OXTALES

First published 1980

Newsletter of the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club Inc.,
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ORARC's Forty-fourth Anniversary Year

Club Nets on VK2RPM
146.700MHz
(CTCSS 91.5Hz)
Sundays
(during EADST at 0830)
(during EAST at 0900)
Every Thursday at 1930

November 2015

Compiled by VK2AYQ & VK2TT

PRESIDENT: Lyle Smith	VK2SMI	6585 2497
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TREASURER: Larry Lindsay	VK2CLL	6587 1155
SECRETARY: Henry Lundell	VK2ZHE	6582 0534

President's Report

Christmas is nearly upon us with the Club's Christmas BBQ planned for December in the usual place at Settlement Point on the 5th.

For JOTA this year the Club operated two stations, one at Port Macquarie and the other at Wauchope. Henry VK2ZHE took charge of VK2BOR at Port and his report is in this edition. Wauchope was manned by Stuart VK2FSTU, Peter VK2MPK, Rob VK2CRF and myself. We had around 9 scouts attend with good propagation giving us all an excellent day with an 40 metre Inverted V antenna supported by a 10 metre squid pole. Communications were mainly by HF but due to the demand for conversation we also made contacts to and from Port and Wauchope via 70cm and 2 metres. 2nd Wauchope Scouts supplied sausage sandwiches for a welcomed break at lunch and our activities were completed by 3pm when we packed up and returned to our QTH's. Thanks to all the Club members that assisted on the JOTA weekend at both locations.

The Beechwood Billycart Classic was held in October and as usual Richard VK2CHC took charge of the organisation for the event and ORARC's participation in the event went well. There were

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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 70 cm (Voice - CTCSS 123Hz)
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 (Voice - CTCSS 123 Hz)
O/P 438.425MHz - I/P 433.425MHz

VK2RCN-1 (APRS Digipeater)
SX 145.175MHz 1200bps

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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 November 2015 2:00 pm

Spring VHF-UHF Field Day
Saturday & Sunday 14 & 15 November 2015

Friday Night Get-Together
Friday 20 November 2015 7.00 pm

White Ribbon Port Macquarie Coastal Walk
Sunday 22 November 2015

ORARC Christmas Party And Monthly General Meeting
Saturday 5 December 2015
Settlement Point Reserve
From 9 am for set up.

Friday Night Get-Together
Friday 18 December 2015 7.00 pm

Monthly General Meeting
Saturday 2 January 2016 2:00 pm

Friday Night Get-Together
Friday 15 January 2016 7.00 pm

Net Controllers' Roster

Nets on Voice Repeater VK2RPM 146.700 MHz

Sundays (00900 AEDST)		**Thursdays** (1930 AEDST)	
November 2015			
VK2CHC	**Nov - 01**	**VK2ZHE**	**Nov - 05**
VK2TT	**Nov - 08**	**VK2ICQ**	**Nov - 12**
VK2CHC	**Nov - 15**	**VK2EM**	**Nov - 19**
VK2TT	**Nov - 22**	**VK2ZHE**	**Nov - 26**
VK2CHC	**Nov - 29**		
December 2015			
VK2TT	**Dec - 06**	**VK2ICQ**	**Dec - 03**
VK2CHC	**Dec - 13**	**VK2EM**	**Dec - 10**
VK2TT	**Dec - 20**	**VK2ZHE**	**Dec - 17**
VK2CHC	**Dec - 27**	**VK2ICQ**	**Dec - 24**
		VK2EM	**Dec - 31**
January 2016			
VK2TT	**Jan - 03**	**VK2ZHE**	**Jan - 07**
VK2CHC	**Jan - 10**	**VK2ICQ**	**Jan - 14**
VK2TT	**Jan - 17**	**VK2EM**	**Jan - 21**
VK2CHC	**Jan - 24**	**VK2ZHE**	**Jan - 28**
VK2TT	**Jan - 31**		

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limited numbers in the main race but the kids and esky races kept the spectators busy.

VK2RPM has again had several visits in the recent times with the installation of the new 70cm repeater, and a loan 2 metre repeater from Henry, replacement of the VHF APRS transmitter due to failure, removal and installation of another antenna, and the most important one being the finding of the faulty connector that has increased the usability of the 2 metre repeater. 2 metres still suffers from the gremlin but it is slowly being pushed out of its home on "our" tower.

November the 15th will see the Club participating in the Spring VHF/UHF Field Day at John Downes Park, we will be setting up multiple antennae and transmitters for use on the day with 2 metre, 6 metre and 70cm our operating bands.

ORARC will be assisting in the White Ribbon Coastal Walk on the 22nd November. The walk will be from the Tacking Point Surf Club to the Town Green from 8am to just after midday, we will be operating radio checkpoints between the two locations with the net controller being at Town Green. Your assistance would be appreciated.

The Beechwood Billy Cart Classic has a range of activities for all ages including the very popular esky race. The competition in this event is almost as fierce as in the main event!

Lyle VK2SMI (President)

Middle Brother Repeater Working Party

On Saturday 10 October a working party of Lyle VK2SMI, Henry VK2ZHE Peter VK2MPK (photographer) Friend of Peter visited the club's repeater site on Middle Brother. Jorge kindly provided his professional expertise for the day.

The purpose of the visit was to eliminate some of the sources of noise which has been causing interference to the VK2RPM 2 metre repeater. The group found severe corrosion and rusting hardware and corroded earthing on a coaxial cables

The above photographs illustrate the extent of the corrosion problem.

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Checks were also made on the Club's repeater equipment and antennas.

The above photo show the new club's new Yaesu DR-1X C4FM digital and analog FM VK2RPM 438.525 MHz repeater, the loan Yaesu DR-1X C4FM digital and analog FM VK2RPM 146.7 MHz repeater.

The loan Yaesu DR-1X 2 metre repeater has temporarily replaced the club's Icom 2 metre repeater as a test as part of the work being done to track down the sources of interference to the VK2RPM 146.7 MHz repeater.

The following photographs of the tower show some of the club's antennas, including the 2 metre bidirectional yagi antennas including the APRS digipeater.

Digipeter antenna

The working party arriving on site

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Henry VK2ZHE Jorge and Lyle VK2SMI meet and plan the action.

The road to Middle Brother

Communications antenna tower with club antennas mounted on right hand side of photograph.

The climb and cable identification by Jorge

Frequency and return loss/time domain reflector (TDR) measurements

The above photograph shows the new Philips FM828 APRS digipeater transceiver which has replaced the original FM828 transceiver which had failed.

Yaesu DR-1X VK2RPM UHF Repeater at Middle Brother Mountain

The Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club Inc was successful in obtaining a grant from the 2015 Amateur Radio NSW development fund to purchase a new Yaesu DR-1X analog FM /C4FM digital repeater to replace the original Philips FM815 analog FM VK2RPM 438.525 MHz 70 cm repeater at Middle Brother Mountain.

The new Yaesu DR-1X repeater is now in service as the VK2RPM 438.525 MHz UHF repeater. The repeater input frequency remains unchanged as 433.525 MHz. To access the repeater it is necessary to transmit a 123 Hz CTCSS sub-audible tone. This is identical to the way the original repeater equipment was set up.

The DR-1X is capable of receiving and transmitting in both the conventional analog FM and in the C4FM digital modes. The repeater has been configured so that conventional analog FM transmissions with a 123 Hz CTCSS sub-audible tone will be retransmitted as analog FM. The repeater now transmits a 123 Hz CTCSS sub-audible tone on repeated analog FM signals. Users may now set their transceivers to both encode and decode 123 Hz CTCSS. Doing so will prevent those receivers from unmuting on those annoying stray signals which seem to abound in built up areas. Importantly, when the repeater is transmitting in the C4FM digital mode, users will not have to listen to the digital "noise". During digital transmissions from the repeater, the receiver "busy" indication will indicate that the repeater is in use. The repeater automatically detects which mode incoming transmissions are so if users have an analog FM only transceiver, then making an analog FM transmission as soon as the "busy" light shows that the repeater has stopped transmitting will automatically switch the repeater back to the analog mode and a normal squelch tail will be heard when the microphone PTT is released. Most C4FM digital radios are equipped with automatic mode select so the digital users who have enabled this facility will hear an analog FM station breaking in during a C4FM digital QSO.

The DR-1X repeater has been configured to automatically retransmit C4FM digital transmissions as C4FM digital. As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, an analog FM station can break in at any time between overs, and the repeater will automatically revert to analog FM.

The VK2RPM 438.525 MHz repeater joins several other VHF and UHF repeaters which are also using Yaesu DR-1X repeaters. These include VK2RGL 147.100 MHz at Cabbage Tree and the Taree VK2REE 146.675 MHz 2 metre and 438.325 MHz 70 cm repeaters which accept both analog FM and C4FM digital transmissions.

Note that at Middle Brother Mountain, the VK2RPM 146.700 MHz 2 metre repeater is temporarily using a loan Yaesu DR-1X analog FM/C4FM digital repeater while the work to reduce the interference to the 146.700 MHz service continues. This repeater is configured so that either analog FM or C4FM digital transmissions into the repeater will be retransmitted as analog FM. When the investigative work at Middle Brother is completed the Icom FR3000 146.700 MHz repeater will be reinstalled at VK2RPM.

Unfortunately, C4FM digital is not compatible with any of the other digital modes such as DStar, APCO 25 (P25), DMR, Motorola MOTOTRBO or DPMR. Further information on C4FM digital may be found at https://www.yaesu.com/pdf/System_Fusion_text.pdf

Yaesu refer to the C4FM capability as "System Fusion". Several local amateurs have Yaesu radios with C4FM digital capability so the mode is becoming increasingly popular. The club's recently purchased Yaesu FT-991 transceiver has this capability.

Henry Lundell VK2ZHE

Are you a member of the WIA? If not have a look at the WIA's website to see the many benefits of being a member.

JOTA 2015 – VK2BOR at Port Macquarie

JOTA 2015 was the 58th annual Jamboree on the Air and the 19th Jamboree on the Internet.

This year the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club ran two JOTA stations on Saturday the 17th of October 2015. The club's Communications Caravan operated as VK2BOR at McInherney Park in front of the 1st Port Macquarie Sea Scouts boatshed.

Port Macquarie Station

Wauchope Station

Club President Lyle Smith VK2SMI kindly set up his communications caravan beside the Wauchope Scout Hall.

Running two separate JOTA stations enabled a great number of Scouts and Guides in the Hastings and Camden Haven areas to make their on air contacts. A couple of Guides from Kempsey came to Port Macquarie to earn their badges. Propagation on HF was much better than in some previous years so both stations made many HF contacts. Additionally, quite a few contacts were made between the two stations via the Middle Brother VK2RPM 438.525 MHz 70cm repeater.

Most of the time at VK2BOR there were simultaneous HF and UHF contacts taking place. The club's communications caravan has two separate operating positions, one at the front and the other at the back of the van so there was no problem in running two separate QSOs at Port Macquarie.

For VK2BOR HF operation a common feed set of 40 and 20 metre dipoles were set up on the banks of the Hastings River adjacent to the caravan. A portable flag pole was used to support the centre of the dipoles. One leg of the 40 metre dipole straddled the launching beach. Even though this was supported using a 10 metre long squid pole, the particularly high spring tide in the middle of the day caused a problem. At high tide the top of the mast of one of the catamarans was in danger of running into the antenna wire.

The ever resourceful Dennis VK2DAM managed to elevate the squid pole an extra metre or so to enable the mast to fit under the wire. All done without interrupting the JOTA 40 metre contacts! One end of the 20 metre dipole was supported on a

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7 metre squid pole standing in a sand screw anchored in the sand on the beach.

Fortunately, it was close to the bank and masts didn't have to go under this wire. The other ends of the 40 and 20 metre dipoles were uneventfully supported by aluminium poles away from the boat launching beach.

This year it was noticeable that most Scouts and Guides were very proficient behind the microphone and were able to have rewarding contacts over the air. In fact, often it took a little gentle persuasion to end conversations so that the next participant in the line could have a turn. The prompt sheet of suggested questions was very helpful.

The first Port Macquarie Sea Scouts set up a series of activities for the Scouts and Guides in addition to the JOTA activities. The weather was perfect and the outdoor activities were very popular. In particular, Scott Witchard who is well known to those active in SES, was kept particularly busy taking groups sailing on his catamaran in the excellent breeze on the river. Yes, this was the catamaran with the tall mast!

The club's communications caravan was set up at McInherney Park early in the day as the half Iron Man event was running in Port Macquarie during the JOTA weekend. Fortunately, Ocean Drive and other roads were only closed for the actual event on Sunday the 18th of October, but at 8 am on Saturday morning there was already a lot of traffic on those roads.

At Port Macquarie Henry Lundell VK2ZHE. Mark McGuire VK2FMGM and Dennis Meade VK2DAM manned VK2BOR. Special thanks to

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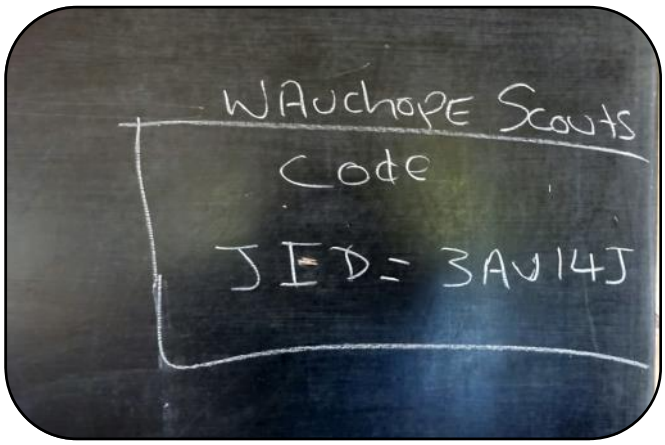
Mark VK2FMGM for arriving at 08:30 am to help set up the station, and for a sterling job in keeping the UHF contacts running until late in the afternoon. We all had a long day. It was eased by the delicious morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea topped off with a sausage sizzle dinner at the end of the day, all kindly provided by the 1st Port Macquarie Sea Scouts.

Mark VK2FMGM operating

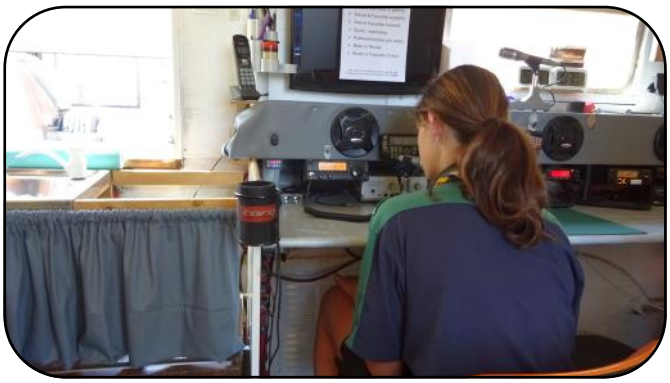
Thank you too, to Scott Witchard who was wearing his Scouting hat on the day, for his assistance with both setting up and packing up the club's caravan. Hopefully Scott will find time to take out a Foundation Licence one day

Scott Witchard and long time Scouting friend take a rest.

JOTA at Wauchope



Scouts and Guides Operating inside Lyles communications caravan



Operators Lyle VK2SMI Stuart VKFSTU and Steve VK2ZSW

The control centre of the caravan.

36th Beechwood Billy cart classic.

Beechwood is a little rural country village located about 10 km north-west of Wauchope . Over the past 36 years the locals have organised and run a Billy cart Derby now called the "Beechwood Billy cart classic" and for a number of years the Oxley region amateur radio club has been involved in providing communications at the various checkpoints along the route with the aim of ensuring safety of all participants.

Part of the volunteer group Larry VK2CLL, Arthur VK2ATM; Steve VK2ZSW, Stuart VK2FSTU, Rob VK2CRF, Bob VK2FBOB, Richard VK2CHC, Rob VK2ZRE, Mark VK2FMGM and Peter VK2MPK

25th October this year marked the running of the 36th annual classic. Our club was once again invited to provide our usual service in return for a donation recognising our contribution and assistance of $150. Our participation was co-ordinated by myself VK2CHC Richard Court a task made both easy and pleasurable due to the enthusiastic willingness of the members who so generously volunteered their time.

My thanks and appreciation goes to VK2ICQ Paul Colledge for the installation and technical support of the broadcast transceiver in the commentary vehicle and to VK2SMI Lyle Smith in supervising the VHF to PA Link at the finish line so that spectators were able to follow the commentary.

Lyle VK2SMI at the finishing line with the VHF to PA link

My thanks also to VK2ZSW Steve Wynn for his part in acting as net control, a taxing job expertly executed ensuring clear concise communications between all checkpoints. Thirteen checkpoints were allocated Pappinbarra road but only eleven were manned. The start being checkpoint 1 manned by VK2CLL Larry Lindsay, checkpoint 2 VK2FBOB Bob Small, checkpoint 3 by myself VK2CHC, checkpoint 4 VK2MPK Peter Kucera, checkpoint 5 VK2FMGM Mark McGuire, checkpoint 6 VK2ZRE Bob Ecclestone, checkpoint 7 VK2CRF Bob Frost, checkpoint 8 vacant, checkpoint 9 VK2ATM Arthur Monk, checkpoint 10 VK2ZHE Henry Lundell, checkpoint 11 VK2FSTU Stuart Walsh, checkpoint 12 vacant, and down to our net control at checkpoint 13 VK2ZSW.

The club's responsibilities in the event commenced at 1030 with a briefing outside the Catholic Church this year our members had the added responsibility of being flag marshals as well as radio operators.

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The Day's briefing

By 11 AM deployment to our various stations was complete and radio checks back to base commenced most of the high powered mobile stations had no problems while some of the weaker hand-held stations experienced some initial difficulty due to de-sensing at net control by transmissions from the bushfires brigade station located across the road from checkpoint 13. The problem was soon identified and overcome by Steve and the rest of the event went off without a

hitch.

Check point 4 in position

The down hill section was steep with exciting curves to negotiate

There were eight Billy cart entries in all; the race started at about 1150, vehicles being dispatched approximately 12 seconds apart with winning vehicle completing the course and just under 13 minutes so it wasn't long before we were all back down at the pub adjacent to the finish line joining in the festivities enjoying a steak sandwich and a

cool drink.

The competition was fierce.

Billy Cart approaching.

Billy cart flashes by.

Billy cart disappears.

Note the full streamlining and the difficult job the van has in keeping a safe distance in front of the leading car and yet being close enough for filming and commentary being relayed to the PA system via VHF link. It has been estimated that these streamlined billy carts can reach speeds of more than 80 Kph on some of the down hill corners.

Tyre squeal can be heard as the high speed billy carts go

Photographs supplied by Richard VK2CHC, Henry VK2ZHE and Peter VK2MPK

The Billy Carts

The Billy Carts are home built showing interesting variations in construction especially in the different ideas on streamlining.

Very different approaches were taken in the riding position of the pusher

Blast From the Past

The photograph below supplied by Bill VK2CZCV

Well known local Port Macquarie identities Jack Staples, Nev Anderson and Allen Reynolds at Tacking Point Lighthouse-Port Macquarie, 1927.

Photograph taken by Ray Dick.

How times have changed; note the enclosed area around the lighthouse; the motorcycles being able to be ridden right up to the lighthouse and of course the lack of helmets.

A more recent photograph of the same area today.

The following photograph comes from the November 2010 copy of Oxtales and features 2 of our well known current members. Henry VK2ZHE is presenting Lyle now VK2SMI with his membership badge. Who can remember where the location was and also Lyle's callsign at the time?

Old Issues of Oxtales

(Editors note:)
While looking through the clubs web site I was fascinated by the selection of the archived editions of Oxtales that Paul VK2ICQ has placed on the site.

Paul has converted many of the old Oxtales from 1980 onwards onto the web site in a pdf form. From time to time parts of the old Oxtales will be quoted as its interesting to see the callsigns of current members who have been actively involved with the club during the past 45 or so years. For example in the 1980 edition which was in the form of a single page newsletter we see that the President was Bill VK2ZCV and the Vice President was Arthur VK2ATM whilst one of the repeater committee members was Henry VK2ZHE.

In 1980 club nets were conducted on 80 metres at 8 pm. General meetings were held every three months. The club was in the process of putting a 2 metre repeater on air.

Thanks to Paul VK2ICQ for making these old editions of Oxtales available to all members on the web site.

Jaycar Electronics
Better. More Technical
7/148 Lake Rd Port Macquarie
Ph. (02) 6581 4476

Radio Equipment from the Past
Yaesu FT-7

Yaesu FT-7 was a solid state and modular built HF amateurband radio transceiver, suitable for fixed and for mobile operation.

The radio was built by the *Yaesu Corporation* in Japan in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Its first Japanese release was in 1976. This transceiver was very small for its time; by current modern standards however it is a large mobile set. It was a low-power (QRP) SSB and CW transceiver of which transmitting power is adjustable up from 10 to about 20W.

The radio was built up with pre-dated synthesisers and microprocessors, had a receiver with a large dynamic range and close-in noise performance. In 1979 the Yaesu FT-7B was released. The FT-7B offered Amplitude Modulation (AM) mode. Transmitting output was adjustable from 5 to 50W maximum by an integrated 50W power amplifier using two 2SC2099 final transistors. It was also equipped with a noise blanker and an RF attenuator.

FT-7B specifications

- Freq coverage: 3.5 - 4.0, 7.0 – 7.5, 14.0 -14.5, 21.0 -21.5, 28.0 – 30.0 MHz in 500 kHz segments.
- Powersupply: max 13.6V @10A transmit; 0.6A receive
- Dimensions: 23 x 8 x 32 cm with heatsink
- Weight: 5.5 kg
- Emission: AM, SSB, CW
- Power input: 100W DC SSB/CW, 25W AM
- Carrier suppression: better than 50dB below rated output
- Unwanted sideband suppression: better than 50dB @ 1000Hz
- Spurious: better than –40dB 31dB
- Transmitter freq response: 350 – 2700Hz (-6dB)
- Stability: less than 300Hz drift from cold start, less than 100Hz drift after 30 mins warmup
- Ant output impedance: 50 Ohms nominal SO-239
- Microphone output impedance: 500 Ohms nominal
- Receive sensitivity: 0.25 µV for S/N 10dB
- Image rejection: better than 60dB 80-15m, better than 50dB 10m
- IF rejection: better than 50dB
- Selectivity: 2.4 kHz (-6dB), 4.0 kHz (-60dB)
- CW audio peak filter: 80Hz (-6dB) adjustable

Audio output: 3W @ 10% THD, 4 Ohms

Radio Set 108

The Wireless Set 108 was designed and produced by Radio Corporation (Melbourne) during WW2. The set was designed for backpack use by the A.I.F. and was based on the existing British #18 set.

The set evolved over time, with 3 different variants being produced, known as the 108 Mk1, 108 Mk2 and 108 Mk3. The variants must have produced some problems for the army as they were not always able to communicate with each other, owing to differing frequency ranges as follows:

Mk1 8.5-8.9 Mhz (1941)
Mk2 6.0 -9.0 Mhz (1942)
Mk3 3.25-3.5 Mhz (1943)/

Although some were used as portable equipment by amateurs after WW2 they were very low powered and were prone to frequency stability problems.

The sets were all battery operated and featured a 1.5v LT battery and 2 45v batteries connected in series for HT. The unmodulated power output of the sets was between 0.4 and 0.45 watts depending on the frequency and the length of the aerial. The sets weighed in at just above 26 lbs.

WIA News

Author : Robert Broomhead – VK3DN

Some misinformation has been spread via the internet that suggests emails from the Australian Communications and Media Authority's (ACMA's) Auto Mail system may be SPAM.

The AMCA has advised the WIA that it is using an auto mailer system with the email address auto_mail@acma.gov.au to send important correspondence and renewal information to licence holders. Amateurs are advised to keep a close lookout for emails from the ACMA with the email address auto_mail@acma.gov.au.

Please be aware you will not be able to reply to ACMA using the auto mailer email address.

As usual, members are reminded to always remain vigilant and take the usual precautions when opening any email regardless of the sender address.

Licence Letters from the ACMA What do they mean?

Date : 23 / 10 / 2015
Author : Jim Linton – VK3PC

As a part of the new SPECTRA system, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) will send revalidation letters to all radio amateurs 90 days before licences are due to expire. This letter, or email, has the ACMA licence number however it does not include your callsign, or callsigns. You can easily confirm callsigns associated with licence numbers online via the ACMA website.

A Validation Notice is sent to all licence holders, and not just radio amateurs. The purpose of this is to allow licensees to check or change their details, or surrender a licence. If the details are correct, and you do not surrender a licence, then the ACMA wants you to take no action, until you receive a Renewal Notice, which is the time to pay for the renewal.

The ACMA sends an invoice for renewing licence holders, and after you have paid a Renewal Summary will be sent out. Is it worth also mentioning that the renewal notice will not contain your callsign so once again you may need to visit the ACMA website and lookup your licence number to confirm the callsign being renewed.

Now here is an important reminder. If the ACMA does not have your details correctly recorded, it cannot send these letters. For instance, you may have changed your postal address, or failed to update them with your current email address.

Renewal is always the licensee's responsibility. Please check now to avoid delays, or cancellation of your licence, and your callsign being reassigned to someone else. The ACMA contact details are: Telephone 1300 850 115 and email info@acma.gov.au

Both of these Articles were published by Paul VK2ICQ, in External News. From the clubs web site.

Have you visited our club's website?

Paul VK2ICQ has established a magnificent website for our club packed with information ranging from current WIA news, reminders about current events and back issues of Oxtales plus links to other Amateur Radio matters.

Make the website a favourite today.

http://www.orarc.org/