



OXTALES

Newsletter of the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club Inc.

PO Box 712 Port Macquarie 2444

[<http://portmacquarie.yourguide.com.au/viewclub.asp?clubid=1044&pageid=2012>]

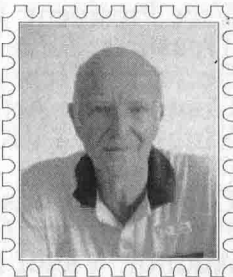
September 2004

Compiled by VK2TT

PRESIDENT: Alan Nutt VK2GD 6582.3557
 VICE PRES: Bill Brooke VK2ZCW 6581.0547
 TREASURER: John Bailey VK2KHB 6582.2192
 SECRETARY: Henry Lundell VK2ZHE 6582.0534

President's Report

Lighthouses come and go and so another Lighthouse Day gets tucked under our belt. The day was brilliant weather-wise and, despite messing up on the start time, the intrepid few had VK2BOR up and running within 45 minutes of leaving the Club room. Fifty five contacts were made during the day and some good DX turned up late in the afternoon. There appeared to be some journalistic licence in the report of the day's events appearing in our local paper, together with a little confusion trying to identify someone in a photo from a rear view description over the phone! Never mind Bob, it was a lot of fun and the Club's name was once again before the public. Thanks again to all who took part.



Our hardworking Secretary has succumbed to the inevitable result of some heavy lifting and required a brief stint in hospital to repair the damage. We wish you well and a speedy recovery, Henry. You might just need some further assistance to get those floor panels down without undoing the repair job!

After a lengthy period of seemingly little interest, there is some renewed activity on the education front with enquiries from several sources about a new class for intending licensees. Our Education Officer, Larry, would welcome further enquiries as course planning gets under way.

There is still no response from Country Energy about our enquiry regarding Power Line Communication tests and our offer to help monitor possible interference. We are not sure whether their silence means some sort of clandestine activity is taking place and they want to keep it under wraps or our letters are not con-

sidered worthy of a reply. Perhaps they've just plain lost them. Who knows?

No further news at this point on the proposed shift of the SES from Gordon Street. Hopefully, I will have something to report to the September meeting regarding the Fire Brigade premises in Hay Street and further follow-up with Hastings Council as we press our case.

Arrangements to dispose of equipment from deceased estates can be a very time consuming activity as we have found in recent years. As a Club, we are only too pleased to help the families of departed members in what is undoubtedly a very difficult time but, as I gaze around my precious "junk", I wonder whether a little forethought on my part might not relieve the Club of an added work load in years to come. What about a better filing system, coupled with a gradual disposal process as a starting point? I want to make sure that all the operations and service manuals for my equipment are properly labelled and in one place so that they can be quickly and easily matched up with their related equipment. I can begin disposing of gear that I know realistically I'm never going to get round to using, repairing or modifying now or later. A small start but something we might all give some thought to.

- Alan Nutt VK2GD
 El Presidenté

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Down The Coax

Friday Night Get-togethers
Fri. September 10th and 24th
7.00pm

October Monthly Meeting
Sat. Oct.
2.00pm

Friday Night Get-togethers
October 8th and 22nd

Beechwood Billy Cart Classic
Sunday 10th October

JOTA Event
October 16/17th October

2004 Xmas Barbie
At QTH of VK2KDL
Date to be advised

Net Controllers Roster

Sundays

Wednesdays

		September	
VK2FSH	Sep-05	VK2GD	Sep-01
VK2OA	Sep-12	VK2AYD	Sep-08
VK2AIF	Sep-19	VK2EI	Sep-15
VK2BZD	Sep-26	VK2HOT	Sep-22
		VK2ZHE	Sep-29
		October	
VK2EJK	Oct-03		
VK2TT	Oct-10	VK2GD	Oct-06
VK2FSH	Oct-17	VK2ZCM	Oct-13
VK2OA	Oct-24	VK2HOT	Oct-20
VK2AIF	Oct-31	VK2ATM	Oct-27
		November	
VK2BZD	Nov-07	VK2ZHE	Nov-03
VK2TT	Nov-14	VK2AYD	Nov-10
VK2FSH	Nov-21	VK2EI	Nov-17
VK22OA	Nov-28	VK2HOT	Nov-24
		December	
VK2AIF	Dec-05	VK2ZHE	Dec-01
VK2BZD	Dec-12	VK2GD	Dec-08
VK2TT	Dec-19	VK2ZCM	Dec-15
VK2FSH	Dec-26	VK2EI	Dec-22
		VK2ATM	Dec-29
		January 2005	
VK2OA	Jan-02	VK2GD	Jan-05
VK2AIF	Jan-09	VK2AYD	Jan-12
VK2BZD	Jan-16	VK2HOT	Jan-19
VK2TT	Jan-23	VK2ZHE	Jan-26
VK2FSH	Jan-30		
		February 2005	
VK2OA	Feb-06	VK2ZCM	Feb-02
VK2AIF	Feb-13	VK2GD	Feb-09
VK2BZD	Feb-20	VK2EI	Feb-16
VK2TT	Feb-27	VK2ATM	Feb-23

Annual General Meeting— 2004

Saturday, 7th August, saw a good roll-up of 21 members (both financial ones, and un-financial ones) for the 2004 AGM.

Some of them tootled off home forgetting to pass on to the Treasurer the necessary currency to update their status! Hope they don't get too much of a shock when they read this! Hi.

The customary election of officers for the new financial year was a very slick process. On a motion from VK2ATM (Arthur) the entire band of office bearers who gallantly served for the 2003-2004 year, were again nominated to to serve a further year. There was a seconder, too, and none of the nominees opted to decline their nominations. All were re-elected, unopposed. Obviously a very satisfactory crew?

So for those of us who are not too sure who holds which position, we have the following:-

Office Bearers.

President: Alan Nutt (VK2GD)
Vice President: Bill Brooke (VK2ZCW)
Treasurer: John Bailey (VK2KHB)
Secretary: Henry Lundell (VK2ZHE)
Committee: Arthur Monck (VK2ATM), Bill Sinclair (VK2ZCV), Bruce Walker (VK2HOT)

Other positions:

Public Officer: David Pilley (VK2AYD)
Auditor: Victor Hume
Rptr. Chairman: Bill Brooke (VK2ZCW)
Oxtales Editor: Trevor Thatcher (VK2TT)
Publicity Officer: Bill Brooke (VK2ZCW)
Education Officer: Larry Lindsay (VK2CLL)
Eqpt. Officer: Will Jamieson (VK2XXU)
Social Director: Charles Edmondson (VK2FSH)
WIA Liaison Delegate: David Pilley (VK2AYD)

The notices of motion relating to ratification of the committee's decision to create a position of Welfare Officer, and a position of Station manager VK2BOR were carried.

The notice of motion to create a category of "Family Membership" was not carried, but general agreement was reached that such membership could be considered in the future should circumstances arise to warrant such consideration.

A motion to confer Honorary Membership on Wendy Monck was moved and carried unanimously, in recognition of the valuable participation and consistent long-term support that Wendy has provided for the club over its three decades of existence.

Wendy Monck Honorary Member

At the August AGM, the committee's recommendation that Wendy Monck have Honorary

Membership conferred upon her, was ratified unanimously.

Members are well aware of Wendy's sustained long-term support of the ORARC and all recognise that Honorary membership for this tireless supporter is well deserved.

In these days of political correctness it is difficult to introduce a person to a group without there being some possible connotation of gender-bias. To introduce Wendy as "the XYL of Arthur (VK2ATM)" or "Arthur (VK2ATM) is the OM of Wendy" without fear of gender-bias, has me stymied, so let's settle for this:-

Wendy is that well known tireless supporter, who, throughout the 32 years of ORARC's existence has been directly involved in the club's activities, particularly our Annual Field Day event—our fund raiser.

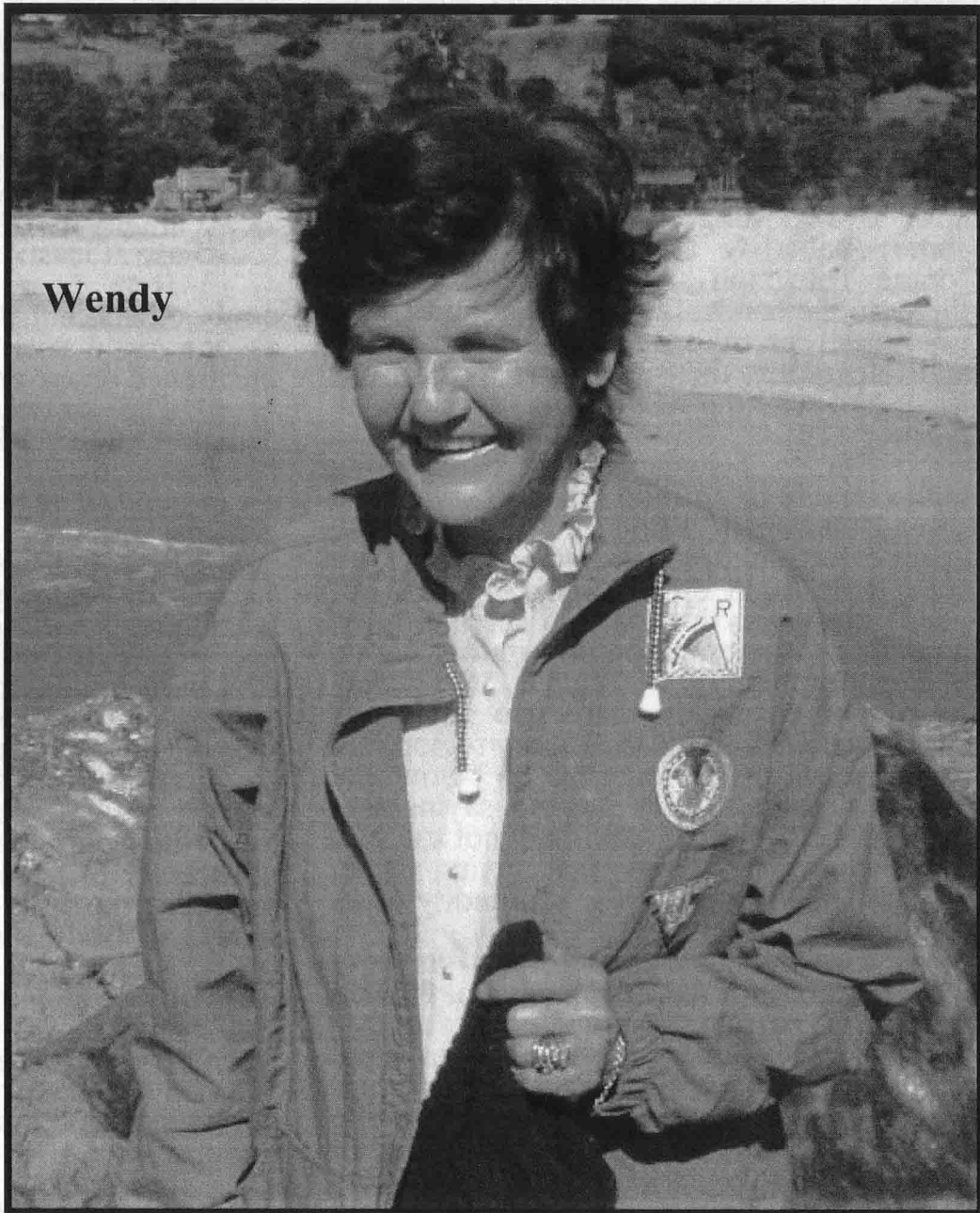
In the days before the OM's shed their cloak of Male Chauvinism and became involved in the Field Day kitchen, volunteer XYL's were largely responsible for feeding the multitudes. Wendy was a great leader in this activity. She willingly provided her skills in organising the catering, working in the kitchen, and other logistical support functions; she was a tower of strength to the other participating XYL's.

When Male Chauvinism was expunged from the club (quite some years back now!), the XYL's were gradually relieved of the catering chores, and this vital "feeding function" is now totally in the hands of the OM's. However, Wendy has continued her support for the event in other ways, by organising great varieties of raf-

fle prizes, Lucky Door prizes, grab-bags and handouts, all at no cost to the club.

These helpful contributions not only apply to field days, but also to other events such as raffles at our monthly meetings, and handouts at the JOTA functions where ORARC is represented.

Thank you Wendy for accepting our token of recognition, Honorary Membership!



Analysing Telegraphy — For Fun

How often does one hear comments like "Old Fred has a beautiful fist!" or "Young Mary has a long way to go!" (all in relation to the quality of their telegraphy expertise,, of course) ?

I have heard such comments very often, and have been regularly guilty of making similar comments myself, but... such comments are purely subjective and

are usually said with the unspoken, but implied phrase "in my opinion" prefacing the comment. I would be surprised if most aficionados of the gentleman's mode, Morse Telegraphy, (not CW, because that is a misnomer, despite its almost universal use) have not at some time voiced, or felt like voicing such statements.

Anyway, I feel most readers will catch my drift as a result of their experiences in the spectral wilderness where the telegraphy buffs roam at will.

If it can be agreed that Morse Telegraphy is very much like handwriting, i.e. some of us are particularly good at it, and some of us are really bad at it (but still persist!), then I would like to embark on a discussion regarding my attempts to make some qualitative analyses of the various Morse Telegraph signals that abound out there on the bands. If you cannot agree with my initial premise regarding handwriting and telegraphy, then by all means skip this item, and read the rest of this newsletter in peace.

Morse Telegraphy and handwriting both come in an infinite range of styles that spread between something approaching near perfection, down through mediocre but acceptable, right on through (and well beyond) the lower threshold of intelligibility, passing as it goes, through a murky region of misty ambiguity. Fortunately, the majority of participants in these two noble arts are placed well above the murky region, but the presence of the few who go below that region simply justifies the old saying that "It takes all types....." and I am not too sure from whom, or where, that saying came, nor am I really sure of the profundity of its meaning.

However, all is not lost for those who venture into the murky region. Human ingenuity, perseverance and endurance being what they are, have resulted in there being many amongst us who have acquired, developed, or snatched from the jaws of defeat, the ability to comprehend the strange squiggles of the pen, or the random stuttering output of a telegraph key, manipulated by a seemingly disembodied hand.

The ability to achieve this level of skill to read the murky stuff, comes purely from custom and practice (experience? conditioning?). As a consequence, certain people have no great problem in comprehending handwriting, or telegraphy, that is generated by a person who "dwelleth within the murky region" or beyond... provided that there has been an adequate period of previous "conditioning".

Whilst there are, no doubt, ways and means of measuring the quality of hand-

writing, it would be far too complex for the likes of yours truly to attempt such an analysis.

There is, however, for telegraphy, a reasonably satisfactory analysis method available to anybody with a PC and bit of proprietary software. These tools will enable one to simply measure the various parameters that make up any series of Morse Telegraph symbols. One can analyse any amount of symbols, identify and measure the minute departures from the standard symbol formation, in terms of percentage error in the speed, and element timing. In fact, with patience, a profile of an individual's "fist" could be produced that might help unfamiliar listeners in identifying that individual. (Not as accurately as DNA, perhaps, but of some social use at least.)

Here is *a* method... there are no doubt others, but this one is about as simple as one could wish for, given that the tools mentioned above are available.

The software that I have used is called "COOL EDIT 2000". It was certainly not designed with Morse Telegraphy analysis in mind. It is really a very powerful programme designed to enable a user to create, manipulate, edit, analyse, and process audio signals by employing the various digital techniques associated with sound audio engineering. With Cool Edit, (hereinafter called CE) used in conjunction with the PC sound system, one can convert analogue signals to files in the various formats that abound today in the world of "canned audio". Consequently, it lends itself to recording directly from the audio output of an ordinary HF transceiver to produce a wave file (.wav in the parlance of the sound buffs) that can be stored, analysed, played back, whatever.

Amongst its many attributes, CE provides the user with the ability to display a very accurate graphical representation of the wave form of any recorded sound, and a facility to accurately measure (in terms of time) the period between events in any given waveform.

In relation to accuracy, the purists may wish to consider the accuracy of the individual PC's CPU clock, but as we are dealing with human timing functions in telegraphy, we would be very "picky" if we demanded greater accuracy than +/- 1 millisecond. The sampling rate for commercial audio discs is 44.1KHz (22.6 uS intervals) and CE is good enough to show the sampling intervals in great detail at this rate, and beyond. Hence, it is only when getting down to these sorts of minute periods of time that CPU's clock accuracy would become significant if we were (and we 'aint!) interested in accurate absolute period measurement.

So, recently, armed with my trusty PC, and CE all stoked up, I first attacked our very own repeater, VK2RCN and digitally recorded its periodical MCW identification burst.

The graphic of the waveform at Fig 1 shows the result.

To the Morse-trained ear/brain, (and in this graphic, the eye) the symbols are perfectly readable, without any ambiguity, and they

The spacing period between words is 7-units.

Now, assuming that a sending operator observes these timing elements *precisely*, one can calculate, quite accurately, the speed in Words Per Minute (WPM) that he/she is sending *if* one has the wherewithal to measure just one or more of the periods. Furthermore, the errors in *relative timing terms* can be identified with adequate practical precision, thus enabling a reliable statement to be

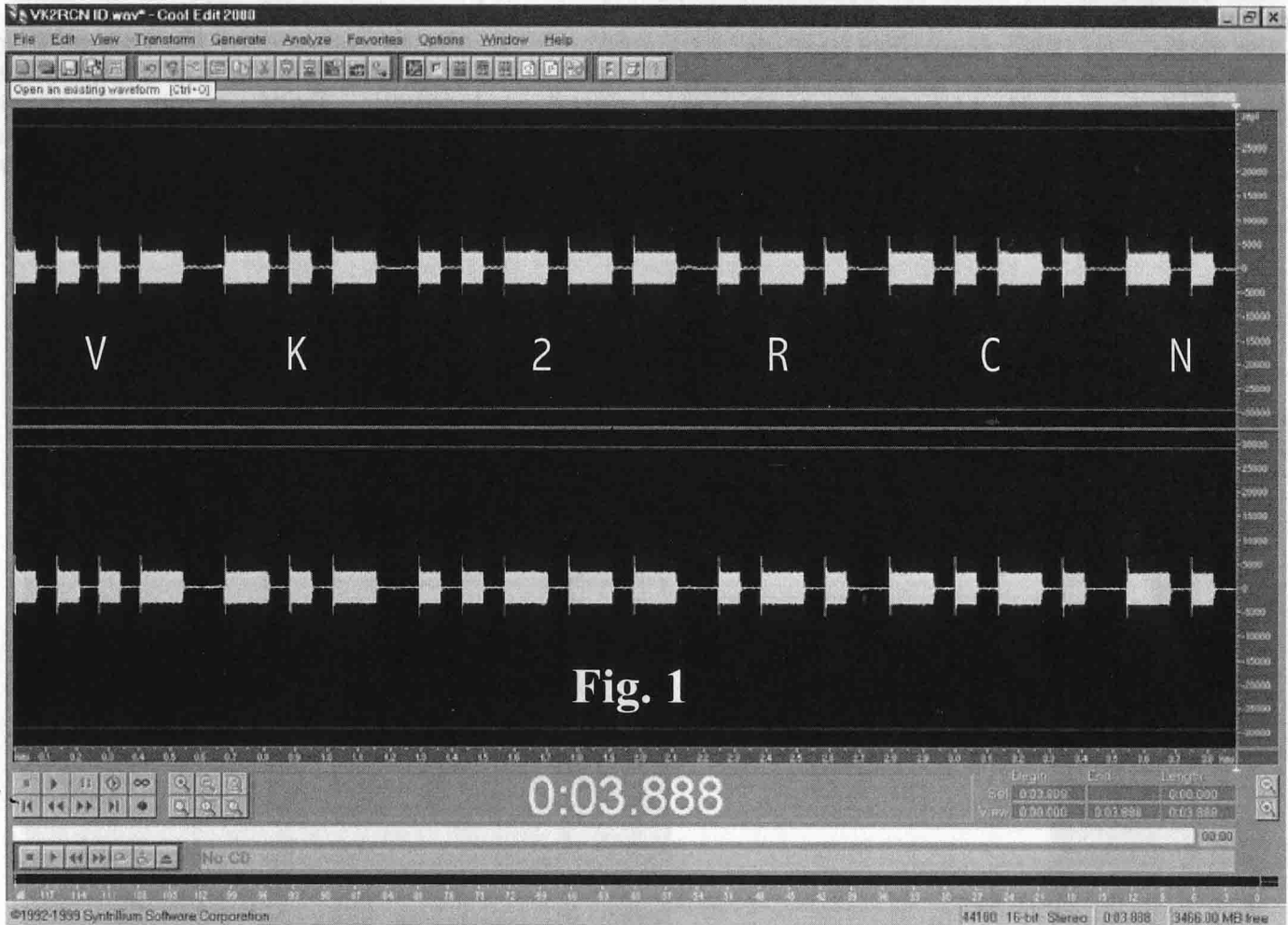


Fig. 1

satisfy all the practical requirements for the purpose they serve. But to the Morse-trained ear/brain, the sample has a characteristic that is slightly shaky/jerky, reminiscent of a competent operator who has passed his prime, but is still totally commercial. The reasons for this characteristic can be revealed by a quick analysis with CE, shown a little later.

I should say here that my analysis of any Morse Telegraph symbols are based upon the international standards that are set out in the ARRL handbook. I believe these standards to be correct. Briefly interpreted the standard says:

The marking period of the DOT element is taken as 1-unit.

The marking period of a DASH is 3-units.

The spacing period between elements of a given symbol is 1-unit.

The spacing period between symbols is 3-units.

made as to the quality of a given operator's sending, or "fist" (as it is quite commonly dubbed amongst the telegraphic aficionados.)

The use of CE in any reasonable PC, enables all of the foregoing to be measured by simply recording a sample passage from a Morse Code transmission and then, at leisure, zooming in on the waveform. The cursor can be used to mark out the various elements, and the time periods, in milliseconds read directly off the display timer. If the analyst is fussy, then further zooming can be invoked and periods of +/- 5uS can be interpolated, but +/- 1 mS is good enough for me. Nobody's sending is good enough to warrant any finer time intervals to be measured. The length of a standard dot marking period at 30WPM is of 40mS duration. A 1mS error represents only 2.5%, which, from a practical standpoint, is totally insignificant to a trained human ear/brain that has to do the decoding.

Let us now take a closer look at what

VK2RCN does when it sends its Morse ID.

The graphic (now Zoomed to give some precision) at Fig. 2 shows selected elements as received.

The DOT marking period measures 68mS

The DASH marking period measures 138mS

The element spacing period measures 67mS

The character spacing period (highlighted on the graphic) measures 135mS

Taking the 68mS DOT marking period of this sample as our basis for comparison, we can now calculate any timing error that exists in the remaining three measured periods... i.e. If one now relates these last 3 periods to the figure that they *really should be* to meet the standard periods, we find that the measured dash period error is 32% short; the measured element spacing period error is 1.5% short; the measured character spacing period error is

34% short. Thus we “hear” this sample as a “slightly shaky/jerky” bit of sending, yet perfectly readable despite the significant percentage of “clipping” of the dashes and the character spacing period. So, the trained human ear/brain decoder is quite tolerant of timing errors... up to a point!! The point to which I refer here is that point where a receiving operator has to begin relying on “telepathy” as a figurative crutch, to assist his/her challenged skills in comprehending the keying by somebody with a “rough old fist”!

In the next issue of **Oxtales**, I shall show some graphics of actual samples gathered selectively from some anonymous “donors” that I have encountered whilst wandering in the spectral wilderness. But, as I said at the opening, it is “for fun”.

— Trevor (VK2TT)

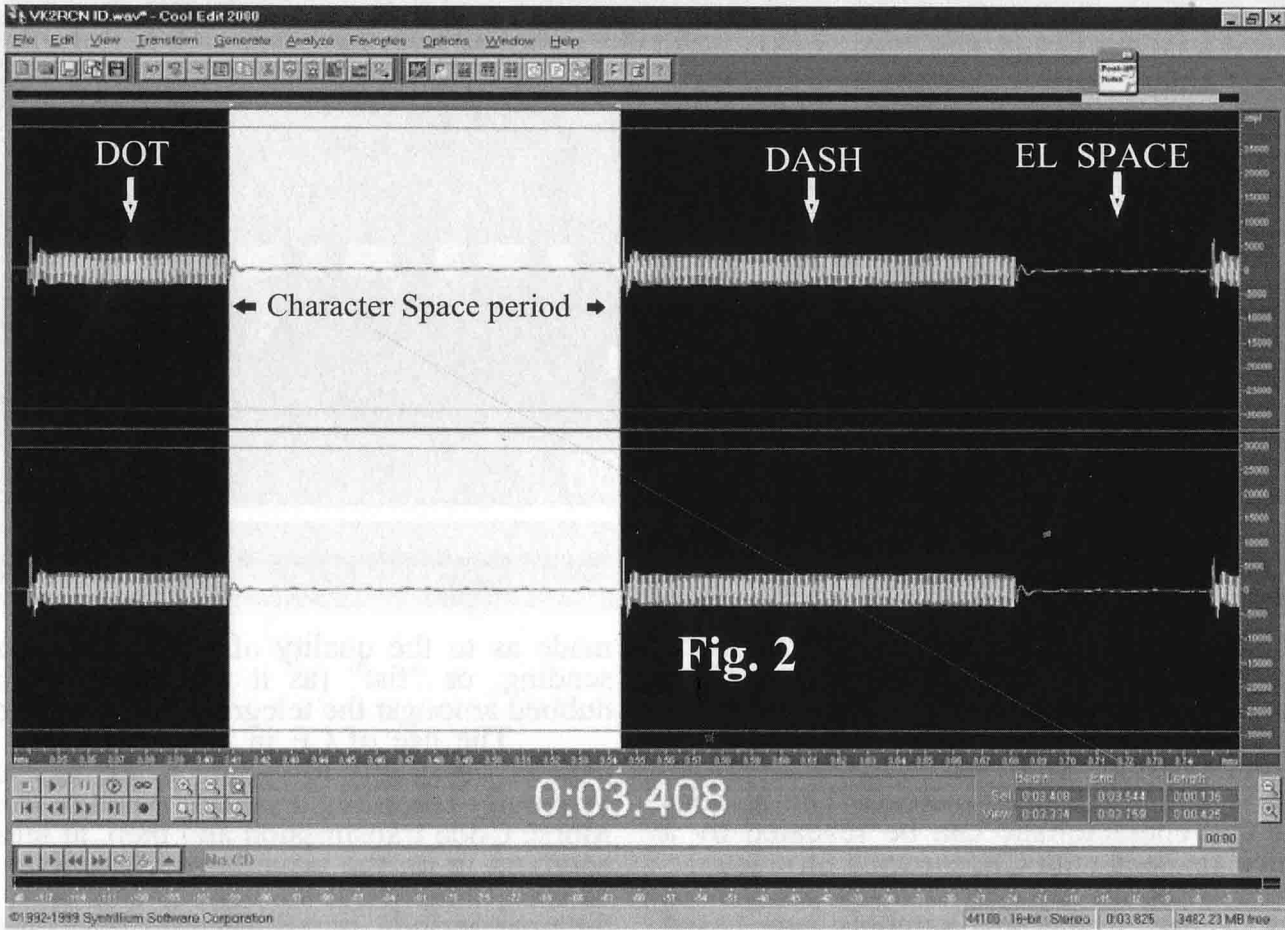


Fig. 2

Life Membership for John (VK2JB)

Within a matter of days, John Baylis will reach the magic age of 85 which qualifies him Life Membership of the ORARC. Arrangements are in hand to confer that honour on John, and we are hoping to present

in the next issue of OXTALES an item to mark the occasion, by featuring some of John's experience and achievements in the world of Amateur Radio and elsewhere. Advance congratulations John.

Raffles

After the success of the "From Port Macquarie to Queensland Outback & Back" raffle at the August meeting, our resident raffle organiser, Wendy Monck, has created a fun raffle for the November meeting and a Christmas Raffle to be drawn at our Christmas Party in December. *(The August raffle was won by Allan (VK2OA), who had not long returned from a "Christmas In July" function.... When he won Wendy's raffle, he telephone her to say thanks but added that he thought the prize was a "Christmas In August" present... Ed.)*

The November raffle takes place during the Spring Racing season so it is logical that it should have an equine flavour with our very own Oxtales Handicap.

The December meeting will be held at the Christmas Party. There will be a giant Christmas Raffle to be drawn at the Christmas party. There will be a dozen Christmas baskets to be won. In keeping with the Christmas spirit, everyone will win a prize. Your donation of an item for the Christmas food baskets would be appreciated... packaged fruit, nuts, Christmas fare, etc., no later than our November monthly meeting, please.

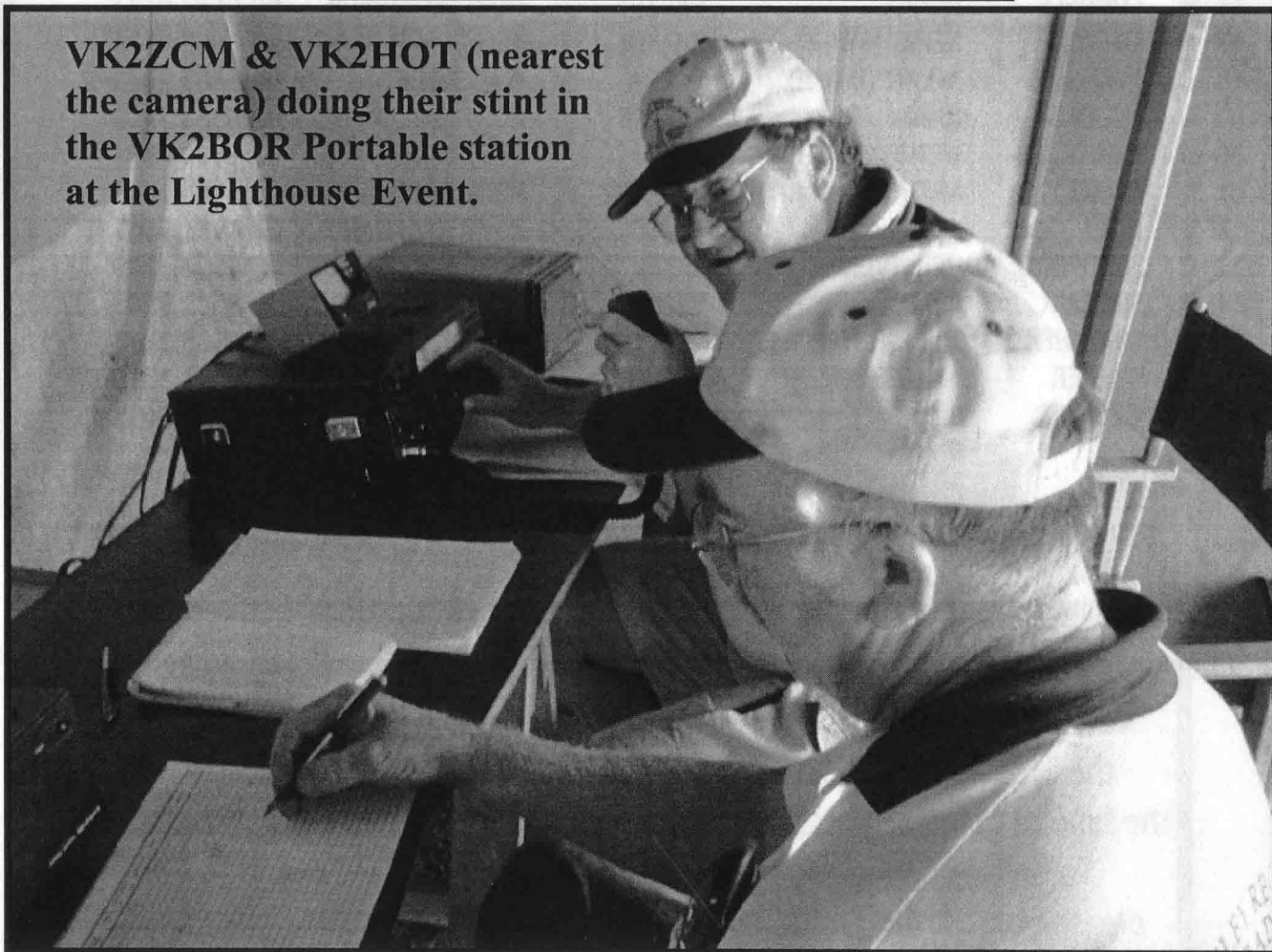
Oxtales Handicap

The Inaugural Amateurish Ham Event
This race will be run at the Club Meeting 6th Nov, 2004
Enter your horse early. Only \$2 each
There is a Trophy for every horse so you can't lose!

Giant Christmas Raffle

To be drawn at the Christmas Party
Prizes include no less than a dozen Christmas baskets
In keeping with the Christmas spirit everyone will win a prize!
Tickets will be available at the Christmas Party, and at the meetings prior to the party.

VK2ZCM & VK2HOT (nearest the camera) doing their stint in the VK2BOR Portable station at the Lighthouse Event.





OXLEY REGION AMATEUR RADIO CLUB Inc. MEMBERSHIP REGISTER.

(as at 31st August, 2004)

Cat.	Surname	Given name (Spouse)	CALL SIGN	TOWN/CITY	TPH. NO.	
1	O	BAILEY	JOHN (FLORENCE)	VK2KHB	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.2192
2	O	BAYLIS	JOHN (MARY)	VK2JB	LAKE CATHIE	02 6585.5703
3	D	BELL	ALAN	VK2BEL	COOLONGLOOK	02 6554.1689
4	L	BLYTH	BOB	VK2XIQ	PORT MACQUARIE	-
5	O	BRODIE	BOB	VK2EJK	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.0592
6	O	BROOKE	BILL (AILSAS)	VK2ZCW	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6581.0547
7	O	BURGES	ROY W (JUNE)	VK2YOR	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.9349
8	O	EDMONDSON	CHARLES (PAT)	VK2FSH	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6584.0495
9	D	ELLIS	STAN (BETTY)	VK2DDL	TUNCURRY	02 6554.7996
10	A	GILSON	BARRY	-	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.8814
11	O	GLEESON	BADEN (VALERY)	VK2MOQ	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.2018
12	L	HANLON	KEITH	-	PORT MACQUARIE	-
13	O	HARDING	DAVID (ISABELLA)	VK2AIF	WAUCHOPE	02 6586.4980
14	O	JAMIESON	WILL (CAROL)	VK2XXU	DUNBOGAN	02 6559.8622
15	L	LINDSAY	LARRY	VK2CLL	WAUCHOPE	02 6587.1155
16	L	LUNDELL	HENRY	VK2ZHE	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.0534
17	O	LUTTON	KEITH (GWEN)	VK2KDL	TELEGRAPH POINT	02 6585.0321
18	O	MADIGAN	ALLAN (DAWN)	VK2OA	WAUCHOPE	02 6585.2043
19	O	MCLEAN	JOHN	VK2KCE	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.7400
20	H	MONCK	WENDY (ARTHUR)	-	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.1311
21	L	MONCK	ARTHUR (WENDY)	VK2ATM	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.1311
22	O	NUTT	ALLAN	VK2GD	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.3557
23	O	SANDFORD	NEIL (VERENA)	VK2EI	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.5830
24	O	SINCLAIR	BILL	VK2ZCV	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.9302
25	O	THATCHER	TREVOR (PHYLLIS)	VK2TT	WAUCHOPE	02 6585.2278
26	O	WALKER	BRUCE (GWEN)	VK2HOT	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.8360
27	O	WEBSTER	JIM	VK2BZD	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.4037

A=Associate Member O=Ordinary Member D=Distant Member L=Life Member H=Honorary Member

Note: If your name does not appear on the above list, it means that the Treasurer had not received your 2004-2005 subscription at the time of going to press. As a consequence, you would be unfinancial.

To ensure continuing membership and future **OXTALES**, please contact the Treasurer. The club needs your valuable support.