

Lincolnshire Poacher (E03)

Cherry Ripe (E03a)

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MI6 stations “Lincolnshire Poacher” and “Cherry Ripe”

Operational since the first part of the 1970's and active until July 2008 (Lincolnshire Poacher) and December 2009 (Cherry Ripe).

"[The Lincolnshire Poacher](#)" was the nickname of a British numbers station that was believed to be operated by the British Secret Intelligence Service, a.k.a. MI6.

The transmitter site was at Akrotiri on Cyprus.

The station used two bars from the English folk song "The Lincolnshire Poacher" as their interval signal. On the hour the interval signal is played twelve times, followed by a five figure header read ten times by a woman. This is repeated for ten minutes. After that, six tones are transmitted followed by exactly 200 five figure groups. At 45 minutes past the hour the interval signal is sent once again and then the station stays silent until the start of the next hour.

The Lincolnshire Poacher broadcasted each day of the week at 1200, 1300, 1400, 1500, 1600, 1700, 1800, 1900, 2000, 2100 and 2200 UTC. The transmissions were always on 3 parallel frequencies. The Poacher transmitted its last message in July 2008.

The Poacher's sister station was "[Cherry Ripe](#)". It got this nickname because it used several bars of the folk song "Cherry Ripe" as their interval signal. The station transmitted for years from the US base on Guam and moved to Humpty Doo, Australia in late September 2009. From this site the station only transmitted during two months until it suddenly stopped in December 2009.

On the hour the interval signal is played twelve times, followed by a five figure header read ten times by a woman. This is repeated for ten minutes. After that, six tones are transmitted plus exactly 200 five figure groups. At 45 minutes past the hour the interval signal is sent once again and then the station stays silent until the start of the next hour.

Cherry Ripe had also 11 transmissions per day but not on Saturday. The broadcasts were on Sunday - Friday at 0000, 0100, 0500, 0700, 1000, 1100, 1200, 1300, 1400, 2200, 2300 UTC. The transmissions were always on 2 parallel frequencies. Cherry Ripe transmitted its last message in December 2009.

On the 27th February 2000 the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CyBC) broadcasted a TV story on Numbers Stations.

With help from Cypriot radio amateurs, reporter George Georgiou managed to prove, using signal strength and DF, that Lincolnshire Poacher is transmitting from a RAF Unit in the SBA in Akrotiri. But, as DF showed, there could be another two, smaller transmitters somewhere in the Middle East. The main transmission, though, emanates from the RAF Unit in Akrotiri.

The site of transmission is the 12 Signals Unit of the RAF. Its installations include many facilities, and LP is just a small part of them. It's a very big site, so you can only see a part of it in the pictures.

The location of the Unit is in the British Sovereign Base Area of Akrotiri (in the south of Cyprus) and the exact location is just next to the village of Akrotiri. It is an ideal place for transmissions, with the sea surrounding the Unit. in addition, there is also a salt lake nearby.

The info and pictures on this site come from George Georgiou, TV reporter with the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CyBC).

George made the pictures exclusively available for 'Numbers & Oddities'





The texts of the folk songs “The Lincolnshire Poacher” and “Cherry Ripe”

The Lincolnshire Poacher - printed at York about 1776

When I was bound apprentice, in famous Lincolnsheer,
Full well I served my master, for more than seven year,
Till I took up with poaching, as you shall quickly hear:
Oh! 'tis my delight of a shiny night, in the season of the year.

As me and my companions were setting of a snare,
'Twas then we seed the gamekeeper, for him we did not care,
For we can wrestle and fight, my boys, and jump o'er everywhere:
Oh! 'tis my delight of a shiny night, in the season of the year.

As me and my comrades were setting four or five,
And taking on him up again, we caught the hare alive;
We caught the hare alive, my boys, and through the woods did steer:
Oh! 'tis my delight of a shiny night, in the season of the year.

I threw him on my shoulder and then we trudged home
We took him to a neighbor's house, and sold him for a crown;
We sold him for a crown, my boys, but I did not tell you where
Oh, 'tis my delight on a shiny night in the season of the year.

Bad luck to every magistrate that lives in Lincolnsheer;
Success to every poacher that wants to sell a hare;
Bad luck to every gamekeeper that will not sell his deer:
Oh! 'tis my delight of a shiny night, in the season of the year.

Cherry Ripe - Robert Herrick. 1591-1674.

Cherry-ripe, ripe, ripe, I cry,
Full and fair ones; come and buy,
If so be you ask me where
They do grow, I answer: There,
Where my Julia's lips do smile;
There's the land, or cherry-isle,
Whose plantations fully show
All the year where cherries grow
