



OXTALES

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

October 1997

Compiled by VK2TT

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President's Report

Well the summer is upon us so conditions hopefully will start to improve on all bands. It's also the start of the ducting season for other bands.

The World Amateur Radio Day BBQ which was cancelled due to the rain has been rescheduled as a Christmas party (see down the coax). I was surprised that very little activity in the way of contests etc., did not take place on the day.

The family and I attended the Billy Cart Derby and Fun Run at Beechwood which was an experience. VK2TT-Trevor put me in the HOT seat so to speak, as navigator in the commentary vehicle, so I had a fast trip down the mountain to the finish line. More on the event from TT.

JOTA has been and gone for another year. (See separate report by the co-

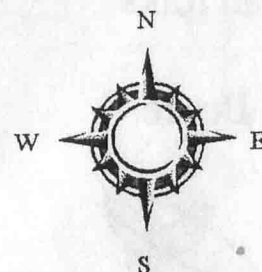
ordinator VK2VY-John). My participation was limited due to the Lions Club Convention being on the same weekend.

It seems that the club members are a well travelled lot. It always seems that somebody is away overseas or travelling around Australia. No sooner was TT home, that myself and the family went OS. Then AYD and DAL went OS and XU headed north.

No doubt when DAL gets home he will have a big erection to cope

In This Issue :

Activities Calendar	Page 2
Propagation	Page 2
Beechwood Billy Cart Derby	Page 3
Jota Report (Port Macquarie)	Page 4
Jota Report (Wauchope)	Page 5
Exchanging QSL Cards	Page 6
Packet Improvements	Page 7
Membership Register	Page 8



with. Best of luck, Dave!

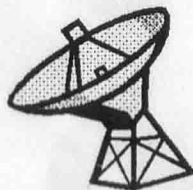
The 2 meter nets (Sunday at 8am and Wednesday at 7.30pm on 146.700) are working well with good numbers on each. More people are required on the 80 meter net (3597.5Mhz) at 8pm on Wednesdays to survive.

Membership renewals are a bit slow at coming in so if you are one of those that still needs to renew, then it would be appreciated if you could do so. You can post it to P.O. Box 712 or pay at a Club meeting - it's that easy.

VK2FT - Jason - has been appointed Equipment Officer and will need assistance to get a new book up and running. Thanks for taking it on. This position also puts him on the committee. He might even take on the Field Day co-ordinator's position if we all twist his arm a lot. He would do a terrific job.

Well that's all folks

VK2HOT - Bruce.



Activities Calendar

or

Down the Coax

Saturday, 1st November, 1997

General meeting at SES Building at 1.00pm.

Sunday, 30th November, 1997

Christmas party BBQ at Diamond Head Camping Reserve from 10:00am onwards.

The Club will supply:
soft drinks, juices, wine and snags

You supply:
salads, chairs, tables, plates etc.

Saturday, 6th December, 1997

General meeting at SES Building at 1.00pm.

Propagation

Ever tuned in to a HF band and thought it was dead because there were no signals?

Before you decide to switch off, check the World Wide Beacon Net. This network was created by the NCDX Foundation and designed to help Amateurs who are interested in RF propagation and DX.

There are 18 Beacons around the world that currently transmit on

14.100, 18.110, 21.150 and 28.200 MHz. Each Beacon has a 10 second slot during which it transmits its call-sign at 100W and then reduces power in steps to 50,10, and 1 Watt.

A typical sequence on 14.100 MHz would be (in Minutes) :

00:00 4U1UN	01:30 4S7B
00:10 VE8AT	01:40 ZS6DN
00:20 W6WX	01:50 5Z4B
00:30 KH6WO	02:00 4X6TU
00:40 ZL6B	02:10 OH2B
00:50 VK6RBP	02:20 CS3B
01:00 JA2IGY	02:30 LU4AA
01:10 RA ?	02:40 OA4B
01:20 BY ?	02:50 YV5B

Handwritten notes:
 UN
 Can
 SRI
 S. AF
 Kenya
 ISRAEL
 NZ
 AUS
 SA
 FIN
 Argent
 Brazil
 Peru
 Venez

So, in three minutes, you can determine all your propagation paths. I check them out a few days prior to a contest. Unfortunately on the day of contest we usually have a complete change of sun spot activity and it isn't correct. However, for day to day band checking it's excellent. Incidentally I note that a lot of the stations use TS-50 transceivers, donated by Kenwood.

- David (VK2AYD)

Beechwood Billy Cart Derby

The combined service club's annual Billy Cart Derby Classic and Fun-Run were contested once again at Beechwood on Sunday 12th October, 1997. As has been usual over the past several years, ORARC Inc.,

members again provided the communications facilities for these community events as a voluntary service.

The crew present on this occasion consisted of Bruce (VK2HOT), Charles (VK2FSH), John (VK2VY), and Trevor (VK2TT), manning the base station, 2 check points, and the commentary vehicle that led the classic down-hill race for the gravity/human powered vehicles. Tracy (VK2GTM) made a valuable contribution to the hardware pool by providing a 2-Metre Transceiver of sufficient power to ensure solid coverage of the commentary that was delivered over the torturous, twisting track down the mountainside north-west of Beechwood. Bruce (VK2HOT), was "volunteered" as the official "on vehicle" operator for the commentary vehicle, and he paid no attention to the risks involved, and arrived at the finish line, cool, calm, and fully collected.

The event was held in superb spring weather, perhaps a little on the warm side for some, but there were adequate liquid (and solid) refreshments available at the finish line immediately in front of the local hostelry. (They did it again though, Bill! Not a solitary freebie

for the thirsting, sweating workers, who made their time and resources available for several hours, at no charge.)

Since the event took place, I have spoken with Bill (VK2WST) regarding a possible exercise for 1998, whereby the main event of the day is given some Vision coverage by means of Bill's ATV equipment. Subject to such content being in compliance with regulations, and some hardware upgrading to provide sufficient power to cover the distance involved, it is possible that some video coverage may take place.

de Trevor (VK2TT)

Jota Report 1997 PORT MACQUARIE.

Hi all! de John VK2VY.

Well, Saturday morning saw a team from ORARC heading to the Buller St., Scout Hall

Most of the guys arrived around 8:00am and started to set up the gear. We put up the long dipole after fixing the new ladderline to the centre and the dipole was raised to a height of about 5 meters,

where the hot end was handed to Ian, VK2XU (The master of the Zed match) and so, after lots of muttering and groaning, a new tuner was put in place just to keep the master happy. At last he gave us the nod that all was well.

I thought band conditions were good, going by what I could hear on the multi-band vertical antenna that is mounted upon the roof. I set up a 2nd HF radio on that antenna and worked a ZL for about 3 hours, closing only because they had to eat

We worked most states of VK and also worked ZL, VE, & UU. VHF was used all day on most of the repeaters we could hear and there where lots of long contacts on VK2RPM.

We had a guest arrive on Saturday afternoon, Larry (from USA), with his wife, and he made contact with a guy in his old home state.

Night time saw 80 meters rather noisy and with very poor conditions, so we packed up for the night at about 10:30PM.

On Sunday morning, Paul (VK2UPR) and myself returned to the hall and made some more contacts. For hours at a time, the kids

where exchanging phone numbers and addresses and other data, until we pulled the antenna down around lunch time.

Thanks go to all who attended. I am sure the Leaders are very happy with our effort. Cheers.

John. (VK2VY).

JOTA AT WAUCHOPE.

The Girl Guides at Wauchope who participated in the JOTA event on the Saturday, 19th October were looked after by a small team comprising David (VK2HBC), Charles (VK2FSH) and Trevor (VK2TT).

A Two-Metre, and an HF station were installed in the Guide's Headquarters at the Rotary Centre at Wauchope. The HF antenna was provided by David (VK2AYD) who was absent overseas and unable to participate personally. David (VK2DAL) was also absent overseas, but he made a Power Supply available to energise the HF rig.

Propagation conditions on HF were at best patchy, and the number of far reaching QSO's was disappointing. The most successful lengthy contacts held were within VK-land JOTA stations. No DX contacts were obtained, and those with ZL all fell apart due to sudden collapses of the propagation

paths before any significant numbers of Guides could get their "messages" through.

Activity on VHF was pretty much continuous throughout the day, and this compensated greatly for the patchy success experienced on HF. Access to the Kempsey repeater extended the VHF range this year, with good contacts to Coffs Harbour being logged. There were no dull moments in the VHF station as David (VK2HBC) found out on his foray into the world of JOTA. Hopes are high in Wauchope that he will front up again next year for another dose! (With Asprin?)

The Guides and Brownies appeared to enjoy themselves, but the very common condition called "mike shyness" took its toll on many. There were, however a few participants who were in good voice, delivering an enormous torrent of verbage, and thus marginally over-compensating for the restricted flow amongst others within the quiet group.

One could be excused for feeling complacent about the future when celebrities like Jana Wendt and Geraldine Doog retire, because there will be a large pool of potentially competent replacements waiting enthusiastically in the wings. Believe it!

-Trevor (VK2TT)



Exchanging QSL Cards

In a recent issue of the Westlake Radio Club's Newsletter, there was an informative article by Greg (VK2CW) containing some interesting facts and observations made regarding the practices of those amongst us who are involved in QSL'ing. In the article, Greg explains that he, as one of the volunteers at the Teralba QSL Bureau, has seen, first hand, the workings of QSL'ing. With acknowledgments to the above Newsletter, and to the author, we are reprinting from that article, the following extract:-

".... Half the fun in sorting and filing at the Bureau is looking at the cards. Most sorters like the JA cards best which is just as well because there are so many of them. JA cards are always of high quality and a large proportion are photographic, often depicting the call sign holder and his girlfriend/family on holiday. Sometimes geisha girls are featured. Antenna installations are another favourite subject for card photos and some of these are amazing, 'Have a look at this one', usually means to the sorters that a massive beam antenna is on the card, or a magnificent sunset, or an exploding volcano, or a distant galaxy as seen through a telescope - or a geisha.

The standard of living a country enjoys is reflected in the cost and quality of amateur QSL cards. Eastern European cards for example, are in-

variably printed on low-cost board or paper and are often printed at home by stencil or rubber stamp. When a change in call sign occurs, a texta pen is all that is needed. When a photograph of an operator in his shack is on a card from these countries, he has a Morse key, wears a coat and tie and never, never smiles.

CW plays an important part in QSL cards, probably because like QSL'ing, it has become old-fashioned. The number of cards confirming contacts in Morse code is much higher than the use of the mode would warrant in proportion to the other forms of communication. At the other end of the scale, there are virtually no cards confirming a contact on FM via a repeater. I have never seen a QSL card for a contact on packet radio. Why is that? Perhaps because packet is "modern" and "modern" operators don't QSL? Perhaps it's because more CW operators in proportion to all amateurs belong to the WIA and therefore use Bureau often? I don't know. It would be interesting to know the percentage of the various licence levels and to see how that fits with the percentage of WIA members. ..."

Anybody out there with some comments about the driving force behind QSL cards ?



Packet Improvements ?

Recent discussions within the club's Repeater Committee has precipitated moves towards further development of the ROSE Switch in VK2RPM.

Currently, the firmware running in the ROSE Switch/Digipeater is Version 3.3, and although Version 3.7 has been on the streets for some considerable time, it has not yet been installed in our Middle Brother installation. Further, the ROSE backbone links south of us (towards Newcastle and Sydney) have been upgraded to 4800 BPS which has meant that VK2RPM (still operating at 1200 BPS) has not been capable of providing users with full ROSE switching facilities to southern destinations.

These two issues, implementation of ROSE Version 3.7, and an upgrade to 4800 BPS, are currently under examination within the repeater committee, with some progress already having been made towards acquisition of the firmware for Version 3.7.

It should be noted that implementation of Version 3.7 will **NOT** see any major change to the existing ROSE performance by VK2RPM, but it will provide an opportunity for knowledge and experience to be gained by club members who have sought to participate in the management and control of the ROSE system under the club's jurisdiction. The cost to the club for Version upgrading will be insignificant in terms of financial outlay, but considerable membership time will be involved in "jollyng up" the existing hardware, and there will be a consequential period of "down-time" to accommodate this work and confidence testing,

before the installation goes back into service on the mountain.

The backbone speed upgrade to 4800 BPS will, however, involve some expenditure for replacement hardware (most likely for TNC's and a modem) and when a plan of action is firmed-up, the Repeater Committee will present its recommendations for examination and discussions. Therefore, members with an interest in the packet mode are urged to make their views known, preferably by attending the monthly meetings. In cases where it is not possible to attend our monthly meetings, then a packet message, or letter, addressed through the ORARC Secretary (David - VK2HBC @ VK2ATM) to the Repeater Committee Chairman, would be satisfactory.

It will only be through close liaison and interworking with other progressive clubs and organisations, that packet systems will be improved, developed, evolved, introduced (call it what you will). There are individuals in the fraternity who are anxious and willing to implement new ideas, try fresh approaches, expand existing systems and the like. It seems fair and beneficial to listen and for such views to be considered, and where deemed appropriate, club resources be deployed to assist, & encourage, or where impracticalities or sheer "Rat-Baggery" (rare in Amateur circles?) may arise, provide some guidance.

- VK2TT (Trevor)

(For the ORARC Repeater Committee)





OXLEY REGION AMATEUR RADIO CLUB Inc. MEMBERSHIP REGISTER.

	FIRST NAME	SURNAME	CALL SIGN	TOWN/CITY	TPH. NO.
1	H J	BAILEY	VK2KHB	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.2912
2	COLIN	BELLENGER	VK2AF	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.3803
3	W. L. (BOB)	BLYTH	VK2XIQ	PORT MACQUARIE	-
4	DEANNA	CAMERON	-	PORT MACQUARIE	-
5	KEVIN	COULTER	VK2MAM	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.8325
6	IAN	DALRYMPLE	VK2XU	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6584.9922
7	JIM	DANIELS	-	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.1933
8	CHARLES	EDMONDSON	VK2FSH	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6584.0495
9	BADEN	GLEESON	VK2MOQ	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.2018
10	SAM	GRIFFITHS	VK2LSG	TAREE	02 6552.3149
11	KEITH	HANLON	-	PORT MACQUARIE	-
12	PETER	HILL	VK2BZA	LAKE CATHIE	02 6585.5449
13	DON	JONES	-	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.5084
14	JOHN	JONES	VK2JJ	LAKE CATHIE	02 6585.4522
15	GARY	LEEDS	VK2NOV	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6584.3978
16	JACK	LEEDS	VK2KN	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6584.1206
17	LARRY	LINDSAY	VK2CLL	WAUCHOPE	02 6587.1155
18	HENRY	LUNDELL	VK2ZHE	PORT MACQUARIE	-
19	KEITH	LUTTON	VK2KDL	TELEGRAPH POINT	02 6585.0321
20	ALLAN	MADIGAN	-	WAUCHOPE	02 6585.2043
21	JASON	MARIS	VK2FT	TELEGRAPH POINT	02 6585.0426
22	JOHN	MCDONAGH	VK2VY	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.0020
23	DOUG	MCDONALD	VK2EUM	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.6157
24	TERRY	MEEHAN	VK2KL	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6584.2997
25	ARTHUR	MONCK	VK2ATM	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.1311
26	ALLAN DAVID	NUTT	VK2GD	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.3557
27	LESTER	O'CONNELL	VK2BFP	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.4274
28	DAVID A	PILLEY	VK2AYD	KING CREEK	02 6585.2647
29	PAUL	ROMAINE	VK2UPR	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6584.1830
30	BILL	SINCLAIR	VK2ZCV	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.0329
31	DAVID	SMITH	VK2DAL	WAUCHOPE NSW	02 6585.1004
32	WILLIAM	STOFMEEL	VK2WST	BONNY HILLS NSW	02 6584.8104
33	DAVID	TARRANT	VK2HBC	WAUCHOPE	02 6585.6381
34	TREVOR	THATCHER	VK2TT	WAUCHOPE	02 6585.2278
35	BRUCE	WALKER	VK2HOT	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.8360
36	RONALD W	WYLES	-	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6581.1085

