

SI9AM, King Chulalongkorn Memorial Amateur Radio Station By Lars Aronsson, SM3CVM

Calling CQ, CQ. This is SI9AM welcoming calls from all over the world.

King Chulalongkorn's Road follows a rolling landscape down to a little valley. Something white flashes through the trees; in a while it turns out to be a most unusual kind of building in this part of the world. A fascinatingly beautiful exotic building stands, majesthetically, in the middle of a Nordic scenery. We have arrived at the King Chulalongkorn Memorial Building in Utanede, Jämtland, the only building of its kind outside Thailand.



History takes us back more than a hundred years. In 1897, King Chulalongkorn travelled from Siam (since 1939 known as Thailand) to Stockholm in the kingdom of Sweden. He also went further north to acquaint himself with the Swedish forest industry. On the way back he passed through Utanede to the Indal river valley and on the river to the sea coast. The visit of a royal guest from far away raised a great deal of interest among the local population.

In memory of the event, the little gravel road through the forest that the king had been travelling was later named King Chulalongkorn Road. The rumour about the road spread in Thailand and Thai monks began to come to Utanede to walk on the beloved king's road. Little by little, contacts were created between Ragunda county and Thailand, and these eventually led to a decision to build the King Chulalongkorn Memorial Building. Construction was started in 1997. On 19 July every year, the king's memory is celebrated with a ceremony with numerous Thai visitors from various parts of the world in attendance.

How does amateur radio fit in this? Enthusiastic radio amateurs from the Swedish regions of Jämtland and Västernorrland saw here a possibility to set up a facility for visitors who would wish to operate a well-equipped station in a very special setting. Exotic because of the beautiful Thai memorial building to which a Thai teak house has recently been added. But special also because of the fantastic scenery with forests, hills and water inviting to outdoor life, walks and fishing in the pristine wilds.



- We really enjoyed our stay at SI9AM say Erik, SM0AGD and XYL Eva, SM00TG. An excellent place for holiday combined with amateur radio and touristic experience, they say and continue: The Indal river valley has a wonderful scenery, there is an exotic touch of Thailand, plus a well-equipped amateur radio station with a unique call sign suited for DX as well as for rag chews. Count on us coming back, Erik and Eva say.

The station is in a building next to King Chulalongkorn Road, a couple of hundred meters from the Thai buildings. At the station there is a bunk bed for two, a toilet and a possibility to warm one's food. There is a restaurant in the building and a number of simple rooms which are open in the summer months. Hotels, restaurants and other services are available the year round at a distance of 10 to 20 kilometers from Utanede. The nearest cities are Sundsvall and Östersund, 90 and 130 kilometers away. The station is available for visiting operators around the year for a small fee.

The station equipment consists of an FT 1000 MP with an SB-220, plus an IC-735 with an IC2KL. A 24-meter mast carries a tribander beam for 10/15/20 meters and a two-element for 40 meters. For other bands there are various wire antennas. Computer logging with either TR or DX4WIN.

An annual high point is the 19th of July with a lot of visitors, especially Thais living in northern Europe. The day is celebrated in memory of King Chulalongkorn with cultural activities and other events. At that time, or during the nearest week-end, SI9AM welcomes guest operators and other visitors. In 2002, SI9AM was honoured to receive HS1VRD, M.R. Chakrarot Chitrabongs and Ms. Phinranai Chotikanta. They expressed their appreciation of the station.



Facts about the visiting amateur radio station SI9AM
County Z302

Locator JP82iw

Latitude 62.5718 N

Longitude 14.4034 E

QSL via SM3CVM, bureau or CBA

Reservations via SM3CVM or SM3FJF

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Information and photos at <http://www.qsl.net/si9am>

Information about King Chulalongkorn Memorial

Building can be found at <http://www.ragunda.se/english>