OXTALES

First published 1980

Newsletter of the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club Inc.,
PO Box 712 Port Macquarie 2444
Club email address: vk2bor@orarc.org
Club Website: http//www.orarc.org

ORARC's Forty-sixth Anniversary Year

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

January 2017

Compiled by VK2AYQ & VK2TT

PRESIDENT: **Henry Lundell**	VK2ZHE	6582 0534
VICE PRES: **Paul Colledge**	VK2ICQ	6580 9912
TREASURER: **Larry Lindsay**	VK2CLL	6587 1155
SECRETARY: **Jim Neil**	VK2VIV	6581 2481

President's Report

January 2017 President's Report

Welcome to 2017. I trust everyone has had a safe and enjoyable festive season.

Coming Events

ORARC 2017 Field Day 11 & 12 June

The ORARC 2017 Field Day takes place on Saturday the 10th and Sunday the 11th of June during the Queen's Birthday Weekend. The Field Day venue will again be the Tacking Point Surf Life Saving Club building in Matthew Flinders Drive at Lighthouse Beach. Last year's Field Day was a great success and this year's event will be even bigger and better.

Planning for the 2017 Field Day will commence this month so please consider offering your assistance. The committee will be very pleased to hear from you.

Summer VHF UHF Field Day Saturday 14th January 2017

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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
C4FM digital mode capability

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
C4FM Digital Mode Capability
VK2RCN-1 (APRS Digipeater)
SX 145.175MHz 1200bps

In This Issue :

Down The Coax

Ross Hull Memorial Contest 1 to 31 January 2017

ORARC meetings held in the S.E.S. Building
Central Road, Port Macquarie.

Monthly General Meeting
Saturday 7 January 2017 2:00 pm

Summer VHF-UHF Field Day Saturday 14 &
Sunday 15 January 2017
VK2BOR at North Brother Sat 14 January

Friday Night Get-Together
Friday 20 January 2017 7.00 pm

Monthly General Meeting
Saturday 4 February 2017 2:00 pm

ORARC Antenna Shootout and Foxhunt Day
Sunday 12 February 2017 Start 10.00 am
Tuffins Lane Sports Fields BBQ Lunch

Friday Night Get-Together
Friday 17 February 2017 7.00 pm

Wyong Field Day Wyong Racecourse
Sunday 26 February 2017

Monthly General Meeting
Saturday 4 March 2017 2:00 pm

Friday Night Get-Together
Friday 17 March 2017 7.00 pm

John Moyle Memorial Field Day Saturday 18
& Sunday 19 March 2017

Monthly General Meeting
Saturday 1 April 2017 2:00 pm

Net Controllers' Roster

Nets on Voice Repeater VK2RPM 146.700 MHz

Sundays (0900 Local)		**Thursdays** (1930 Local)	
January 2017			
VK2TT	**Jan - 01**	**VK2ICQ**	**Jan - 05**
VK2FMGM	**Jan - 08**	**VK2EM**	**Jan - 12**
VK2CHC	**Jan - 15**	**VK2ZHE**	**Jan - 19**
VK2TT	**Jan - 22**	**VK2ICQ**	**Jan - 26**
VK2FMGM	**Jan - 29**		
February 2017			
VK2CHC	**Feb - 05**	**VK2ICQ**	**Feb - 02**
VK2TT	**Feb - 12**	**VK2EM**	**Feb - 09**
VK2FMGM	**Feb - 19**	**VK2ZHE**	**Feb - 16**
VK2CHC	**Feb - 26**	**VK2ICQ**	**Feb - 23**
March 2017			
VK2TT	**Mar - 05**	**VK2EM**	**Mar - 02**
VK2FMGM	**Mar - 12**	**VK2ZHE**	**Mar - 09**
VK2CHC	**Mar - 19**	**VK2ICQ**	**Mar - 16**
VK2TT	**Mar - 26**	**VK2EM**	**Mar - 23**
		VK2ZHE	**Mar - 30**

(Cont'd from front cover)

The next club activity will be the Summer VHF UHF Field Day. The club station VK2BOR will operate portable in the Field Day from North Brother Mountain on the afternoon of Saturday the 14th of January 2017. This is an excellent location with uninterrupted radio paths up and down the coast. There will be bacon and eggs from the barbeque for breakfast for those arriving in the morning to set up. The contest starts at 12 noon. A sausage sizzle lunch will ensure that everyone has a good start to the afternoon. Approval has been received from National Parks and Wildlife for the event. The approval includes the use of the club's new inverter generator for power.

As caravans are not permitted on the road up the mountain, VK2BOR will be set up on tables under a gazebo. Operation will be on 6 and 2 metres and on 70 cm. If other stations indicate that they will be active on 23 cm then VK2BOR will set up 23 cm equipment as well. The 6 metre sporadic E season is still open so it is hoped that 6 metres will be open during the VK2BOR operation. VK2BOR operated from North Brother Mountain during the Spring VHF UHF Field in November and did rather well on 6 metres.

Antenna Shootout and Foxhunt Day Sunday 12th of February 2017

The club's popular annual Antenna Shootout and Foxhunt day will be held on Sunday the 12th of February 2017 at the Tuffins Lane sports fields. The large flat open fields make an ideal VHF and UHF antenna testing range. There is a lot of interest in antenna performance this year with several members already busily constructing new antennas especially for the shootout. It is always interesting to see how home brew antennas perform in comparison to the various commercially built antennas.

As well as the antenna shootout, the day at the Tuffins Lane sports fields is a great social occasion with a bacon and egg breakfast from the barbeque followed by a sausage sizzle lunch. A number of pedestrian foxhunts will be run during the day. This is a perfect opportunity to hone the skills in readiness for the Urunga Convention and the ORARC Field Day foxhunts in the coming months.

Wyong Field Day Sunday 26th of February

Many club members will make the annual trip to Wyong racecourse for the Central Coast Field Day on Sunday the 26th of February. This year is the 60th annual Field Day. http://www.ccarc.org.au/wp/ccarc-field-day/

Urunga Convention 15 & 16 April 2017

Remember to mark your calendars for the 68th annual Urunga Convention during Easter on the 15th and 16th of April 2017. http://users.tpg.com.au/goldy2/

Recent Events

Spring VHF UHF Field Day

Lyle VK2SMI, Larry VK2CLL, Bob BK2ZRE, setting up VK2BOR 6 Metre Station.

The 2016 Spring VHF UHF Field Day took place over the weekend of the 26th and 27th of November. The club station VK2BOR operated from North Brother Mountain

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The view from North Brother Mountain. Perhaps a possible way of putting up a 'wire in the sky"!

during the afternoon of Saturday the 26th November as a multi operator portable station in the 8 hour division. The station only operated for a little over four hours as it was a daylight hours operation. During that time 16 contacts were made on 6 metres for a total of 17,054 points. The longest distance worked was 1381 kilometres. Unfortunately the activity on 2 metres and 70 cm was abysmal by comparison. The effort in setting up on 6 metres was well rewarded.

John VK2NJJ cooks up a storm whilst Rob VK2CRF and Arthur VK2ATM conduct quality control.

There was an excellent roll up of members on the mountain for the day. Those arriving early to set up were treated to a bacon and egg breakfast expertly barbequed by John Winchester VK2NJJ. Thank you to VKJ2BOR station manager Lyle Smith VK2SMI for organizing the day and bringing his portable mast and antennas together with a gazebo. Thank you to Keith Bayliss VK2FPTL for bringing his gazebo as well. This meant that the 6 metre station was set up under one gazebo with the 2 metre and 70 cm station under the second gazebo. The gazebos were used because caravans are not permitted on the steep winding road up the mountain. Setting up the portable operation without the club's communications caravan took more effort but it is always good to exercise the skills of setting up a station from scratch. Club members demonstrated the high level of competency that comes from many years of collective experience.

Ray VK2JU Operating VK2BOR on 2 Metres

Keith VK2FPTL operating VK2BOR 6 metres

The contest commenced at 12 noon Daylight Saving Time and the afternoon got off to good start with 6 metre DX and a

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delicious sausage sizzle lunch barbequed to perfection by John Winchester VK2NJJ. Those not operating VK2BOR were able to socialize over lunch with many interesting topics of conversation. The weather was sunny with a gentle breeze making for a pleasant afternoon under the shade of the many trees.

Some of the callsigns attending included VK2SMI, VK2CRF, VK2ATM, VK2DAM, VK2JU, VK2ZRE and XYL Diana, VK2NJJ, VK2CLL, VK2FPTL, VK2KC, VK2ZHE, VK2ICQ and VK2FPDC and harmonics.

Larry VK2LL, Arthur VK2ATM and John VK2KC in discussion.

White Ribbon Walk

White Ribbon at Shelly Beach Matt participant, Mayor Peter Besseling' Dennis VK2DAM and Ray VK2JU

The White Ribbon Walk took place on Sunday the 27 November 2016 which was the day after the VK2BOR Spring VHF UHF Field Day Saturday operation on North Brother Mountain. Special thanks to those who came out bright and early on the Sunday morning to provide the safety communications. The walk started at the Tacking Point Surf Club and finished on the Port Macquarie Town Green. The intermediate check points were at Shelly Beach, Flynns Beach and at the Town Beach kiosk.

Lyle VK2SMI at Town Green check point

Those who manned the check points were Lyle Smith VK2SMI, Rob Frost VK2CRF, Dennis Meade VK2DAM, Ray Mullins VK2JU, Arthur Monck VK2ATM, Mark McGuire VK2FMGM, Larry Lindsay VK2CLL and Henry Lundell VK2ZHE

The club was very pleased to receive a special Certificate of Appreciation for ORARC's contribution to the success of the walk by providing the safety communications. The club has already been invited to provide the safety communications for the 2017 walk.

2016 Christmas Party

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Long Point Gallery and Art Reserve pictures above and below show some of the outside art sculptures and spacious grounds.

Jim VK2VIV and Bruce VK2EM checking out the grounds

Huge deck area provided plenty of room for mingling and socializing.

Keith, VK2FTPL brought his gazebo to provide additional shade over the large table. Bob VK2ZRE, Stuart VK2FSTU, Larry VK2CLL and Keith VK2FPTL erect the gazebo supervised by Tim VK2ZTM

Jim VK2VIV and Larry VK2CLL preparing the BBQ

The December 2016 Christmas Party was held at the Long Point Art Gallery and Winery. Settlement Point Reserve has become too popular and after the crowding of last year it was decided to try a different venue. Thank you to Secretary Jim Neil VK2VIV for finding the Long Point venue and negotiating the free use of the timber deck picnic area and barbeque facilities. The day was perfect and the inconvenience of the delay in waiting for the three sets of Houston Mitchell Drive roadwork traffic lights to change was quickly forgotten.

Thank you to everyone who attended the party for making the day so enjoyable. As well as the club supplied bacon and eggs

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breakfast and sausage sizzle lunch barbequed by Larry Lindsay VK2CLL and Jim VK2 VIV followed by fruit salad and ice cream, there was a veritable feast of party food brought by members to share. The delicious trifle made by Sue Meade was a special treat. No one went hungry!

Thank you to Keith Bayliss VK2FPTL for thoughtfully bringing his gazebo which provided very welcome shade over the large picnic table on the timber deck.

Paul VK2ICQ watches as Bruce VK2EM demonstrates the JT65 digital HF Station.

Thank you also to Bruce Ekert VK2EM for setting up his self contained portable battery powered JT65 digital HF station. The demonstration created a lot of interest with many members seeing first hand how a very compact HF digital station can made using very affordable hardware. Bruce was kept very busy answering questions and explaining the finer points of how it's done. Lots of photographs were taken during the day.

Those attending included Jim Neil VK2VIV and Carol, Bob Ecclestone VK2ZRE and Diana, Bruce Ekert VK2EM and Yulia, Dennis Meade VK2DAM and Sue, Stuart Walsh VK2FSTU, John McLean VK2KC and Corrine, John Winchester VK2NJJ and Pauline, Arthur Monck VK2ATM and Norah, Ray Mullins VK2JU and Lynne, Paul Colledge VK2ICQ, Paula Keena VK2FPDC, Larry Lindsay VK2CLL, Ivan Southwell VK2FIJN and harmonic, Keith Bayliss VK2FPTL, John Bailey VK2KHB, John Hansen VK2AYQ, Tim Mills VK2ZTM, Trevor Thatcher VK2TT, Gayle and Henry Lundell VK2ZHE.

Plenty of room for just relaxing and socializing. Pauline, John VK2NJJ, Jim VK2VIV, Carol, John VK2KC and Corrine. Below Dennis VK2DAM with Rob VK2CRF , Sue, Ray VK2JU and Gayle

And they all rode off into the sunset! Larry VK2CLL, Bruce VK2EM, John VK2AYQ and John VK2KC

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Wednesday Morning Working Bees

The Wednesday morning working bees have been very busy for the last few months constructing the antenna duplexer for the new VK2RCN 6 metre repeater. The morning teas during the working bees have become legendary, both for their popularity, and for the delicious morning tea fare brought along by those attending. The accompanying photo of a typical morning tea shows how well attended the working bees are.

Enjoying Morning Tea, Arthur VK2ATM, Ray VK2JU, Barry VK2LBG, John VK2KC, Rob VK2CRF, John VK2KHB, Dennis VK2DAM, Paul VK2DEL and Paul VK2UPR.

The VK2RCN 6 metre analogue FM voice repeater will transmit on 53.8 MHz and receive on 52.8 MHz. Building the duplexer has been a significant project. The duplexer comprises four full size 6 metre "cavity" filters. Most people are quite impressed at the size of the filters when they see them for the first time. Note that while the filters are colloquially known as "Cavity" filters they are more correctly called coaxial resonators. In essence the filter is a quarter wave coaxial line with the top short circuited where the centre resonator element is mounted to the top mounting plate on the filter body while the bottom end of the resonator element inside the filter body is open circuit. As the resonator element is about 1.5 metres long a non-conductive polyethylene "spider" is fitted to the lower part of the resonator to prevent mechanical vibration. The "spider" can be seen the accompanying photos.

Fitting the 'spider' John VK2KHB, Arthur VK2ATM and Barry VK2LBG

The filters became available may years ago when the Middle Brother Mountain ABTN1 TV transmitting equipment was upgraded. The filters are highly coveted as they are one of the few surplus full size filters which are able to be tuned to the 6 metre Amateur Band without modification.

Of course, to use the filters in a duplexer for a 6 metre repeater the filters still had to be modified by fitting band pass band reject coupling loops to work with 50 Ohm coaxial cable. In TV service the filters were fed with large diameter "plumbing style" coaxial lines and the centre conductor directly tapped onto the resonator element.

Blanking off redundant holes and drilling and tapping holes for coupling loop.

As can be seen from the accompanying photographs, the first job was to blank off the large now redundant hole in the resonator mounting plate. The club is indebted to John McLean VK2KC for machining custom blanking plugs from aluminum and shrink fitting them to form a

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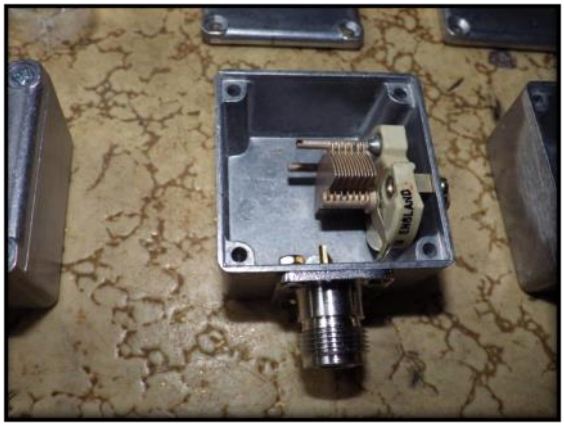
permanent low loss electrical cover for the holes.

The next job was to drill and tap holes in the resonator mounting plate to fit a pair of N Type coaxial sockets to support a custom made coupling loop inside the filter while enabling the coaxial cable connections to made to the outside top of the filters for the duplexer harness. The second connector enabled the notch tuning capacitor box to be attached to the top of the filter. These notch tuning capacitors had to be custom mounted in diecast aluminium boxes fitted with an N type coaxial socket. As can be seen the now rare Polar brand ceramic VHF trimmer capacitors from the VK2ZHE astute purchases made in the 1970s mounted very neatly in the small diecast boxes that are still available from Jaycar. *(see below)*



The notch tuning capacitor connects one end of the coupling loop to the body of the resonator mounting plate. The capacitor enables the coupling loop to be tuned to series resonance on 6 metres so that the coupling loop looks like a short circuit at the notch frequency. The coupling loop will look like an open circuit i.e. a very high impedance, at the frequency at which the resonator element is an exact quarter wavelength. This is the band pass frequency.

The notch tuning capacitor tuning boxes are attached to the coupling loop sockets on the resonator mounting plates on the "cavity" filters using an N type male to male coaxial adaptor.

More on this in the next issue of Oxtales where the operation of the duplexer will be explained. There will be more photos of the completed duplexer, together with the tuning and testing needed to ensure that the duplexer will perform correctly. The accompanying photos in the next issue of Oxtales will show the scope of the work that has already been carried out.

Middle Brother Mountain VK2RPM Repeater Site

As most members will now be aware, the radio link site on Middle Brother Mountain at which the VK2RPM repeaters are located is now owned by TPG Telecommunications. It is hoped that after the planned site upgrade works are completed the interference that has been reducing the sensitivity of the VK2RPM 146.7 MHz two metre repeater will be less of a problem.

Telegraph Point VK2RCN Repeater Site

It is hoped to soon commence work at the site to replace the mast guys and to install the VK2RCN 6 metre repeater folded dipole antenna as part of the mast refurbishment. Steve Wynn VK2ZSW is in the process of arranging meetings with the interested parties to finalise the scope of work and to set a budget and schedule.

ORARC 2017 Calendar

The club's 2017 calendar is the most popular yet with photos of almost all of our current members. Copies are still available and may be purchased at the various club activities.

2017 Callbooks

The first batch of 2017 WIA Callbooks sold out one day after they arrived at the beginning of January. Orders are being taken for a second batch. Contact Henry Lundell VK2ZHE as soon as possible as an order will be placed as soon as the WIA office reopens for business.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy 2017.
Henry Lundell VK2ZHE
President

Equipment from the Past

WS 108 Mk3 and WS 208 Mk2

These radios pictured below were used by the Australian Defense Forces during World War 11.

Both of these sets became readily available on the disposals market after the war and were used by radio amateurs in the early 1950's. The sets were used on 80 meters as they were usually available quite cheaply and could be used without extensive modifications. They were both low powered units. The WS 108 for AM (amplitude modulation) use and the WS208 for R/T (morse code use).

Wireless Set 108 Australian

The Wireless Set No.108 was originally developed by Radio Corporation (Astor) in around 1940 and was the standard manpack set for providing communications in forward areas during the Middle East campaign. By late 1941 the Mk.II version with a wider tuning range, had been introduced and remained the principal manpack until being replaced in 1946 by the Wireless Set No.128.

Ranges up to 10 miles could be achieved using vertical antennas, the range largely depending on the type of country. Power source, internal dry batteries. Frequency control, master oscillator and four preset channels for the Mks I and II, master oscillator only for the Mk.III. Output control, approximately 1/4 watt. Modes, voice (a.m.) only for the Mks. I and II, voice (a.m.) and m.c.w. for the Mk.III. Number of valves, 6.

Specifications:

Mk III

Manufactured 1943

Used primarily by Airborne Div, Para Bde, Comb Ops

Frequency range 2.5-3.5 MHz

Weight complete station 40 Kg

Mode of operation R/T 0.4, MCW.

Portability Man-pack

Australian design

Wireless Set 208 Mk 2

The Wireless Set No.208 was developed in Australia as a low power compact set which could provide communications over a reasonable distance for principally commando and similar units.

The No.208 was developed from the No.108 Wireless Set omitting the voice capability, internal battery and whip antenna.

The use of R/T only permitted longer distances to be archived for a given power output. The dry battery was separate from the set, thus allowing more compact packing and more even load

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distribution amongst the soldiers. Long wire antennas were provided since they could meet the requirements of moderately long distance. The set was originally developed by Radio Corporation in Melbourne in 1941, the Mk.II version entering service in about 1944. It probably saw little service after World War II.

Power source, external 1.5 and 99 volt dry battery. Frequency coverage, 1.5 to 3.5 Mc/s. Frequency control, master oscillator. Output power, approximately 1/4 watt. Modes, morse (c.w.) only. The receiver is of a superhetrodyne design with a intermediate frequency (I.F.) of 455 Kc/s. Number of valves, 4 in the receiver and 2 in the transmitter, all octal based. The output valve is a 1Q5GT.

WS 208 Mk III

Manufactured 1944

Used primarily by Commando forces

Frequency range 2.5-3.5 MHz

Weight complete station 26Kg

Mode of operation R/T 0.4 watt

Portability Man-pack

Australian design

Acknowledgements:

VK2DYM's Military Radio and Radar Information site.

VK2bv.org/archive/museum/ws208.htm

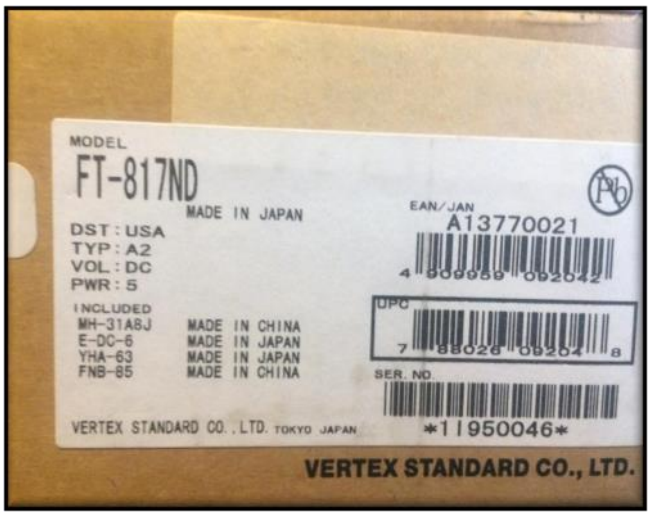
Military Wireless in the Midlands Museum Qsl.net/g4bxd/Australian.htm

Stolen Equipment

A fellow Amateur Michael Connolly VK2EAR was camping at the Breakwall Caravan Park on December 19 last year when thieves stole items from his car overnight including a Yaseu FT-817ND.

The theft has been reported and logged with the local Police. A photo of the serial number is reproduced below. Michael wrote a statement of the incident and published it on Facebook.

Members are asked if they come across the equipment, to notify Michael Connolly via Facebook Messenger and or contact the police assistance line as the serial number of the radio has been supplied in the initial police report.. Police assistance line 131444



Editor's note: The story is timely as it illustrates the realise the importance of keeping an up to date register including serial number of our equipment.

A current list of equipment with serial numbers and additional details such as date of purchase, where purchased and cost of purchase would be very useful in the event that equipment was stolen, lost or destroyed and an insurance claim was going to be made.

Comboyne House Fire

Past ORARC Member Neil Blake (ex VK2PV) Comboyne House Lost in Fire.

Neil Blake (ex VK2PV) of Comboyne sadly lost his house and two sheds in a fire in the small hours of the 12th of December 2016. Fortunately, the burns that he received to his hands and face from the fire are non-life-threatening but he is still in hospital in Sydney. The report in the "Port Macquarie News" says that he plans to stay with a nephew near the Royal North Shore Hospital for a time when he is discharged from hospital.

The Comboyne Community Centre is looking for a caravan for Neil when he returns to Comboyne so that he will have somewhere to live until his house can be rebuilt. They are also conducting a drive for household items to help Neil settle in. The Comboyne Community Centre can be contacted on (02) 6550 4289 or (02) 6550 4346.

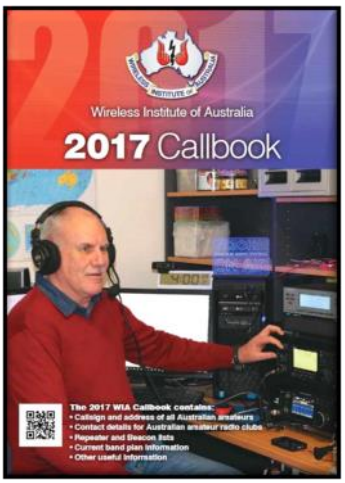
Neil moved to Comboyne in about the year 2000 and was an active member of the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club. As a Vietnam Veteran he had something more than just Amateur Radio in in common with several of the club members. He took an overseas posting and let VK2PV lapse. When he returned to Comboyne he did not get back on the air but was active in community activities. He had a special love of the local Showground.

At the time of the fire Neil was 73 years old. His home was in Duck's Ridge Road in the rural part of Comboyne.

The Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club is sorry that Neil suffered such a serious misfortune. We wish Neil a good recovery from his burns and hope that he will be able to return home and rebuild his house soon.

Submitted by Henry Lundell VK2ZHE with acknowledgement to the newspaper article in the Port Macquarie News on the 28th of December 2016.

The above was a bit of light heartedness from the Summerland News Letter.



Members wanting a 2017 call book please contact President Henry VK2ZHE to place an order.

AX prefix on Australia's national day

Date : 02 / 01 / 2017
Author : Jim Linton - VK3PC

All radio amateurs may substitute their normal VK callsign prefix with the letters AX, on Australia Day – Thursday January 26. The ACMA automatically allows this privilege which was negotiated by the WIA.

The day commemorates the First Fleet's arrival in 1788 at Sydney Gove and the establishment of a European settlement at Port Jackson, with the raising of the British flag by Governor Arthur Phillip. On Australia Day many celebrate our country and culture. This includes the granting of awards, honours and the welcoming to citizenship of many immigrants. National flags will be flown and the celebrations include fireworks displays.

The AX prefix is popular among prefix hunters and others while the use of a special QSL card is encouraged by the WIA.

60 metres not ready for amateur occupation in VK
Date : 01 / 01 / 2017
Author : Roger Harrison - VK2ZRH

The new amateur band at 5.3 MHz allocated world-wide to the Amateur Service in late 2015, has been incorporated into the Australian Radiofrequency Spectrum Plan (ARSP) 2017, but a number of further steps have to be taken before Australian amateurs can occupy the band.

ARSP 2017 was registered by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) on 20 December 2016 and came into effect the next day, with a commencement date of 1 January 2017.

As many amateurs are aware, the last Conference was WRC-15, held in November 2015, which approved the wordwide allocation of 5351.5 to 5366.5 kHz to the Amateur Service on a secondary basis, with different power specifications applying in different regions and countries, ranging from 15 watts effective isotropic radiated power (eirp) to 25 watts (eirp). In Australia the ARSP specifies 15 watts (eirp). Specifying ‘eirp’ takes account of the efficiency of different antenna systems, which are not particularly efficient at these frequencies.

Generally known as the 60 metre band, access to this 15 kHz allocation in Australia has been keenly awaited by many HF enthusiasts. Consistent with previous outcomes of WRCs which impacted Australian frequency allocations, the next step is amending the Amateur licence conditions that provides more definite technical parameters than in the ARSP.

The Amateur Service is not the only one affected, and many other radiocommunications stakeholders have to wait for the administrative and regulatory details to be updated before the provisions of ARSP 2017 can take effect.

The WIA’s Spectrum Strategy Committee is working with the ACMA to determine when access to 60 metres for Australian amateurs will become available.

An article on why and how long we have to wait is in the ‘WIA current Hot Issues’ and can be downloaded here. You can download the Australian Radiofrequency Spectrum Plan 2017 and its accompanying Explanatory Statement from the WIA website, here.

Blast from the Past

(Where we look at what was happening in the club 10 or more years ago)

The following was taken from Oxtales January 2007.

The Club Calendar for 2007

In case you haven't seen it yet, above is a grey-scale representation of it to give some idea of how it looks. It's better in living-colour, showing all the youthful features of our members as they appear in real life. A copy is yours, for $5. A good memento to remind us of our fel- low members, as we really are in 2007AD. Get yours from the Secretary, or Treasurer.

Editorial notes: Those of us who receive Oxtales electronically can resize the picture to see more detail. I can see at least one photograph that needs to be updated as it's the same as in the 2017 Calendar! I wonder which member(s) need to update! Also note that the Calendar used to be $5 which makes the current Calendar at $2 a real bargain.

Also from the 2007 Oxtales.

What is Henry holding and where was it going to be installed?

In the February edition of Oxtales 1997 there is a very interesting article written by Paul VK2BZC about a radio network called ROSE (Radio Amateur Telecommunications Society "RATS" Open Systems Environment, based on X.25 CCITT standard). This was essentially a TCP/IP network used on amateur radio which before the introduction of the public Internet of today. Basically a block of 16.7 Million IP addresses was reserved for amateur radio use. The development of the public internet within a couple of years virtually made many of the ROSE type systems obsolete.

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ROSE

Have you noticed that the ROSE network is none too healthy lately? I won't bore you with herbaceous metaphors or puns, but yes, there is a problem.

Actually, ROSE "surfers", Wauchope and elsewhere, have long known the network to be a cranky beast at best. If you follow the bulletin traffic, you will see battles raging both in VK and overseas about maintaining a radio network in the face of the all-encompassing Internet. Well, one problem with our Amateur network is indeed that it is ultra-low cost and I mean ULTRA! Naturally, its performance matches this.

It is tempting to think of this as a baud rate problem, that we need to "go 960011 and everything will be better. This is NOT the case. A higher baud rate is simply a means to allow more retries to occur in a given time. The real problem is that our present "backbone" consists of a string of nodes all hogging the one frequency, and all trying to chip in at once. The performance of this is appalling, and the effect of increasing, as is

presently "in the pipeline", to 4800 baud.. will be minimal.

The proposition agreed to by a consensus(!) of VK2 repeater managers North of Gosford is to upgrade to a 4800 baud' full-duplex link system. 4800 baud appears to be at present a happy balance between performance and economy. Not only do higher speeds require more expensive modems, but higher performance radios, and this is the answer to "why are we putting up with 1200/ 4800 baud when they are using upwards of 28.8 kilobaud on the-Internet?"

But I have said that the baud rate is not so important. The "full-duplex link system II is the part that needs to be developed before we will get anywhere. A link system is needed to overcome all the problems of hidden transmitters, simultaneous transmissions and retries. This means that every link from site to site must have its own frequency pair (one frequency in each direction) just as every link in the telephone system has two ends. Party lines are out!

The link from VK2RND (Newcastle) to VK2RGL has already been· upgraded to 4800 baud but VK2RPM has not yet followed. Consequently, Great Lakes and Taree South . (notable Karl's BBS) are enjoying a comparatively private link to Newcastle which is performing superbly. When we too go to 4800 baud, that link will actually slow down again until the second stage of the plan is implemented and individual links for each step are installed. THEN it will be possible to connect to Sydney within seconds and converse at a comfortable speed.

In the meantime our link south is "broken" unless you know how to use VK2DYX-l's "node" functions (Karl is accessible at present using VK2RPM-1 as a digipeater, and that is how we are getting much of our BBS traffic). But only when we make the necessary upgrades will Packet "come alive".
- Paul (VK2BZC

Editors note: I thought that the article would interest the computer technical network minded members as it illustrates how amateur radio operators are often experimenting with technologies that have evolved into mainstream operations.

In addition the speed rates of the early internet 28.8 kilobauds compared with the many megabits per second of today is quite staggering. Modems were expensive and often took quite a bit of ‘fettling’ to get them to initially set them up and for the internet to work. Pictures took ages to download and download time was measured in minutes.