



# OXTALES

First published 1980

Club Nets on VK2RPM  
146.700MHz  
(CTCSS 91.5Hz)  
Sundays 0900  
Thursdays 1930

Newsletter of the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club Inc.,

PO Box 712 Port Macquarie 2444

Club email address: vk2bor@orarc.org also on Facebook as Oxley

Region Amateur Radio Club

Club Website: <http://www.orarc.org>



ORARC's fifty Second Anniversary Year

## January 2023

PRESIDENT: Henry Lundell VK2ZHE 6582 0534  
VICE PRES: Paul Colledge VK2ICQ 6580 9912  
TREASURER: Dennis Meade VK2DAM 6582 2998  
SECRETARY: Henry Lundell VK2ZHE 6582 0534

### President's Report



Welcome to 2023

### ORARC Meetings

ORARC Monthly General Meetings now only include a short 15 minute business meeting before a presentation by a guest speaker. The new meeting format leaves plenty of time for members to socialize over tea and coffee and biscuits.

The January Monthly General Meeting on Saturday the 7th of January 2023 will not have a formal guest speaker. After the 15 minute business meeting there will be an opportunity for "show and tell" and short talks from the floor. There will be extra time for socializing over tea and coffee and biscuits for afternoon tea.

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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 (DMR)  
O/P 438.425MHz - I/P 433.425MHz

VK2RCN (6m Repeater)  
O/P 53.800 MHz - I/P 52.800 MHz  
VK2RCN-1 (APRS Digipeater)  
SX 145.175 MHz 1200 Bps  
VK2RPM EchoLink Node Number 916007

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## Down The Coax

**Monthly meetings & Friday Nights held  
in the SES Building Central Road, Port  
Macquarie.**

**Ross Hull Memorial Contest 1 to 31 January  
2023**

**Monthly General Meeting  
Saturday 7 January 2023 2:00 pm**

**Coffee Morning - Brooklyn's Burger Bar,  
Thrumster  
10am Thursday 12 January 2023**

**Summer VHF-UHF Field Day Saturday 14 &  
Sunday 15 January 2023**

**Friday Night Get-Together  
Friday 20 January 2023 7.00 pm**

**AX Prefix May be Used on Australia Day  
Thursday 26 January 2023**

**Australia Day Contest  
2200 UTC 25th January to  
1000 UTC 26th January 2023**

**Monthly General Meeting  
Saturday 4 February 2023 2:00 pm  
Bletchley Park Presentation by David Pilley  
VK2AYD**

**ORARC Antenna Shootout  
Postponed to cooler time of year – Date to be  
confirmed**

**Coffee Morning - Brooklyn's Burger Bar,  
Thrumster  
10am Thursday 9 February 2023**

**Friday Night Get-Together  
Friday 17 February 2023 7.00 pm**

**Wyong Field Day Cancelled for 2023**

**Monthly General Meeting  
Saturday 4 March 2023 2:00 pm  
Network Radio Presentation by Paul Colledge  
VK2ICQ**

**Coffee Morning - Brooklyn's Burger Bar,  
Thrumster  
10am Thursday 9 March 2023**

**Friday Night Get-Together  
Friday 17 March 2023 7.00 pm**

**Urunga Convention - Cancelled**

## Net Controllers' Roster Nets on Voice Repeater VK2RPM 146.700 MHz

**Sundays  
(0900 Local)**

**Thursdays  
(1930 Local)**

### January 2023

VK2FMGM	Jan 1	VK2ZHE	Jan 5
VK2FMGM	Jan 8	VK2ICQ	Jan 12
VK2FMGM	Jan 15	VK2EM	Jan 19
VK2FMGM	Jan 22	VK2ZHE	Jan 26
VK2FMGM	Jan 29		

### February 2023

		VK2ICQ	Feb 2
VK2FMGM	Feb 5	VK2EM	Feb 9
VK2FMGM	Feb 12	VK2ZHE	Feb 16
VK2FMGM	Feb 19	VK2ICQ	Feb 23
VK2FMGM	Feb 26		

### March 2023

		VK2EM	Mar 2
VK2FMGM	Mar 5	VK2ZHE	Mar 9
VK2FMGM	Mar 12	VK2ICQ	Mar 16
VK2FMGM	Mar 19	VK2EM	Mar 23
VK2FMGM	Mar 26	VK2ZHE	Mar 30

Thank you to all the members who have already renewed their memberships this year.

Just a reminder to those memberships outstanding that Membership subscriptions may be paid by Direct Deposit to the club's Regional Australia Bank account.

**Bank account details for membership  
dues payment.**

**BSB:932000 A/C 500032744**

The logo for Jaycar, featuring the word "jaycar" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a stylized graphic of a car's front end, composed of several colored dots (yellow, green, blue, red) connected by lines, suggesting a digital or networked theme.

*Continued from front cover*



*Members at the January general meeting. Henry VK2ZHE, Rob VK2CRF, Ziggy VK2TN, Tim VK2XAX, John VK2KHB, John VK2PJW and Geoff who intends to sit for The Foundation Licence.*

At the February Monthly General Meeting on Saturday the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2023, after the 15 minute business meeting, David Pilley VK2AYD will deliver his much awaited video presentation of the contribution of Radio Amateurs to Bletchley Park. This will be a particularly interesting presentation. David has a great deal of interest and knowledge on this subject.

At the March Monthly General Meeting on Saturday the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 2023, after the 15 minute business meeting, Paul Colledge VK2ICQ will deliver his presentation on Network Radio. Paul's presentation will explain the how you can operate without having to put up antennas. All you need is an internet connection. Many Amateurs already access EchoLink via the internet on their mobile phones or computers. The next step is to also access other networks such as DMR and other digital voice systems and more etc. While all this can be done via your phone or computer, there are purpose made network radios available which look much like a normal radio and have a conventional microphone. Most network radios have GPS receivers and 4G or better mobile data capability and WiFi connectivity. Paul will explain how he uses his network radio in his car to operate mobile without having any visible external antennas.

Please let the committee know If you have any suggestions or contacts for future presentations. So far there is a suggestion for an astronomy presentation. With all the recent and upcoming changes to the DMR RadNet, Paul VK2ICQ may do a DMR presentation building on the DMR articles in past issues of Oxtales.

The monthly Friday night get togethers at 7pm on the third Friday of each month are an excellent opportunity to meet up with fellow members. Members are invited to bring items along for "Show and Tell". There is always something interesting to look at and discuss. It is also an opportunity to bring equipment in if you would like assistance from the collective "brains trust". Rag chewing and brain storming over tea, coffee and biscuits is always popular.

### **Coffee Mornings**

The informal Coffee Mornings at 10am on the second Thursday of each month continue to be popular. Currently the venue is Brooklyn's Burger Bar in the Sovereign Hills shopping centre at Thrumster but other venues are being considered, and there has been discussion of a call for interest in doing lunch. Co-ordinator Ian Lindquist VK2GL will be pleased to hear from you if you have any suggestions.

The Coffee Mornings are a great opportunity to meet fellow members and their families socially over a leisurely morning tea.



### **Balun Building and Antenna Wire Purchase Opportunity**

Early in 2023 Amateur Radio NSW will be providing an opportunity for ORARC members to participate in building a subsidized balun kit and/or purchasing subsidized antenna wire.

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The previous balun and antenna days have been very popular.

A date will be set for a balun and antenna building day in Port Macquarie when a date has been set for the ARNSW balun and antenna building day at Dural.

Please let Henry Lundell VK2ZHE know if are interested as the balun kits and antenna will have to be ordered ahead of time.

ORARC members are encouraged to join ARNSW. Membership is not expensive at \$10 per year. More information and a membership application form is available on the ARNSW website at [https://arnsw.org.au/html/page\\_membership.htm](https://arnsw.org.au/html/page_membership.htm) As well as the weekly Sunday morning and evening VK2WI broadcasts, ARNSW promotes and supports Amateur Radio in many practical ways including the subsidized balun kits and Kevlar antenna wire.



### Coming Events

The page 2 “Down the Coax” listing of coming events is looking a lot more positive than the listing we had in previous January issues of Oxtales during the COVID restrictions.

The ORARC Monthly General Meetings and Friday Night Get togethers and monthly Coffee Mornings are back to normal.

### ORARC 2023 Field Day 10 & 11 June

The ORARC 2022 Field Day takes place on Saturday the 10<sup>th</sup> and Sunday the 11<sup>th</sup> of June during the Kings Birthday long Weekend. The 2023 Field Day will be the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Field Day.

The Field Day venue will be the Wauchope Showground Hall. This venue has proven to be very popular. The hall has been booked again for the 2023 Field Day.

The Wauchope Showground hall is spacious with plenty of off-street parking.

On site camping is available and the Wauchope Showground is pet friendly. Early bookings to the live-in caretaker on phone 0475 111 074 are essential <http://www.wauchopeshowociety.com.au/camping.html> as the camp sites are very popular during the Queens Birthday Holiday weekend. This is likely to be even more so in 2023. Rates are very reasonable with power available. There are toilets and hot showers. You can even stable your horse!

The Field Day Dinner will be at 6 pm on the evening of Saturday the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 2023 in the Function Room at the Port Macquarie Golf Club. Thank you to Gary Ryan VK2ZKT of Radio Supply for sponsoring the function room for the dinner. Gary has kindly sponsored the hire of the room for several years and ORARC is indebted to Gary for his continuing sponsorship. The Golf Club has an extensive menu to suit all tastes. Meals are at club prices.

Planning for the 2023 Field Day has commenced so please consider offering your assistance. The committee will be very pleased to hear from you. The position of Field Day Manager is still open, and there are lots of tasks to volunteer for.

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## **Summer VHF UHF Field Day Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

The event runs from 12 noon on Saturday the 14<sup>th</sup> to 12 noon on Sunday the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2023.

This year the club station VK2BOR did not operate in the Summer VHF UHF Field Day. All available resources are currently concentrating on completing the new VK2RCN repeater site at Telegraph Point. The Club is planning to participate in the Summer VHF and UHF Field Day next year.

Club members are encouraged to participate in the Field Day individually. This can be done using home stations, or perhaps operating portable or mobile. If enough members do this, quite respectable scores can be amassed by working each other. Activity breeds activity so amateurs from surrounding areas will hopefully be tempted to come on air and add to the number of stations that can be worked.

The 6 metre sporadic E season is still very active so if the band opens during the Contest some very impressive scores can be made as there are usually a lot of 6 metre stations participating in the Summer VHF UHF Field Day in the southern states, particularly VK3,

VK5 and VK7. Sporadic E signals are usually very strong so even a mobile whip will work extremely well. Most contacts will be made on SSB. At the time of publication the 6 metre sporadic E season is still open which bodes well for the contest weekend.

### **Stop Press:**

6 metres did indeed open during the Field Day with great sporadic E on the morning of Sunday the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2023. The bottom end of 6 metres sounded more like

20 metres during a major contest! It was impossible to find a clear frequency in the phone section above 50 MHz. There were some impressive serial numbers being handed out by particularly the VK3, VK5 and VK7 stations. 50.313 MHz was a cacophony of S9+ FT8 carriers.

The Summer 2023 VHF UHF Field Day rules are available for download from the WIA website at <https://www.wia.org.au/members/contests/vhfuhf/documents/2023%20Summer%20VHF-UHF%20Field%20Day%20Rules.pdf>

## **Antenna Shootout Day February 2023**

The club's popular annual Antenna Shootout would normally be scheduled to be held on the first Sunday in February at the Tuffins Lane sports fields.

While the Antenna Shootout has not been held for the last couple years during the COVID restrictions, many members have asked that future Antenna Shootouts be held during the cooler months as it's usually very hot during February. The ORARC Committee is looking to schedule the 2023 Antenna Shoutout later this year. The new date will be announced once it has been set. The new date will have to fit in with the many existing bookings of the Tuffins Land sportsfields.

## **Wyong Field Day Cancelled for 2023**

The Central Coast Amateur Radio Club has advised that the 2023 Wyong Field Day has been cancelled. After previously being held in February each year for over half a century, the Field Day was held in May as Mayham for the last two years during the COVID restrictions. The club is reassessing and is planning to again run a Wyong Field Day in 2024. An announcement will be made later this year.

The Wyong Field Day has been the largest Amateur Radio

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Field Day in the Southern hemisphere. The Wyong racecourse facilities were significantly upgraded a few years ago. The flea market has been under cover and the Traders have enjoyed an air-conditioned environment.

### **Urunga Convention 8 & 9 April 2023**

After being cancelled for the last few years due to COVID-19, the scheduled dates of the postponed 71<sup>st</sup> annual Urunga Convention during Easter 2023 are Saturday and Sunday the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of April 2023. However, an announcement confirming the resumption of the Urunga Convention has not yet been made and the web site still carries the cancellation until further notice due to COVID <http://users.tpg.com.au/goldy2/index.htm>

### **Recent Events**

#### **Beechwood Billycart Classic 27 November 2023**



After being cancelled for the last two years due to COVID-19 and being postponed from the scheduled date of Sunday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 2022 due to forecast wet weather which did arrive, the 41<sup>st</sup> Beechwood Billycart Classic was successfully held on Sunday the 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2022.

This event is run down the longest course in Australia. It is about 5 kilometres long. As usual, ORARC members provided the safety communications for the event. The

safety communications is critical to the running of the Classic. Thank you to the many volunteers who were needed to man all the check points. The commentator for race travelled with the camera crew this year. The vehicle was crowded so Rob Frost VK2CRF who set up the commentary radio missed out on his white knuckle ride down the mountain.

Thank you to all the volunteers. Callsigns included VK2CRF, VK2DAM, VK2EM, VK2EST, VK2FMGM, VK2ATM, VK2CLL, VK2BIG, VK2ZRE, VK2JU, VK2PJW, VK2SMI, VK2AYD, VK2AYQ, and VK2ZHE.



*Bruce VK2EM, Dennis VK2DAM, Lyle VK2SMI  
and Arthur VK2ATM*



*Bob VK2ZRE, Ray VK2JU And Rob VK2CRF.*



*Larry VK2CLL  
Rob VK2CRF*



*Wade VK2EST and John VK2  
VK2PJW*

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Special thanks go to Bruce Ekert VK2EM, Wade Boyd VK2EST and John Winter VK2PJW for coming up from Tuncurry, Wingham and Krambach to participate.

Bob Small VK2BIG staffed the new checkpoint set up this year at the start of the Junior Race.

Arthur Monck VK2ATM operated from the PA Truck at the Finish and was kept busy keeping the announcer informed of the progress of all the bilycarts in the race.



*Lesley helping Arthur VK2ATM in setting up the commentary position on the truck.*



*Arthur VK2ATM in the commentary position with Bob VK2BIG relaying information from the start of the Junior race*

The event ran smoothly despite difficulties in locating a few of the checkpoints due to missing road markings. The leading carts

managed some serious speeds down the mountain and provided a great sight for the spectators who watched from their favourite strategic vantage points. The lead cart reached speeds in excess of 100 kilometres per hour which pushed the Camera commentary vehicle to its limits to stay ahead.

The main race was run and completed before the short course junior event started.



*Junior Race course showing a cart with pusher and part of the large crowd.*

As always, Beechwood put on entertainment with food and drink stalls to make the Classic an enjoyable family day out see photograph below.



The event had been intensively advertised. This large attendance resulted in parking being at a premium with all spaces near the finish occupied very early in the day.

Cars were parked along the road for two kilometres either side of the finish. After the main race concluded, traffic was eventually able to bypass the road closure at the finish via a newly opened subdivision road. However, the road

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into the subdivision was located just behind the starting line for the junior races so traffic moved very slowly.

The weather was fine which encouraged the crowd to stay and enjoy the entertainment including a well publicized crab race in the afternoon. The food and drink stalls were kept busy throughout the day. The bacon and egg breakfast was popular with the early arrivals.

The organisers formally thanked ORARC for its role in helping to make the Classic safe and enjoyable. ORARC received a cheque for \$150.00 as a kind donation which will greatly assist with construction of the new VK2RPM repeater site at Telegraph Point. We look forward continuing our long-standing support and participating in next year's event.

### **Coastal Walk Against Domestic and Family Violence 28 November 2021**

The Liberty Coastal Walk Against Domestic and Family Violence, previously known as the White Ribbon Walk, took place on Sunday the 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2022.

There was a late invitation to ORARC to provide safety and co-ordination communications for the event but the Club had already committed to provide the safety communications for the Beechwood Billycart Classic which had been postponed to the same date as the Coastal Walk. Unfortunately, due to the large number of operators required for the Beechwood Billycart Classic communications it was not possible to find additional operators to run communications for the 2023 Coastal Walk.

Normally the Beechwood Billycart Classic is run in October and does not clash with the date of the Coastal Walk in November so ORARC is looking forward to providing

the safety communications which ORARC has been invited to set up for the 2023 walk. ORARC is a strong supporter of this most important cause.

### **2022 Christmas Party**



The extremely enjoyable 2022 Christmas Party was held at the Long Point Vineyard and Art Gallery on Saturday the 3rd of December.

The Christmas Party is one of the few face to face activities which the Club has been able to run each year despite the COVID-19 restrictions which necessitated having to cancel most usual club activities during the last few years. In those past years there had been short relaxations of restrictions coinciding with the Christmas Party dates. There were no restrictions at the time of the 2022 Christmas Party so it was nice to end the 2022 calendar year with such an enjoyable face to face social activity in such a pleasant outdoor environment.

The weather on the day ended up fine for the duration of the party despite some of those travelling to the Christmas Party encountering rain on the way to Long Point earlier in the morning.

Thank you to everyone who attended the party and

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contributed to making the day a great success. The sausage sizzle lunch was expertly barbequed and served by Larry Lindsay VK2CLL and Rob Frost VK2CRF pictured below.



The delicious Pavlova made by Lesley and the equally delicious trifle dessert made by Sue Meade were a very popular treat to end a very enjoyable lunch. There was even whipped cream to go with the dessert.



*Lesley prepares to serve out the pavlova while Sue photographs the slicing.*

*Below is Sue's trifle. This is all a far cry from the tinned fruit and ice cream that used to be desert!*



As usual there was a veritable feast of party food brought by members. Thank you to Arthur VK2ATM for bringing along the delicious very scarce cherries. No one went hungry. The tea and coffee, soft drinks and chilled water ensured that no one remained thirsty.



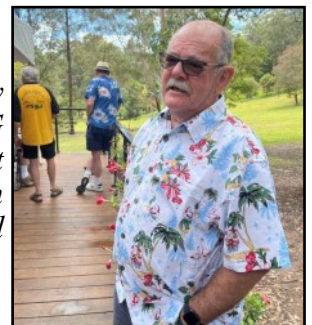
*Party food and conversation around the table. Arthur VK2ATM, David VK2AYD and Diane, Paula VK2PDC.*

*Lesley, Diane, Lynne and Sue enjoy a quiet chat.*



*Jamie VK2YCJ, Ricky VK2BXO, Bob VK2BIG showing his festive shirt with Arthur VK2ATM in an Oxley Club shirt and Jamie in the background.*

*Below Paul VK2ICQ, David VK2AYD and Ricky VK2BXO discuss a technical issues, Bruce VK2EM demonstrates his portable station.*



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*Photographs from top left Henry VK2ZHE demonstrating how to set up his latest non technical acquisition!, Paula VK2PDC, Lynn and Larry VK2CCL and Rob VK2CRF in background, Ray VK2JU and Bob VK2BIG and last Dennis VK2DAM, Judy VK2ZZV and Ray VK2JU.*

Those attending included Arthur VK2ATM and Lesley, Dennis VK2DAM and Sue, John VK2AYQ, David VK2AYD and Diane, Bruce VK2EM, Larry VK2CCL, Ray VK2JU and Lynne, Paul VK2ICQ, Paula VK2PDC, Bob VK2BIG and Lynn, Rob VK2CRF, John VK2PJW, Grahame VK2FA, Judy VK2ZZV Jamie VK2YCJ, Richard VK2BXO and Beatrice, John VK2PJW and Henry VK2ZHE.

Quite a few apologies were received from members who were unable to attend. Hopefully, most of those who had to tender apologies for the 2022 party will be able to

join those attending the 2023 Christmas party.

The venue has already been booked again for the 2023 Christmas Party on Saturday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 2023. Mark your calendars now! The Christmas Party is indeed the social family highlight of the year and should not be missed. The covered timber deck picnic area at the Long Point Vineyard and Art Gallery is a perfect party venue.

### **Middle Brother Mountain VK2RPM Repeater Site**

The Middle Brother Mountain VK2RPM repeaters have been working well.

### **Telegraph Point VK2RCN Repeater Site**

There have been regular intensive working bees at the new repeater site. The corrugated iron roof over the 20 foot shipping container that forms the equipment shelter has been completed. The twenty nine 250 Watt solar panels have all been installed and each panel has been cabled to a separate Anderson red SB50 connector inside the shelter.

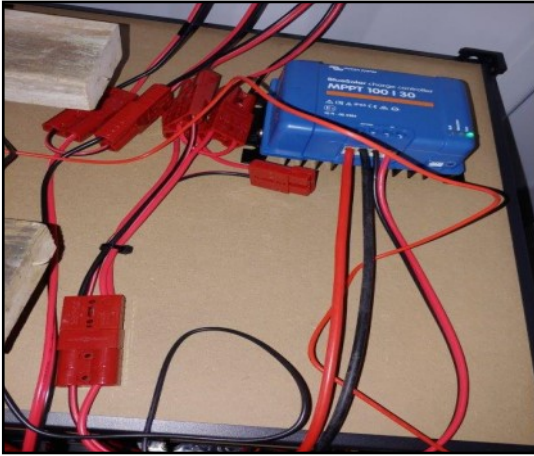


*Corrugated roof completed, solar panels installed some of the workers Rob VK2CRF, Dennis VK2DAM and Lyle VK2SMI*

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*Solar Panel access via Anderson connectors*

This individual access to the 29 solar panels will enable them to be flexibly connected in series and series/parallel to provide optimum solar energy to the separate 30 and 20 amp 12 Volt solar controllers which will charge the separate Lithium Iron Phosphate 12 Volt batteries that will power the various repeaters and other site loads. With 7.25 kilowatts of installed solar power it is expected that the site will have sufficient off grid power even during prolonged low sun periods including during the winter months when there will be significant shading from the trees to the north of the site when the sun is low in the sky.

Provision has been made to recharge the batteries using an external generator if this becomes necessary. A generator shelter has been built beside the equipment shelter and a weather proof 240 Volt AC power inlet has been installed on the outside of the shelter to connect the generator into the shelter to power several mains operated 20 and 30 amp 12 Volt DC Lithium Iron Phosphate battery chargers (Photographs below).



The equipment shelter container walls and ceiling have been lined with foil backed insulating sheets to provide thermal insulation, and to prevent condensation as seen below.



Heavy duty horizontal battens have been installed on the shelter walls, as seen above, to provide protection against physical damage to the insulation. These also provide substantial mounts for the solar panel connectors and the solar charge controllers, and to provide anchorage for the DC and coaxial cabling inside the shelter.

Now that the above work has been completed, the fit out of the equipment shelter and permanent installation of the repeaters and other equipment is under way. One major task is to install a filtered air inlet and fans to pressurize the shelter with external air so that any heat generated within the building is exhausted through the air vents that are fitted to the shelter. There should be very little heat generated by the equipment in the shelter but with the shelter well thermally insulated it is important to exhaust any heat that is generated. It is planned that the air in the shelter should be replaced approximately once every 15 minutes or so. The pressurization fans will operate from a dedicated solar charged 12 Volt Lithium Iron Phosphate battery so the fans will operate continuously.

Before Christmas, as a special treat, and to enable evaluation of actual VHF and UHF repeater coverage using the antennas on the new mast, and also to demonstrate the viability of the off grid solar charged 12 Volt battery power,

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the VK2RCN 2 Metre 147.0 MHz voice repeater was temporarily put back on air from the new site, as was the VK2RCN 438.425 MHz voice repeater which will be replaced by the RadNet DMR repeater in the next few weeks.

As can be seen from the photographs, the temporary connection of the two Yaesu DR-1X repeaters was indeed very temporary. Similarly, the connection of the solar charge controllers and batteries was also temporary. This was all easily accomplished though as everything plugs together.

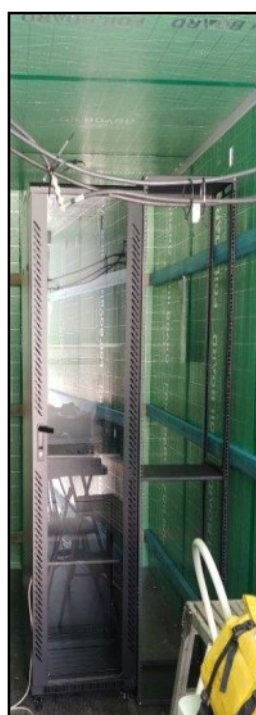


The performance of the temporarily connected VK2RCN 147.0 MHz and 438.425 MHz repeaters and associated solar charge controllers and batteries has been exemplary. The performance of the VHF and UHF antennas through the repeater antenna filtering has been excellent with excellent coverage and no signs of desensitization. The batteries have been fully recharged each day, even during the overcast days. The modern solar panels continue to provide very substantial output with indirect sunlight.

The site has a 12 Volt DC solar battery charged pure sine wave 600 Watt 240 Volt 50 Hz AC inverter to power small AC loads without having to run a generator. Each day it has been very nicely running the 240 Volt oscillating pedestal fan that we brought from the old VK2RCN site.

All of the above has been achieved by a small band of dedicated skilled volunteers during a great many intensive working bees which will continue until the fit out and installation work and commissioning testing is completed. Larry Lindsay VK2CLL and Rob Frost VK2CRF are leading the work supported by Arthur Monck VK2ATM, Dennis Meade VK2DAM, Lyle Smith VK2SMI, Ray Mullins VK2JU and Henry Lundell VK2ZHE.

Larry and Rob have brought a great deal of expertise to the project as they have both recently completed major building projects of their own. They and all the team have been particularly generous in using their own tools and equipment and provided a lot of the material to carry out the Telegraph Point work. All the equipment and hardware such as the equipment racks, repeaters, batteries etc are on hand so the fit out and installation work should continue without interruption.



On the 16<sup>th</sup> of January 2023 a major milestone was achieved when the 19 inch enclosed server rack cabinet and the 19 inch 4 post open rack and the four large 12 Volt 200 Amp Hour Lithium Iron Phosphate batteries were transported to the site by the working bee which consisted of Larry Lindsay VK2CLL, Rob Frost VK2CRF, Dennis Meade VK2DAM, Arthur Monck VK2ATM, Ray Mullins VK2JU and Henry Lundell VK2ZHE.

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The repeaters and associated equipment will be installed in the enclosed server rack and the RF filters and duplexers will be installed in the open frame rack. The final fit out and equipment installation is now officially under way!

It is hoped that the VK2RCN repeaters can be commissioned by the end of January 2023.

The VK2RCN repeaters are:

- The VK2RCN 438.425 MHz RadNet DMR digital voice repeater.
- The VK2RCN 147.0 MHz 2 metre voice FM repeater which will accept either analogue FM or C4FM Yaesu System Fusion digital voice input.
- The VK2RCN 53.800 MHz 6 metre FM voice repeater.
- The VK2RCN-1 145.175 MHz 2 metre APRS digipeater

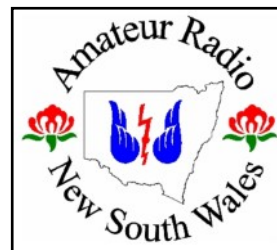
A new VK2RCN 70cm UHF multimode digital voice repeater supporting DMR, DStar, P25, C4FM and NXDN.

The VK2RCN 147.0 MHz 2 metre FM voice repeater will be linked to the Middle Brother Mountain VK2RPM 146.7 MHz 2 metre FM voice repeater early in 2023. This requires installation of additional equipment at both sites.

The new VK2RCN 70cm UHF multimode digital voice repeater will be installed in early 2023. The club is awaiting assignment of the frequencies for this repeater.

In the President's Report in the July 2022 issue of Oxtales, mention was made of the genesis of this project. Barry Gilson VK2LBG should have been included in the group of ORARC members who set out to obtain a suitable site for the VK2RCN repeaters. The group consisted of Barry Gilson VK2LBG, Arthur Monck VK2ATM,

Paul Jones VK2DEL, Dennis Meade VK2DAM, John McLean VK2KC and several others. Sincere apologies to Barry for accidentally forgetting to include him in the mention of the group. Barry was a pivotal member of the group as he had local knowledge and contacts in the area.



### **ARNSW DMR Expansion Project – Radnet – Changes to Radnet**

The Amateur Radio NSW sponsored VK2RCN DMR Radnet UHF repeater at Telegraph Point was very popular until the lightning strike last year which took all the VK2RCN repeaters off air. The VK2RCN DMR Radnet UHF repeater will shortly return to air from the new VK2RCN off grid solar powered repeater site.

As listeners to the VK2WI weekly Sunday morning and evening broadcasts will have heard, Matt Perkins VK2FLY has recently provided the following ARNSW RadNet update:

As regular DMR Users will know, the ARNSW Radnet DMR radio network runs on the VKDMR network. The VKDMR network has over 60 repeaters across Australia and hundreds of hotspot users. It really is an incredible resource for Australian Amateurs.

Over the coming months the Admins of VKDMR have decided to streamline the network. Their aim is to make the network easier to use, Radios easier to program and reduce load on solar powered repeater sites.

The changes to the network will be rolled out in two phases.

*Continued on next page*

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Phase one will have already commenced and the good news is you will not need to make any changes to your radios. During phase one the only talk group that will automatically broadcast on all repeaters is Talk Group 505 which will become a call channel only. All other talk groups will be user activated. So if you want to contact someone give them a call on 505 then move to one of the other user activated talk groups 3809-3010

On February the 9<sup>th</sup> phase two kicks in. This is the time when you will need to reconfigure your radios. There will be updates on how to do that on the vkdmr.com web site <https://vkdmr.com/> and also on the RadNet micro site at arnsw.net at <https://arnsw.net/> The is a link on the ARNSW web site <https://arnsw.org.au/> We will let you know more information about phase two as it approaches. Matt can be contacted by email [dmr@arnsw.org.au](mailto:dmr@arnsw.org.au) Thank you to Matt VK2FLY.

For the ultimate in flexibility in communicating via digital and analogue repeaters via the internet at home and on the move, refer to the very informative Network Radio article by Paul Colledge VK2ICQ in the November 2021 issue of Oxtales.

### **VK2WI Sunday Morning and Evening Broadcasts**

The ARNSW Sunday morning and evening broadcasts can usually be received at good strength from Dural in Sydney on the VK2WI HF frequencies of 1845 kHz AM, 3595 kHz LSB, 7146 kHz AM, 10.125M MHz USB and 14.170 MHz USB, and on the VKE580 morning transmission on 5425 kHz USB. The morning broadcasts commence at 10am Daylight Saving time and the evening broadcasts commence at 7:30 pm Daylight Saving Time. Callbacks are done in the SSB mode on all the VK2WI frequencies at the conclusion of the

broadcasts. The Sunday morning broadcasts are live streamed on the internet on the ARNSW web site at <https://arnsw.org.au/audio> If you miss the live streaming, mp4 audio files of past broadcasts are available on the same page.

### **Education and Amateur Licence Assessments**

The club's long serving Education Officer Larry Lindsay VK2CLL together with Steve Wynn VK2ZSW and Bob Ecclestone VK2ZRE all have their AMC assessor accreditations.

A Foundation Licence training and assessment weekend is planned for early in the new year now that the COVID-19 safety restrictions have eased. Larry Lindsay VK2CLL will contact those candidates who have already expressed interest. As well, at least a couple of club members are planning to upgrade their licences.

If you know anyone who would like to obtain their Foundation Licence or would like to upgrade their existing licence, please contact Larry Lindsay VK2CLL.

Anyone who is ready for assessment may also consider the option of Remote Assessment. If you are interested in this option, contact Larry Lindsay VK2CLL or Steve Wynn VK2ZSW.

### **ORARC 2023 Calendar**



The club's 2023 calendar is as popular as ever despite the calendar no longer having photos of our current members.

*Continued on next page*



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The calendar was launched at the Friday Night Get together on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2022.

Thank you to Steve Pettet VK2ZVG for taking copies to safe hand deliver to Des Thompson VK9FLHI on Lord Howe Island and to Gary Ryan VK2ZKT at Bellingen. Steve picked up the calendars while he and Johanna Pettet VK2FJMM were transiting through Port Macquarie on their way to Lord Howe Island in the week before Christmas. Thank you to Larry Thompson VK2LJT for taking copies to distribute to the ORARC members in the Great Lakes, and to Larry Lindsay VK2CLL who took calendars to distribute to the Wauchope members. Thank you to Grahame O'Brien VK2FA who is distributing calendars to the ORARC members in Newcastle and the Hunter Valley. Thank you to Stuart Walker VK2BMX for taking calendars to distribute to the ORARC members in Sydney.

Copies of the 2023 calendar are available and may be purchased at the Monthly General Meetings, Coffee Mornings and Friday Night Get togethers. The price, a mere \$2 each.

The club meeting and Coffee Morning dates and the ORARC Field Day dates are all marked on the 2023 Calendar. The calendar also contains the details of the frequencies for the club's repeaters.

Thank you to John Hansen VK2AYQ for creating this year's calendar, and to Larry VK2CLL for picking up the printed copies.

As always, ORARC is indebted to Jaycar Port Macquarie for their sponsorship towards the cost of the printing of the calendar. Thank you Jaycar.

### **Mid North Coast WICEN**

The Mid North Coast WICEN group meets in the Port Macquarie SES Building at the

conclusion of each month's ORARC Monthly General Meeting. WICEN members and visitors are made very welcome.

Mid North Coast WICEN hold an 80 metre net each Thursday evening at 7 pm local time on 3600 kHz LSB. Everyone is welcome to join the net. It is a short net and concludes by 7:30 pm in time for participants to join the ORARC Thursday night net at 7:30 pm on the 146.7 MHz VK2RPM 2 metre repeater which is also accessible via Echolink.

If you are interested in joining Mid North Coast WICEN then contact Rob Frost VK2CRF, Larry Thompson VK2LJT or Bob Ecclestone VK2ZRE.

The WICEN NSW web site is at <https://nsw.wicen.org.au/> WICEN NSW hold a 40 metre HF net on the 3rd Sunday of each month at 1830 NSW Local Time on 7110 kHz LSB +/- QRM. Net Control is VK2WIZ.



### **Silent Key**

David Newey ex VK2DFN sadly passed away in Victoria on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 2023. David will be well remembered by ORARC members. He and Leonie Newey VK2LPN moved to Port Macquarie in 2010. They Joined the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club with one of the first Family Memberships. David served a term on the ORARC Committee. David was an avid photographer and many of his photos may

be seen in past copies of Oxtales. He took many action shots at the car rallies that ORARC participated in, and at the Beechwood Billycart Classics. Please see the separate Silent Key Vale David Francis Newey ex VK2DFN in this issue of Oxtales.

### **Milestones**

Just a reminder that members who turn 85 years are rewarded with Life Membership. Eligible members must be nominated by the end of June so that they can be included in the agenda for the ORARC Annual General Meeting. Please let the Committee know of any members who will become eligible in 2023. There are at least a couple of members who will become eligible in 2023.

Amongst our esteemed Life Members, we offer special greetings to Trevor Thatcher VK2TT who is in his 96<sup>th</sup> year. After a great many years in Wauchope, Trevor is now moving to Sydney in the care of his family. His health is not as robust as it once was. He is no longer active on air and has transferred his VK2TT callsign to his son in law Ian McDonald VK2JMW

We welcome three new members who joined at the 7<sup>th</sup> of January 2023 Monthly General Meeting. They are Tim Tuck VK2XAX who recently moved to Port Macquarie, Ziggy Malter VK2TN who recently moved to Lake Cathie and to Geoff Thorley of Port Macquarie. Geoff is looking forward to the next Foundation Weekend to sit for his Foundation Licence.

Best wishes for a safe and happy 2023.

Henry Lundell VK2ZHE  
President



Yaesu have just announced that the FT-818 and FTM-400 production has ceased due to the unavailability of several components necessary for the build.

Component unavailability may also put future production of the DR-2X in jeopardy.

Various amateur overseas magazines have reported that existing stocks of the FT-818 are rapidly being sold out as the radio is very popular for QRP operation especially for those using it for backpack portable operation.





Thank you to our sponsor, DX Radio Systems, for providing the medals for these members.

The competition is open for 2023, again sponsored by DX Radio Systems, and we encourage any WIA-affiliated radio club to get their members to enrol in the DX Awards and create their own Club Group.

### **Declaration of Election of Directors**

Date : 15 / 01 / 2023

Author : Peter Clee - VK8ZZ

Four directors retire at the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting which will be held in May 2023, namely Scott Williams VK3KJ, Peter Clee VK8ZZ, Greg Kelly VK2GPK and Peter Schrader VK4EA. Each retiring director was eligible for re-nomination.

A call for nominations for the position of Director of the WIA was made in the WIA National News Broadcast and in Amateur Radio Magazine in accordance with the Election Regulations.

I advise that I have received Four (4) valid nominations from WIA members for the position as director of the WIA by the advertised closing date for nominations, as follows:-

Scott Williams VK3KJ, Peter Schrader VK4EA, Peter Clee VK8ZZ, Giles Kirby VK5GK.

As advised in the Call for Nominations there will be four vacancies at the conclusion of the AGM to be held in May 2023 and therefore no election will be necessary.

I therefore formally declare these 4 nominees as having been elected to the position of Director of the Wireless Institute of Australia. These Directors elect will take up their role at the conclusion of the Annual General meeting in May 2023. They will remain in that role for a period of two (2) years.

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### **WIA DX Awards "Clubs Competition" winner announced**



Date : 18 / 01 / 2023

Author : Graham Alston VK3GA - Awards Manager

The WIA DX Awards Committee would like to congratulate Bunbury Radio Club for winning the inaugural WIA DX Awards "VK Clubs Competition". This award recognises the WIA-affiliated club that scores the most number of DXCC slots in the calendar year. In 2022, this number was a remarkable 7336. The North East Radio Group were second on 3859, with Amateur Radio NSW third on 1360.

In total, 12 radio clubs participated in 2022.

The winning members of Bunbury Radio Club were VK6APK, VK6DW, VK6IR, VK6OZ and VK6RZ.



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Continuing Directors are:

Lee Moyle VK3GK, Chris Dimitrijevic VK3FY, Steve Green VK2TSG.

These continuing directors will retire at the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting in 2024.

I John Marshall, the duly appointed returning Officer of the Wireless Institute of Australia confirm that these results are valid and in accordance with the Constitution of the Wireless Institute of Australia and the WIA Election Regulations.

This notice is authorised by John Marshall, WIA Returning Officer  
10th January 2023

### **Malaysia drops CW requirements and increases power to 1kW**



Date : 07 / 01 /

Author : Lee Moyle - VK3GK

An important announcement comes from Si-on Chow 9M2CQC, MARTS VHF+ Bandplan Committee Chairman, IARU R3, is that from January 1st 2023 the whole structure of Amateur Radio in Malaysia is changing. For the very first time after nearly 6 years of work since MARPC was established, and after 22 years since WRC-2000, Malaysia is dropping its Morse Code testing requirements for those wishing to upgrade to a Malaysian Class-A license.

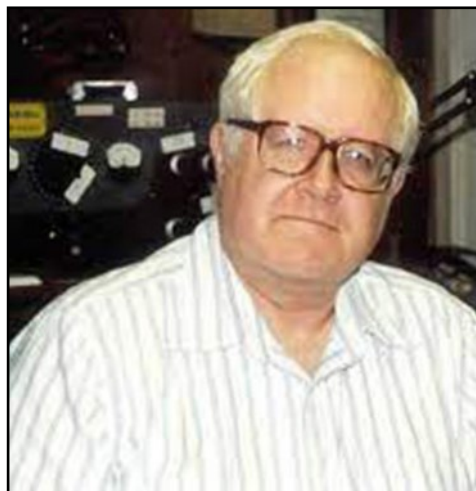
Among other significant changes are:

1. Class-B license holders now get to operate from 80m (3.5 MHz) - 70cm (430 MHz) with 50w of TX power.
2. Class-A and B license holders now get to operate the new 60m band with 15w EIRP of TX power and all HF bands and Class-A with 1000w of TX power.

### **Amateur Radio Contesting Great Fred Laun, K3ZO, Silent Key**

Date : 07 / 01 /

Author : Lee Moyle - VK3GK



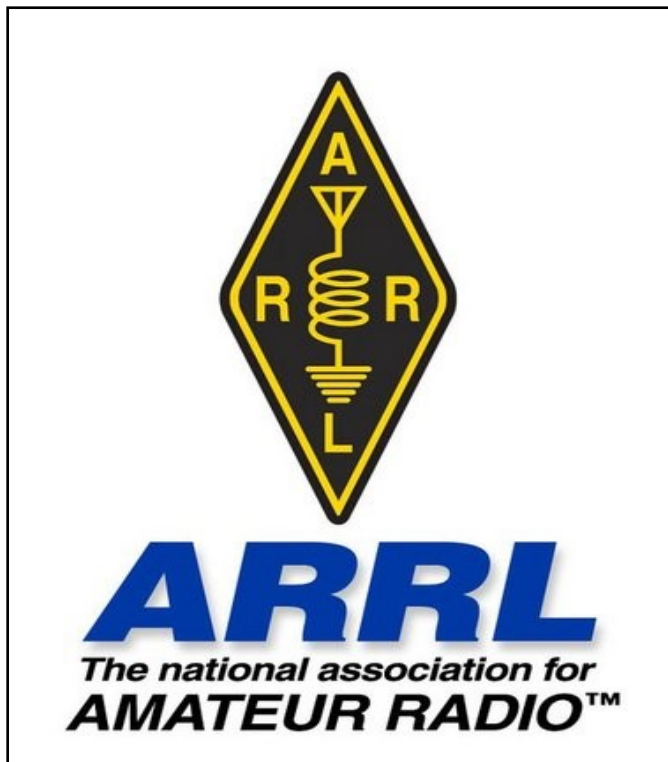
Fred Laun (Alfred A. Laun, III), K3ZO, of Temple Hills, Maryland, USA, passed away on January 3, 2023. He was a member of the ARRL Maxim Society and Life Member, and a member of the Potomac Valley Radio Club.

Laun was also a Director for The Yasme Foundation, an organization that supports awards and grants that recognize and advance the achievements made by radio amateurs. "Fred's service to Yasme and other amateur organizations, spanning decades, was unsurpassed, as were his contributions to amateur radio, for which he cared deeply," said Yasme Foundation President Ward Silver, N0AX, in a press release. "Well-known and respected around the globe, we know Fred's many friends world-wide will honour his memory, both on and off the air."

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Fred was a regular participant in the Oceania DX Contest every year and many VK Contesters would have worked “Kilo Three Zulu Oscar” over the years. His station was well heard around the world.



### **HAARP Thanks Amateur Radio Operators for Help with Latest Experiment**



*A frosty landscape surrounds antennas at the High-frequency Active Auroral Research site in Gakona Alaska on December 20 2022. JR Ancheta UAF/GI photo*

On Tuesday, December 27, 2022, the High-frequency Active Auroral Research Program (HAARP) conducted its latest ionospheric experiment of bouncing radio signals off an asteroid passing near Earth's or-

bit (see the [ARRL News story](#) from December 23, 2022).

A frosty landscape surrounds antennas at the High-frequency Active Auroral Research Program site in Gakona, Alaska, on December 20, 2022. [JR Ancheta, UAF/GI, photo]

Amateur radio operators and radio astronomy enthusiasts were invited to monitor the test and send their results to HAARP for analysis. While the results of the experiment will take several weeks, Jessica Matthews, HAARP Program Manager, said the help was greatly appreciated. "So far we have received over 300 reception reports from the amateur radio and radio astronomy communities from six continents who confirmed the HAARP transmission."

HAARP officials say the results of the experiment could aid efforts to defend Earth from larger asteroids that could cause significant damage.

"We will be analyzing the data over the next few weeks and hope to publish the results in the coming months," said Mark Haynes, lead investigator on the project and a radar systems engineer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California. "This experiment was the first time an asteroid observation was attempted at such low frequencies," he said. "This shows the value of HAARP as a potential future research tool for the study of near-Earth objects."

The University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) operates [HAARP](#) under an agreement with the Air Force, which developed and owned HAARP but transferred the research instruments to UAF in August 2015.

### **More Amateur Radio Astronauts Head for the International Space Station**

Three of the four new astronauts on February's planned launch of the SpaceX Crew-6 mission to the International Space Station (ISS) are amateur ra-

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The four crew members that comprise the SpaceX Crew-6 mission pose for a photo during a training session on the crew access arm at the Kennedy Space Center's Launch Pad 39A in Florida. From left are, Mission Specialist Andrey Fedyaev, Pilot Warren "Woody" Hoburg, Mission Specialist Sultan Al Nedayi, and Commander Stephen Bowen. Photo Courtesy of SpaceX.

Pilot Warren "Woody" Hoburg, KB3HTZ; Commander Stephen Bowen, KI5BKB, and Mission Specialist Sultan Al Neyadi, KI5VTV, will join Mission Specialist Andrey Fedyaev on board the SpaceX Dragon spacecraft, Endeavour.

The spacecraft will be atop a Falcon 9 rocket and, while a launch date has not been selected, the earliest date would be mid-February 2023.

All crew members have learned about Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS), received guidance on studying and testing, and learned how to operate the ARISS radios and the basics of on-the-air protocol from ARISS team members at NASA's Johnson Space Center.

The crew will be able to participate in ARISS, using the ham radio station on the ISS to contact schools and other educational institutions.

ARISS is a cooperative venture of international amateur radio societies and the space agen-

cies that support the ISS. In the US, participating organizations include NASA, the ISS National Lab, ARRL The National Association for Amateur Radio®, and AMSAT.

### The K7RA Solar Update

Last week's Propagation Forecast Bulletin ARLP002 opened with "Wow!" I don't know what to say about this week, except it is beyond wow.

This actually has me thinking about Solar Cycle 19. Lately we have seen solar flux at the same levels we saw at the peak of Solar Cycle 23. If we are about 30 months away from the peak of this Solar Cycle 25, could this get us to the 1957-59 levels last seen in Solar Cycle 19?

Stories from that time tell of worldwide coverage 24x7 on 10 meter AM from low power mobile stations. From Spaceweather.com: "If sunspot production continues apace for the rest of January, the monthly sunspot number will reach a 20-year high." Average planetary A index increased from 6.7 to 13.9. On January 15 the planetary A index reached a peak of 30, a very high value indicating a geomagnetic storm. Conditions were stormy throughout the week, due to flares and CMEs. On that day in Fairbanks, Alaska the college A index was 53, a very high number. Nine new sunspot groups appeared during this reporting week.

An article on 11 year, 100 year, and 2300 year cycles can be found on the following link. <https://bit.ly/3kjVSxC>

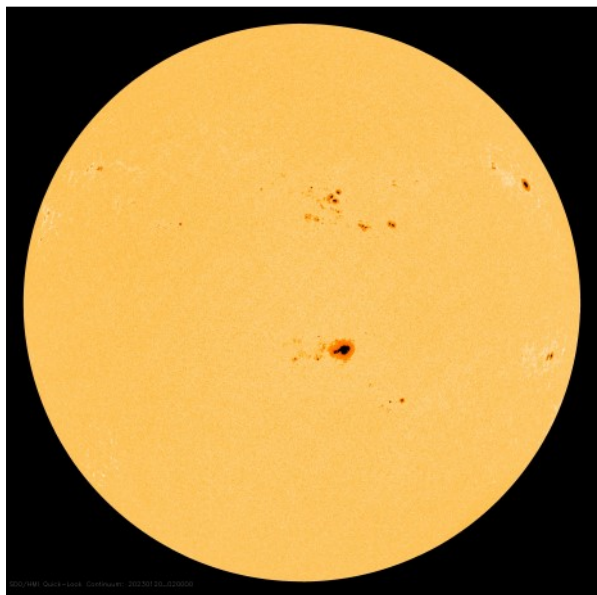
For more information concerning shortwave radio propagation, see <http://www.arrl.org/propagation> and the ARRL Technical Information Service at <http://arrl.org/propagationof-rf-signals>.

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For an explanation of numbers used in this bulletin, see <http://arrl.org/the-sun-the-earth-the-ionosphere>.



## Amateur Radio Newsline Report 2360 for Friday September January 20, 2023



David VK2AYD is kindly supplying various Amateur Radio Newsline Reports on the world of Amateur Radio.

## BOUVET ISLAND ON THE HORIZON



JIM/ANCHOR: We begin this report with encouraging and long-awaited news for DXers. The latest report from the Bouvet Island DXpedition, 3Y0J [THREE WHY ZERO JAY], is that radio operations could

start sometime between the 27th of January and the 4th of February. The team intends to stay on the remote island for three weeks. According to a post on DX-World.Net, Kenneth Opskar, LA7GIA, has reported that the sail from Port Stanley began on the 17th of January, just one day behind schedule. The operators said they are not planning any /MM activity on the way; however you can track them using the Garmin link shown on the Newsline website.

## THINKING AHEAD TO THE 2026 World Radiosport Team Championship

The World Radiosport Team Championship (WRTC) is an on-site ham radio competition held every four years. Previous WRTCs have been held in Seattle (1990), San Francisco (1996), Slovenia (2000), Finland (2002), Brazil (2006), Russia (2010), Boston (2014), and Germany (2018).

JIM/ANCHOR: Meanwhile, even with the big world radio championship coming to Italy later this year, the event's organizing committee is already looking for host venues for 2026. Graham Kemp VK4BB tells us what's involved.

GRAHAM: While much of the amateur radio world awaits the start of the World Radiosport Team Championship in Bologna, Italy this coming July, the WRTC Sanctioning Committee is already looking forward to hearing from prospective host sites for this prestigious event to be held in 2026.

The committee hopes to announce the venue for the 2026 event at the conclusion of the competition in Bologna.

This is Graham Kemp VK4BB.

## FROM DRILL TO REAL LIFE DISASTER

JIM/ANCHOR: Disaster drills are supposed to prepare radio operators for the real thing - so imagine how hams felt in one California county when one of their more recent drills

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played out as a real-life emergency. Randy Sly W4XJ shares that experience.



RANDY: When Sacramento County ARES was invited to participate in an in-person training exercise last summer, they had no idea that a few months later the drill would play out as a real-life event. Most in-person emergency training had come to a halt nationwide over the past few years due to the pandemic, but Sacramento County emergency managers wanted to return from table-top scenarios to in-person training with deployed incident command posts. This in-person drill focused on the levee system of the delta for the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers. At one point, there was a simulated communications blackout and ARES was called in to establish contact between the EOC, command posts and people in the field using FM and Winlink.

Now fast forward to early January. This time, what was happening was not a training exercise: a winter storm with pounding rain was wreaking havoc throughout the coastal counties of central and southern California. Sacramento County activated and included ARES to assist in reporting flooding of the rivers, particularly in the delta region. Sacramento County EC, Jay Ballinger, N6SAC, told AR Newline that, thanks to the drill, the familiarity the hams had gained with roads around the river region as well as with county emergency management allowed ARES to effectively deploy and report.

This is Randy Sly, W4XJ

## WEST BENGAL HAMS ENSURE PILGRIMS' SAFETY



JIM/ANCHOR: A massive religious pilgrimage in India has just concluded and as always the safety of the thousands attending was assured with the help of amateur radio as we hear from Jim Meachen ZL2BHF.

JIM: A record number of pilgrims turned out this year for the largest religious gathering in India, the Gangasagar Mela, and the West Bengal Radio Club was there as always to assist with public safety, communications and coordination for individuals who fell ill and needed airlifting from the island to area hospitals. More than a dozen people were reported missing at the massive gathering and the hams assisted in reuniting them with their families on the island. Officials told the Hindu newspaper that they had the support of about 42 amateur radio operators. The mela began on the 5th of January and ended on the 17th.

While they were there, the hams were also able to make contacts as part of Islands on the Air from the island, which is in the Bay of Bengal and has the designation of AS-153. They used the callsign AT2WBRC.

This is Jim Meachen ZL2BHF.

(AMBARISH NAG BISWAS, VU2JFA, THE HINDU)

## TEN METERS PUTS OUT ITS WELCOME MAT



JIM/ANCHOR: A stretch of days with great conditions on 10 meters has provided a bonus for a number of events on the band lately. In Germany, the DARC held its 10-meter contest on January 8th with hams

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getting on the air using CW and SSB. The Nordic Radio Amateur Union's 10m activity contest will be held on February 2nd, with CW ops on the air from 1800 to 1900 UTC; SSB users on from 1900 to 2000 UTC; FM users competing between 2000 UTC to 2100 UTC and Digital competitors getting in on the action from 2100 to 2200 UTC.

Just two days later, entrants in this year's Ten-Ten International Winter QSO Party will hope to make good use of favorable band conditions for operators using SSB on February 4th and 5th. The nonprofit organization, the Ten-Ten International Net, was created in 1962 to encourage activity on the 10m band and promote good operating practices.

(TEN-TEN INTERNATIONAL NET,  
NORDIC RADIO AMATEUR UNION)

## **SQUIRRELING AWAY SOME GREAT QSOs**

JIM/ANCHOR: We end this week's newscast with the story of a net that puts squirrels on the air. Not flying squirrels on the air. These are radio squirrels. Graham Kemp VK4BB tells us about their chatter.

GRAHAM: As anyone who lives in Australia knows, there are no native squirrels living here. Or....are there? If you ask Linda GØYLM, a member of the North West Fusion Group in the UK, she might insist there are - and for good reason: She has had plenty of QSOs with them. Linda and her husband, Ian, GØVGS, participate in the group's daily morning Squirrel Net, where Linda is net control. The squirrels are all the hams who check in starting at 0700 UTC from New Zealand, Australia, The Netherlands, Ireland, Sri Lanka and even the United States.

Ian told Newsline that the net was inspired by early-morning walks the couple would

take in the local park in the early days of the pandemic. Radios in hand, they would chat with friends as they strolled. Ian said: [quote] "From time to time we would see a squirrel and mention it on the air. This moved to logging the first squirrel sighted each morning, and the Squirrel Net was born." [endquote]

Conversation topics vary from day to day and the chatter often gets as lively as the group's furry little namesakes. Because hams are almost always in danger of timing out, the award of the Golden Acorn is conferred virtually on any ham who passes the conversation along just in time.

You can find the Squirrel Net in WIRES-X room 41755 and on the GB-NWFG reflector, YSF 26499. As Ian told Newsline, everyone is welcome to join the peanut gallery - even those elusive Australian squirrels!

This is Graham Kemp VK4BB.

(NORTH WEST FUSION GROUP)

Acknowledgements:

With thanks to Amateur Radio Weekly; Amba-rish Nag Biswas, VU2JFA; the BBC; CQ magazine; David Behar K7DB; the 425 DX News; The Hindu newspaper; Ian Maude, GØVGS; Jim Storms, AB8YK; North West Fusion Group; shortwaveradio.de; 3YØJ (THREE WHY ZERO JAY) Website; Wireless Institute of Australia; Winter Field Day Association; Worldwide Flora and Fauna; and you our listeners, that's all from the Amateur Radio Newsline. We remind our listeners that Amateur Radio Newsline is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that incurs expenses for its continued operation. If you wish to support us, please visit our website at arnewsline.org and know that we appreciate you all. We also remind our listeners that if you like our newscast, please leave us a 5-star rating wherever you subscribe to us. For now, with Caryn Eve Murray KD2GUT at the news desk in New York, and our news team worldwide, I'm Jim Damron N8TMW in Charleston West Virginia saying 73. As always we thank you for listening. Amateur Radio



## Blast from the past

Blast from the Past' is the section of Oxtales where we reflect on what the club and its members were doing in years gone by. Members are also encouraged to send in items relating to club members or club activities in previous years.

This month's blast is taken from the 2018 January issue of Oxtales. The club had 70 members. Henry VK2ZHE was President, Paul VK2ICQ Vice President, Larry VK2CLL Treasurer and Steve VK2ZSW Secretary.

Club activities reported on were the November 2017 White Ribbon Walk.

*' . . . The Walk took place on Sunday the 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2017. 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, Flynn's Beach and at the Town Beach kiosk . . . '*



*Steve VK2ZSW operating a checkpoint at the finishing point.*

*Those who staffed the check points were Lyle Smith VK2SMI, Rob Frost VK2CRF, Dennis Meade VK2DAM, Bob Ecclestone VK2ZRE, Arthur Monck VK2ATM, Mark McGuire VK2FMGM, Steve Wynn VK2ZSW, Stuart Walsh VK2FSTU and Henry Lundell VK2ZHE . . . '*



## *' . . . 2017 Christmas Party*

*The December 2017 Christmas Party was held at the Long Point Art Gal-*

*lery and Winery. Thank you to Arthur Monck VK2ATM for booking the Long Point venue and negotiating the free use of the timber deck picnic area and barbeque facilities.*

*The day remained fine despite rain being forecast. The rain was warded off by the combined effect of having three gazebos on standby in place on the deck ready for instant erection at the first sign of precipitation. Thank you to Keith Bayliss VK2FPTL for thoughtfully bringing his gazebo which was joined by the two gazebos which Lyle Smith VK2SMI brought along. One was Lyle's personal gazebo and the other was the larger WICEN gazebo. Thank you to Steve Wynn VK2ZSW for arranging the loan of the WICEN gazebo.*

*Thank you to everyone who attended the party for making the day so enjoyable. The club supplied bacon and eggs breakfast was barbequed by Lyle Smith VK2SMI. The sausage sizzle lunch was barbequed by Larry Lindsay VK2CLL and Ivan Southwell VK2IJS.*



*The BBQ team, John VK2KHB, Lyle VK2SMI, Bob VK2ZRE, Larry VK2CLL and Ivan VK2IJS.*

*The delicious trifle made by Sue Meade was a special very popular treat which added to the traditional fruit salad and ice cream dessert. As usual there was a veritable feast of party food brought by members to share. No one went hungry!*



*Sue and Richard VK2CHC pose for the camera after enjoying the trifle.*

*Those attending included Lewis Green VK2AG (SK) and Pamela, Bob Ecclestone VK2ZRE*

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and Diana, Richard Court VK2CHC and Linda and her mother, David Pilley VK2AYD, Charles Edmondson VK2KCE (SK), Dennis Meade VK2DAM and Sue, Stuart Walsh VK2FSTU (VK2WAL), Arthur Monck VK2ATM and Norah, Peter Kucera VK2MPK, Paul Colledge VK2ICQ, Paula Keena VK2FPDC (VK2PDC) and harmonics, Larry Lindsay VK2CCL, Ivan Southwell VK2IJS and harmonic, Keith Bayliss VK2FPTL, John Bailey VK2KHB, John Hansen VK2AYQ, and Henry Lundell VK2ZHE.



*The magnificent deck area at the Long Point Art Gallery and Winery . . .*

### ***‘ . . . WICEN Mid North Coast Region Antenna Building Day***



*Members of WICEN Mid North Coast Region spent Sunday the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2017 at Sancrox Reserve building and testing HF antennas.*

*It was a very interesting and rewarding day. A guyed flagpole was set up as a central support for the antenna feed point and balun.*

*Dipoles were built and tested for the 80 and 40 metre Amateur Bands and for the WICEN commercial 2, 3, 5 and 7 MHz fre-*

*quencies. Tests were done with and without a reflector for NVIS (Near Vertical Incidence Skywave) operation.*

*The day started out fine but the forecast rain arrived with a vengeance in the afternoon. Fortunately, we were the only group using the reserve in the afternoon so we had the large covered picnic area to ourselves. It was dry under cover but adjusting antennas meant excursions out into the rain.*

*A sausage sizzle lunch on the provided electric barbeque was particularly enjoyable.*

*Those participating were Rob Frost VK2CRF, Lyle Smith VK2SMI, Steve Wynn VK2ZSW, Larry Thompson VK2LJT and Henry Lundell VK2ZHE. Larry travelled up from Tuncurry for the day. As well as his Amateur Radio and WICEN interests, Larry is the Communications Manager for the SES Mid North Coast Region . . .*

### ***‘ . . . Education and Amateur Licence Assessments***

*The club's long serving Education Officer and WIA Nominated Assessor Larry Lindsay VK2CCL is very pleased that the club now has two additional WIA Assessors. Steve Wynn VK2ZSW and Bob Ecclestone VK2ZRE recently gained accreditation as WIA Assessors.*

*Congratulations to Steve and Bob on gaining their assessor accreditations. Obtaining accreditation is far from straightforward and requires considerable work. Well done!*

*With three assessors in the club it means that it is now much easier to conduct assessments for all three grades of Amateur Radio Licence.*

*We are looking forward to being able to run a Foundation Licence training and assessment weekend soon. As well, at least a couple of club members are planning to upgrade their licences.*



## Equipment from the Past



In this section we look at radio equipment from previous years. The equipment this month is the FT-818 - 6W HF/VHF/UHF All Mode Portable Transceiver. This transceiver superseded the venerable and very popular Yaesu FT-817ND. However Yaesu have announced that the production of the FT-818ND will be discontinued. This decision has been made due to difficulty in sourcing the availability of some components for production to continue.

The FT-818 incorporated all the basic and features of the FT-817ND and provided upgrades desired existing owners. The FT-818 provided 6W of solid output power with an external DC power source.

The supplied Ni-MH battery pack (SBR-32MH) was upgraded to provide a larger battery capacity - 9.6v/ 1900mAh. The FT-818 also included a built-in TCXO-9 oscillator that provided frequency stability ( $\pm 0.5$ ppm).

Yaesu broke new ground with the introduction of the FT-817 thought to be the world's first HF/VHF/UHF self-contained battery-powered Multi-mode Portable Transceiver.

Providing up to six watts of power output, the FT-818 was designed for operation on the 160-10 meter HF bands, plus the 6 meter, 2 meter, and 70 cm bands. Operating modes included SSB, CW, AM, FM, Packet, or SSB-based Digital modes such as PSK31. A low weight 1.1 kg was also an advantage for pedestrian mobile operation.

### Features.

- HF/6m/VHF/UHF 6W Backpack Transceiver
- TX Frequency 160-10m, 6m, 2m, 70cm
- RX Frequency 100kHz - 56MHz, 76 - 154MHz, 420 - 470MHz
- Power output 6W SSB/CW/FM with 13.8V External DC 2.0W AM carrier 2.5W SSB/CW/FM with 9.6V 1900mAh or 8xAA batteries (AM 0.7W)
- Operating Modes USB, LSB, CW, AM, FM, WFM, Digital (AFSK), Packet (1200/9600 FM) Digital Modes RTTY, PSK31-U, PSK31-L & user defined USB/LSB (SSTV, PACTOR etc)
- Case Size 135 x 38 x 165mm (WHD)
- Weight 1.1kg
- Two colour LCD Multi-function Display (Blue/Amber) Bargraph Metering of Power Output, ALC, SWR and Modulation Optional Narrow CW and SSB Filters AGC Fast-Slow-Auto-Off Selection RF Gain/Squelch Control Built-in Noise Blanker

### Additional operational features.

IPO (intercept point optimisation) and ATT (receiver front end attenuator) Dual VFOs, Split Capability, IF Shift and RIT (Clarifier) Wide/Narrow FM Selection AM Aircraft Reception Dedicated SSB-based Digital Mode for PSK31 on USB/LSB, AFSK RTTY etc. Built-in Electronic Keyer with Semi-Break-in (adjustable down to 10ms delay). Adjustable CW Pitch. CW Paddle Normal/Reverse Connection Selection. Built-in VOX. Built-in CTCSS and DCS. ARTS (Auto Range Transponder System). Smart Search (automatic memory loading system) Front and Rear Panel Aerial connectors (BNC on front, SO-239 on back). 200 Regular Memories, plus Home Channels and Band Limit (PMS) memories Alpha-Numeric Labelling of Memory Channels Automatic Power-Off (APO) and Tx Time-Out-Timer (TOT). Rear Panel Data, Accessory and Key jacks. CAT System Computer Control Capability (4800/9600/38400bps) and Cloning Capability.

Acknowledgements:

<https://www.strictlyham.com.au/>





**Silent Key**

### **David Francis Newey ex VK2DFN**

It is with great sadness that we record the passing of David Newey ex VK2DFN on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 2023 in Geelong in Victoria. David was born in Geelong on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November 1943.

David Newey VK2DFN and Leonie Newey VK2LPN moved from Victoria to Port Macquarie in 2010. They Joined the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club as one of the first Family Memberships. When they took out their VK2 callsigns they both obtained their initials as the letters of their callsigns.



David was an enthusiastically active member of ORARC and he and Leonie participated in all the Club activities. David was elected to the ORARC Committee in 2012. David is fondly remembered for his contribution to the Club during his time in Port Macquarie.



David VK2DFN with Leonie VK2LPN taking part in the ORARC Amateur Radio Display on Town Green during 23 October 2010.



David chatting with fellow amateurs and friends on Town Green October 2010.

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David was an active member of Port Macquarie SES during the years that he was in Port Macquarie.

David enjoyed touring by caravan and he and Leonie made many trips but always looked forward to returning to Port Macquarie.

After 10 years in Port Macquarie, David and Leonie moved back to Victoria in 2019 and settled in David's birthplace of Geelong to be close to family as his health deteriorated.

David's last hobby was flying Drones which he enjoyed very much. In recent times both David and Leonie had let their Amateur Radio callsigns lapse.

David and Leonie have three Daughters with four Grandsons, one Granddaughter and three Great Granddaughters.

The members of the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club extend their deepest sympathy to Leonie and the extended Newey family.

Thank you to Bruce Walker VK2HOT and to John McLean VK2KC for advising of the sad news of David's passing, and to Leonie Newey for providing the details for this Silent Key through John McLean VK2KC.

Vale David Francis Newey ex VK2DFN



*Submitted by Henry Lundell VK2ZHE on behalf of the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club Inc.*

