



Jodrell Bank during the Cold War

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The 76-m radio telescope at Jodrell Bank was just being completed when Sputnik was launched in October 1957 and its first observation was to track the launch rocket (an ICBM launcher) using radar. It continued to play a role in defence until the completion of the Fylingdales early warning radar in 1963, including availability for missile tracking during the Cuban missile crisis. The big dish was also used for commanding USAF/NASA space probes, intercepting the first pictures from the Soviet lunar lander and tracking Apollo missions. At the same time, Bernard Lovell and his team were working closely with scientists in the USSR and the US on various technical and scientific projects including VLBI.

This talk will describe some of these non-astronomical uses of and motivations for the telescope as well as aspects of the scientific diplomacy involved in these collaborations during a period of East-West tension.