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Dear Alan,
Many thanks for your letter and the reprint - I had, of course, seen the original, buried among the pulsar papers. Glad to hear that everything is going so well.

There must be something masochistic in your working at the ends of the spectrum, governed by weather conditions et al. However, I shall be going to yet higher frequencies viz. optical, and doing some run-of-the-mill spectroscopic work on ye olde 4c galaxies, as it's rather frustrating not yet being able to do any radio observations.

The story on our 'megarray' (splendid word!) is a sad one. We were ready to build the full-size array to do a $>4c$ survey at 250 MHz, when lo (and behold), up goes a synchronous satellite bumping out 500 w e.r.p. on - yes - 249.1 MHz! How we did laugh. It is way outside the satellite bands, of course, but as it's a military satellite they have every right to use military frequencies - I suppose. (We could

live with a non-synchronous one, of course).

As this is a prototype for a big one to be launched next year (big? Help!) it's no good waiting for it to go away, so we have been looking for fresh pastures ν -wise, and it seems we may be clear at ~ 325 MHz, still with an 8% bandwidth (how lunatic can you get?). I feel that we really must get moving or the Italians will beat us, although our positions should be much better (hopefully around 5" arc in α, δ).

Thus far, I've done very little productive work, mainly finishing off Cambridge papers (two in *Astrophys. Letters*) and giving the 'Radio Sources' course. I'm replying to your letter now, not to shame you, but because we have the A.A.S. meeting in Austin for the next few days, then I'm going to Dallas for the 4th Texas Symp., then it's Christmas, etc...

I was amused to hear about Chris Hodges - fast work! Must be something in the air or the water supply, or maybe it's just the cold weather! Sounds a dangerous place, anyway!

As for future plans, I still have an open mind (wide open - I can feel quite a draught)

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I can see that, at the end of my initial 2-year stay here, things might just be getting interesting. Most of the people here are ridiculously optimistic and are thinking in terms of supersynthesis, which is crazy with such a small group and minimal financial support. However, one doesn't achieve anything by being too pessimistic and the attitude is 'God will provide, but failing that NSF might cough up'.

America, as a country, still stinks so far as I am concerned, but it's no worse than I remember it, which is something, I suppose. Being fairly insulated against life anyway, I get along fine! Actually, some of the faculty here are 'real nice guys', and I enjoyed giving the course (I learnt a lot!) - ended up with my lecture on the Ryle-Longair theory! I often wonder how much effect that had on my efforts to stay on at Cambridge - maybe one can be too honest sometimes! I am still sure that leaving was a good thing - it's a great place, and good fun especially for research students but one has to decide between a 5- and 50-year stay and although it was NOT directly my decision, I'm sure it

was the correct one. Sussex could have been interesting and I would still consider going there if they had something more than a one-year fellowship going.

I heard that M.R. has his £2 million for the 3-mile telescope, and they have nine new students this year (how many do you need to build a telescope? They will probably look like a chain gang, on the 3-mile railroad!).

I was glad to see your $10.0\%^{5?}$ MHz results published recently. I take it you don't believe the L.F. variations in Tau A, Cas A, etc., published - or rather, referred to by F.G.S. - in a recent Nature. Shades of Sholomitski! Still, with pulsars in the Crab, where will it all end? Poor old QSOs are relegated to a single review paper at Dallas - they are old hat, I suppose.

By the way, our 107" (optical!) was dedicated a couple of weeks back - during a snowstorm. World's 3rd largest (telescope, i.e.) for a few months.

Hope everything continues to go well,

Sincerely,

Derek.