



OXTALES

First published 1980

Club Nets on VK2RPM
146.700MHz
(CTCSS 91.5Hz)
Sundays 0900
Thursdays 1930

Newsletter of the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club Inc.,

PO Box 712 Port Macquarie 2444

Club email address: vk2bor@orarc.org also on Facebook as Oxley

Region Amateur Radio Club

Club Website: <https://www.orarc.org>



ORARC's fifty third year

November 2024

PRESIDENT: Henry Lundell VK2ZHE 6582 0534
VICE PRES: Paul Colledge VK2ICQ 6580 9912
TREASURER: Dennis Meade VK2DAM 6582 2998
SECRETARY: Peter Fletcher VK2HPF 0423117725

President's Report

November 2024



President's Report

We apologise that there was not a September 2024 issue published this year. Oxtales Editor John Hansen VK2AYQ had to move house just as he had begun compiling a September issue and his computer had to be packed up for the removalists. Unfortunately, by the time he was re-established in his new abode it was time to start work in the November 2024 issue. For this reason the November issue is a bumper edition which includes material originally intended for the September issue.

Christmas Party

The club's 2024 Christmas Party will be held on Saturday the 7th of December.

The venue will again be the covered picnic area at the Long Point Vineyard and Art

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ORARC VHF/UHF Repeaters

MIDDLE BROTHER

VK2RPM 2 metre (Voice - CTCSS 91.5Hz)
O/P 146.700MHz - I/P 146.100MHz
VK2RPM EchoLink Node Number 916007

VK2RPM 70 cm (DMR Radnet)
O/P 438.525MHz - I/P 433.525MHz

VK2RPM-1 (APRS Digipeater)
SX 145.175MHz 1200bps

TELEGRAPH POINT

VK2RCN 2 metre (Voice)
O/P 147.000 MHz - I/P 146.400 MHz

VK2RCN 70 cm (DMR)
O/P 438.425MHz - I/P 433.425MHz

VK2RCN (6m Repeater-CTCSS 91.5Hz)
O/P 53.800 MHz - I/P 52.800 MHz
VK2RCN-5 (APRS iGate Digipeater)
SX 145.175 MHz 1200 Bps

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Down The Coax

Monthly meetings & Friday Nights held
in the S.E.S. Building Central Road, Port
Macquarie.

Monthly General Meeting
Saturday 7 September 2024 2:00 pm –
Guest Speaker Sandy Brucesmith
VK2WH – Amateur Radio in the 1950s,
60s and 70s

Coffee Morning - Brooklyn's Burger
Bar, Thrumster
Thursday 12 September 2024

Friday Night Get-Together
Friday 20 September 2024 7.00 pm

Monthly General Meeting
Saturday 5 October 2024 2:00 pm –
Guest Speaker Tim Tuck VK2XAX Mi-
crowave Communications

Coffee Morning - Brooklyn's Burger
Bar, Thrumster
10am Thursday 10 October 2024

Friday Night Get-Together
Friday 18 October 2024 7.00 pm

The 67th Jamboree On The Air
Sat & Sun 19 and 20 October 2024.
Cancelled

Beechwood Billycart Classic
Sunday 27 October 2024

Monthly General Meeting
Saturday 2 November 2024 2:00 pm –
Guest Speaker Dr Peter Fletcher
VK2HPF– Thorium Reactors

Coffee Morning - Brooklyn's Burger
Bar, Thrumster
10am Thursday 14 November 2024

Friday Night Get-Together
Friday 15 November 2024 7.00 pm

Spring VHF UHF Contest
Sat & Sun 23 & 24 November 2024

Net Controllers' Roster Nets on Voice Repeater VK2RPM 146.700 MHz

Sundays
(0900 Local)

Thursdays
(1930 Local)

December 2024

VK2FMGM	Dec 1	VK2EM	Dec 5
VK2FMGM	Dec 8	VK2ZHE	Dec 12
VK2FMGM	Dec 15	VK2ICQ	Dec 19
VK2FMGM	Dec 22	VK2EM	Dec 26
VK2FMGM	Dec 29		

January 2025

		VK2ZHE	Jan 2
VK2FMGM	Jan 5	VK2ICQ	Jan 9
VK2FMGM	Jan 12	VK2EM	Jan 16
VK2FMGM	Jan 19	VK2ZHE	Jan 23
VK2FMGM	Jan 26	VK2ICQ	Jan 30

February 2024

VK2FMGM	Feb 2	VK2EM	Feb 6
VK2FMGM	Feb 9	VK2ZHE	Feb 13
VK2FMGM	Feb 16	VK2ICQ	Feb 20
VK2FMGM	Feb 23	VK2EM	Feb 27

ORARC Christmas Party –Saturday 7
December 2024 – 10:30 am to 2 pm -
Long Point Vineyard and Art Gallery
Covered Picnic Area. (No December
Monthly General Meeting)

Coffee Morning - Brooklyn's Burger
Bar, Thrumster
10am Thursday 12 December 2024

Friday Night Get-Together
Friday 20 December 2024 7.00 pm

Monthly General Meeting
Saturday 4 January 2025 2:00 pm
Coffee Morning - Brooklyn's Burger
Bar, Thrumster

10am Thursday 10 January 2025

Friday Night Get-Together
Friday 17 January 2025 7.00 pm

Monthly General Meeting
Saturday 1 February 2025 2:00 pm –
Guest Speaker Sandy Brucesmith
VK2WH – Amateur Radio in the 1950s,
60s and 70s Part 2



Gallery at 6 Cooina Place, Lake Cathie. Cooina Place runs off Long Point Drive which in turn runs off Houston Mitchell Drive. This is the “Ghost Road” which runs between Ocean Drive just south of Lake Cathie, and the Pacific Highway. The location is easy to find but a map is available on the Vineyard web site at <http://www.longpointvineyard.com.au/contact-us/>

The Christmas party will be from 10:30 am onwards. There will be a sausage sizzle barbeque lunch followed by delicious pavlova and trifle desserts. Please bring your own salads and nibbles and drinks. Note that alcoholic drinks may not be brought to the venue but the Cellar Door will be open for purchases. The club will have some soft drinks and water available. Tea and coffee will also be available.

We look forward to a good attendance at this year's Christmas party. Please take the opportunity to come along and socialize. The covered picnic area has an elevated timber floor. The cover provides shade from the sun and offers shelter in the event of rain. There is no charge and family and friends are most welcome. If you have a folding chair and table, please bring them to help with the seating.

ORARC

ORARC Monthly General Meetings now only include a short 15 minute business meeting before a presentation by a guest speaker. The new meeting format leaves plenty of time for members to socialize over tea and coffee and biscuits.

The new meeting format has proven to be very popular but of course it does mean that we need a guest speaker for ten meetings a year. There is no Monthly Meeting in December as the ORARC Annual Christmas Party is held in place of the formal meeting. Also, as the August Monthly General Meeting is held after the AGM each year, there usually isn't an August Guest Speaker.

Please let the Committee know if you are able to assist by doing a presentation yourself on a topic of interest, or if you are able to suggest a suitable guest speaker.

As has been mentioned, there will not be a December Monthly General Meeting. As is traditional, the Christmas Party on Saturday the 7th of December 2024 takes the place of the December meeting.

The January Monthly General Meeting on Saturday the 4th of January 2025 will not have a formal guest speaker. After the 15 minute business meeting there will be an opportunity for “show and tell” and short talks from the floor. There will be extra time for socializing over tea and coffee and biscuits for afternoon tea.



The guest speaker for the February Monthly General Meeting on Saturday the 1st of February 2025, after the 15 minute business meeting will be Sandy Brucesmith VK2WH with part 2 of his presentation on Amateur Radio in the 1950s, 60s and 70s.

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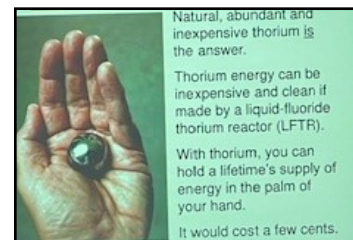
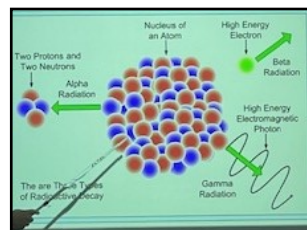
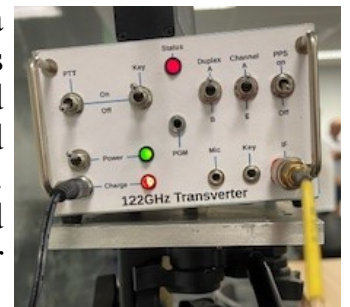
At the 7th of September 2024 Monthly General Meeting those present were treated to a most informative and entertaining talk by Sandy Brucesmith VK2WH on Amateur Radio in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. Sandy still had a lot more material to cover and by a unanimous request has been invited to present part 2 of his talk at the February Monthly General Meeting on Saturday the 1st of February 2025.



The Guest Speaker at the 7th of October 2024 Monthly General Meeting was Tim Tuck VK2XAX with a presentation entitled "The Road to 122GHz". Tim is a well known microwave enthusiast who talked about his personal journey to build kits for the 122GHz amateur radio band.



At the conclusion of his talk, Tim demonstrated a pair of 122GHz transverters communicating across the room. When you are the first in an area to build equipment for a microwave band you have to build two sets in order to be able to test the equipment. This was a particularly interesting presentation and demonstration showcasing cutting edge Amateur Radio construction.



At the 2nd of November 2024 Monthly General Meeting Dr Peter Fletcher VK2HPF delivered his much awaited presentation on Thorium Nuclear Reactors.

Peter is a physicist with a wealth of both theoretical and practical knowledge on this very topical subject. There was great interest in everything that Peter had to say and there was an extended question time after the formal part of the presentation.

Friday night get togethers



The monthly Friday night get togethers at 7pm on the third Friday of each month are an excellent opportunity to meet up with fellow members. Members are invited to bring items along for "Show and Tell". There is always something interesting to look at and discuss. For example the old alignment tools in the photograph



on the left. It is also an opportunity to bring equipment in if you would like assistance from the collective "brains trust. Rag chewing and brainstorming over tea, coffee and biscuits is always popular. The 20th of December 2024 Friday Night Get together will be last Club activity for 2023.

Remember to put 2pm on Saturday the 4th of January 2025 in your calendar now for the January Monthly General Meeting as the first Club activity for 2025.

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Coffee Mornings



The informal Coffee Mornings at 10am on the second Thursday of each month continue to be very popular. The venue is Brooklyn's Burger Bar in the Sovereign Hills shopping centre at Thrumster.

The last Coffee Morning for 2024 is at 10am on Thursday the 12th of December 2024.

The first Coffee Morning for 2025 is at 10am on Thursday the 10th of January 2025.

The Coffee Mornings are a great opportunity to meet fellow members and their families socially over a leisurely morning tea.

AGM

The ORARC Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday the 3rd of August 2024. Normally the AGM is reported in the September issue of Oxtales but as a September issue was not published this year, the AGM results are included in the November 2024 issue this time.

Thank you to Ziggy Malter VK2TN for being the Returning Officer and conducting the AGM elections.

Written nominations were received for all the Committee positions. This was most encouraging and got the AGM elections off to a good start.

I am most honoured to have been re-elected as President and Public Officer for the 2024 – 2025 year. I was also re-elected as Repeater Chairman and VK2BOR Station Manager.

Congratulations to Paul Colledge VK2ICQ on being re-elected Vice President.

Congratulations to Dr Peter Fletcher VK2HPF on being elected Secretary. Peter is a particularly welcome addition to the Committee. He brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the position. Peter hit the ground running with making and following up the application initiated by Sandy Brucesmith VK2WH to gain access to the Tacking Point Lighthouse building for the 2024 International Lighthouse and Lightship Weekend. Peter had set up TidyHQ for the Port Macquarie Astronomical Association in his previous role as Vice President of the Association. His detailed knowledge of TidyHQ has been of great assistance to ORARC in assisting Treasurer Dennis Meade VK2DAM and Vice President Paul Colledge VK2ICQ with completing the setting up of TidyHQ to manage ORARC Membership Administration.



Congratulations to Dennis Meade VK2DAM on being re-elected as Treasurer.

Congratulations to the re-elected Committee members,

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Larry Lindsay VK2CLL and Rob Frost VK2CRF and to Founding Member Arthur Monck VK2ATM who has rejoined the Committee. Thank you to retiring Committee Member Lyle Smith VK2SMI for his past contributions.

Larry Lindsay VK2CLL is continuing in his long serving role as Education Officer. Many members have obtained their licences and upgrades through Larry's classes over a great many years. Anyone thinking of obtaining a licence or upgrading should contact Larry. Note that now that the Amateur Class Licence has been introduced and administered by ACMA there is no ongoing fee for Licences and the exams are free. Larry, together with Bob Ecclestone VK2ZRE and Steve Wynn VK2ZSW have ACMA accreditation to conduct assessments so the club is well placed to run assessments locally. Assessments for all grades of licence can be run at short notice for self study candidates.

Paul Colledge VK2ICQ was re-elected as Webmaster. Paul has built the ORARC website to an extremely high standard and continues to regularly update it with both club news and breaking Amateur Radio news. The website is a great ambassador for the club, and for the Amateur Radio service as a whole. Thank you, Paul.

Derek Archer VK2DJA was appointed ORARC Facebook Administrator at the AGM with John McLean VK2KC continuing as Assistant Facebook Administrator.

There were nominations for the position of QSL manager so the position is currently vacant. The Committee will welcome any expressions of interest in taking on the task.

Congratulations to John Hansen VK2AYQ on being re-elected as Oxtales Editor. The club is indebted to John for his tireless work in continuing to publish Oxtales to a very high standard. Thank you and congratulations to Arthur Monck VK2ATM for on being re-elected as Assistant Oxtales Editor.

Also, thank you to Sue Meade and Arthur Monck VK2ATM for their ongoing work as Oxtales proof readers. A lot of work goes on behind the scenes in publishing each issue of Oxtales.

John Bailey VK2KHB was re-elected as Club Historian. Congratulations and thank you to John for continuing to maintain the ORARC history. There is a lot of history to keep track of now that the club is in its 53rd anniversary year.

The position of Social Director is still vacant as no nominations were received at the AGM. The Committee would like to hear from anyone who would like to volunteer to fill this vacancy. It is not a very onerous job. The very popular Coffee Mornings continue to be held on the second Thursday of each Month at Brooklyn's Burger Bar in the Sovereign Hills shopping centre at Thrumster.

Bob Ecclestone VK2ZRE was elected to the WIA liaison position.

A full list of all the Office Bearers elected at the 2024 AGM is included in this issue of Oxtales.

Life Membership was awarded to long time ORARC member Richard Court VK2CHC who recently moved to Goonellabah near Lismore as a Distant Member. Unfortunately Richard was unable to be present at the meeting but ORARC Treasurer

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Dennis Meade VK2DAM travelled to Goonellabah after the meeting to present Richard with his Life Membership. Richard was very appreciative and he wore his Club polo shirt for the presentation. He sends his best regards to all ORARC members.



John Hansen VK2AYQ was awarded Clubman of the Year 2024 for his dedicated ongoing valuable contribution to the club as longtime Oxtales Editor. A great many of the photos in Oxtales are taken by John who rarely misses a Club activity. John also creates the ORARC Annual Calendar.

John received a well deserved hearty round of applause as he was presented with his Clubman of the Year award.

Membership Renewals

Thank you to all the members who have already renewed their memberships this year. However, a few membership subscriptions are still outstanding. Members should log into TidyHQ via the Member Portal at the top of the home page on the ORARC website <https://www.orarc.org/> to check their membership status, and to update their details if there are any changes. ORARC membership administration done electronically on line via TidyHQ. TidyHQ is now fully up to date and membership renewal reminder emails will only be sent to those who have not yet renewed. Please contact the ORARC Treasurer Dennis Meade VK2DAM if you are having any problems in logging into TidyHQ, or are unsure of your financial status. Your continuing membership is greatly valued by the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club. The membership subscriptions form a very significant part of the club's annual income. If you haven't renewed yet, please renew as soon as possible.

The most convenient way to renew your membership is via the Stripe payment option in TidyHQ. There is no surcharge to members paying in this way. Alternatively, you can pay by direct deposit to the ORARC RAB bank account but Treasurer Dennis Meade VK2DAM will always be pleased to receive payments by cash or card in person at the club meetings. EFT is available at all ORARC Meetings. Cheques may be posted to the club at PO Box 712, Port Macquarie NSW 2444.

The Committee is pleased to advise that again there is no rise in the cost of Membership Subscriptions for the 2024-2025 Financial Year. This was formally ratified at the AGM on the 3rd of August 2024. The fees are the same as those of last year. Ordinary Membership remains at \$40 per annum. Associate Membership remains at \$20 per annum. Distant Membership remains at \$10 per annum. Family Membership remains as a single fee equal to the membership fee for the most expensive membership included in the members covered by the family membership. For example, two Distant members covered by a Family Membership would pay just a single fee of \$10.

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An Ordinary Member and an Associate Member included in a Family Membership would pay just a single fee of \$40. Two Ordinary Members covered by a Family Membership would pay just a single fee of \$40.

Membership subscriptions may be paid by Direct Deposit to the club's Regional Australia Bank account:

Bank Name: Regional Australia Bank

BSB: 932000

Account Number: 500032744

Account Name: Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club Inc.

Please use your callsign as the reference for the payment

It is important that all members please renew their memberships and also encourage those who are currently not members to join or rejoin ORARC. The more members we have, the easier it is to keep our fees low. The club has a lot of fixed expenses and we rely on membership subscriptions to cover those expenses. Your membership subscription is greatly valued.

RD Contest



This year the Remembrance Day contest and the International Lighthouse and Lightship Weekend took place on the same weekend, Saturday and Sunday the 17th and 18th of August 2024. A call was made for volunteers to operate the club station VK2BOR in the contest but there were no offers.

Propagation was good and the activity on the Amateur Bands during the contest was extraordinary. Every available frequency on 80, 40 and 20 metres was continuously occupied. Many people were on air for the full 24 hours of the contest. On Saturday night between midnight and dawn 160 metres was crowded with dozens of stations taking full advantage of the bonus points for the nocturnal 160 metre contacts. The new single letter Contest Callsigns were very much in evidence but it is significant that most operators mentioned their normal callsigns so that everyone could tell who they were.

While the club station VK2BOR didn't operate in the RD contest this year, it was pleasing to hear quite a few ORARC members participating in the contest.

International Lighthouse and Lightship Weekend 2024



The ILLW took place on the weekend after the RD Contest on Saturday and Sunday the 17th and 18th of August 2024 at the same time as the RD Contest.

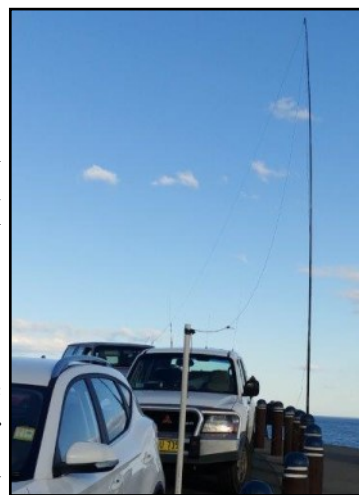
Despite a concerted effort by Sandy Bruce Smith VK2WH and newly elected Secretary Peter Fletcher VK2HPF in trying to obtain approval to set up VK2BOR inside the Lighthouse building for the 2024 ILLW, approval was not granted.

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All avenues were explored through the Port Macquarie Hastings Council, AMSA and Transport for NSW with support from both NSW State and Federal members but ultimately approval was not given.



A call had been made for volunteers to operate VK2BOR in the ILLW. There were no offers but station manager Henry Lundell VK2ZHE operated VK2BOR portable on 40 metres with

an inverted Vee dipole from side of the loop road at the Tacking Point Lighthouse during the Saturday afternoon.

The recent roadworks and “upgrade” of parking at the Tacking Point Lighthouse now make it very difficult to obtain a parking spot at the Lighthouse which is an extremely popular tourist spot. It is no longer practical to take the ORARC Communications caravan to the Tacking Point Lighthouse for future ILLWs.

JOTA 2024

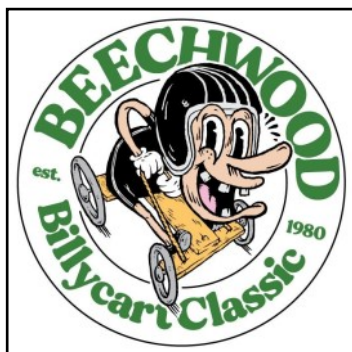


The 68th annual Jamboree on the Air took place over the weekend of the 19th and 20th of October 2024. It also was the 29th annual Jamboree on the Internet.

Unfortunately, the planned VK2BOR JOTA operation had to be cancelled as the 1st Port Macquarie Sea Scouts received insufficient registrations from the Scouts and Guides for the event. Sincere apologies for the inconvenience to all those who had volunteered to run the VK2BOR JOTA Station. We look forward to being able to

participate in JOTA 2025.

Beechwood Billycart Classic



The 43rd annual Beechwood Billycart Classic took place on the morning of Sunday the 27th of October 2024. After some rainy days before the weekend, the Sunday of the Classic dawned fine and clear.

ORARC members have provided safety communications for the Beechwood Billycart Classic every year that it has run. We thank the 15 ORARC members who provided the safety communications this year.

Those who participated were Peter Kucera VK2MPK, Rob Frost VK2CRF, Larry Lindsay VK2CLL, Lyle Smith VK2SMI, Dennis Meade VK2DAM, Mark McGuire VK2FMGM, Bruce Ekert VK2EM, John Winter VK2PJW, Ray Mullins VK2JU, Tim Tuck VK2XAX, Peter Fletcher VK2HPF, Lance Harris VK2EZY, Ben Waters VK2BJW, Larry Thompson VK2LJT and Henry Lundell VK2ZHE.

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A bigger than usual field had registered for the race but as usual there were a couple of scratchings for the main race. What the race lacked in numbers, it made up for in speed. The top billycarts reached speeds of around 100 kilometres per hour down the steeper parts of the course, even after having to brake in order to negotiate the

sharper bends. Little wonder that many of the billycarts are fitted with disc brakes. The lead billycart didn't finish due to a mishap and a couple of the billycarts at the tail end of the field didn't have enough speed and momentum to clear the uphill rises at the bottom of the course and had to be pushed.

Disappointingly, there was no commentary vehicle this year. Special arrangements had been made to use a WICEN commercial VHF frequency for the commentary and type approved equipment had been programmed and set up with an audio feed to the PA system at the finish. In the absence of a Commentary Vehicle, the Amateur Radio 2 metre safety network was utilized to announce when billycarts passed the various checkpoints.

The popular short course Children's billycart race was run after the completion of the main race. As usual this race was very keenly contested.



There was only one incident during the Classic requiring Ambulance attention. A young spectator required attention for heat exhaustion. The billycart incident didn't require Ambulance attention.

As always, the Beechwood Billycart Classic was a well-attended family day out with plenty of entertainment and food stalls in the finish area adjacent to the Beechwood Hotel. For safety in the finish area the main road was closed to vehicular traffic and through traffic was diverted via the backstreets of the northern part of Beechwood.

Spring VHF UHF Field Day

The annual Spring VHF UHF Field Day takes place from 01:00 hours UTC on Saturday the 23th of November to 01:00 hours on Sunday the 24th of November 2024. This equates to 12 noon Saturday to 12 noon Sunday Eastern Australian Daylight Saving Time.

The contest rules are downloadable as a .pdf document from the WIA website at <https://www.wia.org.au/members/contests/vhfuhf/documents/2024%20Spring%20VHF-UHF%20Field%20Day%20Rules.pdf>

The downloadable VK Contest Log logging software <http://www.mnds.com.au/vkcl/> makes it simple to keep your log and score so that it can be submitted electronically.

Logs must be received by midnight EAST, Monday 9 December 2024.

The Spring VHF UHF Field Day will see many stations using their 2X1 contest callsigns with only one letter for their scoring contacts.

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As well as VK, prefixes may also be VJ or VL which will require vigilance when logging contacts.

This year the Saturday of the contest coincides with the monthly 23 on 23 night where from 8pm many stations will be looking for 23 centimetre contacts. The calling frequency is 1296.100 MHz USB.

The ORARC club station VK2BOR is not participating in this year's annual Spring VHF UHF Field Day. Club members are encouraged to participate from their individual stations. It is a great opportunity to operate portable.

23 on 23 Activity Nights

Keen microwave enthusiast Tim Tuck VK2XAX has been actively promoting participation in the monthly 23 cm activity night at 8 pm on the 23rd of each month. Activity is centred on 1296.100 MHz USB but digital modes and FM are also encouraged.

On Friday the 23rd of August 2024 there were good contacts between stations in the Manning Great Lakes, Hastings and Macleay areas. Andy VK2AAK and Shayne VK2XUV operated portable at Forster, Tim VK2XAX operated from home at Port Macquarie, Henry VK2ZHE operated portable at Transit Hill in Port Macquarie and Grant VK2MAX operated from home in Kempsey. Andy VK2AAK made the longest contact when he worked into Maclean on 1296.1 MHz USB. Henry VK2ZHE briefly heard Trevor VK4AFL in Brisbane but did not have a two way QSO.



On the night of Monday the 23rd of September Henry VK2ZHE again operated portable from Transit Hill and Tim VK2XAX operated from home in Port Macquarie. Despite Henry VK2ZHE upgrading to a bay of four stacked 10 element yagis and Tim VK2XAX upgrading to rotatable long Yagi, they only worked each other as the stations at Forster and Kempsey were not on air that night.

Trevor VK4AFL put considerable effort into attempting to work VK2ZHE and VK2XAX on 1296.1 MHz SSB and VK2XAX on digital but tropospheric propagation was particularly poor and contact was not made although VK2ZHE did again briefly hear a few words from VK4AFL on SSB. This was most likely a short-lived fortuitous aircraft enhancement reflection.

The October 23 on 23 night is at 8pm on Wednesday the 23rd of October 2024. This is effectively earlier in the evening as this is Daylight Saving Time.

The November 23 on 23 night is at 8pm on Saturday the 23rd of November 2024. Being a Saturday night and coinciding with the Spring VHF-UHF Field Day Weekend there are certain to be lots of stations active.

The December 23 on 23 night is at 8pm on Monday the 23rd of December 2024.

For more details, please see the article by TIM Tuck VK2XAX in this issue of Oxtales.

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ORARC 2024 Calendar

Thank you to John Hansen VK2AYQ for creating the club's 2025 calendar.

The 2025 calendar looks similar to the 2024 calendar. It showcases club activities and projects. Importantly, there is a wealth of club information. It is the "go to" ready reference for the details of the club repeaters. All the Club meetings and events are clearly marked in colour on the calendar so you can see when they are at a glance. The calendar is the perfect shack companion.

The 2025 calendar will be available at the Christmas Party on Saturday the 7th of December 2025, and at subsequent club activities. It will be available at the Coffee Morning at Thrumster on Thursday the 12th of December, and at the Friday night get together on the 20th of December 2024. It will of course be available at the Monthly General Meeting on Saturday the 4th of January 2025, and at subsequent meetings.

The price for the calendars is again a mere \$2 each. The annual calendar has become a "must have" for every ham shack. The expanded information on the calendar makes it more useful than ever.

VK2RCN Telegraph Point Repeaters

The repeaters at the off-grid solar powered VK2RCN repeater site at Telegraph Point are all working well.

The VK2RCN repeaters are:

The VK2RCN 438.425 MHz RadNet DMR digital voice repeater.

The VK2RCN 147.0 MHz 2 metre voice FM repeater which will accept either analogue FM or C4FM Yaesu System Fusion digital voice input.

The VK2RCN 53.800 MHz 6 metre FM voice repeater.

The VK2RCN-5 145.175 MHz 2 metre APRS iGate digipeater

The VK2RCN 147.0 MHz 2 metre FM voice repeater and the VK2RCN 53.8 MHz 6 metre FM voice repeater both require a 91.5 Hz CTCSS sub audible tone for access. The both transmit a 91.5 Hz CTCSS tone so you can use tone squelch on your radio if you are troubled by interference opening your squelch.

A new VK2RCN 70cm UHF multimode digital voice repeater supporting DMR, DStar, P25, C4FM and NXDN will be added once a frequency pair for this repeater is assigned.

The VK2RCN 147.0 MHz 2 metre FM voice repeater will be linked to the Middle Brother Mountain VK2RPM 146.7 MHz 2 metre FM voice repeater when additional equipment is installed at both sites.

Amateur Radio Licence Training and Assessments

The next Foundation Licence training and assessment weekend will be held in the SES Building in Port Macquarie when sufficient candidates have registered. Prospective candidates should contact Education Officer Larry Lindsay

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VK2CLL as soon as possible. The simplest way is to fill out the contact form on the ORARC website at <https://www.orarc.org/> Just click on the “CONTACT US” link at the top of the home page. Larry will then contact you.

Now that the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) is responsible for the administration of Amateur Radio examinations and licensing, assessments for all grades of licence can be arranged at short notice for candidates who have self-studied. Examinations are now free, but can only be attempted once every 3 months.

Mid North Coast Region WICEN



Amateurs are invited to join Mid North Coast Region WICEN. WICEN meetings are held in the SES building in Central Road Port Macquarie after the conclusion of the ORARC monthly general meetings on the afternoon of the first Saturday of each month except December. The next meeting will be on the afternoon of Saturday the 4th of January 2025 after the ORARC Monthly General Meeting.

Mid North Coast WICEN welcomes all amateurs to call in to the weekly 7 pm Thursday Night 3600 kHz LSB 80 metre nets. The nets conclude by 7:30pm so that participants can join the ORARC 7:30 pm Thursday Night Nets on the VK2RPM 146.7 MHz Middle Brother 2 metre repeater, either directly via the repeater 2 metre input, or via the VK2RPM EchoLink Node. The VK2RPM EchoLink Node number is 916007

WICEN NSW runs two state-wide radio nets each month. On the second Sunday of each month at 6:30pm there is a DMR net on Talk Group 3810. On the third Sunday of each month at 6:30pm there is a 40m voice net on 7110 kHz LSB. Net control is VK2WIZ. All stations are welcome to check in.

For further information, please contact Larry Thompson VK2LJT, Rob Frost VK2CRF or Bob Ecclestone VK2ZRE.

Member News



Rod Bailey VK2AJ joined ORARC when he moved to Port Macquarie a few years ago. He was active in club activities and until recently never missed a Monthly Coffee Morning. Rod recently moved back to Tamworth and is now a Distant Member. Rod VK2AJ is in the photograph at left sitting on the left hand side

of the photograph enjoying a coffee morning.

I wish all members and their families and friends a safe and happy Christmas and best wishes for 2025.

Henry Lundell VK2ZHE
President

Office Bearers Elected at ORARC AGM 3 August 2024

At the Annual General Meeting of the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club on Saturday the 3rd of August 2024, the following office bearers were elected:

President:	Henry Lundell VK2ZHE
Vice President:	Paul Colledge VK2ICQ
Secretary:	Peter Fletcher VK2HPF
Treasurer:	Dennis Meade VK2DAM
Committee Member 1:	Larry Lindsay VK2CLL
Committee Member 2:	Rob Frost VK2CRF
Committee Member 3:	Arthur Monck VK2ATM
Public Officer:	Henry Lundell VK2ZHE
Repeater Chairman:	Henry Lundell VK2ZHE
Oxtales Editor:	John Hansen VK2AYQ
Oxtales Co-Editor:	Arthur Monck VK2ATM
VK2BOR Station Mgr:	Henry Lundell VK2ZHE
QSL Manager	Vacant
Welfare Officer:	Henry Lundell VK2ZHE
Publicity Officer:	Paul Colledge VK2ICQ
Education Officer:	Larry Lindsay VK2CLL
Club Historian:	John Bailey VK2KHB
Social Director:	Vacant
Webmaster:	Paul Colledge VK2ICQ
Facebook Administrator:	Derek Archer VK2DJA
Assistant Facebook Administrator:	John McLean VK2KC
WIA Liaison Delegate:	Bob Ecclestone VK2ZRE
Member Liaison Officer:	Paul Colledge VK2ICQ

23on23 Report for the 23rd of August 2024 for 1296.100 MHz USB Operation.



Both Henry and I were promptly on air at 20:00 on Friday night to be greeted with the sounds of far off signals.

Henry set up on Transit hill and here is his report.

“I did hear a couple of VK4s in QSO underneath VK2MAX and VK2VL and VK2AAK when I first set up. I copied all of them including VK2VL. Of course you were a big signal as you were so close!

I fancy that there may have been some ducting. It's most interesting that I didn't get through to VK2VL when we tried after he worked VK2AAK. My guess is that if it was ducting, perhaps the duct height dropped below my altitude.

Significantly, Grant VK2MAX at Kempsey was stronger to me when we first started at 2000 hours. Closer to 2100 hours we still got through but he was about 3 S points down on his original signal. Grant was running 100 Watts with his beam fixed to the north to favour VK2VL so beam directivity didn't come into play.

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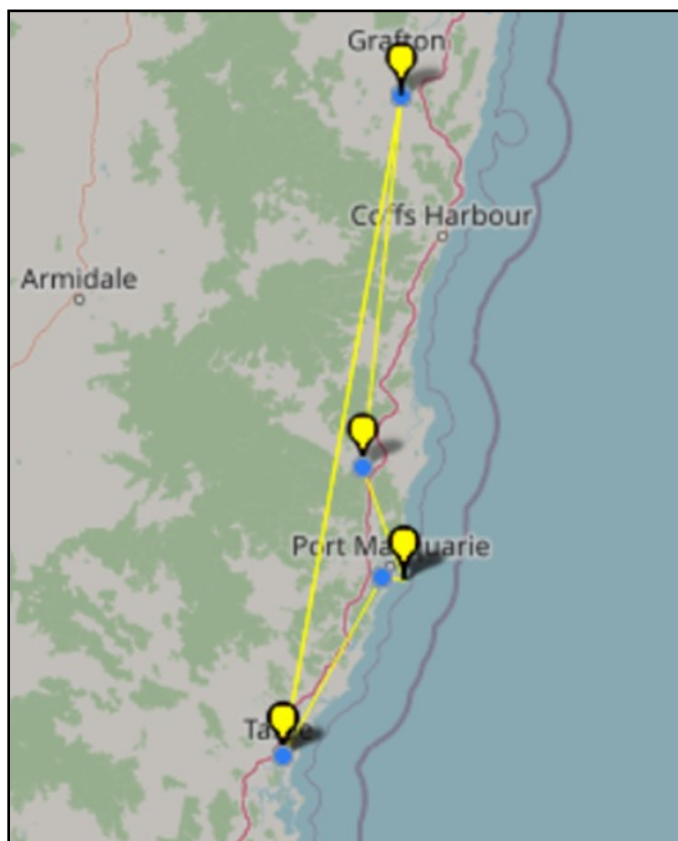
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Andy VK2AAK did say that he was just copying Grant. With Grant beaming north with 100 Watts it's possible that Andy was hearing reflections of Grant's signal. Aircraft enhancement is another factor that needs a bit of research. It all augers well for another go on the 23rd of September.”

For myself I was just barely able to hear VK2AAK , report of R2 S1, and VK2MAX on my X5000 vertical even when Andy switched to vertical polarization I still couldn't hear him. The antenna is only mounted on a TV hocky stick mount so there's no real height to it. Must get it up on a higher mast!

Many others in VK2 and VK4 were on air and their contacts could be seen on vkspotter.com.

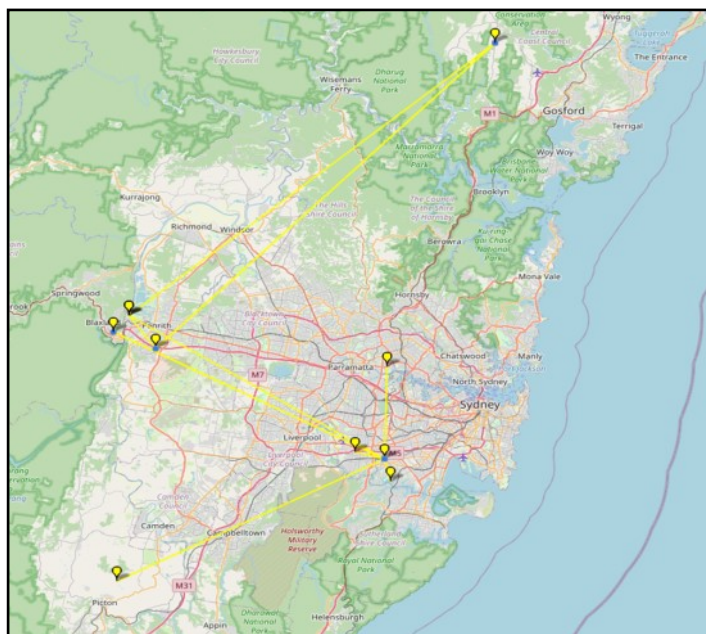
Here are the plots made of the contacts for the mid north coast region.



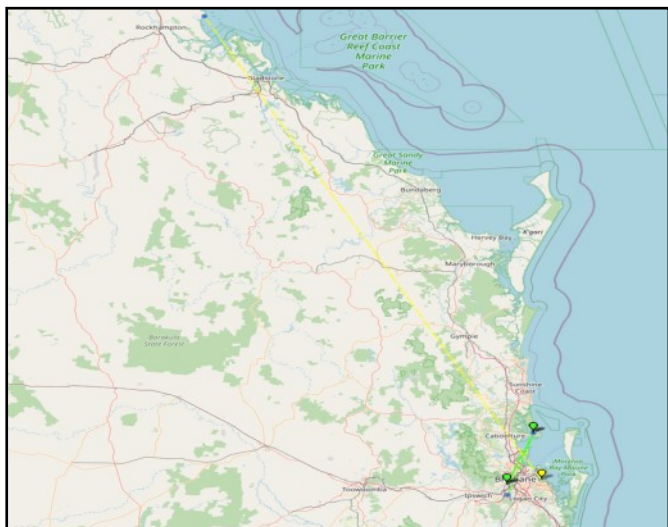
The Western Sydney Microwave group were on air and also produced a few contacts across Sydney and environs.

Here is a capture of their activity from the spotter.

Spotter plots shown on the left and also below.

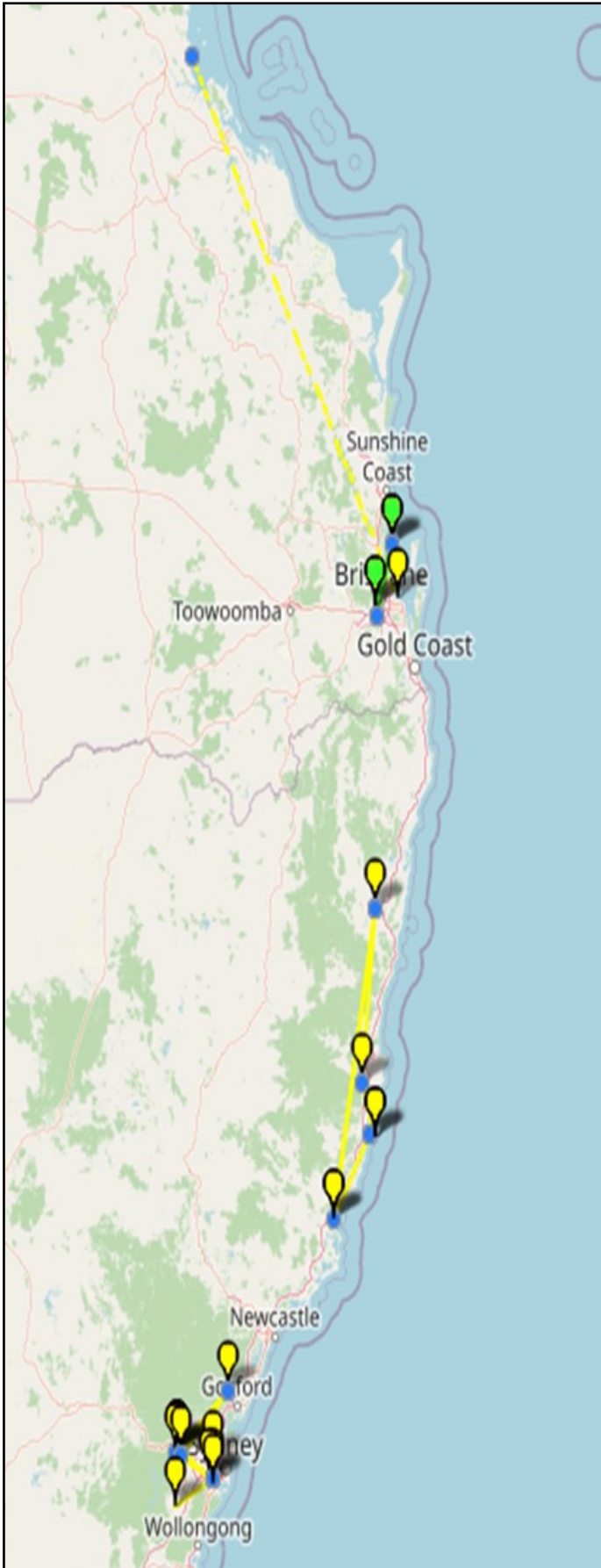


VK4 was not to be outdone and they also managed a few contacts on 2.4GHz as shown on the spotter at left.



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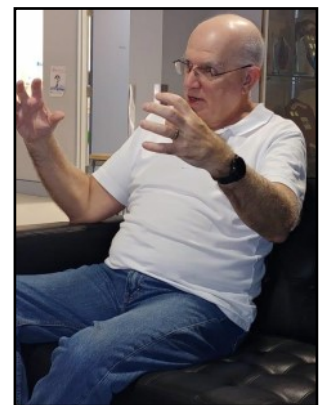


All in all there was 24 contacts logged on the spotter with good representation from VK2.

So for any of you with 23cm capability come join on in and join the fun.

Small beams for 23cm can be purchased cheaply from QSLcomms so there's no excuse for not getting on air :)

Of course you could also home brew something, there's plenty of plans on the internet to do so.



73

Tim
de VK2XAX



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**Gold Coast Amateur Radio Society
HAMFEST 2024
Sunday 13th October 2024**

Venue: Country Paradise Parklands
231 Beaudesert Nerang Rd, Nerang QLD 4211



- Doors open to the public at 08:30 (Table holders can set up from 07:00).
- Everything is under cover.
- On-site parking.
- Entry only \$5:00 per person.
- Further info <http://www.gcars.com.au>
- Table bookings ect please email - hamfest@gcars.com.au

Club member Ben VK2BJW attended the well attended Gold Coast Amateur Radio Society Hamfest 2024 in Nerang Queensland.



As the photographs show the event was well attended on a fine day with plenty to see and buy.



Gold Coast Hamfest report (Oct 13th) - 27 individual people / businesses / organizations that occupied 51 tables. Around 200 buyers through the door with just about all food sold. The Coffee Van was well accepted. Many thanks to the business & organizations that attended .. Elite Communications, QSL Comms, Globe Roamer, HF Radio Sales, VK Direct, VK4NGA Digital Voice Systems, Mag Dog Coils, Mobile One, RF Communications, POTA, SatNOGS, City of Brisbane Radio

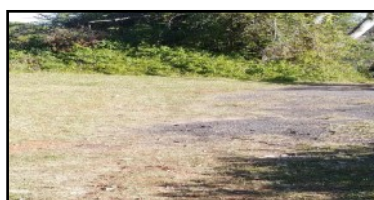


NBN finally gets to Henry's VK2ZHE place. Henry insisted that the fibre connection to the house should be trenched as an aerial run could be easily damaged by falling tree limbs.

Henry was subsequently proved correct when a storm brought down large branches across the power line and broke the old telephone cable that was strung through the air from a telegraph pole.

The process of trenching involved digging a series of pits to the house from the NBN connection point. A 'mole' was put in the pit, photograph above, and then vibrated and pushed so it penetrated the next pit. Then the process was repeated until the house boundary was reached and fibre cable pulled through and connected to the NBN junction box as shown in the above photographs.

The pits were then filled in leaving a very neat surface that concealed the actual trench with the embedded fibre. As can be seen in the photographs below.



The Saga of AKAI Reel to Reel M10 Tape Recorder

By Arthur VK2ATM

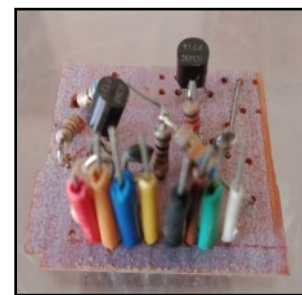
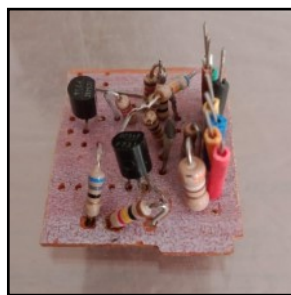
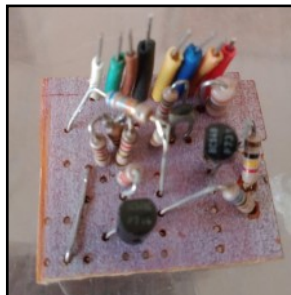
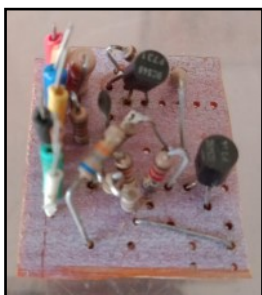
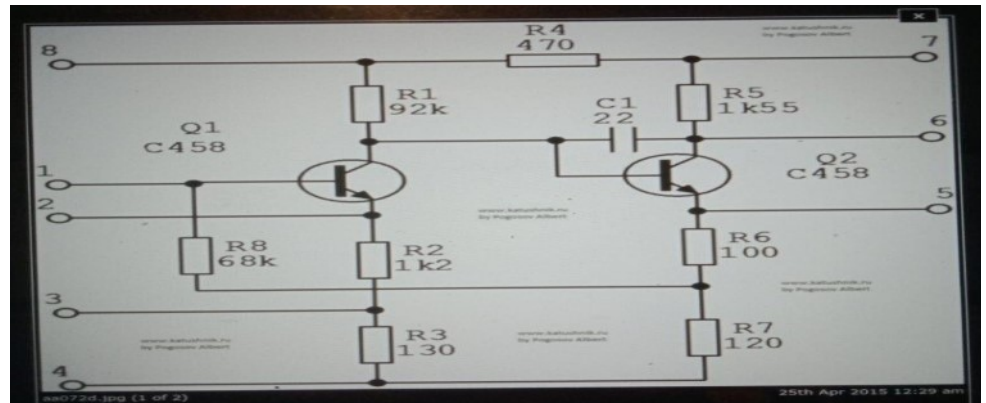
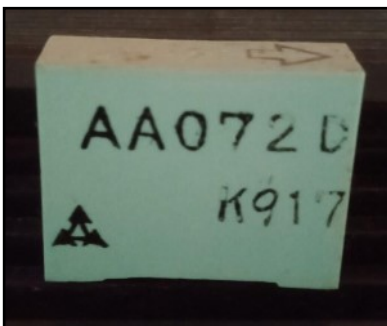


This 50 year old machine was given to me to look at by John Hansen VK2AYQ, it had been part of a neighbour's father estate. In its day it was considered to be a very desirable high fidelity piece of sound equipment and was quite expensive (costing more than \$1,200 in 1970). The recorder had 3 speeds and 3 motors and recorded in 4 track stereo.

It appeared that the right channel was not working. There was no sound coming from the right speakers nor was the VU meter registering anything. Although the power supply had all the correct voltages and the mechanicals all worked, the only way to get sound from the right was to set the stereo/mono switch halfway between. This indicated that the final audio amplifier was working.

A quick look at a circuit diagram showed that this shorted the output from the left preamp to both final amplifiers leading to the conclusion that the right preamp had failed. This had two transistors feeding an IC, an in house

specially made unit (AA072D, pictured below left) no longer available. Consultation with GOOGLE revealed that others had had similar failures, so someone had reverse engineered this IC and produced a discrete circuit diagram of components to replace it (diagram below)



Views of the reversed engineered original IC.

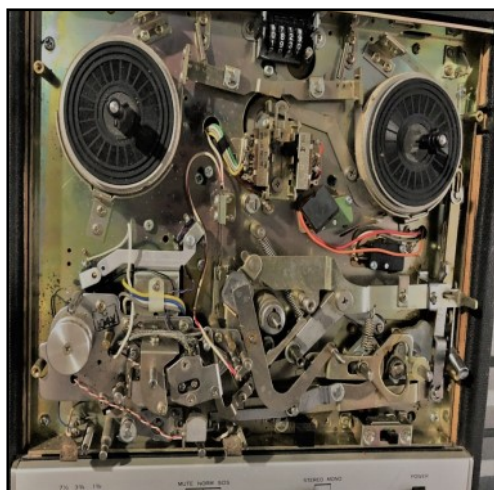
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Unfortunately there was very little space to fit two transistors, a number of resistors and a small capacitor on the PCB. I fashioned a small 2cm x 2cm PCB from old CTV parts with eight legs to match the IC and tested it to make sure it worked (photographs on the previous page).

I fitted it to the original board with great difficulty and considerable profanity, then I discovered that the edge connectors for the board had become brittle with age and broken, so application of Araldite and pressure for a couple of days fixed that.

Reassembly of the Amplifier unit used up all the spare nuts, bolts and screws, with nothing left over. Replaced in the case, I plugged in the various cables and lo and behold, on switching on it all worked perfectly with sound and VU meters. Now to find out if it will still record in full stereo. Mission accomplished. Three days work, I realised it had not been worth the effort and I should have junked the old 30 kg contraption! These recorders still command an ebay price of up to \$400 depending upon condition with claims by audiophiles that they produce a very full and 'warm' sound.



A quick look inside the equipment above reveals a complex series of mechanical parts components. Note the 3 motors in right hand photograph the two outer to drive the reels and the middle one being a synchronous motor for the tape capstan; also the two large electrolytic capacitors which after 50 years would be prone to failure.

Editors note: In an interesting addendum to the repair saga, Arthur VK2ATM informed me at the last Radio Club Meeting that the recorder had failed again! Arthur had fired up the recorder to check some tapes when there was a 'splat' sound and the recorder stopped working. After investigation it was revealed that an electrolytic capacitor had blown itself apart!

Arthur dipped into his large store of electrical bits and pieces, to find a capacitor of similar value and after installation the recorder performed faultlessly. This illustrates what can be expected in equipment that is over 50 years old and provides a timely warning when purchasing old Amateur radio equipment that many components should be replaced when bringing old equipment back to life. Incidentally a general rule of thumb is that reel to reel tape has a life of about 20 years depending on how it is stored and the number of times it has been played. Apparently after 50 playing times there is a noticeable degradation in the play back quality.

Many thanks to Arthur VK2ATM for a most interesting article.



IARU Region 3 Conference

Date : 04 / 11 / 2024

Author : Peter Clee - VK8ZZ

The official Opening of the IARU Region 3 Conference was met with traditional dance.

There are a number of delegates attending in person in Bangkok Thailand. There are also several members attending virtually.

After the opening ceremony the conference got down to business dealing with agenda items. One of the first agenda items was a debate on the structure of the IARU R3. The meeting agreed to keep 7 voting positions on the executive. The position of Secretary was retained as a non voting member of the executive.

The position of chairman has been renamed to President and will be elected on by the triannual conference. A new position is that of Vice-President which is also an elected position.

The meeting then focussed on voting rights as the proposal was for each member of the executive to have a vote and it was agreed that the secretary would remain an non-voting member of the executive.

The other issue discussed at length was about exercising society voting It was resolved that only in person delegates can vote. Member societies can either appoint a proxy or attend in person in order to vote. Non attending societies can attend virtually as observers.

A number of reports including the Directors report and the secretary's report and a number of society reports were tabled.

The conference heard that the IARU are working towards the World Radio Conference due in 2027. Every radio amateur needs the IARU!



Analyse Your Station for EMR Safety Compliance

Date : 06 / 11 / 2024

Author : WIA Education Committee

The WIA's Education Committee, in consultation with the Spectrum Committee, have released a new EMR/EME awareness presentation and a station analysis tool.

Continued on next page

The package consists of a PowerPoint/pdf presentation, a station analysis flowchart, and a link to the RSGB's online EMR/EME calculator. Thanks to the RSGB for approving the calculators use by the WIA.

All the information, together with the flowchart and a link to the RSGB calculator, is on the new Education Committee website. www.wia-education.com.au/resources-for-clubs.

Click on the 'For WIA Radio Clubs' tab at the top of the home page.

This is the start of the journey to improve the EMR appreciation, knowledge, and skills, of every amateur radio operator in Australia.

Compliance with EMR safety standards has been a condition of your amateur licence since 2003, both Apparatus and Class licenses. It is both a safety requirement and a step along the way in negotiating higher power privileges for Australian radio amateurs.

Everyone should have a go at analysing their stations EMR compliance using the Flowchart and the RSGB online calculator.

You will need to enter the characteristics of your station to determine its 'compliance class': Class-1 or Class-2. Stations that are found to be Class-2 are then required to use the RSGB online calculator to determine the required exclusion zone around the transmitting antenna.

Most people will be surprised how small the required exclusion zone is for the average amateur station running 400 Watts or less.

Let us know what you think.

Phil Wait, VK2ASD for the WIA Education Committee

Election of Directors - Call for Nominations as a Director of the WIA

Date : 01 / 11 / 2024

Author : WIA Returning Officer

Pursuant to clause 14.1 of the Constitution the Wireless Institute of Australia, the Board of the WIA has determined that the election of directors shall be conducted by ballot.

Four directors retire at the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting which will be held in May 2025, namely Scott Williams VK3KJ, Peter Clee VK8ZZ, Peter Schrader VK4EA and Giles Kirby VK5GK. Each retiring director is eligible for re-election.

Nominations are called for from persons seeking election as a director of the WIA.

A director must be a voting member of the WIA and must hold an Australian amateur radio license and a Company Director Identification Number.

Any person wishing to nominate as a candidate for election as director of the WIA must deliver or cause to be delivered to the Returning Officer by not later than 2.30pm on 16th December 2024:-



Handbook 101: A New Generation of Amateur Radio

ARRL® The National Association for Amateur Radio® is pleased to announce the next generation of The ARRL Handbook.

The ARRL Handbook is your complete guide to wireless technology, experimentation, practice, and development – capturing the state of radio science and technology in one authoritative work for nearly 100 years. Use its more than 1,200 pages of amateur radio know-how to delve into radio electronics, circuit design, digital modulation techniques, and equipment construction.

The 101st edition proudly introduces a new editor, Gregory D. Lapin, Ph.D., PE, N9GL. Greg and his team of subject matter experts in the community bring a fresh perspective and new outlook on the future of amateur radio. They have revised entire chapters on radio fundamentals, transmission lines, general safety, assembling a station, and more. Major updates to Handbook 101 include:

Information on electromagnetic analysis and inexpensive tools for modelling circuits, antennas, and propagation.

New material on higher-level modelling of transmitters and receivers.

A new section on preparing your station for emergency operations.

Radio astronomy receiver and antenna design information.

A new section on batteries and battery safety.

A new section on NEC4 and the antenna modelling software built on it.

New material on SWR meters and related tests.

The latest on RF safety and compliance with FCC exposure regulations.

Handbook 101 comes with a bonus e-Book download. The download contains a wealth of online content and includes the fully searchable digital edition of the printed book, plus expanded supplemental content, software, PC board templates, and other support files.

Whether you're an experienced ham or new to the hobby, you'll find information you can use in The ARRL Handbook. Like Handbook editor Gregory Lapin, N9GL, said about the first Handbook he owned, "That edition was half the size of the current Handbook and I was never able to read it from cover to cover. I have had many editions since then and ... have never read every word in [it] until this year. Regardless, it has always been one of the great references on my bookshelf; I refer to it often... I hope you enjoy the 101st edition and gain lots of knowledge to help our hobby continue moving forward into the next century and beyond."

The ARRL Handbook is available in a six-volume set and softcover book from the ARRL Store or your ARRL dealer. Handbook 101 six-volume book set, ARRL Item No. 2073, ISBN 978-1-62595-207-3, is \$69.95 retail. Handbook 101 softcover book, ARRL Item No. 2011, ISBN 978-1-62595-201-1, is \$69.95 retail. To order by phone, call (860) 594-0200 or, toll-free in the US, (888) 277-5289. Contact ARRL Publication Sales for more information. **Editors Note:** The prices quoted above are in USA Dollars. Prices in Australia will probably be around \$135 Australian dollars plus delivery charges.



News
The K7RA Solar Update
11/01/2024

The K7RA Solar Update

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Solar activity increased this week. Average daily sunspot number went from 127.7 to 197.4 and average solar flux from 170.5 to 240.2.

Predicted solar flux is 270 on November 1-2, 265 and 260 on November 3-4, 250 on November 5-7, 214, 195 and 182 on November 8-10, 172,168, 174 and 165 on November 11-14, and 162 on November 15-16.

Predicted planetary A index is 5, 8, 15, and 10 on November 1-4, 5 on November 5-15, then 5, 8, 5, 12, and 8 on November 16-20, and 5 on November 21 through December 5.

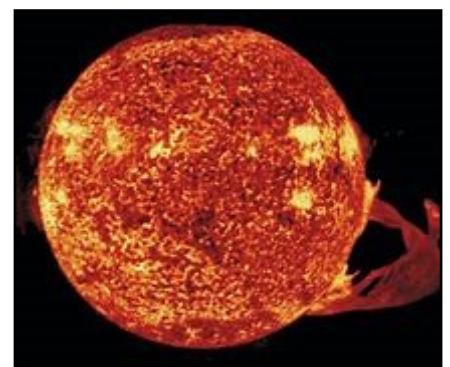
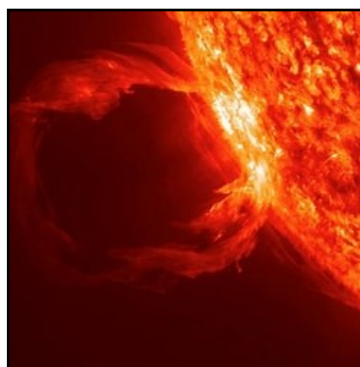
Weekly Commentary on the Sun, the Magnetosphere, and the Earth's Ionosphere - October 31, 2024 from OK1HH:

"We know only approximately what the Earth's ionosphere looked like between March 1755 and June 1766 thanks to observations of the Sun in Solar Cycle 1. But we do know what it looked like in Solar Cycle 19, which ran from April 1954 to October 1964. Although I was a novice radio amateur at the time, I can testify that the shortwave propagation conditions at the peak of Solar Cycle 19 (1958) were wonderful!

"As of December 2019, Solar Cycle 25 is in operation. It was supposed to be low, fortunately it is not. Its maximum is now underway, perhaps a second will follow next year. It is fabulous, judging by the above and the many interesting effects, including, for example, auroras. But unfortunately, not if we judge them by the current conditions of ionospheric shortwave propagation. An explanation of why this is now the case will surely be forthcoming but perhaps Solar Cycle 26 will be underway.

"A week ago, as expected, large active regions and corresponding groups of spots appeared at the southeastern limb of the solar disk. We are now seeing them near the central meridian. This has increased the likelihood of Earth being hit by particles that will eject subsequent flares. It seems that not only these, but also disturbances in the geomagnetic field and then fluctuations in the ionospheric propagation field can be counted on with certainty in the coming days. Given that we have already seen simultaneously observed active regions on the Sun during the last solar rotation, presumably a 27-day recurrence will be a good aid to prediction."

Send your tips, reports, observations, questions and comments to k7ra@arrl.net. When reporting observations, don't forget to tell us which mode you were operating. For more information concerning shortwave radio propagation, see <http://www.arrl.org/propagation> and the ARRL Technical Information Service web page at, <http://arrl.org/propagation-of-rf-signals>. <http://arrl.org/the-sun-the-earth-the-ionosphere>. Photographs below are of Spectacular Solar Flares.

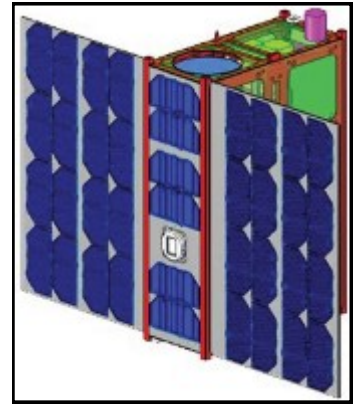




QSOS BEGIN VIA CHINESE AND RUSSIAN STUDENTS' CUBESAT

Our top story this week is about a satellite created through the efforts of Russian and Chinese college students working together. The satellite is in orbit now and hams are busy making use of it for their QSOs. Graham Kemp VK4BB has the details.

GRAHAM: The collaborative efforts of Chinese and Russian university students have helped put a CubeSat known as ASRTU-1 into space. Its 2-metre FM transponder recently became active, with an uplink of 145.850 MHz requiring a CTCSS tone of 67 Hz. The 12U satellite, weighing 15.7 kg, also has SSDV cameras and a telemetry system aboard.



According to a report on ChinaDaily.com, the creation of the satellite was undertaken to encourage cultural exchanges while tapping into the higher-education resources of both nations. The educational and ham radio microsatellite was launched on Nov. 4th on board a Soyuz rocket - a moment eagerly awaited by the students who assisted with the work at the Harbin Institute of Technology in China.

The microsatellite's camera system has a UHF SSDV downlink for low resolution images on 436.210 MHz. There is also a high-speed downlink for high-resolution images on 10460 MHz.

This is Graham Kemp VK4BB.

(AMSAT-SM, AMATEUR RADIO DAILY, CHINA DAILY)

COMMITTEE TO REVIEW IARU REGION 3 BAND PROPOSAL FOR CW



JIM/ANCHOR: One of the many issues taken up at the recent IARU Region 3 conference in Thailand was the proposed harmonization of the CW portion of the 40-meter band plan with the other regions. The proposal designates 7000 to 7040 kHz for CW only. Graham Kemp VK4BB tells us what comes next.

GRAHAM: The Board of the WIA -- after a full briefing by Peter Young, VK3MV, WIA delegate who attended and represented the Wireless Institute of Australia at the IARU Region 3 meeting held in Thailand -- advises that principles were established for band planning and that the proposal by the IARU R3 HF Bandplan committee for the 40 metre band will be sent to a committee before being presented to the other two region meetings over the next three years.

I'm VK4BB, Graham Kemp.

(WIA)

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OHIO SITE MARKS 30TH YEAR SINCE VOA WENT OFF THE AIR

Inside a museum building in Ohio where work crews are busy with renovations, many people recall the final day the building served as a shortwave relay station for Voice of America. Neil Rapp WB9VPG tells us more.

NEIL: Even as the Voice of America Museum remains closed with the hope of reopening after renovations are complete, many were remembering a much more dramatic closing at that site in West Chester Ohio. The legendary shortwave relay station went silent 30 years ago -- on November 14th, 1994 -- making its final broadcast to listeners overseas when it was decommissioned by the US government. The building's more recent closure is to allow upgrades to various systems on the premises as well as to reorganize exhibits.

Meanwhile, the West Chester Amateur Radio Association, WC8VOA, has been able to continue its regular meetings and open-house sessions at club headquarters inside the museum because the club shack is not part of the renovation. Members were also in the shack to participate in the recent ARRL Sweepstakes.

According to the VOA Museum website, there are hopes the renovation work will be finished by mid-January and plans are being made for a grand re-opening to the public.

This is Neil Rapp WB9VPG.

(VOA MUSEUM)



GET READY TO WORK YOUNG OPS DURING YOTA MONTH

Get ready to work the younger generation of radio operators in December: It's YOTA month, as we hear from Jeremy Boot G4NJH.

Don't forget that YOTA Month, also known as December, begins in a little more than one week. Stations with radio operators under the age of 26 will be on the air from countries around the world: France, the UK, the Republic of Korea, Hungary, Argentina, Egypt and the United States, to name a few. This is their month in the spotlight and most of their callsigns contain the suffix Y O T A for Youngsters (or Youth) on the Air. The US callsigns are K8Y, K8O, K8T and W8A, with the single-letter suffixes spelling "YOTA."

As in previous editions of this monthlong event, organisers stress that contacts should be made with the understanding that these QSOs may be the youngsters' first experience in an on-the-air event and so patience and care are key parts of the exchange.

Continued from previous page

Awards will be available for shortwave listeners as well as licensed amateur radio operators. The real award, however, is knowing that you may have inspired someone to pursue amateur radio over the course of their lifetime.

See details and a list of registered stations by visiting the link that appears in the text version of this week's newscast at arnewsline.org

This is Jeremy Boot G4NJH.

NEW ZEALAND NETWORK GROWS WITH HELP FROM HAMS



In New Zealand, amateur radio operators are sharing the power of radio - in this case, low-power license-free handhelds - to bring communities and families closer together. We learn the details of their efforts from Jim Meachen ZL2BHF.

Helping people connect over radio - and stay connected - is the mission behind the effort known as Rebuild Free Radio Network. It's an emerging collective in New Zealand that's relying mainly on portable, licence-free handheld PRS radios that are often used as tools in public safety. A number of the participants also have their amateur radio licences, including the network's national coordinator.

Writing in Qua, the newsletter of the Franklin Amateur Radio Club, club member Trish Murray ZL1TTM, explained how, community by community, she is helping to strengthen the network locally. She described the hands-on, interactive workshops she has been leading to get people familiar with the UHF radios they have purchased but may be hesitant to use. The workshops explain that local resiliency is the best reason for using a radio and the area repeaters, whether it's to stay in touch with other family members or communicate in a crisis.

Trish wrote that some of the more enthusiastic radio operators are considering taking the next step. "Most people are completely new to radio, so it's really inspiring seeing the confidence grow and hear their first tentative calls. We also have experienced radio users, and also now some who would like to go and do their ham licenses. I am encouraging this!"

For more details about the Rebuild Free Radio Network, visit <https://rebuildfree.com/topic/communications/>

This is Jim Meachen ZL2BHF.



Blast from the past

Blast from the Past is the section of Oxtales where we reflect on what the club and its members were doing in years gone by. Members are also encouraged to send in items relating to club members or club activities in previous years.

This month's blast is taken from the 2014 November issues of Oxtales. The club had 69 members. Lyle VK2SMI was President, Charles VK2KCE Vice President, Larry VK2CLL Treasurer, and David VK2 FRAB Secretary.

The main activities reported upon were, A Bunnings BBQ fundraiser and a report on the 57 annual Jamboree on the Air (JOTA). The Club operated JOTA across 3 locations, Wauchope, Port Macquarie and Laurieton. Extracts from the relevant reports from Lyle's VK2SMI Presidents reports follows.

‘ . . . Firstly JOTA. This year we operated three stations, McInherney Park Port Macquarie, Wauchope Scout Hall and Laurieton Scout Hall. This was a feat of organisation and contribution from the members getting equipment and operators to these locations.

Port Macquarie: Henry, VK2ZHE and Barry, VK2LBG, took charge of Port Macquarie with the Club's Communication Van, VK2BOR, both heading out early to avoid the traffic hassles of the Ironman's weekend activities. The setup included a 20/40 metre dipole on the sunny shores of the Hastings River. Thanks to Mark VK2FMGM, Richard VK2CHC, Henry VK2ZHE, Barry VK2LBG, Paul VK2ICQ . . . ’



*‘ . . . **Wauchope** was set up by 09:30am using my mobile ham shack and a half-wave dipole mounted on a squid pole, adjacent to the Scout Hall. With the club being ready on air by 10:00am, Bob VK1ZRE, Stuart VK2FSTU, Stephen VK2HOO and Lyle VK2SMI started making contacts for the Scouts (photograph below); However, propagation was poor and even us old timers were having trouble with the noise level. Despite these difficulties, contacts were made and all the Scouts went through their first QSO before lunch. After lunch, we started again but with a low success rate until mid-afternoon. At that time, a Hunter valley group came on the air, cycling tens of potential Amateurs with our remaining three Scouts.*

Overall, the attendees had a great time, and, at our end, included several Scouts showing great interest in Amateur Radio. WIA brochures were distributed and a follow up visit is planned for November. Wauchope Scouts have already indicated interest in next year's JOTA . . . ’



*‘ . . . **Laurieton** took some organising. Initially, Laurieton was the planned venue but was later, with the plans moving from Laurieton to Kendall and with only 2 days notice it was moved back to Laurieton with a start time of 14:00 hours due to a prior booking of their hall. I left Wauchope to arrive in Laurieton in time for setup with Dennis VK2FEAT and Keith VK2FPTL. Table and chairs were outside (the echo in the hall a problem) radio and power supply connected firstly to a multi band vertical antenna, signals started to be received but no one returned our CQ. We tried a 40 metre half wave dipole with the same results and after liaising with VK2BOR via 2-metres for a report, it was established that we had RF distorting our HF audio. The Scouts were getting restless and the decision was made to fallback to 2 metres to allow VK2BOR to satisfy the hoards.*

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It was still a success with great interest shown by one particular Cub ready to talk to anyone about anything (I think she could out-talk a politician!)

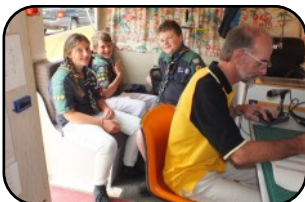
Photograph shows Lyle VK2SMI, Dennis VK2FEAT and Keith VK2FPTL assisted by cubs getting ready for contact.

Thanks to Bob VK1ZRE, for travelling to all three locations and taking the photos.

Port Macquarie Location by Henry VK2ZHE



. . . The ORARC Communication Caravan was set up in front of the Port Macquarie Sailing Club adjacent to the 1st Port Macquarie Sea Scouts boatshed at McInherney Park on the Hastings River at Port Macquarie for the 57th annual Jamboree on the Air on Saturday the 18th of October 2014. Thank you to Barry Gilson VK2LBG who towed the caravan to the site at 7 am and to Paul Romaine VK2UPR and Bruce Walker VK2HOT who assisted Barry Gilson VK2LBG and Henry Lundell VK2ZHE to set up the caravan and erect horizontal dipoles for 40 and 20 metres.



VK2BOR was fully operational by 8:30 am. Thanks to Mark McGuire VK2FMGM and Richard Court VK2CHC who assisted with operating and explaining Amateur Radio to the Scouts and Guides who all said they enjoyed their on-air JOTA experience. The new waterproof annexe for the caravan worked well and provided excellent shade . . .

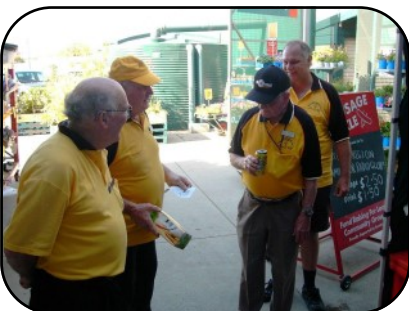
Stuart VK2FSTU sets up a contact for enthusiastic scouts photograph on left. Extracts from the Bunnings BBQ report.

. . . BBQ fund raiser: It's Sunday morning, 7:30, and we are at a hardware store, but we are not here to buy a hammer or new flyscreen or blades for the mower, we are here to sell sausage-sandwiches and soft drinks! It was the Bunnings BBQ Fundraiser event, and our planning went into action. The marquee was raised; the BBQ set-up, with tables, food and the chef standing ready for the first sizzle from the hot plate. Photograph at left has Charles VK2KCE taste tests the sausages watched by Rob VK2CRF and Jessica while Larry VK2CLL cooks up a storm.



Once the customers started to arrive we were in full swing of cooking and ready for sales. It was with apprehension that we stood there as potential sales walked in and then out of Bunnings without a sausage leaving the hot plate. It was after 8:30am and all were talking about it being too early after breakfast and it will pick up, it was a hot day and we should at least sell drinks... but then came the first sale, and then another, we all started breathing again as further sales followed. Sausages were flowing off the hot plate, at conveyor-belt speed at times, and the queue grew, and shrunk, and at times disappeared completely! . . .

. . . At closure time, only 10 sausages and one carton of drinks were left over! A well supplied BBO! We did have to make a run to the shops for more bread and onions. Thanks to Henry, VK2ZHE, for his timely shopping skills. . . . The results were 295 sausage sandwiches and 182 drinks sold with gross sales of \$952.70 and a net profit of about \$535.



A big thank you to Richard VK2CHC, Rob VK2CRF, Charles VK2KCE, Barry VK2LBG, Larry VK2CLL, Henry VK2ZHE, Mark VK2FMGM, Dennis and Sue VK2FAET, Trevor VK2TT, John VK2KHB, Stuart VK2FSTU, Keith VK2KDL, John VK2AYQ, Arthur VK2ATM, Lyle VK2SMI and his daughter, Jessica.

Equipment from the past

BC-221 Frequency Meter

The BC221 is both a HF generator and a heterodyne frequency meter covering 125 kHz to 20 MHz with an accuracy of about 100 Hz, designed in the USA during the 2nd World War (1941-1942) to provide fighting units with an accurate means of setting the frequency of transmitters and receivers.

The Frequency Meter Set SCR-211-(&) is a precision instrument designed to measure or radiate radio frequency between 125 and 20,000 kHz. It is portable, completely self contained instrument used mainly to calibrate field radio receivers and transmitters by direct comparison with the calibrated variable frequency oscillator of the frequency meter. Each meter contains a 1,000 kc crystal oscillator circuit with is used both as a source of accurate radio frequency signals at multiples of 1,000 kHz and for calibrating the variable frequency oscillator of the instrument at a number of points. These points of frequency calibration are called "Crystal Check Points".

These sets were produced in their thousands during 1944 and into the early 1950's. They could be purchased very cheaply from the many army



equipment disposal stores right into 1970s for a couple of pounds! Sometimes as an added bonus some even had headphones stored in the battery base. ACE Radio surplus stores comes to mind plus other stores in Oxford Street Sydney.

Editors note: I spent many hours and a heap of pocket money visiting these stores and then lugging the equipment back home all on public transport in those days! Prices today on ebay range from \$700 up nearly \$1,700 USA plus postage which would be several hundred dollars.

Many amateurs built a separate power supply to enable the sets to be easily used within the radio shack. The original sets had batteries for the low tension valve heaters and the high tension for the plate voltages. These batteries progressively became more expensive and harder to source as the years moved on.

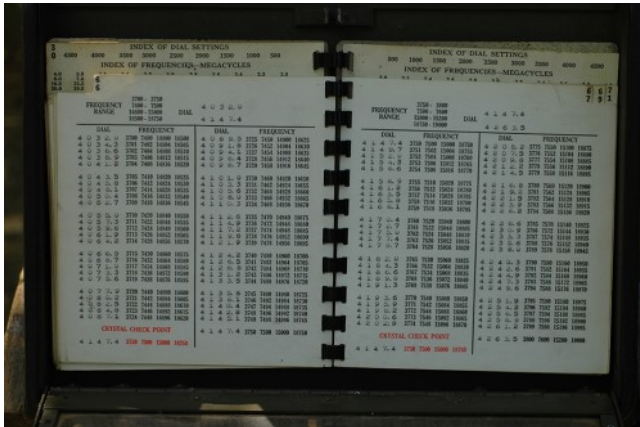
The following description of operation is from the www.radiomuseum.co.uk/ website.

Batteries are held inside the bottom of the case. The equipment consists of a stable variable frequency oscillator having a vernier dial, a crystal oscillator and some circuitry, which after twiddling the appropriate knobs, enable a "squeak" to be heard in headphones when coupled to a transmitter. By comparing the dial reading of the squeak with a set of tables carried in the lid a pretty exact frequency reading of the transmitter output may be obtained.

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Alternatively one could set the dial to a precise setting and tune a transmitter or oscillator, to which the BC221 is connected, to a pre-determined frequency.



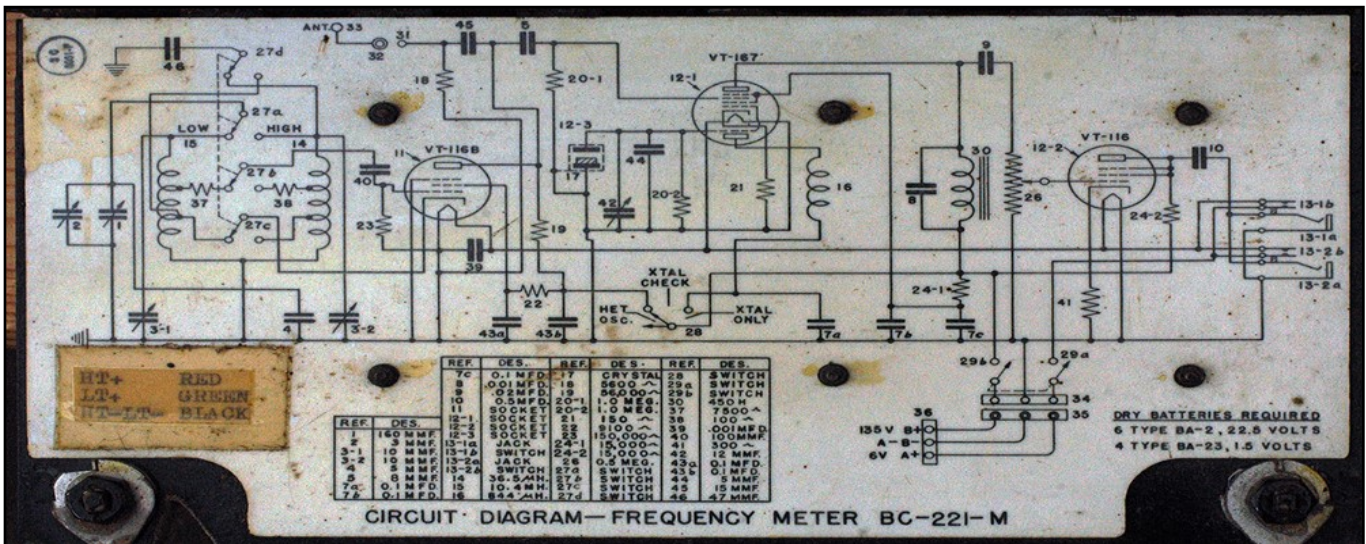
The set of cards in the lid were very important as without them the wavemeter would be useless. To keep the cards in place they're held in a booklet with metal covers screwed to the drop down door.

The information is very interesting because when one studies its content it is apparent that a lot of effort must have gone into its preparation. In fact the information is essentially unique because each equipment has its own set of cards prepared specifically for that equipment and no other. The

numbers of BC221's produced was enormous and it must have been a trifle disconcerting, to the people selling them to the military, when it was found exactly how much labour was needed to prepare the charts. In fact so much effort was needed that the whole job had to be automated and this was probably the first time a computer had been used in a manufacturing process.

A mechanical arm was coupled to the BC221 tuning knob and a custom made electro-mechanical computer moved, measured and typed the charts. Without this embryonic computer wartime communications would have been much more difficult for many radio operators.

The valves are two VT116 (6SJ7Y) and a VT167 (6K8) a total of three in all.



Acknowledgements:

www.radiomuseum.co.uk/
www.richardsradios.co.uk/
 ebay



New Amateur Radio Equipment

Amateur Radio Equipment is continually evolving with systems offered that would have been unheard of ten years ago. The following description of a new device by ICOM the ICOM IC-7760 makes for interesting reading. The information presented below is taken from ICOM sites as the equipment is only just being released in Australia.

The technology comes at a significant cost for example when accessorised the amounts would appear to climb well over \$10,000 depending upon the accessories chosen. However the technology is an indication of what may be in store in the future.

ICOM IC-7760

A New Innovative Shack Style



In today's connected world, the IC-7760 introduces a new connected system consisting of a remote control head and RF deck, connected with a commercially available control (LAN) cable. This concept increases the flexibility of your station installation, making more space available on the desktop by placing the RF deck in an area closer to the antenna feed point. In addition to the direct connect feature, control head to RF deck, utilize your home network to make any tabletop your shack and a PC is not required!

Feature Full Control Head with Separated RF Deck

The IC-7760 consists of a separate remote control head and RF deck and uses a LAN cable for connecting between them. It increases the flexibility of the installation. A control cable (3 m, 9.8 ft) is supplied with the transceiver, and a commercially available LAN cable* can be used to install the RF deck in a more remote location. It enables the RF deck to be placed in a rack or other location away from the station desktop, providing a quiet shack environment away from the noise of the fan used to dissipate the heat generated by the RF deck.

* LAN cable: Cat5e or higher. Cable length: Maximum 100 m.

Feature Flexible In-house Remote Operation and Supports In-house Remote Operation Through a Home LAN Connection



100% Duty Cycle at 200 W Output

The IC-7760 uses a 450 W-class 65 V LDMOS-FET in the PA section, combined with a large heat sink and effective cooling system to achieve a generous 200 W full power full duty operation. Continuous FT8 mode operation is also possible. Furthermore, modulation and frequency conversion are made through digital signal processing, the D/A converter directly outputs the transmit frequency, achieving the purest transmission C/N. By using 450 W FETs device in 200 W

output, the PA achieves excellent IMD characteristics.

Antenna Tuner Unit

The IC-7760 incorporates a mechanical relay type internal antenna tuner as a first for our 200 W models. It provides faster tuning than the conventional variable capacitor type.

Once tuned, the matching information is automatically recalled the next

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time the frequency is selected, facilitating smooth band changes and multi-band operation.

RC-28 for a Second VFO Knob (Accessory)

By connecting the optional RC-28 via USB connection, the SUB band tuning of the IC-7760 can be conveniently operated with your fingertips. MAIN/SUB switching buttons can be assigned to the F-1 and F-2 buttons on the RC-28 and it can operate as the main dial for both MAIN and SUB bands. This allows for quick response to DXpedition stations in split operation, as well as Dualwatch.

SD Card Slot

An SD card slot is provided as an interface for data storage. In addition to voice recordings of outgoing and incoming calls, RTTY/PSK decode logs, captured images of the display, user settings, and firmware updates can be saved in the storage. Voice memories sent in Phone modes, and message memories sent in CW/RTTY/PSK modes, can also be stored. In addition, when an operator is replaced, the operator can simply load their preferred settings from the storage to immediately start operating

Internal Server

Whether from a remote part of your home QTH, or at a remote location somewhere around the world, the RS-BA1 Version 2 software enables you to operate your IC-7760. The Dualwatch operation and dual spectrum scopes with the waterfall functions can be used on your remote PC. With the addition of an Ethernet connector, a base station computer is not required.

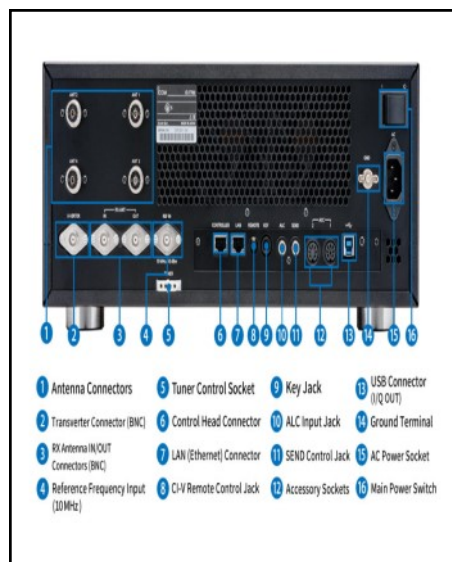
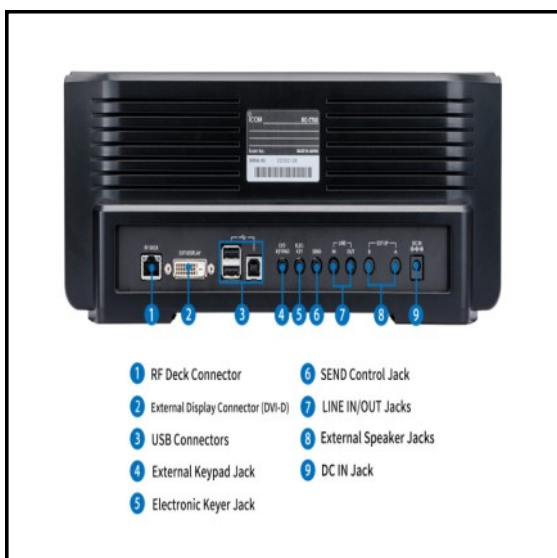
I/Q Signal Output

I/Q signals received by the IC-7760 can be output from dedicated I/Q signal connector (USB on the RF deck) to a PC for digital output. Using the I/Q signals on the HSDR (freeware), you can listen to received signals, or display the spectrum scope on the PC. Used in combination with the CW Skimmer* or N1MM Logger+*, you can virtually decode all Morse signals in the operating band. This function is particularly useful for contesting and DX hunting, and effective callback during split operation.

* USB I/Q driver package can be downloaded from the Icom web site.

HSDR, CW Skimmer and N1MM Logger+ software are not supplied from Icom.

The diagrams below show the extent of interconnections that can be made to control the radio's function.

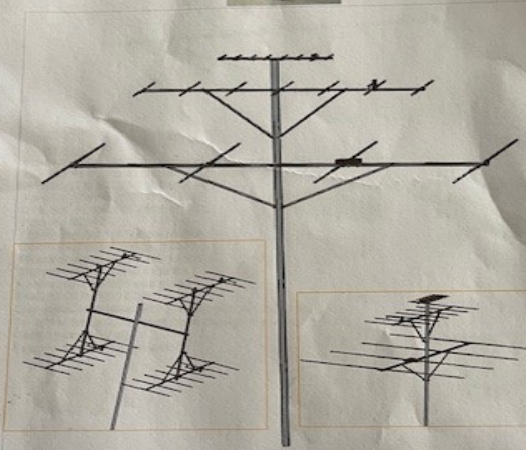


For Sale


The following catalogue was submitted by Sandy VK2WH a club member who has designed and made antennas in Australia for sale through his company KAYSAN.

Club members who wish to order equipment or simply to talk to Sandy about his range of antennas can do so via his email vk2wh@kaysan.com.au , or see him at a club meeting.

REDCAP ANTENNAS by KAYSAN



Made & Designed in Australia
KAYSAN ENGINEERING
 ABN 67185680352
vk2wh@kaysan.com.au



REDCAP 6 METRE ANTENNA by KAYSAN



PARTS USED
 BOOM .. 25 x 25 mm Aluminum (3.0 M boom)
 ELEMENTS .. 19 mm Dia Aluminum
 PASSIVE ELEMENT MOUNTING
 Part No 12911
 DRIVEN ELEMENT MOUNTING
 Part No 12912
 Provision for 1:1 Balun match
 Boom end caps P/No. 12920
 Element endcaps P/ No 13065
 Support braces and U bolts
 Hardware all stainless steel.
 SO-239 CONNECTOR
 Elements are fitted with telescopic Aluminum 16 mm
 To allow for adjustment from design frequency of 50.25MHz
 Gain approx 6.7 dB
 Supplied for easy assembly



Made & Designed in Australia by VK2WH
KAYSAN ENGINEERING
 ABN 67185680352
vk2wh@kaysan.com.au



\$710 Assembled

REDCAP 2 METRE ANTENNA by KAYSAN



PARTS USED
 BOOM .. 20 x 20 mm Aluminum (2.5M)
 ELEMENTS .. 10 mm Dia Aluminum
 PASSIVE ELEMENT MOUNTING
 Part No 12923
 DRIVEN ELEMENT MOUNTING
 Part No 13075
 GAMMA ELEMENT.. 10 mm Dia Aluminum
 Boom end caps P/No. 13048
 Element end caps P/ No 13047
 Support braces and U bolts
 Gamma tuning slide
 Hardware all stainless steel.
 SO-239 CONNECTOR
 Gain approx 10 dB

Supplied for easy assembly

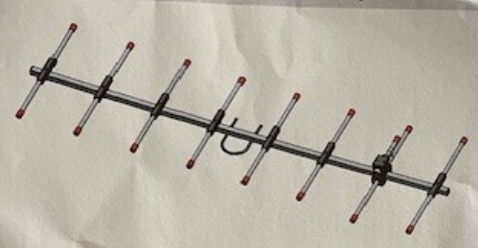



\$389 Assembled

Made & Designed in Australia by VK2WH
KAYSAN ENGINEERING
 ABN 67185680352
vk2wh@kaysan.com.au

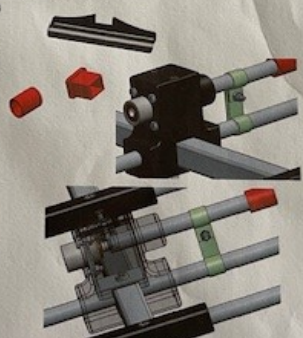



REDCAP 70 cm 435 Mhz ANTENNA by KAYSAN




PARTS USED
 BOOM .. 20 x 20 mm Aluminum (1.25M)
 ELEMENTS .. 10 mm Dia Aluminum
 PASSIVE ELEMENT MOUNTING
 Part No 12911
 DRIVEN ELEMENT MOUNTING
 Part No 1308.1
 Boom end caps P/No. 13047.1
 Element endcaps P/ No 13048.1
 Hardware all stainless steel.
 Type SO-239 CONNECTOR
 Design frequency of 435.0 Mhz
 Gain approx 10 dB

Supplied for easy assembly

Made & Designed in Australia by VK2WH
KAYSAN ENGINEERING
 ABN 67185680352
vk2wh@kaysan.com.au



\$315 assembled

Silent Key – Trevor Thatcher ex VK2TT



It is with great sadness that we record the sudden passing of esteemed ORARC Life Member Trevor Thatcher ex VK2TT late of Wauchope NSW on Sunday the 17th of November 2024 at Engadine NSW. Trevor was looking forward to his 98th Birthday Party which his family had planned for the 18th of November 2024. He was well in the morning but he suddenly took ill in the afternoon.

Trevor will be well remembered by the many people he worked with at the Overseas Telecommunications Commission (OTC).

Trevor was an active amateur throughout his life and was a highly skilled CW operator. He was one of the few operators who was also proficient in sending and receiving Morse code by the clicks of the sounder.

Trevor was an early adopter of digital communications and was a pioneer in X.25 Packet Radio in all its forms. He and fellow digital enthusiasts including Arthur Monck VK2ATM extended the ROSE network UHF backbone from Sydney through digipeaters and nodes at VK2RPM at Middle Brother Mountain and VK2RCN at Telegraph Point. The Amateur Radio X.25 packet radio network carried a lot of Bulletin Board traffic in the days before the internet became established. Trevor was extremely proficient in computing and ran all manner of Amateur Radio applications as well as the usual desktop applications. He maintained his HF packet node throughout all his years in Wauchope and only shut it down when his family finally convinced him to move into assisted care at Engadine in 2023. Until then Trevor's VK2TT home APRS node had marked his location in Wauchope for several decades.

In retirement Trevor lived at Wauchope for 33 years. In later years after the passing of his wife Phyllis, Trevor lived alone as did fellow ORARC Wauchope member David Harding VK2AIF (SK). Trevor had a daily morning 2 metre radio sked with David every morning to check on each other's welfare. This mutual arrangement was instrumental in Trevor going to David's house to check on him if he didn't come up on the sked and vice versa. A couple of times they credited this arrangement with saving their lives when they needed urgent medical attention. After David passed away, Trevor's daughters took turns living in with Trevor for the last couple of years before convincing him to move into the assisted care at Engadine to be closer to their families in Sydney.

Trevor was an active member of the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club and participated in all the club activities. He became ORARC Secretary in 1990. In 1995 he took over from David Pilley VK2AYD (SK) as editor of the Club's bimonthly newsletter "Oxtales".

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Trevor was editor for 24 years before handing over full time editorship to co-editor John Hansen VK2AYQ in 2019. He was highly proficient in Microsoft Publisher and had an enviable command of the English language. His attention to detail was legendary. Trevor was the author of the ORARC constitution.

Trevor founded the ORARC annual calendar in 2004 as a means of providing a ready reference for Club information, and to help members to put a face to their fellow members' callsigns. The annual calendar is still as popular as ever despite the calendar dropping the members' photographs in 2023.

Trevor was an active Morsecodian. He volunteered his Morse Code skills at the Timbertown Museum. He ran the Timbertown Post Office for many years and was well known for sending and receiving telegrams by Morse Code sounder. He was in the process of repairing the unique sounder at the time when the Museum was sold to a private buyer.

Trevor was instrumental in the aviation memorial at Port Macquarie airport.

Trevor was a Life Member of the Huntingdon Rural Fire Service brigade. His sudden passing was a shock to the many RFS members who knew and respected him.

Trevor also volunteered with SES for many years and is fondly remembered in the Port Macquarie Unit. Trevor had great radio communications skills and developed an on screen logging programme that was particularly simple and intuitive to use. It had a particularly professional looking graphical user interface (GUI) created using Visi Calc which Trevor was proficient in.

When Trevor moved into assisted care and was no longer able to get on the air he passed his callsign VK2TT to his son-in-law Ian McDonald who now proudly signs VK2TT. We are indebted to Ian for advising of Trevor's passing.

Trevor will be sadly missed. Sincere condolences are extended to Trevor's family. A Funeral Service will be held in Sydney on the 6 of December 2024.

Vale Trevor Thatcher ex VK2TT

Submitted by Henry Lundell, VK2ZHE on behalf of the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club Inc.



Trevor VK2TT and Roy VK2YOR Work the registration desk at 2010 Field Day



Trevor celebrates his 97 Birthday.



Trevor VK2TT with friends David VK2AIF and Charles VK2KCE at the 2019 Field Day

Field Day Sponsors



OXLEY REGION AMATEUR RADIO CLUB INC.

*thanks all our sponsors for their
generous support.*



Oxtales depends upon contributions from our members; please feel free to contribute articles, photographs and amusing cartoons. Contributions may be sent by email to the editors, Arthur VK2ATM, or John VK2AYQ at hansenjo1@bigpond.com or to the President Henry VK2ZHE.

Thanks to K4ADL <https://www.qsl.net/k4adl/> for the use of his cartoons.