

ATCA/Parkes Forum Meeting Minutes

DATE: 15th September 2015
TIME: 11:30 - 12:30
LOCATION: Basement Conference Room
FOCUS: Parkes

Phil Edwards and John Sarkissian opened with Science Operations:

- John Sarkissian:
 - The UPS system failed last night and so no observing has been going since
 - the fire alarm alerted everyone to the power failure
 - the telescope wasn't able to be stowed during power outage, but eventually they were able to stow
 - the maser has its own UPS so it was OK, but the clock had stopped
- Phil Edwards:
 - schedules are out for next semester, but Parkes only runs through 24th of December because it is still unclear when exactly the Multi-beam will come down and the PAF will be installed
 - there are some RADAR observations planned with Tidbinbilla of some nearby asteroids, but first some moon bounce tests will commence
 - Stacy Mader has become a father for the second time and is on parental leave. CONGRATULATIONS, STACY!!!!
 - PAF website: <http://www.atnf.csiro.au/observers/apply/MPfR-PAF-on-Parkes.html>
 - 10/50 observing has been scheduled, but there is LOTS of RFI at 50 cm; DFB3 had moderate success
 - Parkes System Scientist -- an offer has been made and we are waiting for the acceptance of the offer, so someone should assume this role soon; George Hobbs and Lisa Harvey-Smith are filling in in the meantime
- Ryan Shannon:
 - equipment update:
 - Brett Prestig is going to be changing one of the clocks to sync with the maser for pulsar timing; Sept 22nd is scheduled for this change
 - DFB3: if this is not going to be used next semester, then Brett would like to remove it to free up rack space
- Matthew Kerr:
 - working on RFI mitigation tests

George Hobbs and Simon Johnston gave Parkes Systems Update:

- George Hobbs:
 - is in China at the moment; the FAST telescope is real, it does exist, and is impressive! FAST folks have been using Parkes observations for commissioning
 - 2 new postdocs will be starting at the end of this month
 - 1 postdoc will spend 1 year here at CASS commissioning the PAF and then move to Bonn with the PAF and work for 1 year in Bonn on commissioning it on Effelsberg
 - The ultra-wideband receiver project on Parkes will begin soon
 - there needs to be better communication about the backends -- who's building what?
 - SETI Project -- no details yet
 - New observing modes -- for example, Matthew Kerr working on combining HI absorption with pulsar timing, ...
- Simon Johnston:
 - gave more specific dates and timelines for PAF:
 - last week in Jan/1st week of Feb 2016, the Multi-beam will come off the telescope and the PAF will go up
 - Feb/Mar 2016 will be commissioning the PAF
 - 2016APR semester will (possibly) begin science observations, which will continue until Sept 2016
 - the PAF will be taken down and shipped to Effelsberg in Sept 2016
 - the primary science objective for the PAF will be FRBs, however Lister Staveland-Smith is also interested in HI science
 - the PAF will currently not have any filters installed because the RFI environment below 1150 MHz is too awful to be of any use
 - the PAF will operate between 1150 - 1800 MHz with a 300 MHz bandwidth
 - data rates for the PAF are extremely high, so the data will be managed online and only the relevant data bits will be kept, the rest will be chucked
 - PAF will not be physically rotated but rather, the beam will be rotated through software

Mark Wieringa gave a software update:

- Livedata has been updated with some code from Mark Calabretta; Gridzilla can now handle larger datasets than before; Catzilla has been extended with some new options
- Stacy Mader is encouraging people to submit tickets rather than just seeking out a person to fix the problem directly; this way, everyone can be informed of problems, issues, bugs, etc.

Identifying and tabling of Parkes issues and action items:

- If anyone is interested in getting involved with the PAF, this is a good time to do so
- If anyone is interested in searching for aliens, this is also a good time to get involved with SETI
- The Parkes User's Guide is in need of updating, but with all the new projects coming along, perhaps now is not the best time; rather, keeping a Wiki page up-to-date with current status and developments might be better
- An HI person is needed to act as a liaison between Lister and the PAF/Parkes
- RFI projects are really important right now
- Parkes Data Archive is an important project
- The ultra-wideband receiver will require a combination of expertise
- Matthew Kerr: Parkes is project driven, so people who take on tasks will be part of a project, not necessarily just part of the forum --> technical expertise is required