

	Clubrooms: UHCC Park Street UPPER HUTT P.O. Box 40 525 UPPER HUTT 6415	
	www.qsl.net/zl2vh/ NEWSLETTER of <i>The New Zealand Association</i> <i>of Radio Transmitters UPPER HUTT Branch 63 Inc.</i>	

MARCH 2008

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President's Report

Hi Everyone...as the summer moves on, so has the weather. Hopefully all of you have managed to get out and enjoy the summer, probably one of the better ones in recent times.

I wish to thank those members who have assisted with the working bees at the repeater site on Mt Climie. This rather thankless task although weather dependant has been of great help, in moving the site forward in a number of areas. There have been two main visits recently, one in December the other on Waitangi Day this year. Work completed has tidied up the main antenna pole, with new feed lines of heliax coax, and a reduction in the number of feed lines. We are seeing and hearing the benefits of these new feed lines - greater coverage, and better reception - all good stuff.

However, on the recent visit on Waitangi Day it was sad to note that some damage had been caused to the site by unknown persons. The damage is more annoying than anything else, as it just causes more work for us to maintain the site. When reporting the damage to Upper Hutt Police, it is pleasing to note that the matter had already been reported, by a member of the public who had chased the offenders off the site. It appears that they had gained access by motorcycle. This person had chased them down as far as Plateau Road, before the unregistered bikes got away from him. Good to see that people are looking out for other peoples property.

By the time you read this Field Day will have come and gone, so hopefully a good report will follow on this event.

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Don't forget: Club Net every Tuesday evening on 3.645MHz at 0800UTC

President's Report—continued

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As we move on to March, there are requirements to assist Morrie ZL2ADP with the Kapi Mana Motorcycle events - please make yourself available for these events, as they are a great fund raiser for the club. You only need to do one day every two months or so.

Also in March will be the fourth annual Radio EXPO - again some assistance is required for this event. Morrie has agreed to do the Talk-in Station on 730 using the special event callsign of ZL4FUN. Don't forget to work the station to be eligible for the special QSL card that accompanies the contact. As the EXPO has changed locations, the requirement to work early in the day for the car parking has gone. But the organisers are still requiring volunteers to help out with general security at the event. Remember as a volunteer you get free entry and a free drink (coffee, tea or soft drink) for your efforts.

Finally, the AGM will be held in April, once the finances are in from Gavin ZL2ACT. The date will probably be around Friday 18th. Remember all officer positions are up for grabs, so please consider giving this some thought, to help out the club.

So until next month, good DX and 73's.

Mark ZL2UFI

AREC Report

On Wednesday 20 February at 9.00 am a SAR briefing was held at the Upper Hutt Police Station regarding a missing person in the Birchville area. An 83 year old had left his car at the Bridge St carpark at 2 pm on Tuesday afternoon with the intention of walking up and beyond the Reservoir, an area which he had walked often and was familiar with.

The police were alerted at 6 pm when he had not returned to his car. An overnight search of the area including the use of police dogs revealed no clues as to the missing person's whereabouts and two 4 person search teams were deployed at 9.30 am (Wednesday) to search the walking track and along the river bed.

At 9.41 am a message was received at SAR Upper Hutt that the missing person had been found by one of the search teams near the carpark making his own way out. He was none the worse after spending an uncomfortable night surrounded by high gorse on the hill above the dam.

Regarding communications, John Yaldwyn (ZL4JY), Brian Fearnley (ZL2BRF) and myself checked out the handheld radios and issued backup batteries to the initial search teams. A third team was being prepared when the good news came through by cell-phone.

At this point in time a vehicle was about to leave for Mt Climie with a portable repeater to allow for full radio coverage of the search area.

John MacDonald (ZL2UX) had been advised to keep a listening watch on Climie 730 in case further assistance with communications was required.

The weather in the search area was fortunately fine with warm day and moderate night temperatures.

Maurice Vile ZL2ADP/ZK8EL

Repeater Report

Just a short update as to what has been happening repeater wise. On Waitangi Day a working party consisting of John ZL2UX, Mark ZL4WT, Morrie ZL2ADP, Rod Evans and his son, Mark ZL2UFI and myself ZL2TNG again attacked the Climie repeaters site.

We lowered the mast and while several removed the faulty 70cm (860 repeater) antennas and then fitted the new array. John applied a coat of paint to the pole and its fittings. This time before lifting the mast several test were carried out on the now new antennas both at the input connector at the mast and at the duplexers. It was pleasing to see all the results coming back positive.

The saddles were removed from the coax up the pole and all the cables realigned and held in place with cable ties, a temporary measure until we can cover the coax more permanently with a capping.

Feeling pretty pleased with ourselves we came back down to the clubrooms and had a BBQ. It seemed all was going well but it was not long before our hopes were dashed when 860 started locking on ?&!*#. Oh well another trip up the hill on Friday with Mark ZL2UFI, Peter ZL2SJ and myself to investigate the problem. After some testing we decided on the complete removal of 860 and its duplexers for a more intensive bench testing. We had taken with us the 9625 repeater and very quickly had it fitted in, in place of 860. Although it is running at a much lower power level it is providing much better coverage than 860. We hope to have 860 up and running again in the next couple of weeks.

Cheers for now Neil ZL2TNG
Repeater Trustee.

What is this?

No answers were submitted.



Ham radio in Antarctica

It has been a quiet summer for amateur radio activities on Ross Island this season. The American hams from McMurdo Station have been few in number and less active than in previous seasons, and the HF multi-band beam antenna on their ham shack has been damaged in several successive storms.

We did meet on one Sunday afternoon to trace a source of interference to a faulty fire alarm panel in an adjacent building. I also sorted out the cables and software for connecting a RigBlaster digital interface to their Icom 706 radio. But there has been very little activity with the Americans other than this. Fixing their antenna is nearly an impossibility, since their safety regulations prevent anyone other than a rigger from climbing their (short) tower to work on it. Getting a rigger to do this job involves lots of paperwork, and needs to be requested about a year in advance.

At Scott Base we had two amateurs, and a visit from Geoff Chapman ZL3PX saw a surge in activity here. I had just purchased an antenna analyser, to investigate why the 20m dipole outside my lab was performing so poorly. Geoff suggested changing it to a delta, which fitted in well with the available space here, and using a length of 75ohm coax as a matching transformer rather than the balun that we suspected might be faulty. We made the changes and immediately made contacts with PSK31 stations in Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, and New Zealand.

A week later I arranged a PSK31 contact on 20m with Sean ZL2SC and Tom ZL2HGR, who used the equipment at the Upper Hutt clubrooms. This was so strong that we decided to try voice. It was quite noisy here, due to local QRM from science equipment such as radars. But we were able to have a successful conversation.

I have now installed a 40m delta antenna as well. I'm looking forward to making a few more contacts during the winter, particularly on PSK31.

I also have a small project to build a turnstile antenna for receiving weather satellites. This will need to use materials that are available on the base, such as welding wire and pieces of wood. We can't just go out and buy parts once the winter period of isolation starts.

Pete, ZL2PDJ/ZL5

Jock White Field Day

Hopefully we will have a write up of the club's efforts in this year's Field Day for next month's newsletter.

I popped out to the Kaitoke venue in the early afternoon with a non-ham friend to see what was happening, then went home (my parents-in-law were visiting) and tried to give the Branch a few points by calling up each hour. A combination of good propagation, a lower than normal noise floor at my QTH, and the in-law incentive to try harder with the radio, enabled me to log a modest 100 contacts in the late evening on Saturday and early Sunday morning.

Sean, ZL2SC
