



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 fourth year

January 2025

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

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

President's Report

January 2025



Welcome to 2025

ORARC Meetings

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.



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Down The Coax

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

Ross Hull Memorial Contest
1 to 31 January 2025

Monthly General Meeting
Saturday 4 January 2025 2:00 pm

Coffee Morning
Brooklyn's Burger Bar,
Thrumster 10am Thursday 9 January
2025

Friday Night Get-Together
Friday 17 January 2025 7.00 pm

Summer VHF-UHF Field Day
Saturday 18 &
Sunday 19 January 2025

AX Prefix
May be Used on Australia Day
Sunday 26 January 2025

Australia Day Contest
2200 UTC 25th January to 1000 UTC
26th January 2025

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

Coffee Morning - Brooklyn's Burger
Bar, Thrumster
10am Thursday 13 February 2025

Friday Night Get-Together
Friday 21 February 2025 7.00 pm

Monthly General Meeting
Saturday 1 March 2025 2:00 pm Guest
Speaker TBA

Coffee Morning - Brooklyn's Burger
Bar, Thrumster
10am Thursday 13 March 2025

Net Controllers' Roster Nets on Voice Repeater VK2RPM 146.700 MHz

Sundays
(0900 Local)

Thursdays
(1930 Local)

February 2025

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

March 2025

VK2FMGM	March 2	VK2ZHE	March 6
VK2FMGM	March 9	VK2ICQ	March 13
VK2FMGM	March 16	VK2EM	March 20
VK2FMGM	March 23	VK2ZHE	March 27
VK2FMGM	March 30		

April 2025

VK2FMGM	April 6	VK2ICQ	April 3
VK2FMGM	April 13	VK2EM	April 10
VK2FMGM	April 20	VK2ZHE	April 17
VK2FMGM	April 27	VK2ICQ	April 24

John Moyle Memorial Field Day
Saturday 15 & Sunday 16 March 2025

Friday Night Get-Together
Friday 21 March 2025 7.00 pm



The January Monthly General Meeting on Saturday the 4th of January 2025 was very well attended.



The next Monthly General Meeting is on Saturday the 1st of February 2025.

Sandy Brucesmith VK2WH will be the guest speaker (Photograph far left).

He will present the much-awaited part 2 of his talk on Amateur Radio in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. Please let the committee know if you have any suggestions or contacts for future presentations.

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 or Secretary Peter Fletcher VK2HPF 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.

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For example, two Distant members covered by a Family Membership would pay just a single fee of \$10. 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.

Coming Events

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. 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.

At the 20th of December 2024 Friday Night Get together Tim Tuck VK2XAX brought along his Bird 6100 microwave test set and tested various commercial 23cm and 2.4 GHz antennas and RF power dividers. Henry VK2ZHE brought along his IFR 500 Communications Test Set together with the ORARC Yaesu FT-991 HF/VHF/UHF all mode transceiver for demonstration.

Coffee Mornings



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



The first Coffee Morning for 2025 was on Thursday the 9th of January 2025. It was particularly well attended.

The next Coffee Morning will be at Brooklyn's Burger Bar at Thrumster at 10am on Thursday the 13 of February 2025.

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

Brooklyn's Burger Bar at Thrumster were given a copy of the 2025 calendar at the 12 December 2024 Coffee Morning. This is a good investment as the 2025 calendar has the monthly Coffee Mornings marked on it. When we arrived for our monthly Coffee Mornings a reserved table is always waiting for our Club members. It pays to advertise!

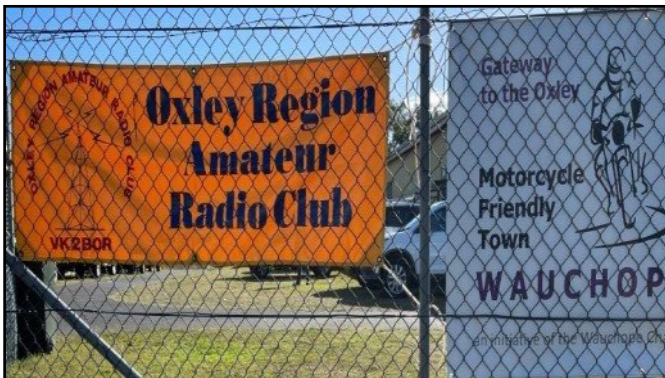
23 on 23 Activity Nights



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.

ORARC 2025 Field Day 7 & 8 June

The ORARC 2025 Field Day takes place on Saturday the 7th and Sunday the 8th of June during the Kings Birthday Holiday weekend. The 2025 Field Day will be the 49th Annual Field Day.



The Field Day venue will be the Wauchope Showground Hall. This venue has proven to be very popular. The hall has been booked again for the 2025 Field Day.

The Wauchope Showground hall is spacious with plenty of off-street parking.

On site camping is available and the Wauchope Showground is pet friendly. Early bookings to the live-in caretaker on phone 0475 111 074 are essential <http://www.wauchopeshowsociety.com.au/camping.html> as the camp sites are very popular during the Kings Birthday Holiday weekend. Rates are very reasonable with power available. There are toilets and hot showers. You can even stable your horse!

The Field Day Dinner will be at 6 pm on the evening of Saturday the 7th of June 2025 in the Seabreeze Function Room at the Port Macquarie Golf Club. Thank you to Gary Ryan VK2ZKT of Radio Supply for sponsoring the function room for the dinner. Gary has kindly sponsored the hire of the room for many years and ORARC is indebted to Gary for his continuing sponsorship. The Golf Club has an extensive menu to suit all tastes. Meals are at club prices.

Planning for the 2025 Field Day has commenced so please consider offering your assistance. The committee will be very pleased to hear from you. The position of Field Day Manager is still open, and there are many tasks to volunteer for especially in providing extra help at preparing and serving lunch.

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Antenna Shootout Day 2025



The club's popular annual Antenna Shootouts are now held in May in the cooler part of the year. As Mothers Day falls on Sunday the 11th of May 2025, the date for the Antenna Shootout has been tentatively set for Sunday the 18th of May 2025 but will be confirmed in March 2025 Oxtales.

For the last two years Larry Lindsay VK2CLL and his wife Penny have very kindly hosted the antenna shootout at their property at Huntingdon, a short distance west of Wauchope. We look forward to their hospitality again this year.



In past years we have tested antennas on 6 and 2 metres and 70 cm. This year in response to interest in the microwave bands we are looking to add facilities to test antennas on 23cm and 2.4 GHz as well.

Wyang Field Day 2025

The long running Central Coast Field Day in February each year had been the largest Amateur Radio Field Day in the southern hemisphere for over 50 years but after the disruptions caused by the COVID pandemic the Central Coast Amateur Radio Club ran the Field Day in May for a couple of years as Mayham but there were no Field Days in 2023 and 2024 and there will not be a 2025 Field Day.

Urunga Convention

The Urunga Convention had taken place over the Saturday and Sunday of the Easter weekends for 70 years but after being cancelled for the last few years due to COVID-19, the several times postponed 71st annual Urunga Easter Convention has again been cancelled.

Recent Events

2024 Christmas Party



The extremely enjoyable 2024 Christmas Party was held at the Long Point Vineyard and Art Gallery on Saturday the 7th of December.

The weather on the day ended up fine for the duration of the party despite a forecast of scattered storms later in the afternoon which did arrive after everyone had departed.

Thank you to everyone who attended the party and contributed to making the day a great success. The sausage sizzle lunch was expertly barbequed and served by Larry Lindsay VK2CLL and Rob frost VK2CRF.

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Thank you to Paula Colledge VK2PDC for bringing her professional electric grill to barbeque the sausages and onions; being used by Peter VK2HPF in the photograph at left. This was much easier than breaking out the traditional BBQ range and was also much quicker for setting up cleaning and packing away.

The delicious trifle dessert made by Sue Meade and the Pavlova together with very tasty tarts especially baked by Lesley for the Christmas Party were a very popular treat to end a very enjoyable lunch.



The photograph on the right shows Lesley plating out the deserts. There was even whipped cream to go with the dessert. Thank you to everyone who brought along the many tasty nibbles to share.

Special thanks to Jamie Campell VK2YCJ for bringing coleslaw, blueberries and the most delicious grapes and super large strawberries for us to enjoy. Thank you to those who shared their salads. The delicious salad proffered by Caroline Fletcher VK2CZF included radishes which were a special treat. Thank you to Arthur Monck VK2ATM for bringing the cherries. No one went hungry. The tea and coffee, soft drinks and chilled water ensured that no one remained thirsty.



The cellar door was well patronised with many attendees taking the opportunity to stock up on Christmas cheer.



Bruce Ekert VK2EM set up his portable HF station on a very convenient covered picnic table which had an ideally placed tree with overhanging branches that provided a perfect support for antennas. The station created a lot of interest and Bruce demonstrated several alternative antenna types. Bruce was able to make some good contacts despite the depressed HF conditions on the day after recent solar activity. Everyone was impressed at how quickly the station was able to be set up and dismantled. The enthusiasm for portable operation was infectious and those attending picked up a lot of useful tips on how to make the most from the opportunity to get on air when out and about.

Those attending included Dennis Meade VK2DAM and Sue and Judy, John Hansen VK2AYQ, Arthur Monck VK2ATM and Lesley, Peter Fletcher VK2HPF and Caroline Fletcher VK2CZF, Ian Lindquist VK2GL and Bernadette, Bruce Ekert VK2EM, Larry Lindsay VK2CLL and Penny, Ray Mullins VK2JU and Lynne, Paul Colledge VK2ICQ, Paula Colledge VK2PDC, Tim Tuck VK2XAX, Rob Frost VK2CRF, Ben Waters VK2BJW, Jamie Campbell VK2YCJ, Richard Hall VK2BXO and Beatrice, Peter Kucera VK2MPK, Bob Ecclestone VK2ZRE and Diana, John Winter VK2PJW and Henry Lundell VK2ZHE.

Quite a few apologies were received from members who were unable to attend. Hopefully, most of those who had to tender apologies for the 2024 party will be able to join those attending the 2025 Christmas party.

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The venue has already been booked again for the 2025 Christmas Party on Saturday the 6th of December 2025. Mark your calendars now! The Christmas Party is indeed the social family highlight of the year and should not be missed. The covered timber deck picnic area at the Long Point Vineyard and Art Gallery is a perfect party venue.

Middle Brother Mountain VK2RPM Repeater Site

The Middle Brother Mountain VK2RPM 146.7 MHz 2 metre voice and VK2RPM 438.525 MHz Radnet DMR digital voice repeaters and the VK2RPM-1 145.175 MHz APRS digipeater have all been off air since a fierce thunderstorm on the 13th of December damaged the host's mains power distribution at the site. It is hoped that the repeaters will be able to be restored in January 2025 when power again becomes available for the ORARC equipment. This is the first time the Middle Brother VK2RPM repeaters have been off air for more than a day or so in the 52 years that the repeaters have been at the site. Lightning strikes are common on Middle Brother Mountain but this is the first time that a lightning strike has affected the VK2RPM repeaters.

The ORARC Thursday night and Sunday morning 2 metre nets are being run on the Telegraph Point VK2RCN 147.0 MHz repeater while the VK2RPM repeaters are off air. The VK2RPM Echolink node has been temporarily linked to the Telegraph Point VK2RCN 147.0 MHz 2 metre repeater so that those who are unable to directly access the VK2RCN 147.0 MHz repeater are able to participate in the ORARC nets. The VK2RCN 147.0 MHz repeater requires a 91.5 Hz CTCSS subaudible tone for analog FM access. It also accepts C4FM digital input. The repeater output is always analog FM.

Telegraph Point VK2RCN Repeater Site

The VK2RCN 53.800 MHz FM 6 metre voice, VK2RCN 147.000 MHz 2 metre analogue FM voice and 438.425 MHz UHF Radnet DMR digital voice repeater and the VK2RCN-5 145.175 MHz APRS iGate digipeater are all working well.

After the 17th of January 2025 Coffee Morning Henry Lundell VK2ZHE and Rob Frost VK2CRF went to Telegraph Point for the monthly VK2RCN site visit working bee.

The VK2RCN 147.0 MHz voice repeater accepts either analog FM with a 91.5 Hz CTCSS subaudible tone or C4FM Yaesu Fusion digital transmissions. The output is always analog FM. Since the Yaesu DR-2X repeater had been installed the repeater receiver automatic mode selection (AMS) had not been detecting C4FM digital transmissions. This was rectified at the working bee.

Now that the repeater receiver AMS is working, the repeater requires a 91.5 Hz CTCSS subaudible tone on analog FM transmissions. Despite the repeater having been advertised for the past 2 years as requiring a 91.5 Hz CTCSS subaudible tone for analog FM access, some users have been accessing the repeater without transmitting a 91.5 Hz CTCSS subaudible tone. If you have recently found that you can no longer access the repeater it is most likely that you do not have the 91.5 Hz CTCSS encode activated on your radio. Note that the repeater transmits a 91.5 Hz subaudible tone so that you can enable CTCSS decode on your radio in the event that you are being troubled by your radio unmuting due to the various low level spurious signals that can be heard in a few locations in Port Macquarie.

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Rob VK2CRF brought his whipper snipper with him and did a great job in cutting down the weeds which had grown rapidly around the site in the January rain. The site is looking much tidier and the work has reduced the fire hazard. Rob also cleaned the rainwater leaf strainer and Henry VK2ZHE washed the air intake filters.

The performance of each of the Victron Solar controller battery systems were checked. The controllers store the performance parameters for each of the previous 30 days. All batteries are being fully charged early in each day.

VK2WI Sunday Morning and Evening Broadcasts



The ARNSW Sunday morning and evening broadcasts can usually be received at good strength from Dural in Sydney on the VK2WI HF frequencies of 1845 kHz AM, 3595 kHz LSB, 7146 kHz AM, 10.125 MHz USB and 14.170 MHz USB, and on the VKE580 morning transmission on 5425 kHz USB. The morning broadcasts commence at 10am local time on Sunday mornings. The Sunday evening broadcasts commence at 7:30 pm local time. Callbacks are done in the SSB mode on all the VK2WI HF frequencies at the conclusion of the broadcasts.

ARNSW have been making an impassioned plea for more volunteers to join the broadcast roster. This has resulted in some additional volunteers but more are still needed. Volunteers who live too far from Dural to attend the site in person can still assist with some of the broadcast preparation tasks. If you can help, please email news@arnsw.org.au.

The Sunday morning broadcasts are live streamed on the internet on the ARNSW web site at <https://arnsw.org.au/audio>. If you miss the live streaming, mp4 audio files of past broadcasts are available on the same page.

Education and Amateur Licence 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 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.

ORARC 2025 Calendar



The 2025 calendar was launched at the 2024 Christmas Party on Saturday the 7th of December 2024.

A big thank you to John Hansen VK2AYQ for producing the calendar and then very generously paying the cost of printing 100 copies as

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a donation to ORARC. Thank you, John. This means that all proceeds from the sale of the calendars goes straight into ORARC funds.

Steve Pettet VK2ZVG and Johanna Pettet VK2FJMM flew to Lord Howe Island on the Monday after the 2024 Christmas Party and kindly safe hand delivered a copy of the 2025 Calendar to Des Thompson VK9FLHI on Lord Howe Island. Thank you to Bruce Ekert VK2EM for taking copies to distribute to the ORARC members in the Great Lakes, and to Jamie Campbell VK2YCJ for taking calendars to Grahame O'Brien VK2FA to distribute to the ORARC members in Newcastle and the Hunter Valley. Thank you to Stuart Walker VK2BMX for distributing calendars to the ORARC members in Sydney. Central Coast member Peter Pratt VK2PX will pick up his copy in person on his next regular visit to Port Macquarie. There are a lot of logistics in distributing the calendars each year!

The dates of the club nets club meetings and Friday Night Get togethers and the Coffee Mornings, and the ORARC Field Day dates are all marked on the 2025 Calendar. The calendar also contains the details of the frequencies for the club's repeaters. This makes the 2025 calendar a great reference for your shack or den to ensure that you will never miss out on Club activities.

Copies of the 2025 calendar are available and may be purchased at the Monthly General Meetings, Coffee Mornings and Friday Night Get togethers. The price, still a mere \$2 each.

Mid North Coast WICEN



The Mid North Coast WICEN group meets in the Port Macquarie SES Building at the conclusion of each month's ORARC Monthly General Meeting. WICEN members and visitors are made very welcome.

Mid North Coast WICEN hold an 80 metre net each Thursday evening at 7 pm local time on 3600 kHz LSB. Everyone is welcome to join the net. It is a short net and concludes by 7:30 pm in time for participants to join the ORARC Thursday night net at 7:30 pm on the 146.7 MHz VK2RPM 2 metre repeater which is also accessible via Echolink.

If you are interested in joining Mid North Coast WICEN then contact Rob Frost VK2CRF, Larry Thompson VK2LJT or Bob Ecclestone VK2ZRE.

The WICEN NSW web site is at <https://nsw.wicen.org.au/> WICEN NSW hold a 40 metre HF net on the 3rd Sunday of each month at 1830 NSW Local Time on 7110 kHz LSB +/- QRM. Net Control is VK2WIZ. There is also a DMARC DMR net on Talk Group 3810 at 1830 hours NSW local time on the 2nd Sunday of each month. Net Control is VK2WID. The DMR nets can be accessed via the VK2RCN or VK2RPM or other DMR repeaters, or via a Hot Spot.

Member News

Those who participate in the ORARC Sunday morning 2 metre nets run by Mark McGuire VK2FMGM will be aware that Mark had an enforced break from running these nets while he was admitted to hospital for serious surgery. The surgery was successful and Mark returned home much earlier than expected and has now resumed running the Sunday morning nets.

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Just a reminder that members who turn 85 years are rewarded with Life Membership. Eligible members must be nominated by the end of June so that they can be included in the agenda for the ORARC Annual General Meeting. Please let the Committee know of any members who will become eligible in 2024.

Best wishes for a safe and happy 2025.

Silent Keys

Sadly, this issue of Oxtales carries three Silent Keys:

ORARC Life Member Trevor Thatcher ex VK2TT passed away on Sunday the 17th of November 2024, one day before his 98th Birthday. Part 1 of his Silent Key appeared as a Stop Press in the November 2024 issue of Oxtales. Part 2 is in this issue.

Long time ORARC Member John Winchester VK2NJJ passed away on Friday the 20th of December 2024. He was 81 years of age. His Silent Key appears in this issue of Oxtales.

ORARC Member Ziggy Malter VK2TN passed away on Wednesday the 25th of December 2024. He was 77 years of age. His Silent Key appears in this issue of Oxtales.

Henry Lundell VK2ZHE
President

Photographs from the Christmas Party



Puzzle. Can you name all the people in the Christmas Party Photographs?





WIA Announces AGM to be held in Bendigo Victoria

The Bendigo Amateur Radio and Electronics Club and the Wireless Institute of Australia advise the dates of the 2025 event.

The Bendigo Amateur Radio and Electronics Club (BAREC) and the Wireless Institute of Australia (WIA) advise that they will hold an Amateur Radio and Technology Expo in Bendigo Victoria in May 2025.

The Bendigo Amateur Radio and Technology Expo will be held in conjunction with the WIA Annual General Meeting on the first weekend in May 2025. The event will be held over the weekend of 3rd and 4th May 2025.

A program for amateurs, partners and the general public is currently being developed by BAREC and announcements detailing the event and the program will be advertised shortly.

So hold that date in your busy calendar as Bendigo is within easy travelling distance from Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney.

The future of The Commonwealth Contest



The Commonwealth Contest has been run each year, excluding wartime, starting from 1931. The Radio Society of Great Britain (RSGB) have been the custodians and administrators for the contest for the whole period, although the original suggestion came from New Zealand.

The Commonwealth Contest participants in 2024 have been asked their preferences for the future of the event and they overwhelmingly said that ‘we should engage with Commonwealth Country National Radio Societies to negotiate “shared ownership” of the contest - with the Commonwealth Contest being included on the contest calendar for each society. Responsibility for the contest would be shared by Commonwealth countries.’

On that basis, as representatives of the contest participants, the RSGB are asking Commonwealth National Radio Societies to consider joining a group to share equal ownership of the contest.

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The Commonwealth Contest is held for 24 hours in March each year using CW. It is held over the weekend nearest to Commonwealth Day. It was still very popular in 2024, with over 240 entrants and 15 Commonwealth Headquarters stations active.

One of the unique characteristics of the contest is that it celebrates the Commonwealth and facilitates contacts between Commonwealth residents over significant distances, without many of the very loud international contest stations outside the Commonwealth monopolising the contest bands. The RSGB have approached the National Societies in Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, and the UK to establish a committee. Proposed for the future is that the contest would no longer be called the “RSGB” Commonwealth Contest, but that responsibility would be shared. Governance would be between a group of National Societies by agreement.

Each Commonwealth National Amateur Radio Society who wishes to take part would nominate representative(s) to form a committee to govern the contest and to determine future strategy.

In the case of voting on any issue, a simple majority based of one vote per member society would be applied. Rule changes would be subject to consultation among contest participants. The committee would elect a chair and secretary who would be responsible for calling meetings and recording discussion points. We would anticipate that the committee meets infrequently, and that dialogue will be electronic due to the variety of time-zones that the Commonwealth enjoys. On behalf of and under the scrutiny of the Committee, RSGB would publish the contest rules, gather logs from entrants, adjudicate the contest and publish the results as it has done to date. This is to reuse resources that have already been developed and not to impose an administrative burden on the other National Societies.

The Committee would manage the awards which could include the introduction of awards for the members of each National Society. Each society would include the Commonwealth Contest in their contest calendar and will promote the contest in an equivalent manner to those which they have organised previously, for example through their journals, websites, and social media.

Joint efforts would also be made to encourage participation from Commonwealth countries which have small amateur populations and less representation. The RSGB would aim for the new Commonwealth Contest Committee to take responsibility as soon as is practical.

The Wireless Institute of Australia has agreed to continue to participate and support the Commonwealth Contest in 2025 and beyond and have indicated support for this proposal to “share ownership” of the Commonwealth Contest. The WIA is seeking expressions of interest from members who would like to be considered for appointment to the Commonwealth Contest committee. Please send your expressions of interest to the WIA Secretary for consideration.

We trust that together we can enjoy this historic contest for many years to come.

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WIA Election for Directors

The Constitution of the WIRELESS INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA (WIA) in Clause 14 specifies the way in which Directors of the WIA are to be elected to that position. Four directors retire at the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting which will be held in Bendigo in May 2025, namely Scott Williams VK3KJ, Peter Clee VK8ZZ, Giles Kirby VK5GK and Peter Schrader VK4EA. Each retiring director is eligible for re-election.

A call for nominations for the position of Director of the WIA was made in November 2024, in the WIA National News Broadcast and in Amateur Radio Magazine in accordance with the Election Regulations.

I advise that I have received Five (5) valid nominations from WIA members for the position as director of the WIA by the advertised closing date for nominations, as follows:- Giles Kirby VK5GK, Klaus Illhardt VK3IU, Peter Clee VK8ZZ Peter Schrader VK4EA, Scott Williams VK3KJ.

As advised in the Call for Nominations there will be four (4) vacancies at the conclusion of the AGM to be held in May 2025 and therefore an election by ballot will be necessary. This Election will be held by electronic ballot with an option for a postal vote as provided for in the WIA Election Regulations.

Members could elect to vote by postal ballot. An election to vote by postal ballot will close on 24th December 2024.

Details of the election timetable and the Bio of the nominees will be sent to all members by email. Details of Nominees will also be included with the postal voting papers sent to those members opting for a postal vote. Details will also be published in January / February Edition of Amateur Radio Magazine.

The electronic and postal ballot will commence on 1 February 2025 and will close on 28 February 2025.

The formal declaration of the election will be announced at the WIA Annual General Meeting to be held in May 2025.

This notice is authorised by Pete Cherry VK2LP, WIA Returning Officer on 1st January 2025.



Ham Radio Operators Serving During California Firestorms

As the firestorms across Southern California continue to threaten millions of residents, trained amateur radio operators are serving critical volunteer roles to help officials spot fires before they get out of control. Dry conditions and wind gusts the firestorms across Southern California continue to threaten millions of residents, trained amateur radio operators are serving critical volunteer roles to help officials spot fires before they get out of control. Dry conditions and wind gusts of 100 miles per hour have fuelled days of devastating wildfires. Entire neighbourhoods have been levelled by infernos.

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The Eaton fire burned to the top of Mount Wilson, a critical logistical post for broadcast radio and television stations, as well as communications across the Southland. Federal agencies, air traffic control, local emergency responders, radio amateurs, and others all share tower space on the mountain.

While the main fires have been burning north and northwest of the central section of Los Angeles, just to the south, hams are standing watch. Orange County Fire Watch (OCFW) is a program locally organized by the Orange County Parks Department and the Irvine Conservancy.

During severe fire weather, volunteers go to preassigned locations within parks and open spaces to report conditions. Many of them are hams, using the amateur radio bands to fill in mobile network weak zones.

ARRL National Instructor Gordon West, WB6NOA, is among the deployed volunteers. He said hams are stepping up. "We're all over the ARRL Orange Section on hilltops, reporting the wind and humidity, ash seen coming down, scanning for spot fires (none so far), smoke from the LA fires, guest activity at the parks, and being a presence at trailheads with reflective vests and vehicle signs indicating Fire Watch," he said.

Ray Hutchinson, AE6H, is a retired Firefighter who serves as the chief radio officer for Fire Watch. He says local clubs are key to providing the needed RF infrastructure. "Our local club, the South Orange Amateur Radio Association (SOARA), an ARRL Special Service Club, provides linked 2-meter and 70-centimeter repeaters: one high level and one coastal, for use by OCFW hams during deployments. There is a formal OCFW Net Control Station (NCS) for the entirety of these events," he said. Radio amateurs are also ready and able to serve at evacuation centers, providing support as needed.

Members of ARRL Headquarters staff have been in touch with ARRL volunteers and other ham radio groups around the affected area, and are offering material support for any activations. "It has been a busy start to the year for ham volunteers," said ARRL Public Relations and Outreach Manager Sierra Harrop, W5DX. "Whether it's firestorms or ice storms or any other need, ARRL volunteers selflessly serve their communities. We're mindful that large-scale events like this impact the hams who are active serving," she said.

ARRL Director of Emergency Management Josh Johnston, KE5MHV, has been on calls with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other served agencies, offering ARRL resources. Efforts are being coordinated locally by Emergency Network Los Angeles (ENLA), the Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) group in Southern California.



Johnston urges hams in the affected regions to be ready to take care of themselves and their families before needing to deploy. He points to resources shared by ARRL's Amateur Radio Emergency Service® (ARES®) during National Preparedness Month. "These are stressful events for everyone, and being a ham volunteer is really second to keeping yourself and your family safe," said Johnston gusts of 100 miles per hour have fuelled days of devastating wildfires. Entire neighbourhoods have been levelled by infernos.

Continued on next page

The K7RA Solar Update



Sorry to say this is the last ARRL Propagation Forecast Bulletin I will write. I took over in 1991 from Ed Tilton, W1HDQ when he was too ill and weak to continue, and now with ALS I have similar problems.

Geomagnetic influencers were more stable this week (planetary A index shifted from 16.9 to 10.7) and solar indicators were weaker. Average daily sunspot number changed from 159.1 to 103.3 and average daily solar flux from 184.3 to 161.9. e K7RA Solar Update.

Predicted activity indicates solar flux at 210 on January 17-18, 215 on January 19, 220 on January 20-21, 215 on January 22, 220 on January 23-24, 170 on January 25-26, 175 on January 27-28, 170 on January 29-30, then 165 and 160 on January 31 through February 1, 155 on February 2-3, 150 on February 4-6, 145 on February 7-8, 150 on February 9, 145 on February 10-12, 150 on February 13, 155 on February 14-15, 160 on February 16, and 165 on February 17-20.

Weekly Commentary on the Sun, the Magnetosphere, and the Earth's Ionosphere, January 16, 2025, from F. K. Janda, OK1HH:

"There is no indication that the prediction of an upsurge in solar activity starting in mid-January will come to pass. The development is quieter, with no major solar flares occurring. The sunspot groups that are currently observable from Earth have stable magnetic fields. More important flares are therefore rather unlikely.

"The geomagnetic field, while not calm, is not disturbed. Intervals of quiescence alternate irregularly with slight upswings in activity. Ionospheric shortwave propagation conditions are therefore not as good as we had hoped based on the predicted rise in solar activity, but they are not bad either. This type of development is likely to continue."

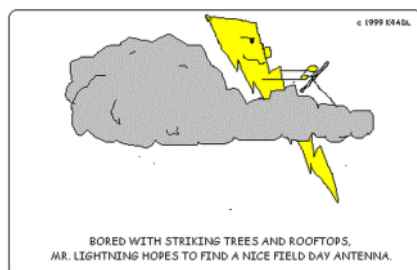
For more information concerning shortwave radio propagation, see <http://www.arrl.org/propagation> and the ARRL Technical Information Service web page at, <http://arrl.org/propagation-of-rf-signals>. For an explanation of numbers used in this bulletin, see <http://arrl.org/the-sun-the-earth-the-ionosphere>.

An archive of past propagation bulletins is at <http://arrl.org/w1aw-bulletins-archive-propagation>. More good information and tutorials on propagation are at <http://k9la.us/>.

Also, check this QST article:

<https://bit.ly/3Rc8Njt>

"Understanding Solar Indices" from September 2002 QST.



REPEATER SYSTEM STAYS ROBUST DURING CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES



NEIL/ANCHOR: Our top story takes us to the US state of California where deadly wildfires have been consuming much of the Los Angeles area and beyond, destroying homes and causing electrical and cellular outages. Even as SpaceX temporarily activated the test version of its satellite-to-cellular service to help deliver emergency alerts and texts, hams were relying on the region's robust and resilient PAPA System of repeaters, as we hear from Ralph Squillace KK6ITB.

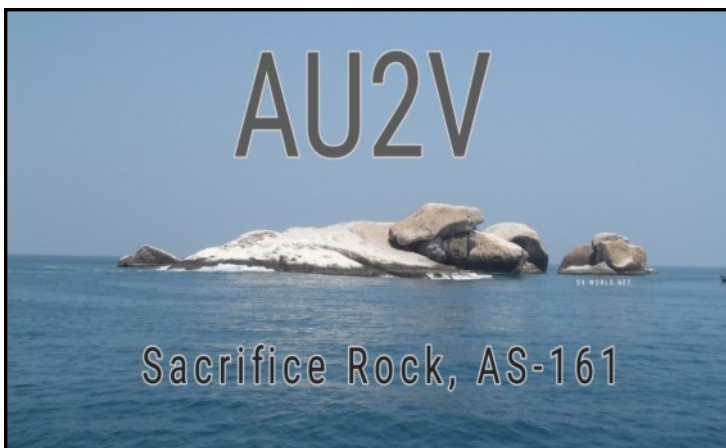
RALPH: As wildfires whipped through the Los Angeles area, the analogue repeaters of California's wide-reaching PAPA System had their nets and routine traffic communications cancelled for a number of days. The repeaters were placed on standby for news and emergency traffic only but by Tuesday, January 14th, all but three returned to net-hosting and normal use. Three repeaters remained off the main network to continue providing emergency coverage in the greater Los Angeles area. The PAPA system's digital repeaters, which utilize DMR, P25 and D-STAR, continued to host normal traffic.



Cecil Casillas, WD6FZA, president of the PAPA System, told Newsline that as of Tuesday 14th, none of the PAPA repeaters had suffered fire-related damages. He said that flames closely threatened repeaters on Mount Wilson and at Saddle Peak, which overlooks Malibu, but the fires stopped short of affecting the buildings, antennas or other equipment. He said the Saddle Peak repeater had been knocked out of service by an unrelated battery failure but that the fires blocked access for anyone to bring up a generator.

Meanwhile, SpaceX gave temporary access to its Starlink satellites to T-Mobile customers, even without its direct-to-cell constellation being fully completed. According to an article in PC Magazine, only T-Mobile customers with supported phones would have access to texting but emergency alerts and evacuation notices could be received by any cellular phone.

Sacrifice Rock



GRAHAM: Writing in the December 2002 issue of the old 73 Magazine, Sri, VU2SBJ, called Sacrifice Rock - a harsh, unwelcoming island off the coast of Kerala in southern India - "a plain solid rock in the middle of nowhere." Eleven months earlier, this treacherous bit of terrain was activated for the first time by Sri and his DXpedition team, who were challenged by its difficult access and changeable weather. No hams have been there since.

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That is, until now: IOTA Number AS-161, as it is also known, is about to become base camp for Team AU2V, six amateurs who are among many to consider it a holy grail. The DXpedition website calls it "a dream come true for chasers."

Sara, VU2RS, told Newsline in an email that planning and preparation have been intense in advance of the hoped-for visit in the second week of February, when the three-month seasonal window for access closes. The team will have two CW operators and four using SSB and digital modes and is still working out logistics for its hours of operation. The team also continues critical fundraising via PayPal to cover what is expected to be \$10,000 in expenses, covering generators, radios, antennas and, of course, the boat that will make that challenging trip across the water to the team's destination. If it is not possible to arrive safely by boat, the team will need to use an airplane, which will add to the costs.



VOICE OF AMERICA MUSEUM POISED TO REOPEN

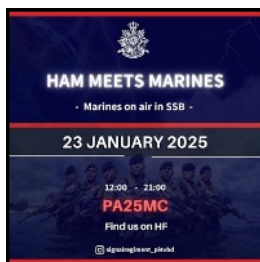
NEIL/ANCHOR: The National VOA Museum of Broadcasting in West Chester, Ohio is QRV and is about to reopen. Stephen Kinford N8WB brings us the details.

STEPHEN: Six months of renovations have come to an end at the Voice of America museum, which is reopening its doors to the public at noon on Saturday the 25th of January. The work has created new exhibit space with room for more displays that showcase radio history in the US. The building formerly housed the Voice of America's Bethany relay station.

The museum will be open every Saturday and Sunday from noon to 4 p.m. local time but can also accommodate group tours on any day of the week if arrangements are made in advance.

The West Chester Amateur Radio Association, WC8VOA, has its headquarters in the historic building and has had uninterrupted on-the-air activity even as remodeling took place elsewhere in the interior. As visitors return, hams will be on the air and, as always, ready to welcome them.

ARMY SIGNAL REGIMENT HOSTS SPECIAL EVENT IN NETHERLANDS



NEIL/ANCHOR: Mark your calendars for January 23rd. You might just work someone in the Royal Netherlands Army Signal Regiment during a one-day special event with a very specific purpose: to get Marines in the Netherlands more involved in amateur radio. Jeremy Boot G4NJH has the details.

Special event station PA25MC has a military mission but one focused on education and friendship. On the 23rd of January, the Royal Netherlands Army Signal Regiment, PI4VBD, will be operating from various locations using military radios - some of them historical. There will also be a variety of operators who will be calling CQ on as many HF bands as possible using SSB.

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 2015 January issues of Oxtales. The club had 70 members. Lyle VK2SMI was President, Charles VK2KCE Vice President, Larry VK2CLL Treasurer, and David VK2 FRAB Secretary.

The main activities reported upon were, the previous years November Beechwood Billy Cart Classic, The Christmas BBQ which was held at the Settlement Point reserve and also incorporated a December ORARC club meeting, the eviction of a 45 cm goanna from the Telepoint repeater shack and a fascinating reminiscence by David VK2AIF on his use of the Wireless Set Number 19 when he was in signals with the Australian Armed Forces.

The following are extracts from Lyle VK2SMI's entertaining report on the billy cart event.

' . . . The Beechwood Billy Cart Classic was held in November and although there was a small attendance in the way of bilycarts, there was a big attendance of club members to assist with checkpoints and safety communications. With Richard's (VK2CHC) recent accident, he referred the final days running to myself. Having the organisation Richard had already completed, made it an easy task . . . '



Editors note: The two pictures show the changes that have taken place in billy cart construction.



The cart on the left was built and raced by Craig VK2ZCM (SK) many years ago prior to 2015. The newer carts have far more emphasis on streamlining and achieve faster speeds down the mountain.

' . . . With a safety marshal paired with one of our members, we headed out to be in position for the big race. Paul (VK2ICQ) took his position in the chase/commentary car and I setup my radios for the PA system

The short races started and finished, with the motorised eskies taking the most amount of time to get ready, and one would have suspected by their driving, they had dipped into their esky for a cold ale. but alas, they only contained ice!



I was hearing of dissatisfied spectators from up the track, waiting for the main race to start, but as we know, not every plan works as it should! The race did eventually start, with four finishers, one DNS (did not start) and one DNF (did not finish)... something to do with a wheel that did not stay on! A good day, and thanks to those attending . . . '

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On the 6th of December, ORARC held its Christmas BBQ at the Settlement Point Reserve. The day started early with Henry (VK2ZHE) arriving with the club's communications caravan loaded with supplies and tea making facilities. As preparation for the BBQ, the caravan was setup and the early arrivals cleaned-off the BBQ's and prepared the area. With the early start, we all enjoyed bacon-and-egg toasted-sandwiches for breakfast.

A very short Committee meeting, followed by a general meeting, which, when out of the way, led to sausage sandwiches for lunch and a good chin wag for those attending. Several hours later, the clean-up was over and the site looked better than when we arrived... which is always a good thing. A big thanks to all those who helped out . . .



Left Peter VK2MPK chats with Richard VK2CHC who demonstrates the results of an interesting Motorcycle trip.



Right John VK2KHB and Trevor VK2TT (SK) reflect on the state of the nation.

Below Sue, Dennis VK2FAET Now (VK2DAM) and Rob VK2CRF



Happy members at the BBQ clockwise Diana and Bob VK1ZRE, at the BBQ Joanne, Tim VK2ZTM (SK), Peter and David VK2FRAB, Jim VK2VIV, Roy VK2EJB (SK), Lyle VK2SMI, Craig VK2ZCM (SK), Ross VK2RR (SK) and Sue with Tim VK2ZTM (SK) and Henry VK2ZHE in background.

Season greetings to all



Equipment from the past

Signal One CX-7



RigReference.com

Signal/One was a manufacturer of high performance SSB and CW HF radio communications transceivers initially based in St. Petersburg, Florida, United States.

Signal/One Model CX-7 circa 1970. Price when new: US\$2395

Description:

High Performance Transceiver 160-10 meters. Solid state except 8072 final tube (Conduction Cooled) Dual VFOs, dual receive, built in keyer, digital readout. High State of the Art in 1972

Signal/One's parent company was Electronic Communications, Inc. (ECI), a military division of NCR Corporation located in St. Petersburg, Florida. Key Signal/One executives were general manager Dick Ehrhorn (amateur radio call sign W4ETO), and project engineer Don Fowler (W4YET).

The advertisement at left outlines the main features of the CX-7 Radio set.

Beginning in the 1960s with the Signal/One CX7, ("S1", as they were called) the company made radios that were

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Please don't call it a TRANSCEIVER...

Some people don't like transceivers. Too much compromise, they claim... only separate transmitters and receivers can deliver really top-notch performance under all conditions...

Pretty hard to argue that point... UP UNTIL NOW!

BUT NOW... SIGNAL/ONE brings you the DELUXE INTEGRATED STATION...

... more performance than any transmitter/receiver combination

... more convenience than any transceiver
... unprecedented versatility

WHATEVER YOUR CHOICE IN THE PAST...

COMPARE IT POINT-BY-POINT with the NO-COMPROMISE CX7...

COMPARE the CX7 with any receiver for sensitivity, selectivity options, dynamic

range, AGC merit, VFO smoothness, interference rejection...

COMPARE the CX7 with any transmitter for continuous power output in all modes, P.A. ruggedness, crisp audio punch, low distortion, instant CW break-in and spotting, quick band-change...

COMPARE the CX7 with any transceiver for total size and weight... the extreme flexibility of its dual-channel system... the convenience of its completely self-contained design...

CONSIDER the CX7's incomparable frequency coverage and readout precision... aerospace-bred excellence in engineering and craftsmanship... built-in "extras"... overall versatility...

signal/one
"It Speaks for Itself"

A Division of ECI (An NCR Subsidiary)

2200 Anvil Street N. • St. Petersburg, Florida 33710

Continued from previous page

priced well above the competition and offered many advanced features for the time, such as passband tuning, broadband transmission, dual receive, built-in IAMBIC keyer, electronic digital read out, solid state design, QSK and RF clipping.

A Signal/ One radio was said to be a complete high performance, station in a box. While marketed to the affluent radio amateur, it has been suggested that the primary market for Signal/One, like Collins, was military, State Department, and government communications. Although prized for the performance and advanced engineering, Signal/One's products did not sell as well as hoped, and the company gradually fell on hard times. From the 1970s though the 1990s, every few years, Signal/One was spun off, sold.

The surviving Signal/One products are sought after and actively collected. These include the CX7, CX7A, CX7B, CX11 and Milspec models. The last Signal/One radio was a re-engineered ICOM IC-781. Information available indicates there were 1152 Signal Ones built: 850 CX7, 112 CX11, 168 MS1030 (number of "C" versions is not known), 6 Mil-Spec1030C, 15 MilSpec1030CI Icom IC-781 conversions and 1 Milspec1030E DSP Icom IC-756 Pro conversion.

Basic specifications Frequency range 10 to 160 metres, Modes AM, SSB, CW and FSK. Output power up to 140 Watts on SSB. Other features Dual VFO and dual receive within the same band. Built-in keyer and full QSK. Nixie tube type frequency counter.

Manufacture was discontinued in the 1970's. A full review can be found in QST: September 2021, page 94.



Acknowledgements:
[WA3KEY Virtual Signal/One Radio Museum](https://www.eham.net/)
<https://www.eham.net/>
[Signal/One CX-7A, Desktop Shortwave Transceiver](https://www.rigreference.com/)
[RigReference.com](https://www.rigreference.com/)
[Signal/One - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Signal_One)



New Amateur Radio Equipment

FTX-1F



The following is taken mainly from the Yaesu and other commercial websites.

Yaesu has officially announced the upcoming release of the FTX-1F, a new QRP portable transceiver that incorporates advanced SDR technology. Set to be available in early 2025, the FTX-1F delivers a power output of 6W, powered by a

5670mAh Lithium-ion battery pack. This battery is estimated to provide an 9 hours of stand-alone operation on HF bands in SSB mode and 8 hours on V/UHF bands in FM mode, based on a 6-6-48 duty cycle. For users seeking more power, the transceiver can achieve up to 10W when connected to an external DC power supply.

Key Features of the FTX-1F

Frequency Coverage: HF, 50, 144, and 430 MHz

Operating Modes: All mode field transceiver

Battery Life: Expected 9 hours on HF bands, 8 hours on V/UHF bands

Operation in SSB, CW, AM, FM and C4FM digital modes

SDR Technology and 3DSS (3-Dimensional Spectrum Stream) on a 4.3-inch high-resolution full-colour touch display panel.

Two independent receiver circuits provide true simultaneous dual-band operation, whether in the same band or in different bands. Two Loud speakers ensure clear and powerful audio output.

An optional Automatic Antenna Tuner can be attached to the rear of the transceiver with the 5670mAh high-capacity Li-ion battery pack. The optional Cooling-fan, which is necessary for comfortable FT8 operation, can also be combined with the antenna tuner. (All-in-one rear panel design).

RF front-end and Low Noise Reference Oscillator, enable Multi-signal Receiving characteristics

Effective QRM rejection afforded via High-speed 32-bit IF DSP (YAESU's renowned interference reduction systems: SHIFT / WIDTH / NOTCH / CONTROUR / APF / DNR / NB)

Compatible with WiRES-X operation

USB ports support CAT operation, audio input/output and TX control

Recommended retail price appears to be probably between \$2,000 and \$2,500 plus depending upon the options such as antenna tuner. The photograph below shows the back of the radio with the snap on battery pack in place.



Acknowledgements:

<https://www.dxengineering.com/>

<https://qrper.com/>

<https://www.radioworld.co.uk/>

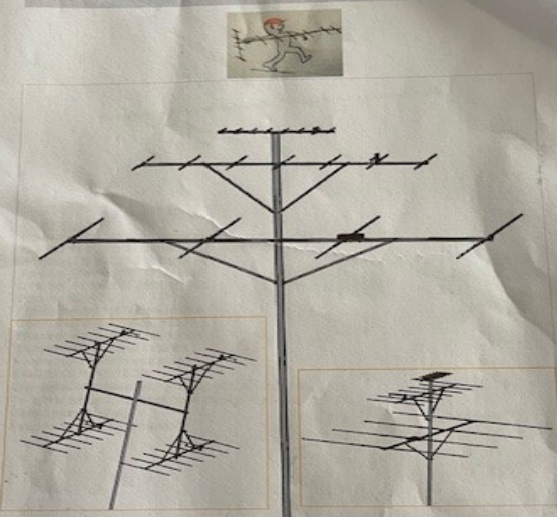
www.andrewscom.com.au

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. Sandy also makes a donation to the club as a thank you each time a club member purchases from this catalogue.

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 13066
 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



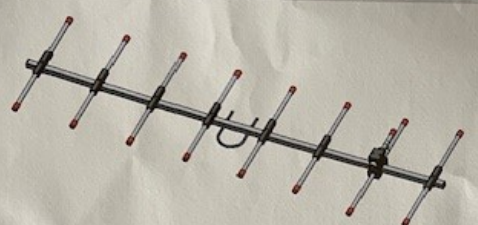
\$389 Assembled



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

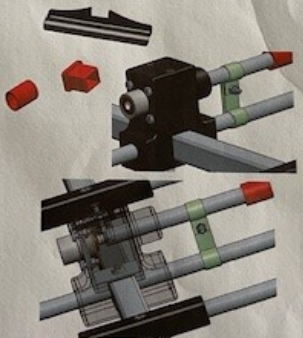


REDCAP 70 cm 435 Mhz ANTENNA by KAYSAN




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 – John William Winchester “Winch” VK2NJJ



It is with great sadness that we advise of the sudden passing of esteemed ORARC Member John Winchester VK2NJJ of Port Macquarie in the Port Macquarie Base Hospital on Friday the 20th of December 2024. He was 81 years of age. John was diagnosed with a serious illness at the beginning of the month. It unfortunately progressed much more quickly than expected.

John had been very active in the Lions Club of Wauchope. Both John and his wife of 59 years, Pauline, had also been very strong in the Scouting movement.

John had retired to Port Macquarie from his hardware business in Wauchope and he and Pauline enjoyed 23 years of caravanning, fishing and cruising. This included a 3 year around Australia trip by caravan and 17 ocean cruises.

John was the founder and passionate supporter of the Men's Shed in the Newport Village in Port Macquarie where he lived in his retirement. John particularly enjoyed the regular social barbeques in the village. He would often call in to the ORARC Sunday Morning 2 metre nets to catch up with the ORARC news and then apologise for having to leave the net early as he was about to cook breakfast on the village barbeque. Cricket was another one of his passions.



John joined the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club when he obtained his Amateur Radio Licence through the Club in 2011. He was first licenced as VK2F-GAA before upgrading and taking out VK2NJJ. He enjoyed the hobby of Amateur Radio and rarely missed a Club meeting when he wasn't away travelling. He always followed Club affairs and he keenly participated in Club activities. With his caravanning experience he was a dab hand with the ORARC Communications Caravan. Photograph on the left shows John cooking up a storm on a Club activity day.

John could always be relied on to regale everyone with tales of his travels. These tales and stories of his adventures during his working life were particularly popular at the ORARC Wednesday morning working bees in the pre COVID years. We learned a lot about what happened behind the scenes in going the extra mile to provide customer service at his hardware business. John will be very sadly missed by all who knew him.

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John checking the repeater battery with club members at the repeater site on Middle Brother.



John and Pauline relaxing with club members at a Christmas Party at The Long Point Winery.

John also volunteered with Port Macquarie SES where he is remembered fondly.

Thank you to John's wife, Pauline, for advising of John's sad passing.

The members of the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club express their deepest sympathy to Pauline and sons Darren and Michael and their families.

The well attended funeral service for John was held on Monday the 30th of December 2024 in the Innes Gardens Chapel in Port Macquarie.

Vale John Winchester VK2NJJ

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

Silent Key – Zigmunt “Ziggy” Malter VK2TN



It is with great sadness that we advise of the sudden passing of esteemed ORARC Member Ziggy Malter VK2TN of Lake Cathie in the Palliative Care Unit of Wauchope Hospital on Wednesday the 25th of December 2024. He was 77 years of age. Ziggy had recently entered palliative care after a long illness.

Ziggy moved to Lake Cathie, south of Port Macquarie in retirement from Sydney. He had set up his music room and had been looking to completing his Amateur Radio station in his new house but work on this had been curtailed by the progression of his illness.

Ziggy had a long career from 1966 in the entertainment industry where he was well known. As well as being an active Amateur Radio operator for over 40 years, Ziggy was a keen aviator and had held a Commercial Pilot's licence and ran an Air Charter and Scenic Flight business for some 30 years until 2013 when his medical issues emerged. He was also a computer and IT consultant.

Ziggy always knew that he wanted to be a musician. Growing up in Melbourne he saved his pocket money to buy his first guitar. In 1966 at 19 after playing the guitar for two years he was recruited from the group The Untouchables to join the relatively short-lived band Mystrys as lead guitarist.

The Mystrys wore green velvet hoods when they appeared in public and did not divulge their true identities.



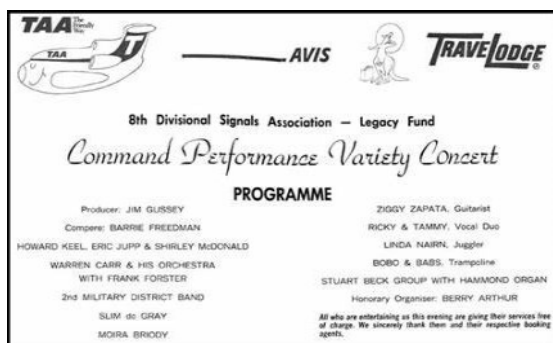
Their debut single, Witch Girl with a ballad called "Land Of The Green Sun" on the B side, was released in May 1966 on the Leedon label and made it onto the Australian Charts. The band toured in regional Victoria and South Australia and had the distinction of having performed in the remote opal mining town of Andamooka. The Witch Girl performance can still be found on YouTube. The rare original disc is very valuable. You can still view interviews with Ziggy at the 40 year reunion of the Mystrys through the extensive music website run by Ziggy's good friend Keith Ritchie



Ziggy was a highly regarded virtuoso guitarist. Over the years he performed professionally in virtually every genre and facet of the music industry. He is well known through his business Ziggy Zapata Enterprises. Sadly, in October 2024 with his advancing medical issues he reluctantly closed his business and took down his web site which had contained an extraordinary wealth of information on all facets of Ziggy's many diverse interests.

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Ziggy ran Ziggy Zapata in Concert as a solo performer. He was renowned as a dynamic and versatile entertainer with powerful singing and hilarious comedy. He could sing in several languages including Polish. He presented his music, concerts and production shows in a huge variety of venues, on many cruise liners, and in recording sessions. His cabaret and concerts were popular at corporate and private functions, and in clubs.

Ziggy was the main support act for a series of concerts all over Australia in 1991 by renowned British Tenor and Goon Show superstar Sir Harry Secombe.



In 2009 Ziggy was proud to receive an award in the One Man Performer Band category at the 33rd Annual MO Awards on the 3rd of May 2009.

In 2014 Ziggy founded the lobby group Campaign Against Road Rip-offs in response to tolls being charged when motorists had no other way to go from one toll free road to another. He was reported in the Daily Telegraph on the 21st of April 2014 when he raised the issue in Sydney of the establishment of the Military Road E-Ramp.

As an internet security expert, Ziggy was an avid crusader against internet scams. In 2017 he was extensively interviewed and reported by the media on the topic.

Ziggy joined the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club when he retired to Lake Cathie in 2022 and looked forward to a long association with the Club which made him very welcome. He rarely missed a Club meeting or Coffee Morning. Even when his health deteriorated and he was undergoing treatment he made great effort to be present. He enjoyed the camaraderie immensely. Everyone looked forward to seeing him and always asked about him if he wasn't present.

Ziggy's positive attitude and enthusiasm was infectious. He drew on a wealth of life experiences to contribute to wide ranging discussions. At the Coffee Mornings the subject of aviation was popular as it was an interest shared by several regular attendees.



He will be very sadly missed by all who knew him. His interesting life was well lived.

Thank you to Ziggy's wife, Barbara, for advising of Ziggy's sad passing. In accordance with his wishes there will not be a funeral service. He had said that he "didn't want people to make a fuss".

Vale Ziggy Malter VK2TN

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

Silent Key – Trevor Thatcher ex VK2TT

Part 2 – Family Life



It was with great sadness that we recorded 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.

This Part 2 of Trevor's Silent Key is a condensed version that draws on the family Eulogy presented at the Memorial Service held on the 6th of December 2024. The full eulogy will be published on the club's website in the near future. It is intended to establish a special section on the website where details of past members may be outlined in greater detail than is possible in just a few pages in Oxtales.

Trevor was Born on 18 November 1926 in Auburn Sydney. His parents Lorna Thatcher (nee Durrington), and Thomas Norman Thatcher, affectionately known to the family as Vanny and Party, were living at a property called Gledhill, in Auburn Sydney, belonging to Trevor's paternal grandparents.

Trevor's memoires recall a very happy time at Currango. The complex around the main homestead consisted of 8 major buildings plus a slaughterhouse, cowshed, fowl-house and woodshed and Shearers quarters. Also included was a small 6 room weatherboard and cast iron clad cottage, now called Daffodil Cottage. It was a cosy little cottage and it was here that Trevor spent the next seven years with his Mum, Dad and later his baby sister Pat. Today this property still stands and is managed by NSW National Parks, it is available for holiday rental.

On Trevor's 85th birthday he had a fabulous reunion with family and many friends, both local and further afield, at the Currango property, sleeping in the Shearers quarters (now known as The Pines) and exploring the property whilst Trevor reminisced his child hood and shared many happy stories. The family had left Currango in 1936.

Trevor always had a musical ear and would often sing songs from his childhood played on his Aunt Nell's gramophone, a "Rexonola". Although there was no money to buy a gramophone for Trevor, his dad did the next best thing and fashioned one out of scrap metal and wood. A group of friends provided the funds to purchase a real Roxonola gramophone. This opened up a new world of musical culture for Trevor who became a great guitarist and pianist.

Communications with the outside world was mostly available by party-line telephone. Of course everyone could hear any conversation on the line by simply having a listen in the earpiece. "Listening in" was a satisfactory way to gain information about what was going on in the area, but it was outwardly frowned upon, although inwardly enjoyed, and universally practiced.

Trevor was schooled via correspondence from the Blackfriar's Correspondence School in Sydney. His lessons were delivered and returned on completion by

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post. He found the weekly sets of lessons to be a great imposition. But he struggled for 5 long years with the correspondence lessons until, at the end of 5th class, he was able give it up and attend a small subsidized school. Despite the difficulties it enabled Trevor to obtain an education of a sufficient level to, much later, make an acceptable living in a career in communications.

In early 1936 another family move took them to a property near Yass called Hawthorne in an area known as The Mullion. The homestead at Hawthorne was a much larger home with 8 rooms and was not as remote as Currango. Trevor would cycle to and from Bonnieville school each day on bicycle. On one occasion after some torrential rain he became stranded on the wrong side of the swollen Mullion Creek. He needed to let his parents know that he was safe before they assumed the worst. A section of the telephone lines was faulty due to the storm and he was not able to call home. Then he had a bright idea. If he could reach high enough under the point where the two telephone lines crossed just maybe he could get a connection to home. He rode his school friend's horse "Fisslo" to the place where the lines crossed and with a length of fencing wire and a long forky stick was able to reach the lines while standing on the horse's rump. A connection was made and after riding back to a neighbour's property he was able to call home and let them know he was OK and would stay overnight with them. Their precious son was safe. This was his first attempt at restoring communications between two remote points. Later in life he was to perform similar magical tricks, but on a much more grandiose scale.

One of Trevor's favourite pastimes was to pass coded messages along the wires of the paddock fences. His parents displayed no interest in this phenomenon at all, seeing no future in his efforts to capitalize on this system of communication. Little did anyone know there was to be a rekindling of this activity in later years. At the age of 15 more begging descended on his parents to let Trevor leave school and pursue a career in communications. His parents hoped he would take a career as a doctor or a chemist but Trevor was not in the least interested. His focus was on communications and the magic of Morse Code. He was able to secure a job at the Yass post office as a Telegraph Messenger. And so Trevor had begun his career in communications, which was to last in excess of the next forty years but, happily, very little of it was with the Yass Post office.

It was during his time in Yass that he met his future wife, Phyllis Ward. In January 1945 Trevor was accepted into the RAAF. Before leaving Yass he had serious misgivings about leaving his friends, particularly the thought of leaving Phyllis to the wolves of Yass. Six weeks of training camp in Cootamundra ensued, followed by 6 months in Melbourne training as a Wireless Telegraphist. Despite becoming a proficient Morsecodian, Trevor never saw active service. The Germans surrendered In May 1945 and the Atom bomb assault on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, and later Nagasaki on August 9 ended the conflict with Japan.

Trevor was employed by AWA in the Beam Wireless Service. He was included in a group of 24 other ex-servicemen and was the youngest among them. It was on the first day of the introductory course that he was given a nickname that would remain with him until his retirement. Mr Thatcher became Mr Scratcher when a fellow employee, George Harris, misheard his name. Trevor hastily corrected the error but George insisted it must be Mr Scratcher. Some variations in later years became Scratcher or Scratchie and sometimes just Scratch! They learned how to touch type 50 words per minute and read morse code of at least 50 words per minute. A boarding house in Gladesville became home for Trevor for a while then later he lived with his Aunt Rita at Naremburn.

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Eventually, due to the government's desire to control important communications into and out of Australia, on 19th August 1946 AWA was taken over by the newly formed Overseas Telecommunications Commission (Australia) or OTC.

Trevor and Phyllis continued to correspond and on the 7th June 1947 she and her brother Eric returned to Australia under an assisted immigration program. They were sponsored by the Bridge family, the same family that had fostered them during the war years and came out on the ship the Orion. Two years later on the 16th April 1949 Trevor and Phyllis were married at Bondi Junction and set up home in Gladesville.

Some months later they moved to Stanmore, a property owned by Mr Harold Bridge, Phyllis and Eric's sponsor. A tiny one room bedsitter flat on the first floor that shared a bathroom with the 2 other flats also upstairs. It was while they were living here in August 1951 that their first child, Lea was born. It now became urgent for them to find a more suitable home for the new family but housing was tight and beyond the means of Trevor's single income. As luck would have it OTC was needing staff in Norfolk Island, offering tax free positions for three years with accommodation provided. Trevor volunteered for the transfer along with his work mate, John Smith. They both had wives and a young child and both desperately needed to accumulate enough savings to eventually house their respective families in Australia. Norfolk Island was the break they needed. There was a catch, however. There was only one cottage available for about 6 months and this would need to be shared by both families until another house could be built. They must agree to share or the deal was off. They talked it over with their wives and pondered the problems for a couple of days but eventually agreed to take the job on, under the temporary accommodation arrangement. Not ideal, but how bad could it be?

After Norfolk Island, there were postings to Fiji 1953-1955 and after three years back in Australia from 1955 to 1958 in Pennant Hills, Trevor was posted to Fanning Island 1958-1960. Then it was back to Australia where Trevor and his family lived at Gidgee Street in Cabramatta from 1960 to 1987.

As detailed in Part 1, Trevor and Phyllis retired to Wauchope to their house "Kandahni" in 1987. Trevor lived there until January 2023 until his move to Engadine Sydney in January 2023 until he passed away on Sunday the 17th of November 2024, the day before his 98th birthday.

Vale Trevor Thatcher ex VK2TT

Submitted by Henry Lundell, VK2ZHE on behalf of the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club Inc. The Club is indebted to Trevor's family for so kindly sharing their family Eulogy for this Silent Key. This Part 2 is a condensed version of the family Eulogy for Oxtales publication by the editor John Hansen VK2AYQ.

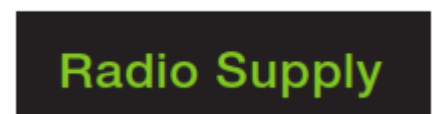


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Thanks to K4ADL <https://www.qsl.net/k4adl/> for the use of his cartoons.