



OXTALES

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

March 2001

Compiled by VK2TT

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President's Report

One of the problems confronting a group is negative thinking. This type of thinking can stop any good idea from getting off the ground. Let us look at a few negatives in the past few months.

The Lighthouse Weekend would not be a goer, "because the John Moyle Field Day was a flop". The Lighthouse Weekend turned out to be a very successful event and we are looking forward to the next one. The success was due to positive thinking about why the John Moyle failed and correcting the situation.

Next came the application for a Community Service Grant from the Council. "no chance" was the comment, but an enthusiastic approach has now achieved a \$1250 contribution to a Mobile Field Unit.

The JOTA event with the scouts "was a waste of time", so the story went. In spite of that cynicism the event was staged and there was an enthusiastic response from both groups of scouts in Port Macquarie and they were grateful for our participation.

Negative thinking is like rust, it sneaks up on you and before you know it you have seized up. The Annual Field Day is our big event, lets get out the WD40 and make this the best Field Day ever, after all we Aussies were capable of producing

the best Olympic Games ever, and there were many who thought of all the problems that would contribute to its failure. If you are aware of the problems you are halfway to fixing them.

- 73 Bob Brodie - VK2EJK (President).

Down The Coax

March Meeting

Friday Evening 16/3/2001 at 7.00pm

John Moyle Field Days

Sat/Sun 17th/18th March

April Meetings

Monthly Meeting 7/4/2001 at 1.00pm

Friday Evening 20/4/2001 7.00pm

May Meetings

Monthly Meeting 5/5/2001 at 1.00pm

Friday Evening 18/5/2001 7.00pm

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E-mail directory.

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VK2ZCV (Bill) lts1@nor.com.au
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"In the Fullness of Time"

Way back during the closing century of the last millennium - October, 1999 to be precise - a letter, in the form of a query, was submitted to the well known electronics journal, "Electronics Australia". It was a query directed to a particular regular "reader participation" feature segment of that magazine, called "What's a...?"

The writer, using a presumed pseudonym, "Old Wilbur, Dunbogan", penned the following plea for information:-

Many years ago I copied out a statement which was incomplete and I thought either EA staff or readers might be able to help. The statement I copied is: "One decibel is the loss of power in a mile of standard cable at 860 cycles per second." It refers to a telephone circa 1875. So what is a standard cable?

I assume the cable came off a reel and when it was strung up on poles, it became an aerial. What is its resistance per mile, and what distance was there between the aerial conductors? I would be most grateful for your help. (Old Wilbur, Dunbogan, 2443)

Wilbur's query *did* get printed, with a note that clearly hinted that the answer wasn't ready off the top of someone's head. 'Twas the editor who wrote it, and verbatim I will quote it. No. Verbatim's not my forté. I'll use word-for-word instead.

This is what the editor wrote:

Staying with a theme of "What's a ..?", here's a letter I'm sure I can't answer, but perhaps a reader can. But you'll need access to books from the 1800's.

These days we've become rather blasé about the standards used to represent measurements units. It's sometimes difficult to remember that during the last century even basic units like the ohm, volt or ampere were defined in a way that would make today's technicians cringe. So, all I can do Wilbur is include your request, and hope that a reader can help you.

And that all appeared in "Electronics Australia", way back in October, 1999.

Old Wilbur sat and awaited an answer. Well... he didn't really *sit* all the time... he is a very industrious retiree who utilises time to its maximum extent, and many of his tightly scheduled projects have rolled off his assembly line since that October day... but he waited, never-the-less... patiently.

During the second week of this new millennium, Old Wilbur received his reward. The clever Postie delivered to him a letter, addressed :-

"Old Wilbur"
Dunbogan
NSW 2443.,

the contents of which had been long awaited. This is what it said:-

Dear Sir,
In reply to your question in *Electronics Australia* October 1999 ie, "What is a standard cable?"

From
TELEPHONY

By
Herbert and Proctor
Second edition
Volume 1

Manual Switching systems and line plant
As reprinted 1946.

"The Mile of Standard Cable. This unit is now obsolescent. It is defined as "an arbitrary uniform line in terms of which the attenuation of a line or network may be specified." The actual standard cable is

held in the Engineer-in-Chief's Office* and has a twenty lb. conductor of 88 Ohms resistance, .045uF capacitance 1 mH inductance and 1 micro-mho leakance. All per mile loop, as its primary electrical constants.
(Remembering the authors are referencing the British GPO)

I will be very surprised if some now retired former PMG Junior Mechanic (Later Technician (s) in Training) has not already provided you with this information which is in reality based on the "Ohm Mile Constant". In that one pound of pure copper drawn to one mile of length will be found to have a resistance of 880 Ohms. Hence the loop mile (total 2 miles) of twenty pound copper wire i.e... the 20lbs copper per mile mentioned in the above standard is stated correctly as having a resistance of 88 Ohms.

I very probably have no need to mention this but I will. For communications of telephony type, Zero dB (i.e. the reference level) is equal to 1mW in 600 ohms. Oddly I have always thought, for radio, the reference level 0 dB, is the calculation for 6 Milliwatts in 600 ohms, remembering decibel (dB) is the expression of relative power based on 10 times the log of $P1/P2$. Direct levels of power difference not being used, for reason as is quoted in Herbert and Proctor "The sensation of loudness in relation to received speech also follows a logarithmic law".

I might add, 'and just as well, in these days of motor vehicles and such masquerading as big base drums'.

Yours

If rather belatedly, (Strange what you come across in libraries)

Sgd. Les Lee.

And thus it was that, in the fullness of time, "Old Wilbur" (aka XXU) came into possession of that vital piece of information that had been buried in a library somewhere, shrouded in the mists of time, thanks to the watchful eye of Les Lee.

DIGITAL WAVES

Is there life after SSB (and CW)?

The ARRL recently conducted a survey of the

current digital modes being used on HF and it really is interesting to see the way that Amateur Radio is now going and where the Computer is playing a major roll. The following is just a brief synopsis. VK2AYD has the complete article with the various web sites that you can go to and down load software.

RTTY

Is the grand daddy of HF digital. Once a cumbersome teleprinter machine that clacked and clacked, today it has been converted to simple computer operations. It is still very popular, but now driven by computer. It is not error free.

AMTOR

(Amateur Teleprinting Over Radio) Enjoyed widespread popularity from about 1983 through 1991. It's distinctive chirp was well known on the HF bands. It has an advantage that it is error free as it requires an acknowledgment from the receiving station. You need a fast switching transceiver for this.

PACKET

Has been in existence since the early 70's and really came into it's own in the mid 80's. It too is error free, but does require a reasonably quiet band to function efficiently. It really shines on VHF, especially with networks. One application is APRS (Automatic Position Reporting System) which you can find on the top end of 30m.

PACTOR

Strolled into the limelight in 1991. A combination of AMTOR and PACKET. A robust error-free system. PACTOR II came to air in the mid 90's and is used more by the professional people.

CLOVER

Was unveiled in 1993 by HAL Communications. It also came with a stiff price and it's necessary to use a HAL processor.

G-TOR

Was the brainchild of Kantronics. Yet another high performance mode but it meant using Kantronics equipment. It is somewhat uncommon on the ham bands today.

PSK31

Viewed as the high-octane cousin of RTTY. It is not error-free, but offers excellent weak-signal performance. Invented by Peter Martinez, G3PLX, who also brought AMTOR to the Amateur world. In 1999, Peter designed a version of PSK31 that needed nothing more than a common computer sound card. The software is free to the ham community. In 2000, new software packages such as Digipan and WinPSK became available. It is now the number one HF digital mode and only uses a signal bandwidth 31 Hz.

HELLSCHREIBER

This has been around since the 1920's and was used extensively in WW II by Germany. It sounds like a hen scratching in the earth! Today simple software is available to run this from your computer.

MT-63

Pawel Jalocha, SP9VRC, invented this. It is a keyboard-to-keyboard "live" mode operationally similar to RTTY and PSK31. It uses 64 different tones which reduces the amount of redundancy even with heavy interference. Unfortunately it requires a bandwidth of 1 kHz which is not so good on a crowded band.

THE FUTURE

New modes that are already being developed include PICCOLO 2000, THROB, MOSAIC II and others. THROB is a 9 tone MFSK digital mode. So, if you are into HF Digital hammering, there are certainly exciting times ahead! We may even see some appearing on VHF. Which one have you tried?

-de David VK2AYD

So You Want to Buy a New House?

When people go house hunting they often pull up in their car outside a prospect house and make a quick judgement not knowing what is on the inside.

In the USA they have allocated 1600 kHz to the Real Estate industry and you now have "Talking Houses" which transmit

with a maximum power of 100 mW and a range of about 450 metres. The transmission describes the better points of the property. So have a tune around 1600 at night - you may pick up a bargain....!
- de VK2AYD

Younger Than We Thought?

Snippet from a packet bulletin that originated in USA:

Australian stations have special prefix available: On January 25 and 26, Australian stations may use the prefix AX to mark Australia Day. This year marks Australia's 100th anniversary.

(Anniversary of what? Ed.)

Maritime Mobile Visitor.

At the ORARC's February meeting, we were honoured with two visitors. Ted Popham (VK2EZQ - G4TBF) and his XYL, Sue, visited our club room and delivered an interesting talk on their travels and AR experiences aboard their yacht "Alice Colleen". Originally from UK, the couple, now based in Australia, are undertaking some short shakedown cruises prior to venturing to places in other hemispheres. "Alice Colleen" is currently tied up in neighbouring Laurieton

Ted outlined the good - and not so good - aspects of amateur radio afloat, ranging from vessel maintenance through to equipment operation and maintenance under seagoing conditions. Sue displayed an interesting selection of photographs, fielded questions and spoke about their travels around Vanuatu and environs. She gave some insight into their provisioning and catering strategies for two foot-loose and fancy-free adventurers on board a vessel in the Pacific. They plan to return to Sydney soon, prior to another sortie into the Pacific later this year. Bon Voyage, Ted & Sue.

MIR'S EXECUTION DATE SET

(Extract from an ARRL packet Bulletin)

According to news reports, two Russian space agencies have agreed that March 6* will be D-Day for the Mir space station--"Deorbiting

Day," that is,

The Russian space station has had Amateur Radio gear aboard. Over the years, countless hams on Earth have spoken directly with the crew--which, at times, has included US astronauts--or have accessed Mir's packet messaging system. Pictures transmitted via an SSTV experiment installed aboard Mir a few years ago also delighted earthbound amateurs.

While the ham gear was installed in part to help boost crew morale, it became a vital communication link after a nearly disastrous fire broke out and--not long after--when the space station's hull was pierced in a collision with a cargo rocket.

The more than 130-ton spacecraft will be pushed out of Earth orbit using Progress rockets. According to the Russian Aviation and Space Agency--Rosaviacosmos--and RKK Energia--Mir's operator--a Progress cargo ship with increased fuel capacity will be launched to Mir January 18. It will displace a Progress rocket already docked to Mir.

The second Progress--heavily loaded with fuel for the deorbiting missions--will dock January 22. In the event of docking problems, Russia is prepared to send up an emergency cosmonaut crew to complete the job.

Mir's attitude control system will be disabled. Then, on March 4 and 5, the Progress will fire its engines and brake the station's orbital velocity. On March 6, the Progress will deliver the killer blow, firing to decrease Mir's velocity to the point where it will drop out of orbit. What's left of the space station after it passes through Earth's atmosphere will plunge into the Pacific later that day. It's expected that the scuttling of Mir will generate a shower of debris that could reach Earth's surface.

Over the years, Mir has become a fixture in orbit and the focal point of pride for the Russian space program. The initial module of the space station was launched February 20, 1986. Recently, the Russian government confirmed its intention to continue its co-operation with the US, Canada, ESA, and Japan in the develop-

ment of the International Space Station.--Roy Neal, K6DUE, and AMSAT News Service, contributed information for this report.

**Since this bulletin was released there have been two further slippages for this date. At the time of OXTALES going to press, the date had slipped to mid-March, with the splash-down point being indicated as several hundred kilometres south of South Island NZ.*

THE OVERLAND TELEGRAPH LINE

The \$240000 contract to build a single wire telegraph line, 3200 kilometres long, north and south across Australia was signed in June 1870. It was stipulated that the line had to be ready for operation by January 1 1872. The task involved penetrating into mercilessly cruel country of which very little was known beyond Lake Eyre. Because of all kinds of troubles the job was not finished until August 22 1872. A ship load of supplies ran aground on a reef; many animals became sick and the dreaded wet-season further complicated the situation. The final capital cost was \$479175, almost double the contract price. Before construction began men and materials had to be obtained and leaders appointed and working parties organised. Transport, mainly horses and bullocks had to be provided and poles, 36000 of them, had to be cut and erected. Some of them hauled many kilometres to places where wood was scarce.

To provision the working parties, herds of beef cattle and sheep had to be taken on the hoof over hundreds of kilometres of gibbers, sandhills and spinifex. The animals were slaughtered and eaten as required as there was no refrigeration then. A base for 2000 sheep was established on the Finke.

The sweat of many men went into the building of the OT line, engineers, surveyors explorers, adventurers and labourers but only six persons died on the job. But the name that history knows is Charles Todd, who was Postmaster General Superintendent of Telegraphs and Government Astronomer in South Australia. He is remembered as the creator of the Overland Telegraph Line and it still is referred to in the Centre as "Todd's Line".

Charles Todd did not put up any poles or survey the route nor was he at Frews Ponds when the final join was made in the afternoon of

August 22 1872. But the planning was his and the drive that carried it through was his because he had a mind that could grasp the magnitude of the 3200 kilometre project and divide it into little pieces, such as the type of wood to be selected for poles; size of poles; job organisation for wiring; building specifications for the 11 repeater stations along the line; sinking of wells; quality of tools; discipline; morale; care of animals and food rationing details per man per day. When mishaps in the north looked like wrecking the project, Todd went north to take charge.

When the job was finished Todd with a small

party set out on the 3200 kilometre long lonely journey. He inspected the construction and called on the Telegraph Operators and line maintenance men at the widely separated telegraph stations. The journey took 4-months. He commended them for their energetic drive in the face of difficulties not easily realised. In the 1870s there were no roads, no 4-wheel-drive, and no 2-way radio. Nor were there any ready sunk bores for water. But there was the same merciless heat, burning gibbers, mulga scrub and the same storms to whip up the fine penetrating sand into a fiery red fog. The men of the OTL had little knowledge about this country before they set out on the gigantic task. It was based on reports that John McDouall Stuart had discovered 8-years earlier that showed that it was possible to cross the continent south to north. Stuart, half blind and always searching for water and battling the scrub had not made a thorough survey and his reports were little more than guidelines for the OT parties. Much of the country today is still untamed.

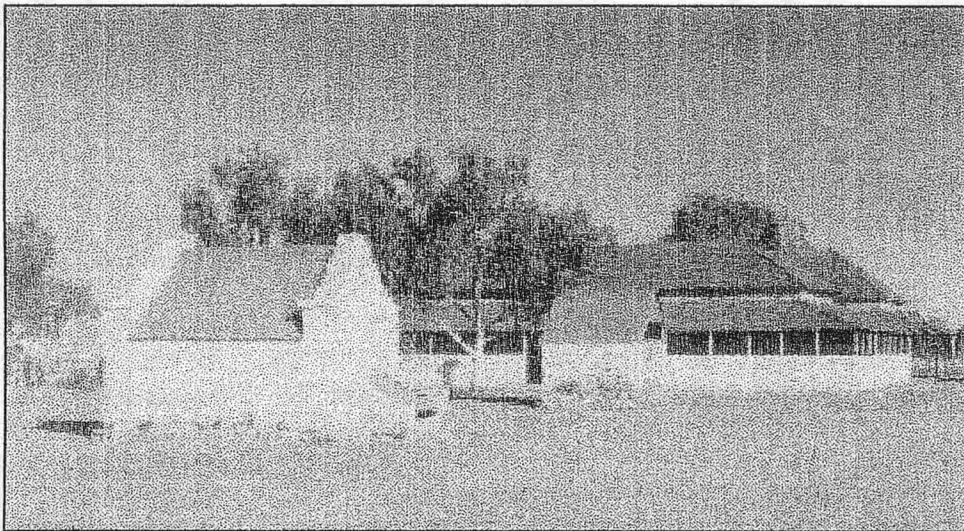
The romantic side of the story is left until last.. Before Charles left England in 1855 to take up his telegraph appointment in Australia, he got married. He then was 29-years old and his bride was a 17-year-old-girl from Cambridge, named Alice Gillam Bell. And she was a very enterprising young lady. According to letters in the archives Charles always finished his letters to Alice with the stilted words, "I am , Your affectionate Husband, Charles Todd."

Perhaps more than anything else his letters to Dearest Alice reveal Todd the man. And dear-

est Alice - her name lives on, thanks to party leader William Mills, who named a pool of water in the heart of Australia the Alice Spring. A township grew there and it is now the hospitable tourist town Alice Springs. Such was the destiny of little Alice Bell when she said "I will marry you Mr Todd."

And guess who the Todd River was named after.?

- VK2OA - Allan.



**Tennant Creek Station on the O.T.L.
(Snapshot taken 1997)**

**Exciting news from the
Amateur Radio Lighthouse Society**

(ARLHS)

- (1) We have tripled our membership in only 6 months.
- (2) We have reduced the dues and membership fees for DX stations
- (3) We are now sponsoring a "Lighthouse Spring Lites" QSO Party for April 13 thru April 23. This is to become an annual event like our tremendously successful "Lighthouse Christmas Lights" and the "International Lighthouse/Lightship Weekend" in August.

All the details, and more, can be found on the Society's web page at <http://arlhs.com>

73
Jim, K2JXW (President)

Letter to Oxtales Editor

Dear Trevor,

Sue and I will be setting sail to Port Stephens soon after the meeting of 3 March. We would like to thank the members of the Oxley Amateur Radio Club for a great reception and a special thank you for those members that have helped us out with information, lifts and chats etc.

We will look forward to hearing from you and possibly meeting up again after Easter when we return North from Lake Macquarie. Hopefully by then we will have serviced the bottom of the boat and got a few more of the defects list ruled off.

Something that did not come out at the meeting in February was the ability to send and receive email using Amateur Pactor and Packet stations. Maybe it has got relatively cheap for everyone to get their own email now! However if there is a packeteer out there who wants to do it here are some simple instructions.

1. Log onto your local Packet BBS, or connect to a Pactor Mailbox (MBO) such as vk2dw or Vk5bar

2. Issue the command:

Sp nexus@vk7pu.#bur.tas.aus.oc

3. At the subject prompt put in the email address you want to send the message to:
vk2ezw@amsat.org

4. Enter the subject of your message as the first line of the message text now requested:
Ted where are you?

5. Enter the message text:

Hi, long time no here, please let me know your QTH

73 de Fred.

6. If you want a return from you email addressee then you may have to write a note to Phil, System operator, i.e. *vk7pu@vk7pu.#bur.tas.aus.oc* and ask him to relay any messages for you to your home packet BBS. e.g. my hierarchical email address is as follows:

*vk2ezq*vk2dw.nsw.aus.oc@winlink.org*
(note the * before vk2dw where the packet address has been modified)

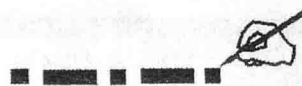
This shows that a packet message sent to me using *vk2ezq@vk2dq.nsw.aus.oc* will arrive in the same place as an internet email message sent to the hierarchical address.

Ted and Sue would welcome a message from you and please let us know if you would like to receive our email newsletter which is sent out occasionally when we are sailing overseas.

We would also welcome some contacts on the HF radio. Please contact us via packet/email or call into one of the nets below with a message or contact:
2030z, 7087lsb, Comedy Net, Daily,
2100z, 14315usb, Tony's net, zllate,
Daily 0900NSW, 7109lsb, Les vk2clb,
Dave vk2ij, Keith vk2axn, Norman vk4hh, Geoff vk2ub, Roger vk2fge, Mon-Fri. Sat 10120/14120 vk5bgy.
All the best and 73 from Ted and Sue.

STOP PRESS::::: New Website URL
Jason (VK2FT) advises that the
O.R.A.R.C.Inc new Website address is
<http://www.geocities.com/orarc2002>

Club Nets
Sundays
8.30am on VK2RPM
Wednesdays
7.00pm on VK2RCN



OXLEY REGION AMATEUR RADIO CLUB Inc.
MEMBERSHIP REGISTER.
as at 22nd February, 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 (JOSIE)	BRODIE	VK2EJK	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.0592
4	F	ROY W (JUNE)	BURGES	VK2YOR	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.9349
5	F	BRUCE	CLARK	VK2MAZ	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.5245
6	F	LARRY (SHIRLEY)	CONNER	VK2IPO	WAUCHOPE	02 6585.3436
7	F	KEVIN (JUNE)	COULTER	VK2MAM	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.8325
8	F	IAN	DALRYMPLE	VK2XU	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6584.9922
9	F	TRACY (CINDY)	DIGNUM	VK2GTM	HERONS CREEK	02 6585.7061
10	F	CHARLES (PAT)	EDMONDSON	VK2FSH	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6584.0495
11	D	STAN (BETTY)	ELLIS	VK2DDL	TUNCURRY	02 6554.7996
12	F	BADEN (VALERY)	GLEESON	VK2MOQ	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.2018
13	F	LEWIS (PAMELA)	GREEN	VK2AG	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6584.9162
14	F	RICHARD J	HALL	VK2BXO	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.6588
15	L	KEITH	HANLON	-	PORT MACQUARIE	-
16	F	DAVID (ISOBEL)	HARDING	VK2AIF	WAUCHOPE	02 6586.4980
17	D	BARRY (JOAN)	HARWOOD	VK2BAZ	GUNNEDAH	-
18	L	PETER	HILL	VK2BZA	LAKE CATHIE	02 6585.5349
19	F	SNOW	HODDER	VK2DV	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.7095
20	F	WILL (CAROL)	JAMIESON	VK2XXU	DUNBOGAN	02 6559.8622
21	F	DON	JONES	-	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.5084
22	F	JOHN (THEA)	JONES	VK2JI	LAKE CATHIE	02 6585.4522
23	F	GARRY (LINDA)	LAWER	VK2TRK	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.0597
24	L	LARRY	LINDSAY	VK2CLL	WAUCHOPE	02 6587.1155
25	L	HENRY	LUNDELL	VK2ZHE	PORT MACQUARIE	-
26	F	KEITH (GWEN)	LUTTON	VK2KDL	TELEGRAPH POINT	02 6585.0321
27	F	ALLAN (DAWN)	MADIGAN	VK2OA	WAUCHOPE	02 6585.2043
28	F	JASON	MARIS	VK2FT	TELEGRAPH POINT	02 6585.0426
29	F	CRAIG	MARTIN	VK2HBM	WAUCHOPE	02 6585.3452
30	F	JOHN (KARIN)	MCDONAGH	VK2VY	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.0020
31	F	TERRY	MEEHAN	VK2KL	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6584.2997
32	L	ARTHUR (WENDY)	MONCK	VK2ATM	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.1311
33	F	LAURIE (ROBIN)	NEWHAM	VK2ELN	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.5387
34	F	ALAN	NUTT	VK2GD	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.3557
35	F	DAVID A (DEE)	PILLEY	VK2AYD	KING CREEK	02 6585.2647
36	F	BILL	ROTH	VK2CWR	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6581.1776
37	F	NEIL (VERENA)	SANDFORD	VK2EI	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.5830
38	F	BILL (RUTH)	SINCLAIR	VK2ZCV	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.9302
39	F	DAVID (ROMA)	SMITH	VK2DAL	WAUCHOPE	02 6585.1004
40	F	DAVID (AILEEN)	TARRANT	VK2TBC	SARATOGA	02 4369.8738
41	F	TREVOR (PHYLLIS)	THATCHER	VK2TT	WAUCHOPE	02 6585.2278
42	D	GRAEME (JOYCE)	VIRTUE	VK2GJ	BRUNSWICK HEADS	02 6685.1336
43	F	BRUCE (GWEN)	WALKER	VK2HOT	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.8360
44	F	JIM	WEBSTER	VK2BZD	PORT MACQUARIE	-

F = Full Member

D = Distant Member

L = Life Member