. I am sure they would have been there, but I just felt that even the customs and security folk at the airports were mannerly, and not the rude and ignorant types you have in this country. Even parking attendants in this country can be extremely rude and think they are in some important position. I have to stress I had no business with any Dutch or German traffic cops or even normal cops, so my illusions may have been easily shattered. But we were drinking in the streets of Dusseldorf to the early hours, not bothering anyone, and in fact people wanted to chat to us about everything from bagpipes to Scottish mountains. It was so cool.

I am glad sometimes that the local accent here in my area of Scotland is so much NOT like Oxford English, that tourists to the area find the language very difficult. Sometimes I cringe at some of my fellow countrymen, at how they treat foreign tourists. Some of them unfortunately seem to believe that it's all about "Whit Fitba' team dae ye support". No wonder people stereotype about Scot's abroad!!! The BBC have a new series filmed in Killie called "The Scheme", and following the lives of six families for a year or so. Boy does this portray us Scots in a bad light!!

WOULD YOU MOVE LOCATION FOR DXING??

I read a question posed on the Skywaves DX group the other day. Who wants to move to a more favourable QTH for dxing??

That was always my ultimate dream as a young fella. Beverages at every point of the compass. Long wires, dipoles, towers etc, all out in the country and on the top of a hill, and maybe even the whole top floor of the house a 360 degrees glass room, that you could sit in at night with the lights out and watch the stars. But what is the chance of achieving this? Nil to be honest.

If I achieved my long time dream of winning the lottery, would I move?? Certainly if I had a decent win. I always quite liked living in a quiet country village, but these days I have less and less affection for it because of the isolation.

I used to dream of living on the Western Isles somewhere. I love going on holiday to the north west of Scotland, or the Islands, so beautiful in nice weather. A drag in the rain, but so is anywhere. So could I live with the isolation of living on an old tumbledown farm for example on a north western peninsula of a remote island surrounded by beverages?? The more I go through life, the more I am not sure that I could handle this life long dream for too long. It would be great in winter for a time with the dxing, and the old turf fire burning in the fireplace, and the winds whistling around the draughty old house. But it would be a long way to go to the pub, to a gig, to an eating house. I can imagine on a Friday or a Saturday night I may start pacing up and down like a caged beast!! I like my rock bands, and there are some worthwhile acts play around the area at weekends. I would miss all of that scene.

For quite a number of years now, I have found out about being isolated by living in the sticks here with no village inn any more. It has turned into a snotty nosed eating place, and doesn't encourage casual drinkers!! (I have always been a chap that liked to get out at the weekends.) We used to have two Inns in the village. Now there are none. No more shuffling across the road whenever I choose. It is all a bit more hassle nowadays, trying to get to and home from a night out etc. It is as if the heart has gone from the village. I know more folk from the next village than I do from my own home town nowadays.

So what does this have to do with moving to a more dx friendly qth. Nothing really, just another long string of thoughts and old ideas!!

Some folks think I have it good here, as by chance there are no houses over the river from me. (Although there have been rumours in the past..). I am perfectly able to make beverages with a little imagination, ie through the dense woodlands and aerial starting about 200m away from the shack. So to move and find a more dx friendly site, I would have to live on a farm or something, to better the qth where I am. It is not the perfect qrn free location here, though I can't grumble.

There is a farm just up the road from me that was up for grabs a couple of years ago, with an extraordinary amount of moorland, including the highest point in the immediate area. See my article about a possible dxpedition, which I never ever did. It would have been possible at that QTH to have long beverages in almost every direction. That would have been something. But of course my lottery never came up.

I should have made my A/B tests with really long beverages, to see the difference between 500m and 1000m for example, with a perseus recording to back it up.

I also read on the Skywaves site, something I couldn't understand. Some reconed it may be better to move to a sprawling housing estate, than a remote country area??

Reason being that satellite etc in the large estates is pretty well established, where as out in the country you could have one noisy item waste it for all. Luckily we have survived the worst rf qrn here, but I do know in the middle of the highly populated areas, the rf noise for me is just alarming. I dont know where it comes from, but I have heard it when visiting friends, and I'm mighty glad I am a country chappie sometimes. Even if the web speed aint what it is in the towns.

But to answer the initial question?? Well I have the easy solution. If the move desired a large lottery win in the first place, then the addition of a holiday farm in that mysterious distant NW peninsula for dxing would not be out of the question, and even a remote receiver placed there would be beneficial. But here we are in fairy land again, talking the same old lottery dream that has been talked many many times before in the bars..... and not only by myself!!!!!!

KEN'S DX DIARY AND LOGS - TUESDAY 18th MAY 2010

UNID CAPTION TOP END OF E3:

1600 TODAY at the top end of E3,(The LF end), I had this caption. Any ideas???


Update: RAI new logos





STATION IDENTIFICATION, THANKS TO AB:

I had a logging of Caracol Columbia up on line last month on 1400kHz. I thought no more of it. Sounded like a good ID to me, though I had no idea of the talk before hand that seemed to announce frequencies and telephone numbers. But thanks to the keen ears of Andrew B, I now have the correct station ID. It was not the one I imagined it was, but Em Mariana de Bogota. As always, when told, the id jumps out at you..... Again, tnx for pointing me in the right direction OM.

 Click to listen. I thought it was Radio Caracol at 50s. seems not. Una Radio Para Todos is what is being said!!

TCR 1512:

Tyrone Community Radio heard on 1512 seems to be a bit stronger these days. I heard them the other night, and recorded some off air airchecks. I have been promised by dxers closer to the transmitter than I am, some decent recordings, but so far I only have my own recordings. It is not great by day here, but now 1512 is so clear at night, it is pretty solid in the early evening here, though begins to become messy later in the night.



FEEDER CABLE:

A dx friend on the Skype Chat was asking about the feeder cables I use to reach the start of the main beverage aerial about 200m distant. Below is a photo with some samples. The thick stuff is the cable I would wish for with, but the length I had that went only across the river, and was damaged by a flood some years back. It really is the best of cable. I did find a price on it on line, and it was ridiculous. It's little brother, the thinner coax, is cable I use for maybe 100m or so towards the beverage. After the initial run, all I have is shorter lengths. At one time I did try an A/B test with the thicker wire, against normal coax. I have not found the written results sadly, as I can't recall the year I fell in with this cable (saved it from being burnt for scrap!!). All I can say is that there was a significant difference using the thick cable. Signal strength wise, measured on the NRD 515 meter against Radio North 846.

The other two lengths of samples in the picture are a length of the fibre optic cables that are laid all around here, and as far as I know never used so far. The diggers that stayed at the local Inn gave me the sample when I asked them for it, maybe 12 - 15 years ago. There is another interesting piece of wire which I think was from an old military lead I got from ex army junk stuff. I bet that cable wasn't cheap either. It has about 16 twin and earth shielded pairs as well as a main screen.

If you want a shock, first pour a large brandy. Then search Google for LDF5-50A, the thick cable. The thinner stuff is LDF12-50J. The only writing on the fibre optic is 1308M, and nothing at all written on the grey army cable.



TVDX!!!!

TVDX arrived here in Scotland last week. I wouldn't say I am in high gear yet, as far as intense dxing goes, but I have found the appropriate aerial leads that have been disconnected throughout the year, for various reasons. (Prob lightning reasons).

Logs so far have been E21 Italy E3, NOVA Czech Rep R1 R2, Slovakia R2, RTL Hungary R2, Croatia E4, Austria E4.

Photos below from 13th May show

- 1) Nova R1, lamp illuminating dial to show freq!!
- 2) Nova R2
- 3) Slovakia R2
- 4) ORF Austria E4, qrp TX seemingly
- 5) Croatia HRT E4
- 6) Croatia HRT E4





MORE UNWANTED CRAP FROM SKY!!!

I was out on Friday night and wanted to record the epic Tom Petty 4 hour documentary on BBC4 when I was out, followed by a Stevie Wonder concert. BUT.... There is always a but on these pages....

Sky have taken it upon themselves to add some crap standby mode, so that if the box sits unchanged for so many hours, it switches off to save .0005 of a penny. Great idea, give the guy that thought of that a Crackerjack Pencil, or maybe a boot in the bollocks.

OK, You can press - Services - Auto Standby (option 5) and disable. But if like me your box software has auto updated and if like me you were unaware of this nonsense, you may have missed your favourite show too.

A few months ago I had a pint bought for me in the pub because their Sky system had this intrusive message all the time as well, and they couldn't get rid of it. I was not aware my own old box had auto updated...

While I am in grumpy mode, have you ever flicked past a pay channel on a Sky box if you don't subscribe to any Sky channels? A very annoying pop up screen comes up now, and you have to press back up to get rid of it. Previously you simply flicked up and down the channels without this intrusive sales screen.

KEN'S DX DIARY AND LOGS - WEDNESDAY 12th MAY 2010

LATEST UPDATES:

Not a lot to report of this week radio wise. I have though, included a few recordings made recently. I have given two longish recordings, well a couple of minutes, from VOXM 710 which was one of the first of three stations I heard from across the water, way back on a wild winters night in 1978.

100511_0303_710_vocm_vg.mp3 (849k)

100511_0405_710_vocm_vg.mp3 (599k)

100512_0402_1190_wlib_inc_hd2_id.mp3

100430_0300_1540_kxel.mp3



Click to see a screenshot of VOCM 710

OLD RADIO RECORDINGS:

I have been advised of a great site with many high bitrate recordings in store, and not the usual crap rate you see around the web. At the time of typing it seems to be temporary off line, but anyhow, here is the link.

<http://www.bonniesradiocollectie.tk/>

MAGNUM RADIO RALLY:

Well that was the day of the Magnum Radio Rally here in Scotland. On Sunday David H and I went down to the only major ham rally of the year nowadays. The place was busy enough, but I was not really after anything. I may have bought a WRTH if I had seen one in front of me, but there were none for sale in the whole of the rally. There were a lot of phone chargers, and cheap tools etc, component dealers as well, but I couldn't think on anything I was really after. I bought a couple of Mics at 4 quid each, and a more recent RSGB handbook than the one I have for £2. On the way out the door, there was a little home made notch filter in a decent little box, for 3 quid. It didn't notch!!! But components and box are worth the 3 quid!!



ORBAN EQ/ NOTCH FILTER 642B:

After my little notch filter wouldn't notch from the radio rally, I got to thinking about the problem I am trying to solve. Some of my old tapes may have some hum, or a het on the recordings, so some kind of a notch filter that does not have an adverse effect on the rest of the audio frequencies would be desirable. Yes we all had the audio notch filters from the 80's from ?? (can't remember company name). These were very limited, and an AM transmission sounded like SSB through them. They did get rid of hets though.

Anyway, the audio notch filter on the NRD 545 is really really sharp, and removes hets without disturbing other audio frequencies. I hear the AOR 7030+ has a good one as well.

But when I bought the ORBAN 642B EQ/ NOTCH a couple of years ago, I bought it hoping it would clean up and add some spice to many of the old manky tapes that were recorded on crap equipment in the 80's. This it did, and although notch was mentioned, I have never notched anything out till now.

So I thought I should try harder. I found an old tape with only a test tone. The idea is that it should be easier to notch a tone if the only thing on the tape is a tone. Surprise surprise, I found that I could notch out the tone to 100% with the ORBAN. This could be good for hets on some of the old Caroline recordings, as there was on many recordings an annoying arabic off channel, Tunisia always got the blame. So if they were still on around 962, the same settings would get rid of the 1khz tone?? I have yet to try.

Below is a recording of adjustments to the Orban being done to get rid of tone. I know there are dirty controls, but that will be cleaned soon!!! The point is, I took the het to zero, changed the tape, and Bon Jovi was still OK. He didn't sound like SSB. The tone back in at the end is the result of changing tape to tone tape again obviously, and then switching out the notched controls.

UPDATE: Now as a PS to the first part of the article, I have now included a recording of Caroline with their annoying het in Sept 79. I am heard switching in and out the notch filter. Pretty damn good eh?? I am very impressed with this piece of kit dating to maybe the 1980's when this type of rack mounted studio gear was an absolute fortune. No wonder they hold their prices even now on e bay.

I can now record the airchecks with much better sound quality than previously possible.

Now to find the can of Servisol.

You can see the ORBAN units installed on the photo on the home page.



The ORBAN notch filter is the bottom unit

tone_test_orban_inc_dirty_control.mp3

790922_clip_orban_test_on_caroline_het.mp3

NB: ORBAN is the legendary company that made AM radio what it was in the States with their superb audio processing units. I am surprised when I find experienced radio people that have never heard of an Orban Optimod.

The ORBAN OPTIMOD is what gave Radio Nova 738, Caroline 963, KISS 1008 etc their beefy audio on MW here in Europe in the 1980's, although much of that was to do with the engineer that set it up in the first place.





KEN'S DX DIARY AND LOGS - WEDNESDAY 5th MAY 2010

DAWN AT THESE LATTITUDES:

Dawn - such a lovely time of the morning, whether you are up with the lark to see the sunrise, or coming home late on a Saturday night, maybe from that party that you shouldn't have went to at your age, but what the hell.

I was awakened by noisy geese yesterday morning at 0430 local, which is 0330 GMT, and it was that half light when the smaller birds were already up and about. It was nice. It is good to see for myself instead of relying on the greyline software. So maybe the times for the dawn enhancement at this time of year will be 0300 and 0400 rather than 0500. It is the time of year that always seems to catch up fast, and before you know it, mid summer is here.

TV DX APPEARS ALREADY:

I have had my first band 1 TVDX of the season yesterday. E21 from Italy was seen, with quite a good peak in the afternoon, not long after talking about sporadic e on the skype dx chat box. I was not really set up with the camera or even to record sound from ICOM VHF rx. But the band 1 aerial feed has been found and plugged in. Amazing how things get moved if not in use for many months. I haven't even got the d100 reconnected as yet.....

An old friend and fellow local dxer from years ago used to always recon that the first week in May often produced the first tvdx of the season. I wish I knew what happened to all his old photos when he died. He used to take images of the TVDX at a time when I had no camera capable of taking photos off the TV. I published a photo of my late old

pal here last summer, Ian Mason. There may be one or two dxers who still remember him, as he had contact with a few dxers on a regular basis.

TIME FOR THE HAM RALLY AGAIN:

Not that I am holding my breath, but I will be attending the Magnum Rally again this year. Last year I couldn't have even bought a WRTH at it. There were no vintage books, or old junk that took my fancy. But you just can't take the pot and say you are not going. This may be the year there is an abundance of old crap for only a few shillings!!!

OLD STORIES ABOUT OLD TAPES - YET AGAIN:

Yes, it is sometimes hard to remember the days when the tapes were the only media readily available for recording, and the reliability factor of them was questionable at times.

I have been archiving many of my old tapes of late. Many play fine after all these years. But I have been back in the 70's this past week, and copying some of the older cassettes, which are more than 30 years old now. I had forgotten how I used to be plagued by the crap tape syndrome. Using the Pyral tapes, or the Pinnacle, I remember the mechanical jam ups. It still happens with these manky old cassettes. Some hi fi guys or guys involved in radio would say, yea, buy TDK tapes. But they were more expensive, and at the time, we didn't have a bottomless pit of cash for blank tapes, never mind good quality ones. Finding them to buy was no easy task at that time out here in the sticks either.

It was years before I realised that good quality tapes meant "mechanically" good, not just "audio" good. Many tapes record OK, but the mechanisms used to jam easy, or somehow some tapes would chew up easily.

These Pyral things I am working with at the minute often stop half way through, because the tapes are well jammed. Trying to rewind with your finger shows the extent they are jammed. Often a good few bangs off of a hard surface, like the edge of the bench for example, will be enough to free the tape. In extreme cases I have to change shells. Something I always remember about those Pyral tapes too was their index cards. They had a real strong smell like some new books have of the inks used in them I suppose. Even after more than 30 years, some of them, especially those that have not been played as often, still have the same distinctive smell of "new book" from the labels after all these years.

A radio friend used to send BASF C60's, those orange ones you used to get, and they were shocking for chewing up!!! Even c60's!! Some were more guilty than others of the dreaded wow and flutter. I have had to swap shells of some old tapes just to get them

to play properly.

And then of course some tapes I have dug out sound terrible, till it is realised the tiny square of foam that is at the centre of the tape to keep the actual tape against the heads has gone. Luckily I don't tend to throw out much, and therefore have plenty "spare parts".

Sometimes I have used a c60, giving obviously only 30m per side. But sometimes there would be some bad QRN from faulty power lines over a mile away that used to cause grief around here, and the tape would have to be stopped. Quite often I may only have a 10m clip of something or other, or maybe even only a few precious airchecks. Maybe signals were very poor. But these days, some of the stations which the recordings are of, may only have a few known recordings available, so a rubbish recording is better than no recording at all.

I recently suspected a cassette player of chewing tapes, and almost ripped it out and threw in another machine. After playing side A of a MEMOREX C90 first flawlessly, side B would not play without a lot of chewing and wowing. Tape path and heads were cleaned again just to be sure. Still the same. Tried the first c120 I found lying around the shack, as they were REPUTED to be worse at chewing and wowing, although not in my experience. Played perfectly. Hmm. Tape Faulty??

I had a TDK SF cassette lying close by, so I changed the shells. The former chewer played perfectly. I guess the reason was inside the sticky shell?? That is the first time I have ever had to split one of these Memorex C90, MRX3 late 70's tapes. So confident were the manufacturers of the day that they had not even put screws in their tape housings / shells, so they have to be prised open.