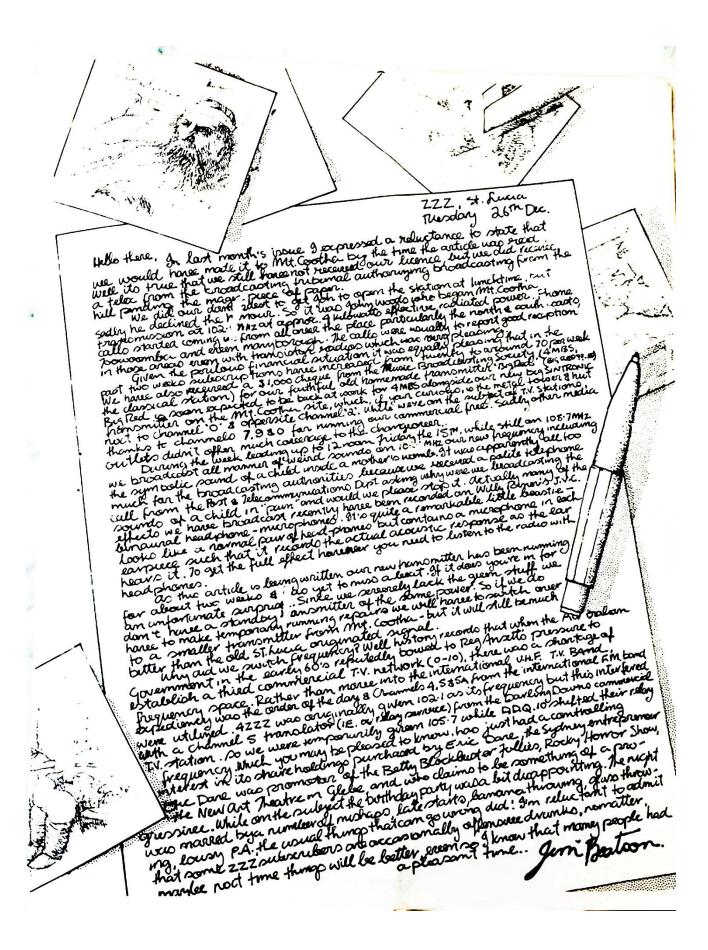
The First Transmission from Mount Coot-tha December 1978



ZZZ, St. Lucia Tuesday 26th December 1978

Hello there,

In last month's issue I expressed a reluctance to state that we would have made it to Mt. Cootha by the time the article was read. Well, it's true that we still have not received our licence, but we did receive a telex from the broadcasting tribunal authorizing broadcasting from the hill pending the major piece of paper.

We did our damnedest to get Joh to open the station at lunchtime, but sadly he declined the honour. So, it was John Woods who began Mt. Cootha transmission at 102.1 MHz at approximately 4 kilowatts effective radiated power. Phone calls started coming in from all over the place particularly the north and south coasts, Toowoomba and even Maryborough. The calls were to report good reception in those areas, even with transistor radios, which was very pleasing.

Given the perilous financial situation it was equally pleasing that in the past two weeks subscriptions have increased from twenty to around 70 per week. We have also received a \$1,000 cheque from the Music Broadcasting Society (4MBS, the classical station) for our faithful old homemade transmitter "Big Red" soon expected to be back at work for 4MBS alongside our new big SINTRONIC transmitter on the Mt. Cootha site, which, if you are curious, is the metal tower and hut next to Channel 0 and opposite Channel 2. While we are on the subject of T.V. stations, thanks to channels 7, 9 & 0 for running our commercial free. Sadly, other media outlets didn't offer much coverage to the changeover.

During the week leading up to 12 noon Friday the 15th (December), while still on 105.7 MHz we broadcast all manner of weird sounds on 102.1 MHz our new frequency including the symbolic sound of a child inside a mother's womb. It was apparently all too much for the broadcasting authorities because we received a polite telephone call from the Post and Telecommunications Department asking why we were broadcasting the sounds of a child in "pain" and would we please stop it.

As this article is being written, our new transmitter has been running for about two weeks and as yet to miss a beat. If it does, you're in for an unfortunate surprise. Since we seriously lack the green stuff, we don't have a standby transmitter of the same power. So, if we do have to make temporary running repairs we will have to switch over to a smaller transmitter from Mt. Cootha - but it will still be much better than the old St. Lucia originated signal.

Why did we switch frequency? Well history records that when the Australian government in the early 1960s reputedly bowed to Reg Ansett's pressure to establish a third commercial T.V. network (0 -10), there was a shortage of frequency space. Rather than move into the international UHF T.V. band, expediency was the order of the day and channels 4, 5, and 5A from the international FM band were utilized. 4ZZZ was originally given 102.1 as its frequency but this interfered with a channel 5 translator (i.e. a relay service) from the Darling Downs commercial T.V. station. So, we were temporarily given 105.7 while DDQ 10 shifted their relay T.V. frequency. Which you may be pleased to know, has just had a controlling interest in its share holdings purchased by Eric Dare, the Sydney entrepreneur. Eric Dare was promoter of the Betty Blockbuster Follies, The Rocky Horror Show, the New Art Theatre in Glebe, and who claims to be something of a progressive.

While on the subject, the birthday party was a bit disappointing. The night was marred by a number of mishaps, late start, banana throwing, glass throwing, lousy P.A., the usual things that can go wrong did. I'm reluctant to admit that some ZZZ subscribers are occasionally offensive drunks, no matter, maybe next time things will be better, even so, I know many people had a pleasant time.

Jim Beatson

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