

NEWSLETTER - MAY 2010

In the last newsletter I mentioned some of the ongoing work that was taking place. Well some of this work has resulted in the telescope being 'down' for the last few months. The new motor and gearbox has now been installed and on Wednesday 28 April 2010 the new front end, which has an improved sensitivity, was finally installed and we started recording data.

That night a strong but unexpected source was detected. After a bit of investigation we established that it was coming from an American GPS satellite (NAVSTAR 63 (USA203)). During the last week of April this satellite was orbiting within the beam of the telescope resulting in the strong peak shown in Figure 1. Figure 2 shows the satellite track over Durban on 28 April. The satellite has since moved outside the beam and is no longer detectable. Further details on this satellite can be found at: <http://www.n2yo.com/?s=34661>

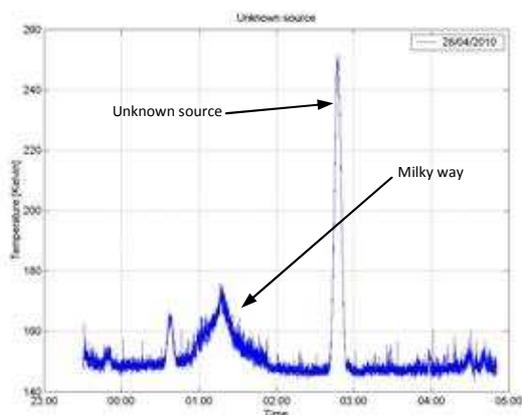


Figure 1

It is also interesting to see that the latest Google Earth images are now so clear that the Indlebe dish is clearly visible. To find us go to the co-ordinates 29° 51' 15.61" S, 31° 00' 16.65" E.

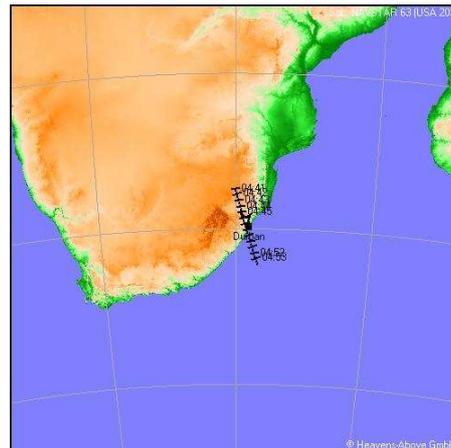


Figure 2

As promised in the last newsletter I have some information about **INDLEBE ENKULU**. For those unfamiliar with the Zulu language, this means 'big ear'. This is one of two new masters' degree projects just starting up. This will be a completely new radio telescope with a diameter of 7 m. It will be sited at Monteseel, approximately 40 km West of Durban. This will be a fully steerable wire mesh dish and is a project by Mr John Fielding.

Another new masters' degree student is Mr Dave Callaghan who will be working on combining two 1,8 m commercial dishes to form a small interferometry array.

If you have any comments or questions please feel free to contact me by return email. Should you wish to be removed from the mailing list, please send me an email with the words 'remove me'.

Gary J van Vuuren