



# OXTALES

Newsletter of the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club Inc  
PO Box 712 Port Macquarie 2444

**January 2001**

Compiled by VK2TT

PRESIDENT: Bob Brodie VK2EJK 6584.0495  
VICE. PRES: Bruce Walker VK2HOT 6583.8360  
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## *President's Report*

Another Christmas has gone and I trust you all had an enjoyable time. I anticipate that there are some tales of the goings on at the Christmas BBQ within these pages.

What a pleasant December meeting we had with our guests, Barry Simpson VK2BJ who has proven to be a most creditable winner of the "Peter Alexander Award" for the year 2000. His "talk on cw" contesting was most enlightening.

To Ina, thank you for gracing the portals of we males. We do need to be brought into line from time to time and I am sure all XYL's would have appreciated your sentiments. We do look forward to you making many more presentations.

The icing on our Christmas cake has come from Hastings Council who have provided us with a grant of \$1250 from the Community Grant Program. This grant will assist the Club in the purchase of our own Field Communication Unit which will include a 250 volt generator, a

small marquee, and a portable aerial mast.

In this new year, we have the "John Moyle" contest and the ORARC Field Day ahead of us and it is not too early to be giving thought to how we can make these events the best yet and together with the results of the current survey we should ensure an enjoyable 2001.

- President Bob VK2EJK

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## Down The Coax

### January Meeting

Friday Evening 19/1/2001 at 7.00pm

### February Meetings

Monthly Meeting 3/2/2001 at 1.00pm

## In This Issue :

Item.	Page No.
President's Report	1
Down The Coax	1
JOTA 2000 Report	2
JOTA at Hollingworth Site	3
How Are Your Brains?	4
E-mail Directory	4
Magnetic Recording Tape	4
Marconi Day	6
Conundrum Corner	6
Transmission Modes	6
OXTALES Rescheduled	7
Christmas Barbecue	7
Answer to The "F's" Test	7

Friday Evening 16/2/2001 7.00pm

**CCARC Wyong Field Day  
25th February**

**March Meetings**

**Monthly Meeting 3/3/2001 at  
1.00pm**

**Friday Evening 16/3/2001 7.00pm**

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**J.O.T.A. 2000 Report**

Members Participating were:-

VK2EJK Bob (Pres), VK2ZCV Bill,  
VK2BZD Jim, VK2HOT Bruce, VK2DAL  
David, VK2AYD David, VK2FSH  
Charles, VK2KHB John & VK2ATM  
Arthur.

On Saturday 21st October, 2000, 40+ Scouts, Cubs, Joey's and Girl Guides operated ORARC club equipment from the 1st Port Macquarie Sea Scouts Hall in Buller St., Port Macquarie for J.O.T.A. 2000, between 1330 and 2030 ESST.

Contacts were made from Tasmania to Townsville and elsewhere in Australia. An overseas contact was made to Maui near Hawaii where a very patient KH4 spoke at length to many boys and girls.

The prompt sheets we provided obviously made our boys and girls a little more fluent in the conversational exchanges with other groups. We had some hilarious moments provided by one six year old boy with a quick and lively imagination.

All participating children received a free grab bag of gifts, stickers and instructional pamphlets including our ORARC tri-fold

brochure.

Scouts, Leaders and parents present were very appreciative of our efforts and thanked our members by providing lunch and evening meals.

The help of our club members in providing the work force to erect, operate and dismantle equipment, was much appreciated by your J.O.T.A. co-ordinator VK2ATM.

130 Grab Bags were made up by my XYL Wendy, 30 went to Hollingworth St. where Larry VK2IPO operated for the 2nd Port Macquarie Land Scouts. 50 were left over and these have been repacked with additional material into 100 Holiday Coast Credit Union bags ready to have Tourist information about Port Macquarie added for the ORARC Field Day in 2001. They will be stored in the cupboard for the Field day co-ordinator.

- VK2ATM J.O.T.A. 2000 co-ordinator.

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**JOTA 2ND PORT MACQUARIE  
SCOUTS 2000**

The JOTA at the Hollingworth site was undertaken privately this year by VK2IPO, Larry, in Port Macquarie. It would only be the second ever JOTA that I had been to. And the last one I was at the 1st Sea Scouts hall, where I was only one of the participating radio operators. I would like to personally thank all the club members of the ORARC that helped me with hints and advice for the event. And, especially Arthur and Wendy Monck for the wonderful bags of goodies to pass out to each scout that attended JOTA. The kids loved those! Good on ya Wendy and Arthur!

The weather for the event was especially cooperative the Saturday of the event. I was afraid it might rain. I made up a 20 metre Di-Pole to chuck up between two existing flag poles at the site. Larry Wilkens, who is a scout leader, and the co-ordinator for the events they have there, helped me put up the antenna and set up the HF gear. We used my Yaesu FT-890, which worked out quite well. We had the radios and antenna SWR's right by about 12 noon. So, that gave us a good head start on the arriving kids soon to be.

Scouts started arriving about 2 p.m., so I promptly got out the log book and showed the kids where the "Suggestions on what to talk about" sheets were, and commenced organising the first QSO for the day. It wasn't long and we had Brissy scouts on the horn. So, we started passing the microphone around and they got started. The first QSO lasted for 3 hours! Those kids had a lot to talk about I reckon! I filled out QSL cards for all that participated in that QSO with proper mailing address and told each one to mail it to that address to get one in return. They all had good fun on that first QSO, but after 3 hours I reckoned it was time we moved on. So, we tuned around and made many more contacts around Australia that day. We even were able to hook up with the First Sea Scouts JOTA here in Port twice. VK2ATM, "Arthur" was radio OP the first time. The second time, Bob, VK2EJK was at the switch! So, we of course had to get the two scout groups hooked up there, so they could have a bit of a yarn with each other as well!! They had good fun there I think too!

But the time always arrives when the kids get hungry, doesn't it? And, it did this year as well. So, about 06:30 they all shot through to go get pizzas at the take-away. And, it wasn't long after that since they were all camping out at the hall that night, they started thinking more about

setting their gear up and getting some videos to watch etc. I wonder if the happy campers of the old days had television, and VCR's and pizzas?? Food for thought? hi hi!! But, these were a good bunch of scouts, and I reckon they got their fill of Amateur radio, and had good fun doing it that day. So, I was happy and thought to myself, maybe you have made a difference in some kids life, or at least showed him what a wonderful hobby Amateur radio really is. And all of the possibilities that are before you when you sit down to an HF rig to see what's going on in people's lives, just like you and I. I think that's part of what Amateur Radio really is about. Finding common ground, and identity with your fellow man across the globe. And, what a big globe we live on! But, the nice thing about Ham Radio is that even though it is a big globe, we do it with frequency and bridge that gap. And, sometimes find out what a small world it really can be when you find out how many other people are really just like you!!

I personally want to thank everybody who participated in this JOTA this year. Not only at the Hollingworth site, but the 1st. Port Macquarie Sea Scout site as well. It's wonderful to do something like this for the kids. They are the next generation and if we can influence them to become radio ops someday, or even just show them that there are good things out there besides fast cars, and pubs, and all the things out there that are so easy for kids to get into these days that aren't any good for them, then I reckon we have made some sort of a positive mark in each kid that we came into contact with. Thanks to Larry and Jan Wilkens for co-ordinating this fun event and for



the wonderful food they brought for me and my wife Shirley. And for the help setting up the radio gear. Thanks again to Wendy and Arthur Monck for their advice, and for the wonderful bags we gave out to the scouts for their efforts. The kids sure loved them a lot. They told me so! We will look forward to this event again next year.

- Larry (VK2IPO)

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## How Are Your Brains?

Read this sentence:

**FINISHED FILES ARE THE RESULT OF YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY COMBINED WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF YEARS.**

Now count aloud the "F's" in that sentence. Count them *ONCE ONLY*, don't go back and count them again!

You will find the answer on page 7.

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## **E-mail directory.**

VK2EI (Neil) hnsandford@telstra.easymail.com.au  
VK2FT (Jason) jasonm@tsn.cc  
VK2GD (Alan) anut@ozemail.com.au  
VK2GJ (Graeme) virtue@mullum.com.au  
VK2JB (John) jebaylis@midcoast.com.au  
VK2JJ (John) jjones@felglow.com.au  
VK2OA (Allan) poss2oa@telstra.easymail.com.au  
VK2TT (Trevor) gramps@felglow.com.au  
VK2VY (John) vk2vy@bigpond.com  
VK2ATM (Arthur) afamo@midcoast.com.au  
VK2AYD (David) davpil@midcoast.com.au  
VK2CHC (Richard) farmsale@felglow.com.au  
VK2CLL (Larry) lindsay@midcoast.com.au  
VK2DAL (David) davsmith@felglow.com.au  
VK2DDL (Stan) svellis@midcoast.com.au  
VK2EJK (Bob) bobro@bigpond.com.au

VK2HBM (Craig) vk2hbm@globalfreeway.com.au  
VK2HOT (Bruce) brucew@tsn.cc  
VK2IPO (Larry) lazzah@dingoblue.net.au  
VK2UPR (Paul) dapto@midcoast.com.au  
VK2YOR (Roy) rburges@midcoast.com.au  
VK2ZCV (Bill) lts1@nor.com.au  
VK2ZHE (Henry) henry.lundell@airservices.gov.au

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## Magnetic Recording Tape

Over the years, I have read about, and listened to the experiences of others relating to the durability of audio signals on magnetic recording tape. Most evidence, from folk-lore sources, has generally been against its reliability to provide useable audio reproduction of tracks after ten or so years have elapsed since they were recorded. Issues such as how often the tracks were played over these periods, or whether the tape was simply stored and unplayed, were included in the factors examined in these informal analytical excursions. I emerged from countless discussions, and some happenstance reading, reasonably convinced by the "experts" that around fifteen to twenty years was about the best one could hope for, even if the tape had been stored out of harm's way and never played.

Way back in 1958, I was stationed at a remote Pacific Island (Fanning Island to be precise... now renamed Tabuaeran, and part of Kiribati). Whilst there, I made some reel-to-reel tape recordings of the local residents performing in their traditional Batre - an enjoyable sing-along type of event that was conducted a few times each year to entertain both themselves and any other persons who happened to be on the spot at the time.

The recordings were made in acoustic conditions that did not meet studio standards, but were at least anechoic... in the middle of a

copra plantation beneath a palm-thatched shelter of some 200 square metres in area. About sixty to seventy artists, of all ages and gender, in groups and choir, gave renditions of their traditional songs, punctuated with Polynesian dancing. Considering the technology of the day, and the far-less-than-professional gear that I possessed, the results were highly satisfactory to my simple mind, both technically and from an entertainment viewpoint.

The tapes were played quite often over the next few years, but with the advent of the tape cassette and the collapse of my reel-to-reel gear, they eventually found themselves shoved into their original boxes, stashed on shelves, or in boxes, or being moved to different QTH's over the next 40 years.

Some weeks ago, a rare opportunity arose to borrow an old working reel-to-reel machine that would play tapes at 7.5ips and 3.75ips (some of you young guys don't know what I am talking about, do you!). With trembling hands, quivering upper lip, and white faced, I loaded one of these precious tapes (reminiscent of Dead Sea Scrolls) onto the machine, and exerted pressure on the "Play" lever (no buttons on these machines, mate!). I fully expected the tape to either break, or shed scales of brown magnetic material like confetti around the shack, or perhaps even clog up the works with honey-like "goo". But no!... nothing like that happened... instead, from the speakers emerged those glorious sounds of the Gilbertese harmony, the howling and barking of their dogs as they joined in the sing-along, the thumping of the empty packing case (the only instrument used in

most songs... used for its superb percussive effects!) and the magical atmosphere of that far away tropical isle wafted into my shack from a memorable night's event that occurred more than four decades ago.

Needless to say, I was elated. I was able to recover, from 2 large spools, about two hour's worth of "audible artefacts" from the tropics, plus two small 15 minute spools (of slightly later vintage) containing "interviews" with our infant children when they were learning to talk.

It is not possible for me to make a precise or authoritative pronouncement on the quality of the recovered audio. Firstly, I had no technical data as to how good the original reproduction was at the time of the recording. Secondly, I still have no measuring equipment to check what it is like now. Suffice to say, my recollection of the original quality was that it was as good as my gear could produce and, to my ear, had sounded "delightful" at the time. The audio quality of the recently recovered tracks, to me, is still "delightful". However, I would strongly suspect that this subjective comparison would be influenced significantly by elements of nostalgia, senility, mental overcompensation for recognised deafness, and other similar factors all of which are Anno Domini related. In summary, I can't really tell the difference!

Now, one interesting observation was that the large spools that still contained good audio were both BASF brand, and the small spools were NEC Golden Tape. There were other spools of Scotch brand, and one of..... wait for it.... Irish brand, complete with a shamrock moulded into the spool. These two tapes, of Gaelic origin, were just about useless... full of drop-outs from missing oxide coating, bad

print-through from adjacent layers, and incredible noise. But all tapes had undergone the same treatment over the years, being housed together at all times. Some brands had stood the test of time much better than others. BASF and NEC must have put the right amount of "baking soda" into their recipes.

With some readily available software, I have been able to convert all useable tracks into wave files, and subsequently burn them to Compact Disc. The discs containing the Fanning Island tracks have been copied and sent to interested ex-colleagues who have since reported experiencing rich nostalgic moments (often misted with tears, I would suspect) as they once again heard the sweet harmony of what we knew as the Gilbert and Ellis Islanders.

This experience has given me a revised impression of the longevity of old magnetic tape recordings. My view is now to advise others not to simply "write off" old tape, but rather to take a listen if they have any old relics mouldering away "out of harm's way". It is quite possible that something in the way of sweet sounds from the past may have survived and could be preserved to live on for further enjoyment. Giving one's grandchildren the opportunity to hear, with excellent clarity, their parent's early attempts at the spoken word is an experience by itself.

- de Trevor (VK2TT)

## CONUNDRUM CORNER

A cat has kittens. Each female kitten has the same number of brothers as sisters but each male kitten has half as many brothers as sisters, how many male and female kittens are there???

- Garry (VK2TBH)

## Marconi Day

From Whitey (K1VV)

*The Marconi Radio Club, W1AA will celebrate the 98th Anniversary of Guglielmo Marconi's First Transatlantic Radio Transmission between Cape Cod Massachusetts and England. The Marconi Radio Club will operate from Cape Cod using the call sign W1AA/CC. "CC" was Marconi's first call sign for his transatlantic Cape Cod Station long before the existence of the FCC and issuing of call signs.*

*The Marconi Radio Club will operate two High Frequency amateur radio stations on CW and Voice. Hours of planned operation are from 1200Z through 2200Z, January 18, 2001 on the 20 through 10 meter bands. DX stations QSL via the W1 Bureau and W/K stations to the W1AA Callbook address with an S.A.S. E. Operation will be from a former Coast Guard Life Boat Station close to the original 1903 Marconi Transatlantic Radio Station site within the National Sea Shore Park, as almost all of the original 1903 Marconi station site has been carried away by beach erosion.*

## New (and old) Transmission Modes

Here are some e-mail addresses that can provide complete freeware software for the following :-

HamComm: <http://home.att.net/~k7szl>

JV-FAX/JV-Comm32: <http://www.jvcomm.de>

or: <http://www.muenster.de/~welp/sb.htm>

EZ-SSTV: <http://ultranet.com/~sstv/ezsstv.html>

MSCAN: <http://www.mscan.com>

EasyFAX V1.1: [ftp://ftp.funet.fi/pub/ham/fax\\_sstv/ef110.exe](ftp://ftp.funet.fi/pub/ham/fax_sstv/ef110.exe)

PSK31: <http://aintel.bi.ehu.es/psk31.html>

MT63: <http://members.xoom.com/ZL1BU/MT63/MT63.html>

MMTTY1.58: [http://geocities.com/mmtty\\_rtty/](http://geocities.com/mmtty_rtty/)

Some of these are DOS programmes (EZ-SSTV), others will work with Windows.

MMTTY is a windows RTTY programme rather like PSK31.



MT63 is a new system in development.

Most of these programmes do not need fancy interface boards. However if you want to use all of them in a comprehensive system VK2AYD has info on a simple interface board using a TL-082 dual op amp.

- David (VK2AYD)

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## Oxtales Rescheduled

At the November monthly meeting, a decision was taken to reschedule the publication of **OXTALES** such that it more conveniently suits our annual calendar of events, **OXTALES** will now be published in all odd-numbered months of the year, i.e. January, March, May etc., and will be released early in each of those months ready for distribution at each monthly meeting. This will assist in reducing postage costs, and will give more timely coverage of our annual field day promotion and reporting. There was no issue of **OXTALES** for the month of December, 2000.

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## Christmas Barbecue

Sadly, your Editor was away from the district over the Weekend of the Club's Barbecue on 17th December, and as a consequence, is unable to give a first hand comprehensive report on the function. However, it was gleaned through various informal channels that the event was well attended, held in good weather (that came just in time!) and that those in attendance had another enjoyable end-of-year get-together.

The event was held at the Lake Cathie QTH of John (VK2JJ) and his XYL, Thea. A sincere vote of appreciation and thanks is extended to

John & Thea for once again making their delightful home and garden available for this annual event.

It is understood that it is not a rumour, but a hard, cold fact, that the coveted trophy, "The Stirrer's Helmet", was awarded this year to VK2AYD in recognition of the superlative efforts that he so admirably expended to prevail over all the many other passionate contenders for this prestigious citation.

- Trevor (VK2TT)

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## Club Net Reminders

Don't forget the Club Nets each week. On Wednesday nights the net is conducted at 7.00pm through VK2RCN. On Sunday mornings the net is at 8.30am, conducted through VK2RPM. Times are all Local, to accommodate EADST.

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## ANSWER to the "F's" test.

There are six F's in the sentence. One of average intelligence finds three of them. If you spotted four, you're above average. If you got five, you can turn up your nose up at anybody. If you caught all six, you're a genius, and a lot too good to be wasting your time on foolishness like this!..

- 73, de Long type John VK2JJ



  
**OXLEY REGION AMATEUR RADIO CLUB Inc.**  
**MEMBERSHIP REGISTER.**  
as at 2nd January, 2001

Cat.	FIRST NAME (Spouse)	SURNAME	CALL SIGN	TOWN/CITY	TPH. NO.
1	F JOHN (FLORENCE)	BAILEY	VK2KHB	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.2192
2	F JOHN (MARY)	BAYLIS	VK2JB	LAKE CATHIE	02 6585.5703
3	F BOB (IOSIE)	BRODIE	VK2EJK	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.0592
4	F ROY W (JUNE)	BURGES	VK2YOR	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.9349
5	F LARRY (SHIRLEY)	CONNOR	VK2IPO	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.6924
6	F KEVIN (JUNE)	COULTER	VK2MAM	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.8325
7	F IAN	DALRYMPLE	VK2XU	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6584.9922
8	F TRACY (CINDY)	DIGNUM	VK2GTM	HERONS CREEK	02 6585.7061
9	F CHARLES (PAT)	EDMONDSON	VK2FSH	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6584.0495
10	D STAN (BETTY)	ELLIS	VK2DDL	TUNCURRY	02 6554.7996
11	F BADEN (VALERY)	GLEESON	VK2MOQ	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.2018
12	F LEWIS (PAMELA)	GREEN	VK2AG	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6584.9162
13	F RICHARD J	HALL	VK2BXO	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.6588
14	L KEITH	HANLON	-	PORT MACQUARIE	-
15	F DAVID (ISOBEL)	HARDING	VK2AIF	WAUCHOPE	02 6586.4980
16	D BARRY (JOAN)	HARWOOD	VK2BAZ	GUNNEDAH	
17	L PETER	HILL	VK2BZA	LAKE CATHIE	02 6585.5349
18	F SNOW	HODDER	VK2DV	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.7095
19	F WILL (CAROL)	JAMIESON	VK2XXU	DUNBOGAN	02 6559.8622
20	F DON	JONES	-	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.5084
21	F JOHN (THEA)	JONES	VK2IJ	LAKE CATHIE	02 6585.4522
22	L LARRY	LINDSAY	VK2CLL	WAUCHOPE	02 6587.1155
23	L HENRY	LUNDELL	VK2ZHE	PORT MACQUARIE	-
24	F KEITH (GWEN)	LUTTON	VK2KDL	TELEGRAPH POINT	02 6585.0321
25	F ALLAN (DAWN)	MADIGAN	VK2OA	WAUCHOPE	02 6585.2043
26	F JASON	MARIS	VK2FT	TELEGRAPH POINT	02 6585.0426
27	F CRAIG	MARTIN	VK2HBM	WAUCHOPE	02 6585.3452
28	F JOHN (KARIN)	MCDONAGH	VK2VY	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.0020
29	F TERRY	MEEHAN	VK2KL	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6584.2997
30	L ARTHUR (WENDY)	MONCK	VK2ATM	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.1311
31	F ALAN	NUTT	VK2GD	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.3557
32	F DAVID A (DEE)	PILLEY	VK2AYD	KING CREEK	02 6585.2647
33	F NEIL (VERENA)	SANDFORD	VK2EI	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.5830
34	F BILL (RUTH)	SINCLAIR	VK2ZCV	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.9302
35	F DAVID (ROMA)	SMITH	VK2DAL	WAUCHOPE	02 6585.1004
36	F DAVID (AILEEN)	TARRANT	VK2TBC	SARATOGA	02 4369.8738
37	F TREVOR (PHYLLIS)	THATCHER	VK2TT	WAUCHOPE	02 6585.2278
38	D GRAEME (JOYCE)	VIRTUE	VK2GJ	BRUNSWICK HEADS	02 6685.1336
39	F BRUCE (GWEN)	WALKER	VK2HOT	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.8360
40	F JIM	WEBSTER	VK2BZD	PORT MACQUARIE	-

F = Full Member

D = Distant Member

L = Life Member