



QST63

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Newsletter of The New Zealand Association of Radio Transmitters, Upper Hutt Branch 63, Inc.

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Presidents Report

Hi everyone... I hope that all survived the Christmas/New Year period and that it wasn't too taxing for you all.

As we look forward to 2012, there are a number of projects being considered for this year - one is the weather station project. More news on this as it develops but suffice to say, the project is based around the idea to have a weather station at Mt Climie and to report on conditions up there. Watch this space!

Peter ZL2HM has been looking at setting up the Field Day Station at the Upper Hutt Summer Carnival this year, but he may well be out of the country when this is on. Is there someone who'd be willing to take this little project on? About the only issue apart from enough operators to help out, would be for someone to probably sleep overnight with the caravan as security for the equipment and site. Anyway have a think about it and let me know ASAP as the event is on the last weekend of February (where has January gone?).

There has been quite some activity on D-Star over the summer period which is good to see, and read the repeater report for various updates on all the repeaters at Mt Climie.

Thanks to all those that helped out at the recent Junk Sale (Estate Sale) at the clubrooms we also managed to get rid of some stuff out of the garage area that had been there for a number of years gathering dust. We must have a day soon to clean out the garage and loft area to see what we have 'left' as well. So I'll pick a date soon, and advertise the day so you can all assist - probably a Saturday morning is all that will be required.

And I've updated the club's web site with new links and documents of interest - check out the Resources and D-Star Links pages for more information.

Also don't forget that the NZART Conference for next year is being held in Nelson - in years gone by it has been one of the best locations to go to as you'll all know. So if you are considering going then get in early on the accommodation and travel arrangements to avoid as they 'any disappointment'.

Well that's the news from me... 73's and good DX....

Mark ZL2UFI, President

Repeater Report

A busy month, lots going on and more to be done !

1292 23cm FM

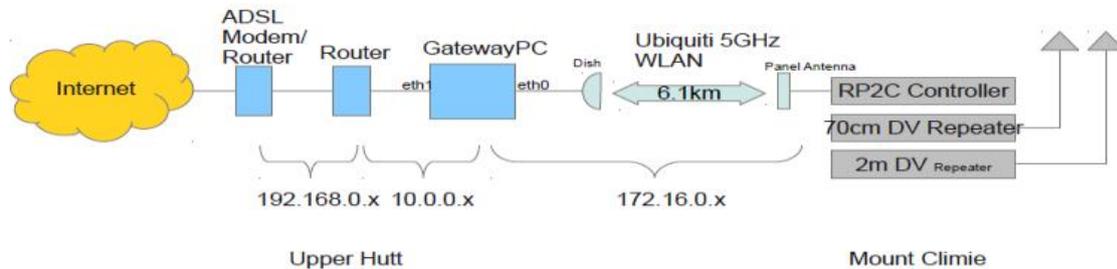
Been on air for a year and continues to give excellent results.
A site visit is planned to upgrade the antenna feeder.

Dstar gateway

The Wifi Link to Climie was commissioned late November 2011. The Gateway was connected, and after a few teething troubles associated with the DStar us-root-node permissions, had been giving good results. However the recent high winds moved the panel antenna at Clime. A recent site visit restored the wi-fi connection. Subsequently the PSU in the gateway PC died. However that has now been replaced and ZL2VH gateway is operational.

860 DStar 70cm

We have been receiving reports of varying signal strength on 860 DV, due to possible temperature cycling issues with the power amplifier module in the 860 Transmitter.



At a recent site visit 860 DV was removed for repair and was temporarily replaced with the backup tait 860FM 25W repeater.

5425 Dstar 2m

Nothing to report, continues to run ok.

730 2m FM Repeater

Still waiting for Downer to refit a filter at Telecom's pager transmitter site. This Pager system continues to cause interference to 730.

6M Beacon

Neil ZL2TNG kindly built a new antenna for the 6M Beacon. A working-bee (and volunteers) needs to be organised to recommission the beacon.

Simon ZL2BRG
Repeater Trustee

AREC Report

No events during January. We may need to support a KMMC Trail Ride at Makara on the Sunday 12th February 2012. Three operators required. Also another KMMC event near Makara in March 2012. Please advise if available or not for the 12th February.

Keep prepared.

Malcolm ZL2UDF
AREC Upper Hutt Section Leader

Eric's Visit "Up Over"

(Well, if we are "Down Under", that has to be correct!)

Last April my exuberant sister visited NZ and so it came to pass that I found myself in mid-December sitting in an aluminium tube (AKA a Boeing 777) on my way to the UK for the Holiday period.

I will spare you the gory details, but it was a very hectic 3½ weeks visiting friends and family. The weather was unexpectedly mild, so I took far too many cold weather clothes.

General observations were that the UK is not as bad as people make out, although collecting the rental car from Heathrow was a bit traumatic as I had difficulty understanding the guy who checked it over! The roads seemed too narrow at first, although these are the same 'main' roads as I used to tear around in my previous life.

By the end of the trip this had corrected itself. The main differences since my last visit 7 years ago were to do with motoring. There seems to be an excess of speed cameras, everywhere charges the earth for parking and everyone ignores speed limits on motorways. The banking system is still archaic, and I had difficulties, even with a UK bank account.

Anyway – to the radio side of things!

I took my FT-60R handheld with me and, shortly after arriving I visited Moonraker Communications and purchased a small dual band mag mount antenna for mobile use. That got me on the air satisfactorily without wrecking the paintwork on the rental car. (They seemed a bit fussy!). There were numerous repeaters around, but very little activity on any of them. I guess most people have turned to the Internet for communications.

Talking of the Internet, I tried to find an IRLP node in order to report back to NZ, but without success. It seems that OFCOM (the UK regulatory body for communications) has an iron grip on this sort of thing, and IRLP nodes definitely cannot be active if they are unattended. Hence, most are inactive for much of the time. We are lucky that node 5582, which we use for our regular Saturday sked, is attended full time.

On my travels I had arranged to head to Lincolnshire for various reasons. On the way I met up with Colin, G8TMV who is an old work colleague. I had not seen him for over 30 years. We spent a very interesting day at the Imperial War Museum's aircraft museum in Duxford – even though several exhibits were closed for the winter. For anyone interested in aviation it is a 'must see'! We ended the day with a pub meal and a pint of Real Ale (of course).

While in Lincolnshire I had the pleasure of visiting the Friskney and East Lincolnshire Communications Club (www.felcc.com) who were holding their mid-winter table-top sale and auction. I believe this was a 'first' and something of an experiment, but the evening was well attended and proved to be a success for the club.

My contribution was to purchase a top cover for the FT101B that I received from Morrie ZL2ADP, and which I intend to renovate when time allows. The lid cost me the grand sum of 50p (96c)! There were other items of interest but I would have had to bring them back on the aircraft.

The auction took place after the sale, but it appears that the "recession" has been rather more deeply felt in the UK. Despite the very reasonable prices for most items, the punters' pockets seem to have become deeper (or their arms shorter) as the bids were not so forthcoming despite the best efforts of Brendan 2E0BDS and Ian 2E0XOD.

(Apologies if I got your callsigns wrong guys. I stored the info on my laptop in case I lost my piece of paper. You've guessed it! I lost my paper and my laptop crashed beyond repair!).



There was a varied selection of items for sale, varying from new to 'not so new' as this photo of part of the hall shows:



Brendan 2E0BDS showing his skills as auctioneer and Ian 2E0XOD holding the FT101EE that was on offer for 'spares or repair'. The radio eventually went for £20 (\$38).
(Shame I had to come home by air!).

Friskney is a very small village between Boston and Skegness, on the East coast of England. Even with SatNav in the car it was very difficult to find the Village Hall in the dark and, being Lincolnshire (which is extremely flat), on the day I visited it was howling an absolute gale. It was probably the coldest day during my trip but the reception by everyone at FELCC could not have been warmer.

A very big thank you to Brendan and all at Friskney for your hospitality. Next time I am in the area I will call in to see you all – hopefully in more clement weather.

This brings me to another point. The UK callsigns confuse the hell out of me. I was always used to G-calls full stop! With the current licence structure things are a bit more complicated. I think I am over-running my space in the newsletter so have a look at the following link in order to clarify things:

http://www.electronics-radio.com/articles/ham_radio/call-signs/uk-amateur-radio-callsigns.php

My final radio event was to travel to Exeter to meet an old friend and colleague, Bob G8CQR, who I had not seen since 1978/9, and Tony, M6AIV. I have a regular weekly sked on IRLP with these guys when they are around. If you hear us on 730 please feel free to join in.

We had arranged to meet for another pub meal (and more Real Ale) but Bob had a dose of the Montezumas, so Tony and myself had a nice evening with an eyeball ragchew. (We had not met in person before). I called in to see Bob the following day, as I couldn't travel all that way and not see him! He wasn't too good at all, but he's much better now.

Anyway, I'd better leave some copy space for someone else. Suffice to say that my trip was very 'full on' but enjoyable. I did spend money on a new Alinco power supply and a few connectors and antenna bits. Hopefully I will have an improved HF antenna in the near future. I have to put my G4EHJ callsign to bed until next time.

I must remember that my trainers have steel toecaps when I fly next time, as I smelled out the security area at various airports when I had to take them off to pass through the x-ray machines.

Eric
ZL2SET / G4EHJ

BRANCH 63 WEEKLY NET

Well may you ask what has happened to the Branch 63 weekly HF net?

For several months or was it years a couple of us, ZL2TNG and ZL2ADP, using the branch call-sign ZL2VH we valiantly called for stations to log on for the Branch 63 HF net but alas to little avail. Occasionally we would have a station join us.

Thoroughly disappointed and disillusioned we just gave up.

For some time now, and having been joined by ZL2SET, we three have continued to net up on a Tuesday evening on 80 metres on 3.755 Mhz LSB at 0800hrs UTC using our own call-signs. The shift in frequency from 3.715Mhz was mainly due to QRM.

We would be more than happy to have other stations join us however we three are not prepared to go back to running a branch net.

Having said that we would willingly join in with others if a branch member were willing to run a regular ZL2VH Branch 63 HF net.

Three old rag-chewers.
