March 2010
Compiled by VK2TT & VK2AYQ

President’s Report

I have just returned home after a most enjoyable day at the 2010 Central Coast Field Day at Wyong on the 28th of February. As usual a great many Amateurs from all parts of the country made the annual pilgrimage to Wyong to attend the largest Field Day in Australia. This year there seemed to be more international visitors than usual. While most overseas visitors were from New Zealand I also spotted several from the rest of the world as well. It was particularly pleasing to see the familiar faces of so many ORARC members in the crowd.

On the Saturday night prior to the Field Day I attended a dinner at Wyong to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the formation of the Wireless Institute of Australia. The dinner was organized jointly by Amateur Radio NSW and the Central Coast Amateur Radio Club. While the dinner took place 12 days prior to the actual date of the anniversary, the opportunity was taken to hold a celebratory dinner in Wyong while so many Amateurs from all parts of Australia and internationally were present there for the Field Day. Of course it did mean a second round trip in two days to Wyong for those Amateurs attending from Sydney and Newcastle but weren’t staying in the Central Coast overnight. Amateur Radio NSW released a very attractive commemorative plate and a commemorative mug at the dinner. These centenary momento are both limited editions and were popular purchases at both the dinner and at the ARNSW stand at the

(Continued Page 2)
Down The Coax

Friday Night Get-Together
Friday 26 March 2010 7.00 pm

April Monthly Meeting
Saturday 3 April 210 2.00 pm

Friday Night Get-Together
April 23 2010 7.00 pm

May Monthly Meeting
Saturday 1 May 2010 2.00 pm

E-mail directory

Reflects ALL changes notified up to February 2010

VK2AG (Lewis) lewisgreen@bigpond.com
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VK2EM (Bruce) vk2em@tpg.com.au
VK2GD (Alan) anu16734@bigpond.net.au
VK2KC (John) vk2kc@bigpond.com
VK2TT (Trevor) grumps@midcoast.com.au
VK2ATM (Arthur) arfamo@midcoast.com.au
VK2AYD (David) dvdplly@midcoast.com.au
VK2AYQ (John) hansenjo@ozemail.com.au
VK2BEL (Allan) belly@skymesh.com.au
VK2BOR (ORARC) vk2bor@orarc.org
VK2CMJ (Chris) Chris@CalmDowns.org.au
VK2CHC (Richard) yachtman@midcoast.com.au
VK2CLL (Larry) lindsay@clearmail.com.au
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VK2IEV (Joe) rbivona@bigpond.com
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VK2ZCM (Craig) vk2zcm@dodo.com.au
VK2ZCV (Bill) wsi54224@bigpond.net.au
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VK2ZHE (Henry) lundell@tpg.com.au
VK2ZTM (Tim) tim.ztm@gmail.com
VK2YZ (Charley) rameses32@yahoo.com
VK2FABJ (Ailsa) cabrooke@westnet.com.au
VK2FRBG (Barry) bgilson11@hotmail.com
VK2FHKO (Horst) horstko@bigpond.com
VK2FJKD (Jim) jaidal@bigpond.com
VK2FLHI (Des) lhbluelag@bigpond.com
VK2FRTH (Bob) miastar@aussieisp.net.au
Peter Fletcher. fletcher@physics.usyd.edu.au

Net Controllers’ Roster

March, April and May 2010
Nets on Voice Repeater VK2RPM 146.700 MHz

Sunday (0830 Local)       Wednesday (1930 Local)

March 2010
VK2OA  March - 07  VK2ZCM  March - 03
VK2VIV  March - 14  VK2ATM  March - 10
VK2TT  March - 21  VK2ZHE  March - 17
VK2OA  March - 28  VK2EI  March - 24
                      VK2AYD  March - 31

April 2010
VK2VIV  April - 04  VK2ZCM  April - 07
VK2TT  April - 11  VK2ATM  April - 14
VK2OA  April - 18  VK2ZHE  April - 21
VK2VIV  April - 25  VK2EI  April - 28

May 2010
VK2TT  May - 02  VK2AYD  May - 05
VK2OA  May - 09  VK2ZCM  May - 12
VK2VIV  May - 16  VK2ATM  May - 19
VK2TT  May - 23  VK2ZHE  May - 26
VK2OA  May - 30

(Persons report continued from page 1)

Field Day next day. The WIA stand did a brisk trade in WIA Centenary merchandise. If you weren’t at the Field Day, or if you missed out on this merchandise, the various items may be viewed and purchased via the WIA web site, http://www.wia.org.au

The actual date of the Centenary is the 11th of March 2010. On this date in 1910 a meeting of like-minded people in the Hotel Australia in Martin Place, Sydney, formed the Institute of Wireless Telegraphy of Australia. From this beginning grew the Wireless Institute of Australia that represents all Amateur Radio operators in Australia. It is the oldest organization of its kind in the world.

(Continued on Page 3)
While at Wyong I was approached by Michael Owen VK3KI, the President of the WIA. Michael is very keen for our club to publicise Amateur Radio in conjunction with our Field Day. He is hoping to be able to attend the event this year, and may be able to arrive on the Friday in time to participate in both live and recorded publicity.

I discussed Michael’s ideas with several of our members at the Wyong Field Day on the Sunday morning and everyone I spoke with was very supportive. The ORARC committee will be delighted to hear of any suggestions which you, the members, may have. Please contact me at any time if you have any ideas or proposals that you would like to discuss. Remember that the continuing viability of our hobby is dependent on attracting new participants.

In February our club received a very welcome letter from David Wardlaw VK3ADW in his capacity as Chairman of the WIA Centenary Committee advising that the committee had agreed to recognize the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club 2010 Field day in June as an official Centenary celebratory event. Our club has already received a set of very attractive Centenary and Amateur Radio posters which we will display at the Field Day. There are enough posters to also display them at other suitable venues in the district. Please contact me if you have ideas for suitable venues that we might have access to.

I am very pleased to see the year starting off with an increase in the Amateur Radio operator population in our part of the world. We must thank our hard working Education officers, Larry Lindsay VK2CLL and Alan Nutt VK2GD for undertaking the training and assessments. Congratulations and welcome to the holders of the new call signs. Larry and Alan already have additional candidates for assessments for both Standard and Foundation licences so we look forward to seeing some more new callsigns in March.

Henry Lundell VK2ZHE
President

S9SS QSL Card
by VK2HOT

This was an interesting contact as it was in my first year being allowed to use the 15 meter band. It was at the time the longest distance that I had made contact to with and as you can see I just made it with a 4/2 report but I will take any contact!

The distance from my QTH to Sao Tome (Iota AF-023) and the station operated by Charles Lewis (S9SS) is 15041 km / 9350 miles. I gave him a 5/7 report and he was not being hammered by stations from Europe.

I was using 100 watts to a TH3j tri band antenna so my 4/2 report was good for what I was using. The following is what he did and used.

The S9SS QTH was on the 346 acre site of...
the transmitting station where Charles served as station manager. That made him somewhat of an "alligator" much of the time. Sharing a QTH with five 100 kW shortwave broadcasting transmitters, a 600 kW transmitter on 1530 KHz, and another on 945 kHz with 20 kW resulted in very poor receiving conditions much of the time.

Use of an antenna tuner, tunable filter, and sometimes the receiver's attenuator, often sufficed to overcome signal overload. When all these transmitters were on the air, the on-frequency noise floor rose in the ham bands. Even worse, there were often periods of intense intermittent wide band noise bursts of varying durations. On the low bands, a nearly constant high level of Equatorial QRN also seriously degraded reception. Despite these problems, S9SS averaged more than 1,000 QSO's per month in casual operation, mostly on Friday and Saturday evenings when he did not have to arise early the following morning. Sometimes success despite these poor receiving conditions required patience on the part of the other stations.

Bruce VK2HOT

VK9NA 2010 Norfolk Island DXpedition and Neil VK2EI’s contacts.

Neil VK2EI at our last monthly meeting gave a very interesting power point presentation of the VK9NA DXpedition to Norfolk Island during January of this year.

Neil’s contacts were on VHF and UHF. The following slides from the presentation show the distances that can be achieved with the right gear, ‘know how’ and patient dedication. A truly remarkable series of contacts.
52/9 from Lighthouse West Lookout 1,467 km.
* VK2EI/P January 13 1050-1100Z 23 cm Keyer S2 traces of keyer with 2 Watts to corner reflector.
VK9NA 75 W to long yagi, 1,467 km.

HIGH SPEED TELEGRAPHY
Dave VK2AYD

Is telegraphy faster than SMS ? Yes

Reading through December QST I had a nostalgia moment when I read the results of the World High Speed Telegraphy Contest. Back in 1951, long before bugs and electronic-keyers were in vogue I was in Germany and had an opportunity to participate in such a test. At that time reaching speeds in excess of 40 wpm was considered exceptional – today that is considered Novice speeds.

Each year, somewhere in Europe this contest is held. In 2009 it was at Obzor, Bulgaria where contesters from around the world met to compete.

The HST competition is divided into three types of events. Transmitting, Receiving and a Practicing Test. To make it more interesting the competitors are divided in various divisions such as Male and Female, Under 40 years of age, over 40 etc..

For the transmitting test the objective was to send 5 character letter/figure groups for 60 seconds. El-keys permitted. Errors can be corrected but of course they lose points. Speeds around 50 wpm are often reached.

The Receiving test uses the German software Rufzeichen-Hoeren. This starts off easy and as you log each station so the speed increases by 10 cpm. This was won by DJ1YFK who averaged close to 800 characters per minute which translates to about 200 wpm across 50 calls. Morse code at 800 cpm sound like a 20 millisecond burst of noise!

(Continued on page 10)
Trip to WA and Back Part 2 by John Mclean VK2KC

700 km to the west. After passing Madura, Cocklebiddy and Balladonia Roadhouses, I ran into a very stiff westerly wind, and some anxious moments were had when I started to calculate I was not going to make it to Norseman. I slowed down to just under 100 kph, and with that, we just made it into Norseman, with the EFI fuel pump making a terrible racket. We bought 81.25 litres of fuel, which is not bad, considering the fuel tank holds only 82 litres! The lesson learned allowed for the strong westerlies that are quite prevalent on the Nullarbor!

Once we turned north from Norseman, the mining activity and road train traffic increased. There were mining sites every 10 km or so, with plenty of warnings about road trains (some of them hauling 4 trailers). At each bend in the road it had been widened especially to allow the road trains to take the turn without encroaching on the opposing traffic lane!

The next overnight stop was Merredin, about 275 km form Perth, but as it was close to nightfall, we decided to pull up for the night. It was a big mistake. The main east/west rail line runs right through the centre of the town and with the noise of the very long multi-engine trains every few hours, we lost a lot of shuteye!

The next morning it was an easy run into Perth, with the last call made to the Traveller’s Net to advise the monitors of our impending arrival. We arrived at our daughter’s house in time for an early lunch. This was the end of a 4200 km trip; but sobering to think it was only half over. A great 4 weeks were spent there with 6 grandkids to keep us on our toes. There were many things to see, cinemas to visit, and we scored an escorted trip up to Geraldton for 2 days. Boy! Oh! Boy! is that place alive! With new roads and plenty of 4-trailer road-trains sharing the road with the public, it was amazing to see.
Whilst I was in Perth, I intended to visit “Ham Heaven” which is situated in White- 
man Park, a huge tract of land some ½ 
hour north of Perth. This park is dedicated 
to hobbyists, where the Northern Corridor 
Amateur Radio Club have build a huge 
shed and, at last count, 3 towers with an-
tennae galore. But, with the demands of 
family, I couldn’t get to visit the site. I did 
hear a lot of morning/evening traffic on 
the main 2m repeater but the locals were 
reluctant to chat. Let’s hope we don’t re-
peat that act of ignorance to our out-of-
state visitors who call in on our repeater 
network. It leaves a bad taste in one’s 
mouth, as it did mine. I did make contact 
with Peter VK6YV and spent a few enjoy-
able hours at his QTH, which happened to 
be just around the corner from our daugh-
ter’s place.

The trip back.
We left early on the morning of 30th Sep-
tember after delaying the return trip for 2 
days due to a tummy bug! Our destination 
was Caiguna in WA. It was a 1120 km 
run, and this part of the trip was made 
without incident.

From Southern Cross to Norseman, where 
road trains are common; it is so unlike the 
Pacific Highway here in NSW. The driv-
ers are very professional. Even when talk-
ing on the CB, their language was impec-
cable. Again, so unlike NSW, where I was 
forced to shut down the UHF CB because 
of the extremely foul on air language.

They always moved over to allow you to 
look up past them to see what was coming 
before overtaking. I didn’t find one driver 
who was speeding, and this was similar to 
my experience on the way over from Port 
Augusta.

Accommodation and fuel at the BP Road-
house Caiguna proved to be expensive. It 
cost $125 for a double bed. Certainly it was a 
little more modern than Mundrabilla. It too, 
was clean and the meal, again like all road-
houses on the Eyre Highway, was very ex-

90 Mile Straight

It had rained overnight and as we left before 
sunup, the conditions for driving were very 
comfortable. As the new day dawned, I de-
cided to set up the HF transceiver to see 
what I could find on 80m. We were about 25 
km east of Caiguna when I looked up from 
organizing the headset and turning on the IC-
706. There, right in front of us was a big 
western red roo! I simply didn’t have time 
even to hit the brakes or even slow down. 
The roo decided that the roadway wasn’t the 
healthiest of places to be at that time and de-
cided to remove himself, but in doing so, he
slipped over because the road was wet. He was still on his side as I hit him, or should I say ran over him. There were two quick thumps! I pulled up, and much to my astonishment, I couldn’t see any damage. There was no fluid loss; no smashed plastic. Everything was normal. So I removed the body from the road. He was a big buck roo and I took another look under the car, to make sure all systems were normal, and drove off. The only side effect was a smell of burnt meat because the roo had donated a piece of his anatomy and it was tangled up with the exhaust system. After 2 days of driving, the smell stopped!

Through the day, I had excellent contacts on 20 metres with WA, SA, NT, QLD and NSW. The AR ops all commented on the strength of my signal. After a contact with an VK2 op from near Coffs Harbour, I sent a text message to Henry ZHE to meet me on 14.212 MHz, and as we neared Eucla, with its own mobile phone tower, I had a QSO with Henry and Bill ZCV, all good signals and next to no fading. I felt pretty chuffed with the excellent reports I received from on air contacts.

**Eucla Telegraph Station**

We made a stop at Eucla, in WA, and drove out to the old telegraph station. I was disappointed to see that there were no signs up to indicate the station’s past history, and vandalism was very evident.

A most interesting sight was a Cessna Aeroplane pulled up at the Nullarbor Roadhouse, being filled up with Avgas! They had their own mobile phone tower, as did the Nundroo Roadhouse too, but the range was less than 5 km, so it was obviously a low powered installation.

We had booked into a motel at Kimba SA, which, geographically, is halfway across Australia, at a distance of 1140 km from Caiguna in WA. We also had another surprise. Daylight saving was in force and that meant we had a 2 ½ hour time difference between WA time and SA CDST. So, with the loss in time, the day seemed to be very short! Nevertheless, well after dark we made it to the Motel at Kimba, had a very nice evening meal and a very good sleep. Maybe we slept well knowing it only cost us $75 for the room and the meals were ½ the price of what we had experienced on the Nullarbor!

The next morning we set off for Adelaide (a quick 4 1/2 hour run!) to spend a few days with my sister, and to pick up a new lathe chuck I had bought to suit my milling machine. I didn’t bother to make contact with any of the locals whilst I was in Adelaide, I was too busy recuperating after making Adelaide from Perth in 2 ¼ days.

We left Adelaide on the 6th October for our next stop, Canberra, 1180KM distant. This was the longest distance we had planned. The traffic density increased, as did the requirement for more concentration. I still managed to make lots of HF contacts, even one to 9Y4D in Trinidad, plus, as I neared the Hume Highway from Wagga Wagga, I managed to contact
2ZHE, 2ZCV, 9LH 2ZTM and 9FLHI on 80metres with good signals from all. We arrived in Canberra at 1825 hours totally stuffed!

A few days R&R were taken and we headed off back to Port Macquarie. After travelling over 4580 km on the return trip, we averaged 98.8 kmph and 9.9 l/100 km for the entire trip. Not bad, after using a tank of E10 fuel at Nyngan, which caused our fuel usage to skyrocket to about 13.5 l/100 km. I am not too sure why it used so much fuel, as there wasn’t a head wind, but certainly the V6 engine didn’t like the E10 very much, so I stuck to 91 Octane ULP for the entire trip.

It took us 4 ½ hours to drive to Perth, and 4 days back, and certainly I would do it again, I really enjoyed it. The country is magnificent, and the roads in WA are unbelievable. One interesting side story is that I stuck to just under the speed limit of 110 kmph, and had plenty of drivers who used to catch me quite quickly, but then would drop back. It wasn’t until I spotted a Police car in Penong SA, with an HF antenna mounted at the back of it (almost the identical way mine was mounted) that the bell rang. The average driver must have come to the conclusion that my vehicle was a Police unit.

At one stage I pulled over to allow the train of faster drivers to get ahead. I was tail-gated for quite a distance coming into Penong by a Police vehicle, a turbocharged V8 Landcruiser Ute, and could that thing go! It had a modified suspension and a few other enhancements such as an ultra long-range fuel tank, HF and VHF/UHF transceivers, sat phone, and onboard satellite tracking. It was used as a highway pursuit vehicle. The officer said his beat was on the Nullarbor and travelled a distance of up to 1000 km west from Penong!

The next time I drive over, I will probably tow a small camper type van and spend more time smelling the roses, but I would do it again!

A big thank you to those who did monitor the frequencies and made contact with me. You have no idea what it meant to chat to those from the old hometown, being so far from it!

73
John VK2KC

Equipped installed in my vehicle for the trip:
- Icom IC-706 MkIIg,
- High Sierra HS1800 Antenna,
- N2VZ tuner interface,
- FT8900R and a dual band VHF/UHF Diamond antenna,
- Heil Traveller Headset for the IC-706.

(The Mighty High Sierra Antenna!)
The Practicing test used the software Morse Runner and starts with a pile up of 4 stations and as you log a station another automatically takes its place. Unfortunately they are not spread out over 150 Hz and have different call sign lengths. This was won by LZ4UU who averaged 72 QSO’s in a 10 minute period which equates to about 8 seconds per QSO at a rate of 430 per hour. All this copied through non-stop four-station QRM.

Belarus, Russia and Romania took out the gold.

Acknowledgement to ARRL QST de David VK2AYD

QUOTE OF THE CENTURY

"A Computer is a super-moronic device, doing exactly what it was told to do and not what you thought you had told it to do"

(Known as GIGO - Garbage In Garbage Out)

David
2AYD

A complete number 19 station (Australian War Memorial Canberra)

Now that’s what I call a real HF Whip Antenna! (From the Bridge of HMAS Brisbane Australian War Memorial Canberra)
THE BRAID BREAKER

David VK2AYD

To the old timers in the club, this is old hat, However to the new ‘F’ calls it may be a salvation to operating with peace in the household and possibly with neighbours.

I personally had the dreaded TVI problem and found building a simple ‘Braid Breaker’ solved the problem and kept peace. They are so simple to build and only need a few hours to make. My biggest problem was finding a suitable housing that was small enough.

The following 2 circuits were recommended by the UK DTI and produced by Pat Hawker in his RSGB RadCom column in October 85

I have only built the first circuit on a single sided PCB and mounted it in a small brass tube. It looked good However it did slightly decrease the signal strength to the TV but not enough to show any degradation of the picture. In those days everything was analog. It removed my TVI.

I have never tried the second circuit built on a double sided PCB (call if you want some).

Give it a try – don’t lose precious off air time.

David
VK2AYD
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<th>Given</th>
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Category Key: O = ORDINARY  A = ASSOCIATE  D = DISTANT  H = HONORARY  L = LIFE