NEW ZEALAND & AUSTRALIAN AMATEUR RADIO

VOL. 5 DECEMBER 2025

Photograph Geoff ZL3GA

VOL. 5 NOVEMBER 2025

A Free Magazine with Product News, DIY and Interviews

NEW ZEALAND & AUSTRALIAN AMATEUR RADIO MAGAZINE

Email: ZL1GUD@proton.me

New Zealand & Australian Amateur Radio Magazine is now being sent to every amateur radio club in New Zealand and Australia as well as over 200 subscribers... and it's all for FREE

New Zealand Amateur Radio magazine is free and includes Product News, International Amateur Radio News, DIY projects, Interviews, POTA and SOTA news and DX Pedition news. Club news is for the clubs and will not be included in the magazine.

I you want to be featured or have a project that you want to feature then email me the details and we will include it.

Greg
ZL1GUD

Note: Right click on text for link to website.

www.thehamshack.co.nz

This issue:

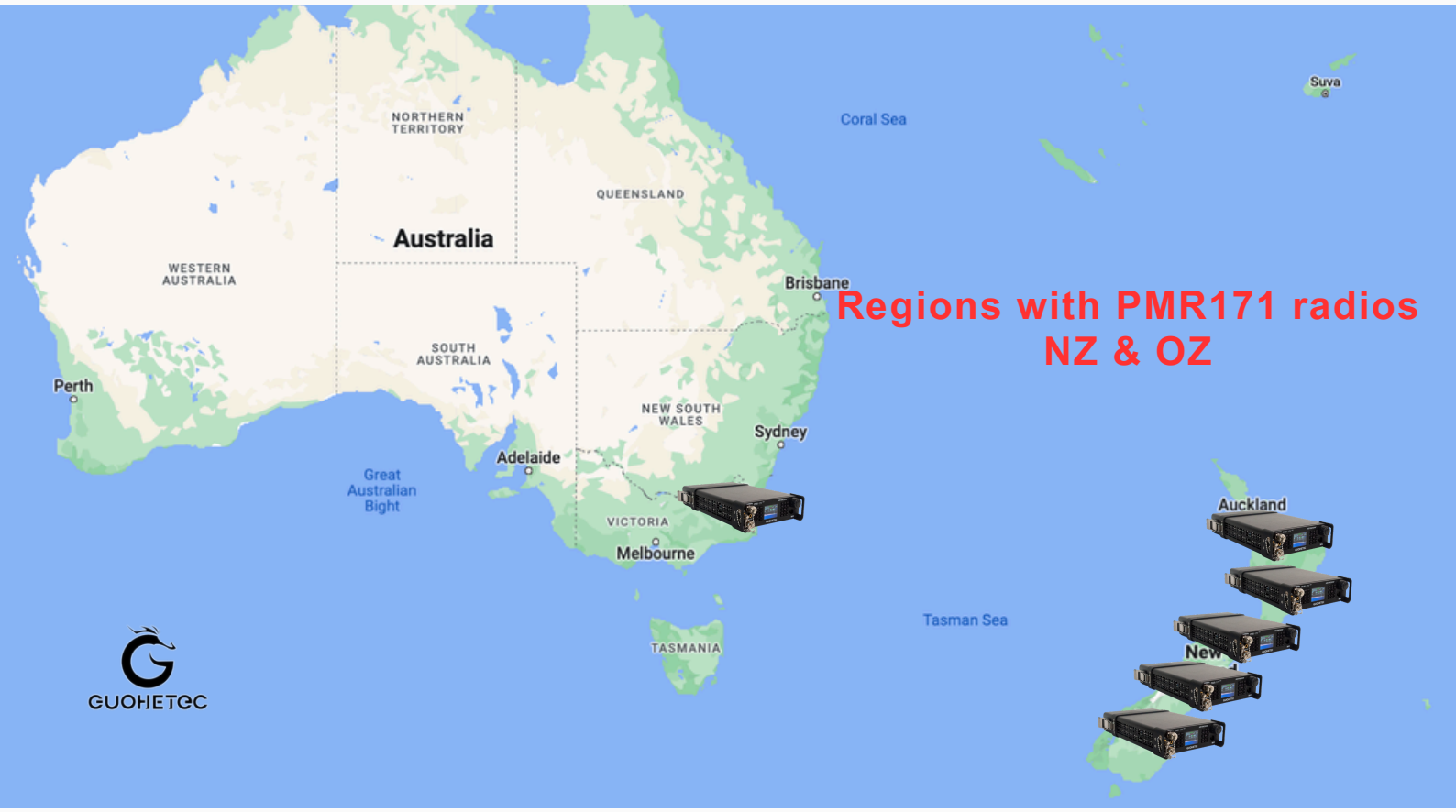
LOTS of STOCK

THE HAM SHACK

Perfect for SOTA & POTA

PMR 171

- HF, VHF & UHF
- All Mode incl. FT8 & RTTY
- ATU
- Waterfall
- Comes with a battery & charger
- CW decode
- Optional backpack
- Millitary style antenna options
- 20w HF & 10w VHF & UHF



Regions with PMR171 radios
NZ & OZ

NZ$1295.00
incl. 5Ah battery

Delivered to VK $1250.00 by Fedex
(incl. 5Ah battery)
excl OZ taxes and clearance

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From the Editor

We have just held the Kaikoura inter-region social.

Blenheim & Nelson meets the Canterbury hams. We met in Kaikoura as it is roughly half way between the two centres. These socials have turned out to be fun and this one was two days with a social and POTA events on the Saturday. A meetup in a local pub for dinner on the Saturday evening and then the Sunday...

The Sunday was a DX competition sponsored by The Ham Shack using the PMR171 radios and both the Guohetec antenna and the Spiderbeam 807 multiband wire antenna. Two bands 40m and 20m 25 minutes per band with operator slots allocated by a draw. 1 point per NZ contact, 2 points for a contact with OZ and 3 points per contact beyond the region.

The prize for the DX competition was a 10m Spiderbeam mast sponsored by The Ham Shack.

I wear two hats, the editor of this magazine and the owner of The Ham Shack and we will continue to sponsor these events to stimulate and grow the hobby.

It's a bit premature, but Merry Christmas to you and your's and may 2026 be full of DX and radio adventures.

73's

Greg

www.thehamshack.co.nz

Is POTA/SOTA Changing Amateur Radio?

Why POTA Is Changing the Face of Amateur Radio

If you want to see where the real energy in amateur radio is right now, look at Parks on the Air (POTA). It has exploded from a niche activity into one of the most dynamic forces reshaping the hobby. And the reason is simple: POTA blends radio, adventure, simplicity, and community in a way nothing else quite matches.

For decades, amateur radio relied heavily on fixed stations, contesting, DXing, nets, and club nights. Those things still matter—deeply—but POTA has injected something fresh. It gets people outside, on the move, and actually doing radio in a way that feels alive. You don't need a tower, a big rig, or a fancy station. A small radio, a lightweight antenna, a battery, and one of thousands of parks worldwide is all it takes to be part of the action.

What makes POTA so compelling is its accessibility. New operators—who often feel overwhelmed by the complexity of the hobby—discover they can make contacts worldwide with a simple setup in the middle of a quiet reserve. For older hams, POTA rekindles the spark that first got them licensed. It strips everything back to the basics: radio, nature, and skill. No noise floor. No interference from the neighbour's solar inverter. Just clean signals and a sense of freedom.

Then there's the challenge. POTA offers instant objectives—activate a park, chase an activator, build your stats, complete awards. The system is gamified enough to keep you hooked, yet still grounded in real operating skill. Operators who have never tried CW suddenly want to learn it because it's efficient in the field. Portable antenna design has taken off because people want to optimise every gram of gear. It pushes operators to improve—without ever feeling like a chore.

But the biggest shift POTA brings is cultural. It's dragging radio out of the shack and back into real life. People are meeting up in parks, forming local groups, and collaborating on activations. Families are joining. Non-hams get curious when they see a wire in a tree and someone working DX from a picnic table. It's one of the few aspects of the hobby that consistently attracts new blood.

POTA is also incredibly social online. Logs upload instantly, spotting networks run constantly, and activators get real-time feedback from chasers. The pace and connectivity fit the modern world, yet the core of the activity remains pure, hands-on radio. It bridges generations—old-school operators appreciate the skill involved, while younger hams enjoy the portability, community, and fresh challenge.

In short, POTA is changing the face of amateur radio because it brings back something the hobby has been missing: adventure. It's radio with dirt under its fingernails. It's simple, challenging, unpredictable, and fun. And for a hobby that has often struggled to define itself in a digital age, POTA proves the magic of radio is still very much alive—just waiting for you in the next park down the road.

Celebrating 100 YEARS 1923 - 2023

NZART Centennial Conference 2026

Dear Branch Secretaries,

Could you please send this email around to your club members for their consideration and action.
Forums...

What is your club expecting for talks/forums at the 2026 NZART AGM/Conference.

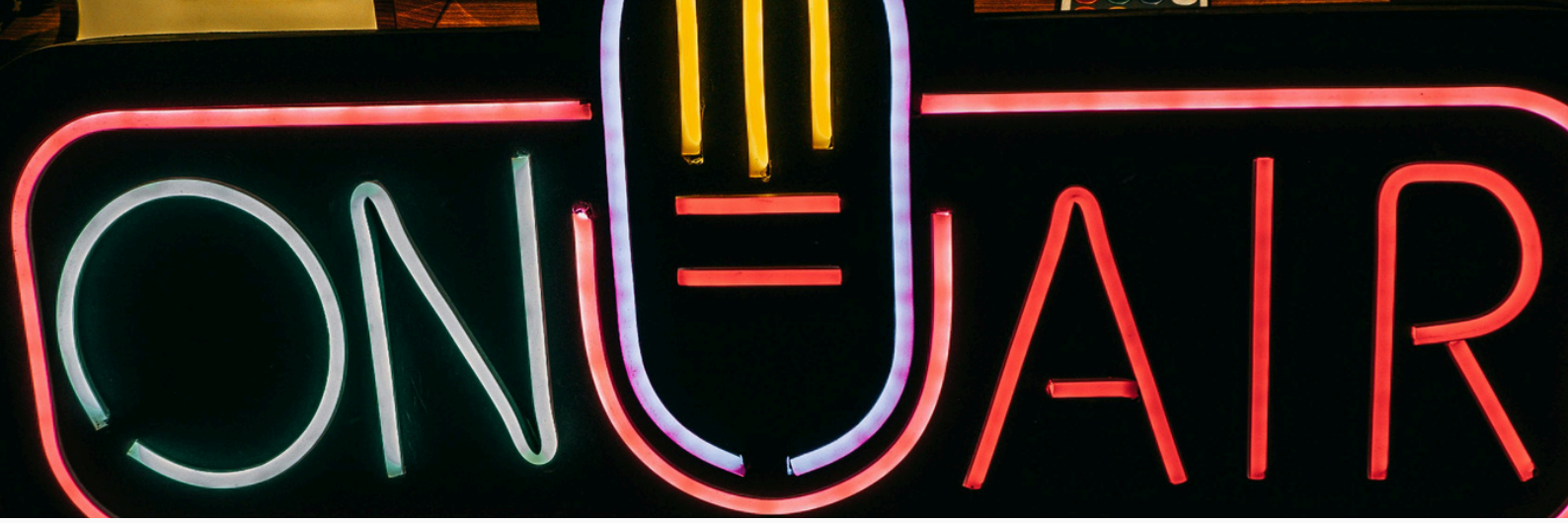
Have you any members who would like to give a presentation and approximately how long would that presentation take... 1 hour slots with the first and last 5 minutes to move in and out of the location.
If you have members who are willing... what is their call-sign, name and email contact details, so we can contact them to finalise matters.

ZL100C... this call-sign is special and sought after by hams, worldwide.

If you would like to use this call-sign for a time... please email David Karrasch, zl1dk@nzart.org.nz- with the dates, times, bands and modes so he can add your details to the register of operators.
David will send you a reply within 24 hours with approvals, depending on other operator's bookings.

You will be required to send David a computer-generated adif file of your log daily, with all contacts so he can add those to QRZ.com. Paper logs are no good... it must be a computer-generated log to add details into QRZ.

Thanks for your consideration.
Regards
Ian Ashley, ZL1AOX,
2026 Conference Secretary.



DX CALENDAR DECEMBER 2025

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
J38W																															
VP9I																															
V47T																															
P44W																															
PJ5C																															
5X1XA 5X1DF																															
3B9KW																															
XU7BBC																															
C6AQQ																															
YJ0GC																															
VK2/LZ1GC																															
A52AA																															
PJ7UK																															
TO9W																															
IZ4AM																															
5R8IC																															
JG8NQJ/JD1																															
IR8CB																															
DP0GVN																															
FT4YM																															
HK3JCL Colombia																															
OX7AKT																															
H44MS																															

Courtesy of DXworld.net

Dimitry, UT5UGR will again be active from Martinique as TO7A for the CQWW CW contest.

QRV as SOAB/HP. Activity before / after the contest (Nov 24 to Dec 4) as FM/UT5UGR. QSL via H/c.

3G0YR CE0Y

3G0YR CE0Y Team will be active from Easter Island, IOTA SA - 001, 26 November - 3 December 2025.
Team - CE3CT, CE3SPR, LW6DG, LU9FVS, UA3AB, R5AA, RX3APM, RW7K, RA3AUU.
They will operate on HF Bands

Easter Island – a place shrouded in mystery
Easter Island is one of the most mysterious places on our planet. This small piece of land, lost in the southern Pacific Ocean, is part of Chile. Rapa Nui (translated as “Navel of the Earth”), as the locals call their island, is one of the most remote inhabited islands, located more than 3,000 kilometers from the mainland.

Scientists around the world are still puzzling over the mysteries of Rapa Nui. The stone giants known as moai, undeciphered writings, the language, the origin of the local inhabitants, and the time of the island's settlement are all topics of ongoing debate that are unlikely to subside anytime soon.

Why I bought a PMR 171!

After being involved with POTA for just over a year and watching the activators set up I started looking for an easier setup.

Radio, mast and antenna is fine, but then it is a battery and improvisation. I only used to do activations I could drive to and then as the first time activation locations became less and less I would choose the out of the way spots that need a 4x4 to get to. Now, 12 months later the only “parks” that have not been activated are in locations that I need to walk to.

I own a FT891 for POTA work and generally use a car battery which is of course not practical, so what do I do?

Nick ZL2NEB suggested that I look at the PMR171 and that did it! I had been in the defence force in Africa (we were all conscripted for two years), and I liked the manpack look and convenience with the battery clipped on and ready to go. I never do things in half measures so contacted the manufacturer in China and was given the agency for New Zealand and Australia.

So why the PMR171? Well the main attraction was the clip on 5Ah battery pack, then the fact that the radio is all mode on VHF and UHF so ideal for comms when the Alpine Fault gives us a jolt. Although most radios have built in ATU’s this ATU is quick and will tune 1.8 – 74 MHz, the fact that it has connectors for a HF and VHF/UHF antennas on the front panel.

For the first QSO I plugged in my wide band HF antenna and worked ZL2NEB, ZL2BHF, ZL3GMT, ZL2EF, ZL1KRH, ZL3OY, ZL3RIK, then Nick had a QSO with W5IB from Texas, Phil had a QSO with OT4A in Belgium and I had a QSO with YT9X in Serbia.

I guess my comments would be construed as biased, however I love this radio, it is really compact, works well, has great audio on TX and RX and the clip on battery pack is probably the feature I like best.

In November at the South Island Amateur Social in Kaikoura we will be hosting a DX Competition using the PMR171 with some great prizes.

Te Puke Amateur Radio Club Inc.

Branch 53 of NZART

24TH MARKET DAY

Saturday March 7th 2026

Paengaroa Community Hall.
4 Old Coach Road, Paengaroa.
(GPS Coordinates: 37.49S 176.24E)

Venue opens for Vendors from 06.30am.

Table Prices
Pre-Sale 1.8 Table $20.00, On the Day $25.00
Pre-Sale ½ Table $12.00, On the Day $15.00.

Bank Account details for Table Payments:- 03 0474 0030113 00
Please use your Call Sign as Reference.

Sale time 10.00am.

Door Charge $2.00 per person to help recover costs.

Breakfast Available from 07.30am to 11.00am.

For further information & Table Booking's, Contact Syd Rowe ZL1LWR
Phone (07) 533 1029, Mobile: 0272488664,
Email:- sydrowe@xtra.co.nz

Accommodation available at the Junction Motel,
State Highway 33, Paengaroa.

Radio in a Box for Portable & Emergencies

Images Beamed from Space Celebrate 25 Years of Ham Radio on the ISS

Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) will mark two major milestones this month with a special Slow Scan Television (SSTV) event aboard the International Space Station (ISS). Beginning November 12 through November 20, the station will transmit a series of 12 commemorative SSTV images, pausing only for a scheduled educational contact.

The “SSTV Spacetacular” will highlight both the recent World Scouting movement’s Jamboree-on-the-Air (JOTA) and the 25th anniversary of ARISS ham radio operations on the ISS.

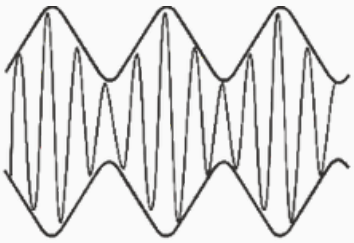
ARISS first went on the air on November 13, 2000, when the ISS Expedition 1 crew made the inaugural ham radio contact using an Ericsson VHF radio. That same year, the first scheduled school contact linked ISS Commander Bill Shepherd, who had call sign KD5GSL, with students at Luther Burbank School in Burbank, Illinois. Since then, ARISS has connected an estimated 200,000 students, educators, and enthusiasts each year with astronauts living and working aboard the orbiting laboratory.

For this month’s event, scouts, educators, students, and amateur radio operators worldwide are invited to receive and decode the transmitted images. Participants can upload their received pictures to the ARISS SSTV gallery to earn a commemorative electronic award certificate.

In ARISS’s most recent SSTV campaign — held in early October to celebrate World Space Week — nearly 9,000 images were submitted by more than 3,600 participants on all continents, including three from Antarctica.

About ARISS
Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) is a cooperative venture of international amateur radio societies and the space agencies that support the International Space Station (ISS). In the United States, participants are ARRL The National Association for Amateur Radio®, the Radio Amateur Satellite Corporation (AMSAT), the ISS National Lab-Space Station Explorers, Amateur Radio Digital Communications (ARDC), and NASA’s Space communications and Navigation program. The primary goal of ARISS is to promote exploration of science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics topics. ARISS does this by organizing scheduled contacts via amateur radio between crew members aboard the ISS and students. Before and during these radio contacts, students, educators, parents, and communities take part in hands-on learning activities tied to space, space technologies, and amateur radio. For more information, see www.ariss.org.

Society for the Preservation of Amplitude Modulation



It's an AM-only contest, 80 meters, from 7.30 to 10 pm on Monday 8 Dec. It is to commemorate the return of amateurs to the air after WW2 on Dec 8 1945, and to remember the sacrifices of our amateur forebears to give us the freedoms we still have today.

There are 1,2 or 3 points for contacts with solid state, hybrid, or all valve (vintage) stations respectively, and 5 points for a contact with the special callsign ZL6H, only available on the night.

It is organised by Rob ZL2IW who will take logs and reports after the contest. Email a photo or whatever of your log and reports also appreciated. It will eventually appear in Break In!

rob.zl2iw@gmail.com

Nets
There are nets operating at present on AM as follows:

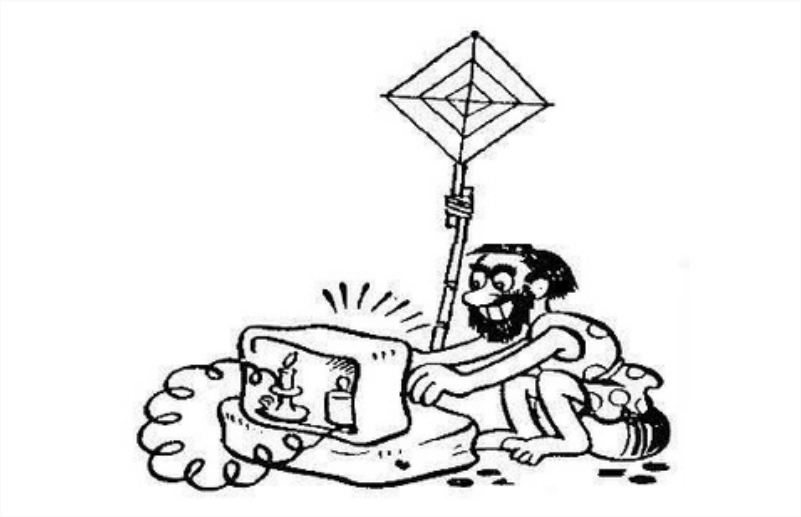
- Friday evenings: 3.850 MHz at 8:30 PM local time year round. The net controller has the special call sign ZL6AM.
- Wednesday mornings: 7.125 MHz at 11:30 AM local time year round. The net is usually controlled by ZL1ZLD, the Musick Point Memorial Radio station, Bucklands Beach, Auckland.

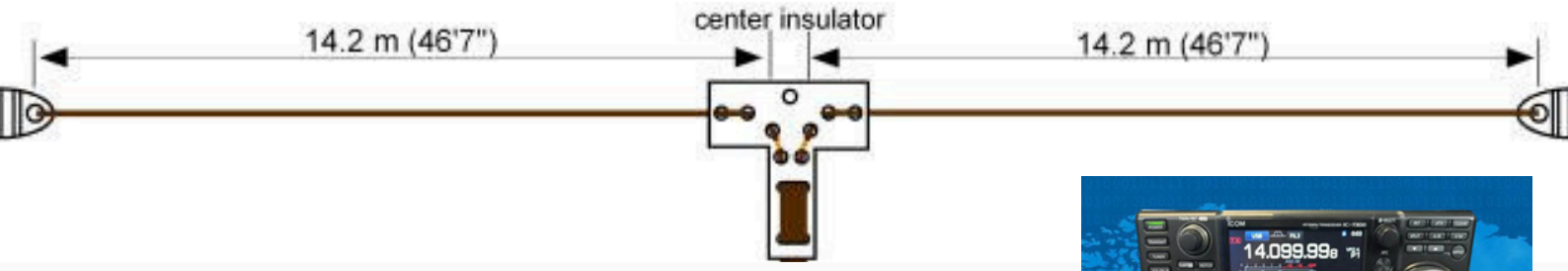
3.850 MHz and 7.125MHz should be used as AM calling frequencies at other times.

Newsletters
Newsletters are sent out regularly by e-mail, presently combined with the Musick Point Radio Group's monthly newsletter. They are sent by blind copy method so individual's addresses are not circulated.

The newsletter includes AM news, requests for information, wanting to buy and sell parts and equipment. Any contributions relevant to AM is always welcomed by the editor.

Contact
Secretary/Treasurer/Newsletter Editor:
Martyn ZL3CK
Email: martyn.seay@gmail.com.





COMPETITION CALENDAR

Competition consol
for the Icom IC 7300
available from
www.thehamshack.co.nz

WA7BNM Contest Calendar Powered by ICOM

Home | 8-Day | 5-Week | 12-Month | Perpetual | State QSO Parties | Log Due Dates | Historical | Alphabetical | Customize | Cabrillo Names

Follow @wa7bnmcalendar | November 13 - 20, 2025 | November 21 - 28, 2025 | November 29 - December 6, 2025

	Nov 29 Saturday	Nov 30 Sunday	Dec 1 Monday	Dec 2 Tuesday	Dec 3 Wednesday	Dec 4 Thursday	Dec 5 Friday	Dec 6 Saturday
CQ Worldwide DX Contest, CW								
K1USN Slow Speed Test								
ICWC Medium Speed Test								
OK1WC Memorial (MWC)								
ICWC Medium Speed Test								
ARS Spartan Sprint								
Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest								
ICWC Medium Speed Test								
QRP Fox Hunt								
Phone Weekly Test								
A1Club AWT								
CWops Test (CWT)								
VHF-UHF FT8 Activity Contest								
Mini-Test 40								
Mini-Test 80								
CWops Test (CWT)								
QRP ARCI Topband Sprint								
Walk for the Bacon QRP Contest								
CWops Test (CWT)								
CWops Test (CWT)								
NRAU 10m Activity Contest								
SKCC Sprint Europe								
NCCC FT4 Sprint								
Weekly RTTY Test								
QRP Fox Hunt								
NCCC Sprint								
K1USN Slow Speed Test								
ARRL 160-Meter Contest								
Kalbar Contest								
Wake-Up! QRP Sprint								
PRO CW Contest								
INORC Contest								
FT Challenge								

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RUSSEL RANGE (WEST) BY GEOFF ZL3GA

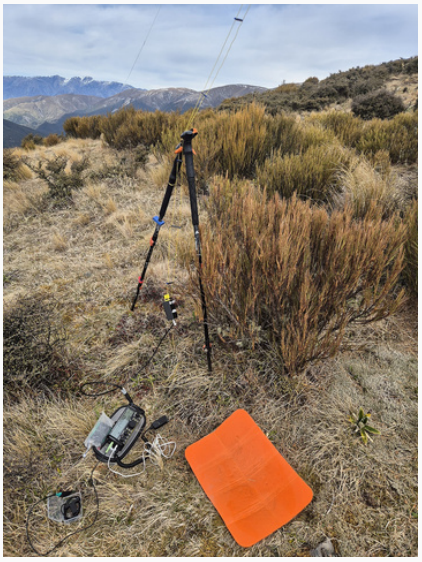
ZL3/CB-551 Russel Range (West)
After terrible band conditions on Saturday 1st November, I was hoping for better on Sunday as I headed for Springfield and the start of the track on Ben More Station.

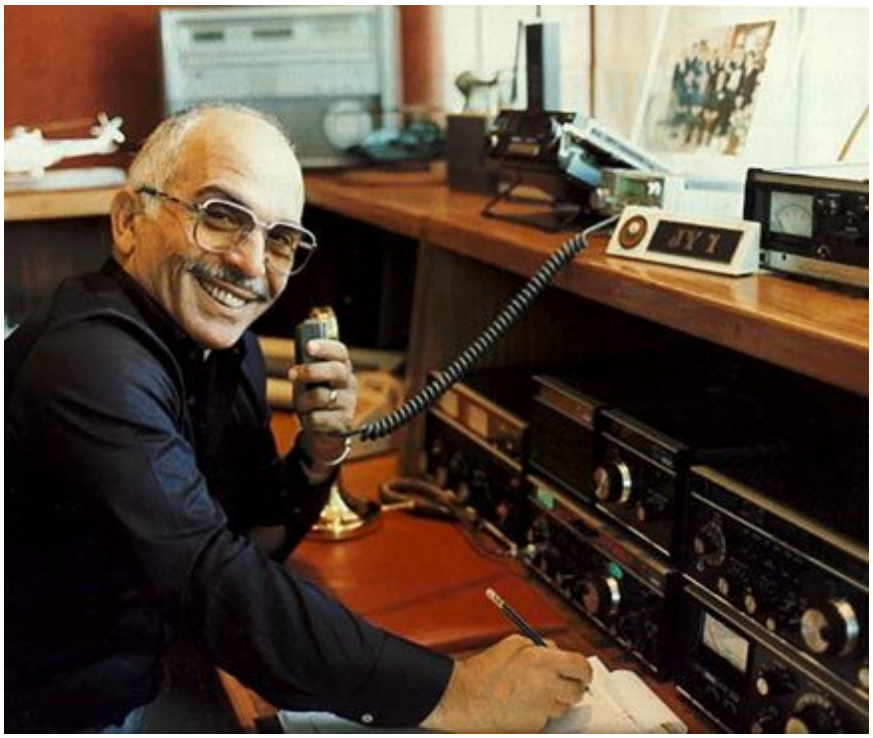
A fine day was forecast with light winds and so it turned out. 8 Degrees at the start but I soon warmed up. This summit is on private land, accessed by an easement from Ben More and Annavale stations. They have done a great job of the track and it was nice to see possum and rat/stoat/hegehog trapping being carried out too. It's a 30 minute walk up the 13 Mile Stream toward Ben More Hut before turning off onto the Annvale track. A couple of hours, 7km and 675m of vertical later and on the summit, a cloudless, windless day but would propagation be any good? Antenna choice for today was the 50' open wire fed doublet. This antenna is great as it gives you every band from 60m-10m and is very efficient. A handy waratah to bungy the 6m telescoping pole to, switched on the KX2 and heard Nick ZL2NEB and Ben ZL4AT on a summit down in Otago with good signals - yay! After working them both, I worked the locals on 2m FM and then proceeded to try all the bands, 40 through 10m. 40 produced good reports up and down the country, 30m, 20m and15m were a bust but 17m produced VK and JA. 12m CW delivered an S2S (Summit to Summit) contact with WY7N in Arizona and 10m yielded more USA and JA contacts (plus Rick ZL3RIK!). 30 in the log and time to pack up and head home for a belated Halloween party with my grandkids. Halfway down I was rewarded with the sight of a mob of red deer hinds quietly grazing near the bush edge and a glider being towed right over me.

Back to car in good time and a coffee at Springfield's Black and White cafe, a regular post-SOTA haunt. A very good day outdoors!

Stats for the day:
14 km, 688 vertical metres and 2hrs 55m of walking.
30 contacts in the log from ZL, JA, VK, W
5 bands used - 40m, 17m,12m,10m, 2m

73
Geoff ZL3GA





FAMOUS HAMS - KING HUSSEIN

CALL JY1

King Hussein bin Talal (1935-1999)

His Majesty King Hussein bin Talal, the father of modern Jordan, will always be remembered as a leader who guided his country through strife and turmoil to become an oasis of peace, stability and moderation in the Middle East.

Hussein would get on HF and simply call “JY1” — never “King” or “His Majesty.”
Operators often had no idea who they were talking to. Only after the QSO, when someone else said, “You know that was King Hussein, right?” did it dawn on them.

He preferred normal ragchews over celebrity treatment.

He genuinely loved radio — and he wanted to be treated like any other ham.

Many hams who worked JY1 later received beautifully printed QSL cards — sometimes delivered through diplomatic channels or embassies.
Some stories mention an embassy staff member personally handing over the card, saying:
“His Majesty sends his regards.”

Imagine working a DX station in a casual QSO, then getting a royal handshake via QSL.

According to operators who visited Jordan, Hussein kept a rig in several places — including his aircraft, his palace, and some remote retreats.
More than one guest said he would finish a meeting with foreign leaders, then walk straight over to the radio and ask:
“What’s the band like?” It wasn’t a hobby for him. It was his escape.

Hussein personally approved special calls for young hams in Jordan.
If a young person showed promise or excitement for the hobby, he often made sure they got encouragement, equipment, or access to clubs.

One now-senior Jordanian ham said:
“Most of us in the 70s and 80s got into radio because His Majesty made us feel like it was a national treasure.”

ALINCO

THE HAM SHACK

GUOHETEC

AUTHENTIC THS Antennas NEW ZEALAND

spiderbeam high performance lightweight antennas

To Dad from Dad

SOTABEAMS AMATEUR RADIO FOR THE GREAT OUTDOORS

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Make your list and order early so we can get it to you by Christmas

Christmas Gift Vouchers

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FEDEX to Australia

www.thehamshack.co.nz

NZ deliveries typically 2 to 3 working days

sales@thehamshack.co.nz

Ballarat Amateur Radio Group Inc. (BARG)

HAMVENTION

Sunday February 1 2026

At the Ballarat Polocrosse Club's Facility,
207 Airport Rd, Mitchell Park

Display and Sales (setup from 8am on the day)
Trade Table $20.00 includes one admission,
(Space for 70+ tables, this is a big one!)

General Admission $ 10.00 (accompanied under 15 free)
STRICTLY 10:00 AM START
BBQ and drink will be available on the premises

Enquiries and up to date details: BARG on the web www.barg.org.au

Group by Hamfests Australasia

Hamfests Australasia Group

Public group · 2.9K members

+ Invite | Share | Joined

THE LAKE WAKATIPU IOTA EXPEDITION

BEN ZL4AT

My fascination with islands began early, back when I was small enough to believe that the world was mostly made of pirates and storms. This impression was confirmed when my parents moved us to the Isle of Man — where even the seagulls look weather beaten.

So when I learned that a handful of islands in Lake Wakatipu had never been activated for POTA, my brain did what all great human brains do when faced with something gloriously unnecessary — it said, “Splendid! Let’s do that immediately.”

The chosen islands were Pig, Pigeon, and Tree — names clearly decided by someone who gave up on creativity halfway through the map. Each was untouched radio territory, a trio of unclaimed islands awaiting their first signal. To be the first to plant an RF flag upon them was a notion too enticing to resist. Whomever would be first to activate them would forever be in the log as the first!

Like all worthy expeditions, the dream required a fellowship. One does not simply walk into the pages of radio history alone. And so, through the strange serendipity of QSOs, I gathered a small band of kindred spirits: Nigel ZL2SEA, Nick ZL2NEB, Norm ZL4SY, and Linz ZL4DJ.

Plans formed quickly — and within three weeks, the operation was set.

Together, we were unstoppable — not for fame or fortune but by the inexplicable conviction that someone, somewhere, might want to hear us on 40 metres.

The night before our departure, a crackling transmission came through my HF rig: it was Norm, our advance man on Pigeon Island, who had bravely crossed ahead to secure the hut — only to report, in grave tones, that he had forgotten both tea and coffee. An intolerable hardship for any man.

At dawn, we launched from the Face Creek boat ramp. Norm, caffeine-deprived yet fortified by beer and FT8 from the night before was in good spirits. Nick gave us a heroic shove-off, earning wet feet in service to radio history and the 16-foot Bonito shot across the water like a small fibreglass warhead.

Norm, a seasoned ferry skipper from the Outer Hebrides, piloted us with maritime poise. The lake was a perfect mirror, and the clouds above were so faithfully reflected below that it felt as though we sailed the heavens themselves.

Pigeon Island came into view, and we disembarked beside the Douglas Robinson’s Hut. Outside, Norm’s DX Commander stood proud and inside his Icom 7300, batteries and generator at the ready.

After breakfast — sausages, tea (which I brought), and fine company — we devised our plan of attack. Nick and I would ascend to the SOTA summit and operate on 40 metres, while Norm and Nigel would handle POTA and IOTA duties from base camp on 40 and 20 metres.

It was a brisk 25-minute climb through the podocarp forest, opening onto a summit with sweeping views of a snow-capped Mt Earnslaw. Nick erected a dipole on a six-metre mast in inverted V formation and warmed up his trusty G90. For me, still a relatively new operator, it was instructive to witness his process firsthand.

Thirty QSOs later, we’d covered New Zealand from tip to tail and attracted at least one angry Weka, who seemed to believe the summit was his and had strong opinions about 40 metres.

Back at the hut, we took soup and sandwiches. Nigel deployed a portable Starlink and, in a moment of moral weakness, used it to play one of Nick’s own YouTube videos at him. Soon the rain came down in sheets, and we relaxed by the radio, checking into the Alpine Fault Net. A Weka wandered in, looked aghast at our presence, and left as swiftly as it came.

Presently, Linz ZL4DJ arrived by boat with his XYL, offering logistical support and a fisherman's cheer. After closing down the AFN, we turned our bow to Tree Island — the farthest of the three and, by now, our second activation. There Norm unveiled his secret weapon: a USDR QRP radio approximately the size of a sandwich. With an end-fed wire and a telescopic boat hook serving as a makeshift mast, we fashioned a sloper just three metres high. I doubted its efficiency — until the first CQ replies rolled in. Against all common sense, it worked beautifully — seven QSOs in the log and one operator forced to admit that physics occasionally takes pity on fools.

For the record, the radio costs about $200 on AliExpress, which is either miraculous or deeply suspicious.

Pig Island, our third and final conquest, lay just thirty seconds away — which is about how long it took for the band conditions to collapse. Once more, we deployed the USDR and end-fed; though band conditions were deteriorating, we managed five solid contacts. Afterward, Nigel and I summited Pig's lofty 11 metres, purely for the glory of it.

It had been a glorious day of adventure, high spirits and camaraderie in the common goal of radio, and as we sped across the glass-like water of Lake Wakatipu towards the shore my companions looking forward, I was looking back. Time itself seemed to pause, and in that stillness I felt a deep, radiant happiness – the kind that rarely visits a man save when he knows he has done something splendidly pointless and gloriously good.

Back on solid ground, with the Bonito snug on her trailer, the indomitable Scotsman proposed one final activation — the carpark itself, a designated POTA site. As I was feeling slightly melancholic about this wonderful day coming to an end I happily agreed. So, one last time, we deployed Norm's marvellous QRP rig. Nick launched a cord into a cabbage tree with professional flair, the end-fed wire went up, and five more contacts joined the log.

We shook hands, laughed, and went our separate ways, leaving the airwaves ever so slightly more cluttered than we'd found them.

Since beginning my HAM radio journey in April this year, much of my enjoyment has been found in solitude — tuning in, making contacts, and learning the craft. But today has shown me something greater: that the true spirit of radio lies in fellowship. The laughter, the shared effort, and the thrill of the chase were all heightened by the company of others. In the New Zealand POTA community, I have found not just fellow operators, but a loyal and generous group of friends — always present, whether on the airwaves or by my side.

I'm already planning my next island radio adventure — because once you've had a day that good, the only sensible thing to do is try to have another. I suggest you do the same!

73
Ben

GROTA - Green Radios On The Air

K Barnsdale ZL3KB kb.ew@xtra.co.nz

We are a likeminded group of hams focused on restoring WW2 radios and putting them through outdoor trials. Actually, it's the operators that get the hardest trial, as these machines need different skills beyond the pushbutton radios of today. Using the WS48 set manpack with its radiated power of 15mW on 7MHz AM, achieving the max range of 10km is not easy!

Restoration

After eighty years most of these sets are in remarkable condition, and their restoration needs very few component replacements. This reflects the "land of plenty" (USA) where it was made, compared to its poor British cousin the WS18. The transformers and iron core chokes sometimes fail, but we are now setup to rewind those.

The battery

Of course, these radios need a power source, so we have developed a battery pack that is the same size as the original, with the same power socket. The pack supplies 3V for filaments, -12V for PTT relay and 150V HT. The filaments-supply is derived from a 3.8V lithium cell through a current sensor dropping 0.7V, but more of that later. The +150V HT is generated from a 12V lithium battery switching MOSFETs at 100Hz into a backwards mains transformer and rectifier. The low frequency switching and steel core transformer suppresses the harmonics in the HF band, which is essential for our trials of maximum range, minimum signal. The -12V is supplied directly from the 12V lithium battery, which in the case of the WS48 set can be either polarity, but for the other sets using this battery (WS18, WS68, WS46) it must be negative. As this battery is hidden away inside the set, it has the feature of not needing a power switch. An internal current sensor on the filament supply detects the radio being turned on and automatically turns the HT generator on. Another feature is, unlike modern regulated switch mode inverters, the HT output voltage reflects the state of charge of its 12V supply. This allows the user to see the state of the battery using the radio set test meter.

GROTA Battery

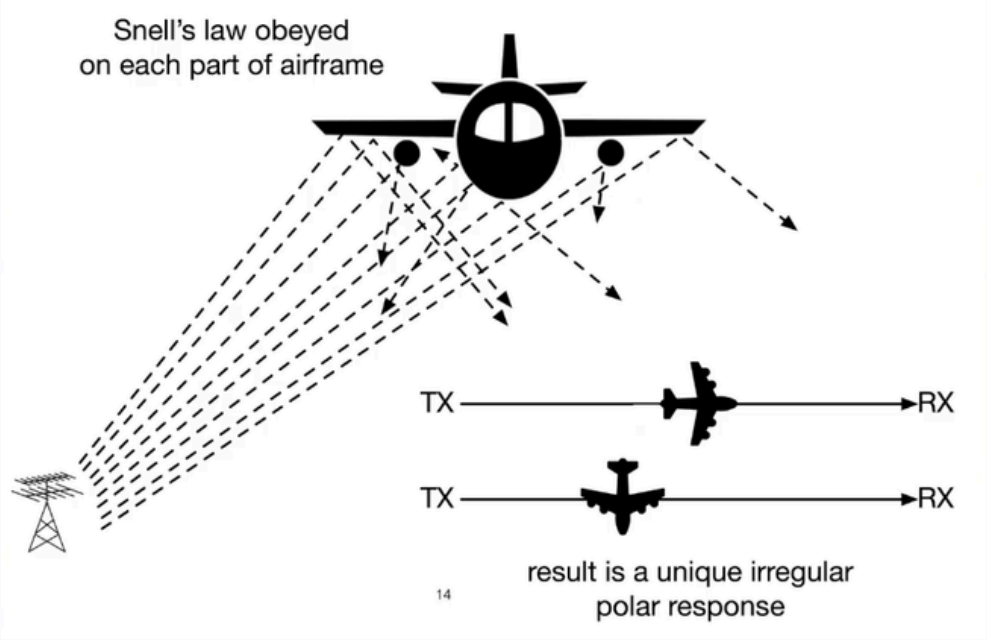
Getting on frequency
In their wartime use the set operators would align their transmit frequency, or 'net' to a control station, but we are too disorganised for that! Sometimes they could net their transmitters to a local frequency meter (BC211) so we developed a crystal calibrator that emits a low signal on 3579kHz and we net to its 2nd harmonic of 7158kHz, now called the GROTA frequency. We call this unit the "Grotette" box, as the big brother variable frequency version "GROTA box" was too expensive for mass pro.

Grotette Frequency Unit

Accessories
Many sets are now without their accessories. The 11 foot antenna can be made from ¼" aluminium tube; brass tube can also be used but it costs more and is a bit too bendy. The microphone is easily substituted with a No8NZ ZC1 carbon microphone, but the PL068 plug is a special 0.206" dia and can be bought from Amazon, and note the PTT is on the tip! The WS48 can take low Z (100ohm) headphones (short plug) or Hi Z type (standard long plug). Standard ZC1 type headphones can be used as long as they have the No9 plug with the collar.

If anyone is interested to get their WS48 set going, we hope to have more restoration info available soon. We have some batteries and Grotettes available, just email me for more info.
K Barnsdale ZL3KB kb.ew@xtra.co.nz

WS48 World War 2 radio



AN INTRODUCTION TO AIRCRAFT SCATTER AS A COMMUNICATIONS MECHANISM

A special thank you to John Berry GM8JBJ for giving me permission to use this article and providing the document in Word.

For the Youtube link Right or Left click on the article below and follow the link.

An introduction to aircraft scatter as a communications mechanism

By John Berry, GM8JBJ

Aircraft scatter was for me a source of interference when planning mobile, broadcast or fixed radio communications systems. It was certainly not something that one might use for the wanted signal. But as radio amateurs, we chase very low-level signals and suddenly aircraft scatter becomes an interesting DX mechanism.

I recently gave a presentation to a couple of amateur radio clubs – Mid Sussex and Galashiels – about aircraft scatter and the recording is available on YouTube at https://youtu.be/qpWIbuKI47E. Meanwhile, here's what I talked about.

The video begins with a clip where I'm receiving the GB3NI amateur radio beacon in Northern Ireland on 70cm. I then discuss receiving the beacon via the normal path, a heavily obstructed non-line-of-sight path and then receiving the beacon when the signal is reflected from a passing aircraft. The aim of this clip is that viewers see the performance of the normal path, and then that of the reflected path via the aircraft.

I then describe the geometry of the propagation with direct and reflected paths. My antennas are elevated skywards toward the aircraft and down the path in the direction of the beacon. As an airplane passes over, the signal amplitude rises and falls, and the pitch of the Morse identifier rises and falls.

The signal when the airplane is there is around 4 S-points above that when there's no aircraft and I'm receiving the beacon over the normal path. At about 6dB per S-point, that's about 25dB higher with the aircraft than when there's no aircraft.

I then discuss the normal path. In discussing any radiowave propagation, it's important to reference the mechanisms being discussed to the normal path – to what would be available or received on a normal uneventful day. My analysis shows that the normal path should be available for 50% of time for a signal just above threshold and that's what was apparent in the video clip – the normal and the hugely enhanced reflected.

The clip describes normal propagation modified by aircraft scatter. And aircraft scatter enables paths which would otherwise – normally – be unavailable.

Aircraft scatter enables communication when the aircraft's cross-sectional area (or radar cross-section) is much larger than the communications signal wavelength. Typical CSAs range from $1m^2$ for small private planes to $40m^2$ for large passenger jets like A380s at 432NHz. The most efficient frequencies for aircraft scatter are 144MHz, 432MHz, and 1296MHz amateur bands. Efficiency rises with frequency. Higher (GHz) frequencies are effective, but engineering is more difficult.

Both the path between the amateur stations and the aircraft track must coincide. Useful reflections are typically of short duration, hence the transmission mode must accommodate short 'overs'. I used Q65-15C with a 15-second transmission time.

To understand aircraft scatter, one needs to understand reflection theory. A radio wave incident on a metallic surface like an airplane excites the metal molecules, causing them to re-radiate. Over a small area, the re-radiation is not useful, but when summed across the whole aircraft, there's significant gain. Gain is the power flux density when reflections occur over the entire aircraft divided by that when reflections would be over only a small area. Gain is measure in decibels (dBi) relative to an isotropic radiator just as if specifying an antenna.

Aircraft scatter is in fact a misnomer. Waves are considered scattered when the surface obeys the Rayleigh roughness criterion, but planes aren't rough. They have lots of smooth surfaces. They support multiple reflections from those surfaces that add up to gain. Despite the misnomer, radio amateurs refer to reflections from airplanes as scatter.

To calculate the gain, I use the billboard gain equation (Gain = 22.2 + 40logf + 20logA + 20log (cos alpha)). The aircraft is effectively a big billboard reflector in the sky. This equation gives the gain of a Boeing 747 as about 42dB at 432MHz. The result is around 212dBi total path loss, which is workable using data mode Q65. I give a more detailed discussion about billboard gain in the presentation.

A path budget can be built considering the characteristics of the stations, the two (separate up, and down) free-space path losses, and the billboard gain. One can also use the bi-static radar equation – the two use the same science. Using this, I then go on to show an MS Excel path budget, and I calculate the fade margin for a big plane, a small plane, and a stealth jet, showing which aircraft will provide a viable reflection and hence which will work and which won't.

I then cover the incidence of Doppler frequency shift as the aircraft moves at speed across the path. Using the Doppler equation, the shift is about 300Hz - similar to the shift seen in the clip at the start when listening to the GB3NI beacon. The Doppler shift is low when the aircraft flies along the path and highest when it cuts orthogonally across the path.

Geometry is crucial in exploiting aircraft scatter. I show a diagram with the Earth's bulge and aircraft over a 400km path. This reveals that aircraft in a large triangle above 15,000ft are useful. This is limited to above 25,000ft over a small area when foreground terrain losses are considered.

I then discuss two practical examples of Q65 communications using aircraft. In the first example, an 18dB uplift (over normal) is apparent. The normal path works at -16dB below the 2.5kHz receiver threshold, rising to +2dB when the plane is mid-path. The plane's usefulness is limited to a few seconds. In the second example, station transmit powers over the path were reduced such that normal communications were not possible. A full Q65 exchange was achieved using four airplanes over 30 minutes (when planes were overhead the mid-path). Signal levels were between -2 and -7, suggesting an uplift of around 20dB-25dB above normal. Q65 threshold is around -28dB using the WSJT software.

So, aircraft scatter may require multiple planes for effective communication.

To illustrate how one might exploit aircraft scatter, I shared two images: one showing all aircraft over the UK at a time and another, the airways criss-crossing the country. The aircraft in the examples above were flying on Bravo 4 over the Scotland-England border. They were likely flying between airports in the London area and Edinburgh.

To exploit aircraft scatter, one needs some tools: a terrain profiling tool; a report of planes in the sky from ground radar; access to a chat forum for radio amateurs to announce their interest in a QSO via aircraft scatter; and tool to predict which planes are likely useful between any two stations.

I discussed AirScout, an online predictor of useful airplanes. I noted that AirScout may use flat-Earth (not considering radio wave refraction – and hence may be optimistic). I discussed a screen plot from AirScout and referenced a presentation by John Quarmby G3XDY on using AirScout. G3XDY's presentation discusses exploiting conveniently tracking planes over a DX path from the southeast of England and southern Germany.

My presentation ends with speculation about interesting scenarios for using aircraft scatter in the south of England where there are always planes in the sky.

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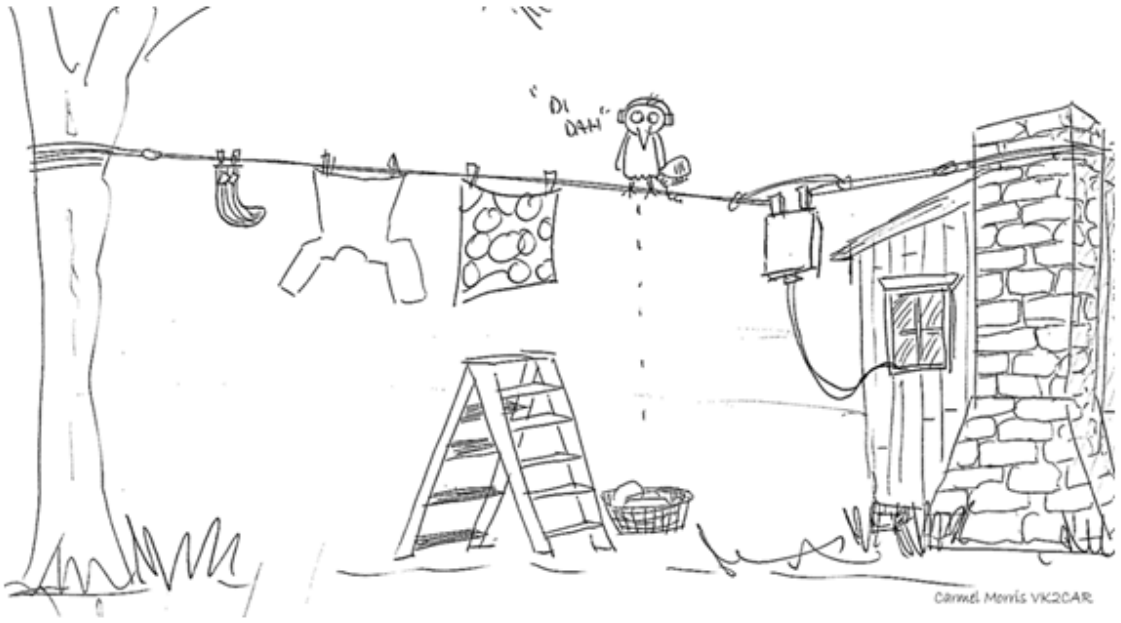
Company website: https://timelesstime.co.uk/
Ham radio website: https://hamradio.engineering/

The Clothesline OCF Antenna

By Carmel VK2CAR / VK2NO

/* This article won the WIA Technical Award Category 2022 */

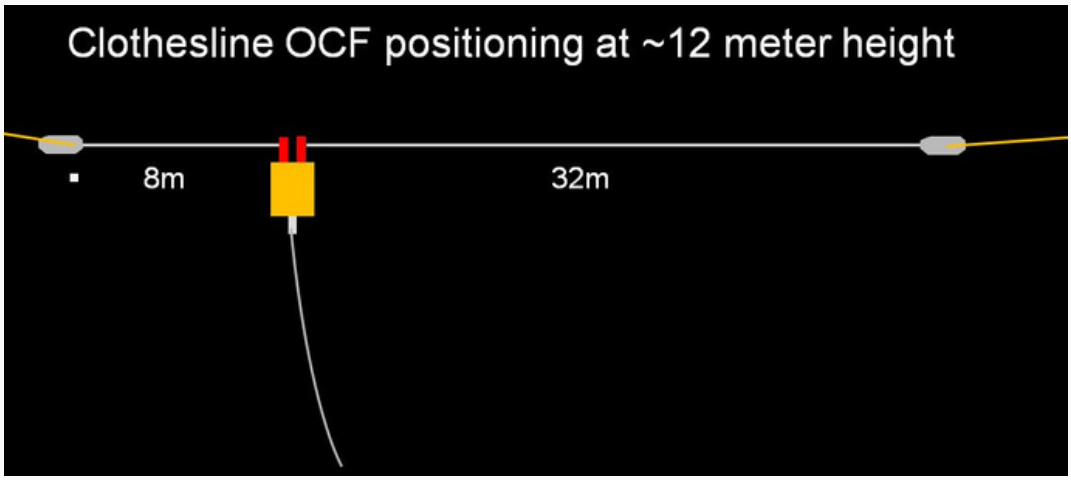


Here's a slightly different homebrew OCF antenna which I still use it today at my home QTH, made from low-cost clothesline wire. It's easy to prepare and would make an ideal first antenna for Foundation license holders. It's also a low-budget antenna that'll get your signal out to the world.

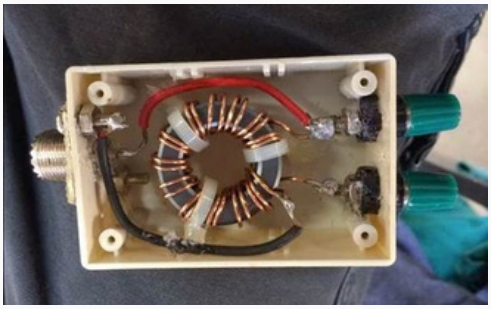
The asymmetric OCF antenna design theory is based on the classic Windom design but that'd be the only similarity. OCF dipole lengths are typically in thirds; two-thirds one end, one third the other. However I needed to experiment with different lengths due to the physical locations of trees around the house.

I changed the radiating lengths to 32 meters one end and eight meters the other. I then connected a homebrew 4:1 balun using a cheap Jaycar L15 core. I know, I'm a real cheapie but on 100W the balun doesn't overheat. These lengths in fifths were superior to other lengths I tried in that you can work more bands given the right mounting conditions.

Many say a 6:1 balun is better due to high impedance at certain heights and impedances also go up the more the antenna is off-centre, however the 4:1 worked well.



OCF CLOTHESLINE ANTENNA PROPORTIONS



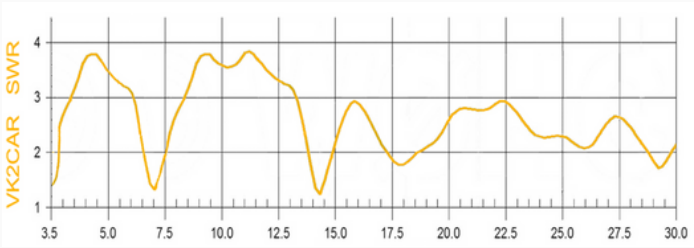
HOMEBREW 4:1 BALUN USING THE JAYCAR L15 CORE WITH 2 X 10-TURN WINDINGS

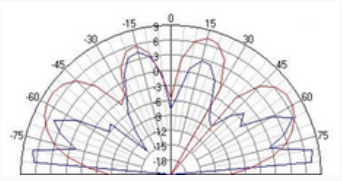
The original Windom antenna was created in the 1920s by General Loren Windom. He used a single line wire feeder straight from the radio which was also part of the radiating element @500 Ohm common mode coupling. This is different from my OCF which is not grounded and uses coax or parallel ladder line.

So what's unique about my antenna? Mostly it's the durability/longevity of the steel clothesline wire, along with the spacing change. Apart from some country boy hams who love barbed-wire fence antennas, I know some of you may say steel is not as good as a copper conductor but this antenna wire is copper coated and covered in nice stealthy UV-resistant green PVC. The advantage of steel is it won't stretch and given the skin effect in wire, most of the RF is working hard around the outer core anyway.

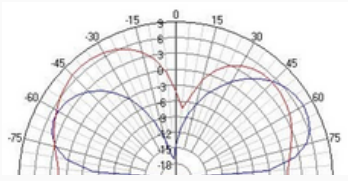
The clothes line antenna wire is dirt cheap; around $22 for a 60-meter roll at your favourite hardware store. I keep my spare field OCF wound on a builder's line reel; very easy to deploy. Some folks use a feedline choke but I haven't found the need for it. Small digression, I recently made a 3D-printed wind-out reel end-fed antenna using a 49:1 wound FT240-43 toroid -very compact for portable -but that's for another article :)

Characteristics
Here's the Sark reflection plot. Not so great on 28MHz but acceptable. Of course you may not get these at your QTH if there are coupling problems with metal roofs, or big hills or massive MacMansions nearby (like we have). If you want to first experiment with your own OCF antenna design, try 4NEC2 which is a freeware Windows app that can help you model a functional antenna without wasting money. I found this useful when determining the lengths.





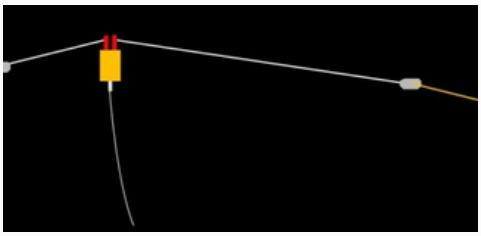
28 MHz

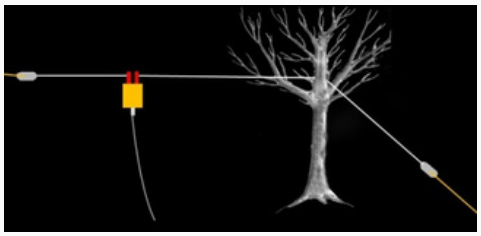


7 MHz

The radiation pattern will vary depending on your setup but would most likely be similar to these...

The OCF design is versatile and the benefit is strength. Unlike copper the steel won't stretch. If setup conditions are not ideal you could turn your OCF into an oblique inverted V or even bend the radiating section around a tree without too much compromise on performance. Naturally the radiation patterns will vary. I should experiment with an OCF loop one day :)





Get some interesting take-offs by kinking your antenna around a tree if there are space restrictions

At the longer end I have the support rope over a pulley. I can easily lower the antenna for stronger local contacts and raise for DX, though most of the time the best balance is around 10-12 metres. If you wanted to experiment with grounding, you may find there's no noticeable difference in adding a copper rod, and OCF antennas don't particularly suffer much from QRM.

Presently my current antenna position is not ideal due to some downed trees in a recent storm, with only 4 meters of height at the shorter end and part of the longer line swaying over my roof. Still, the antenna works well across 80/40/20m/15m, with a recent contact getting into Southern France on 7.130MHz (though his was probably bigger than mine). There are plenty of 4:1 balun instructions online you could follow to make your own. This is one cheap antenna that'll definitely save you money over commercial antennas.

Carmel VK2CAR / VK2NO

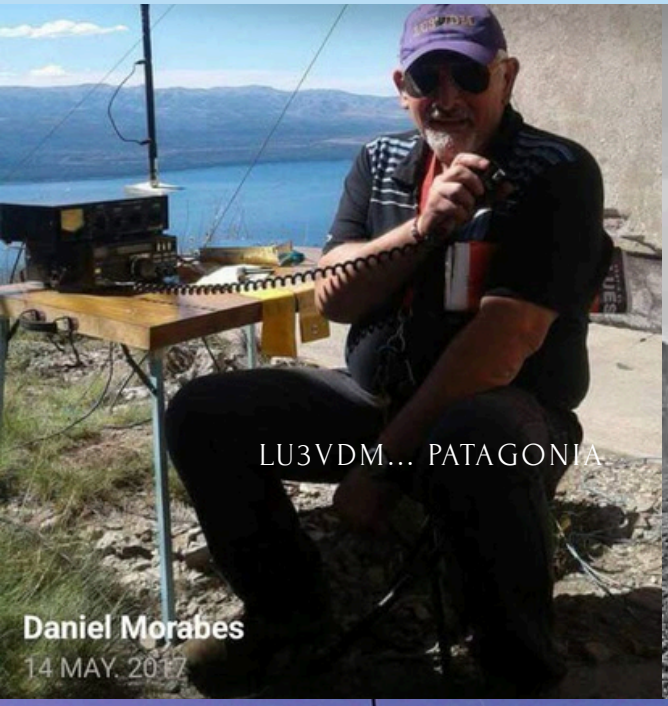
Radio Society of Great Britain

Advancing amateur radio since 1913

December is your opportunity to support young radio amateurs!

You can do this by hosting special event station GB25YOTA. You could operate the call sign with a club, school, university, or youth group such as Scouts, Girlguiding and Cadets, you can even host it as an individual.

Be part of this brilliant opportunity to show young people what #amateurradio has to offer. Get involved now 👉 rsgb.org/yota-month

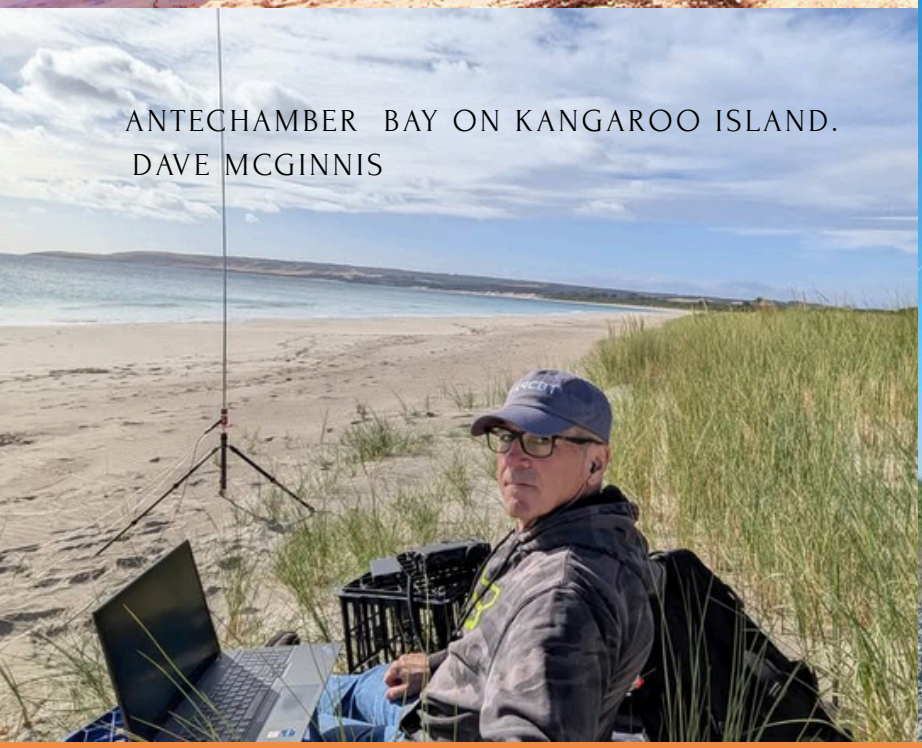


LU3VDM... PATAGONIA

OPTIONAL FREQUENCIES, ONLY FOR ARGENTINA

PETER PARKER VK3YE

ZL3PAE & ZL1GUD



ANTECHAMBER BAY ON KANGAROO ISLAND.
DAVE MCGINNIS

SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS

Amateur radio has always been about pushing boundaries, but nothing captures that spirit quite like working satellites. For many hams, the first successful satellite contact is a moment that hits hard—it's proof that with nothing more than a radio, an antenna, and some skill, you can reach beyond the horizon and work stations literally hundreds or thousands of kilometres away via a spacecraft the size of a shoebox.

Most amateur satellites are in low Earth orbit (LEO). They streak across the sky at roughly 7–8 km per second and only stay in view for 5–15 minutes. During that short window, they act as airborne repeaters. You transmit up on an uplink frequency; the satellite retransmits down on the downlink.

There are two main types:
1. FM Satellites ("Easy Sats")
These operate like a floating FM repeater.
- Great for beginners
- Ideal for handhelds and small portable antennas
- Excellent for POTA/SOTA operations

2. Linear Transponder Satellites
These support SSB and CW. They have:
- Wider passbands
- Lower interference
- Better long-distance capability

You Don't Need a Big Station
Plenty of operators work satellites with nothing more than:
- A dual-band handheld
- A small handheld Yagi (Arrow, Elk, home-built)
- Free tracking software

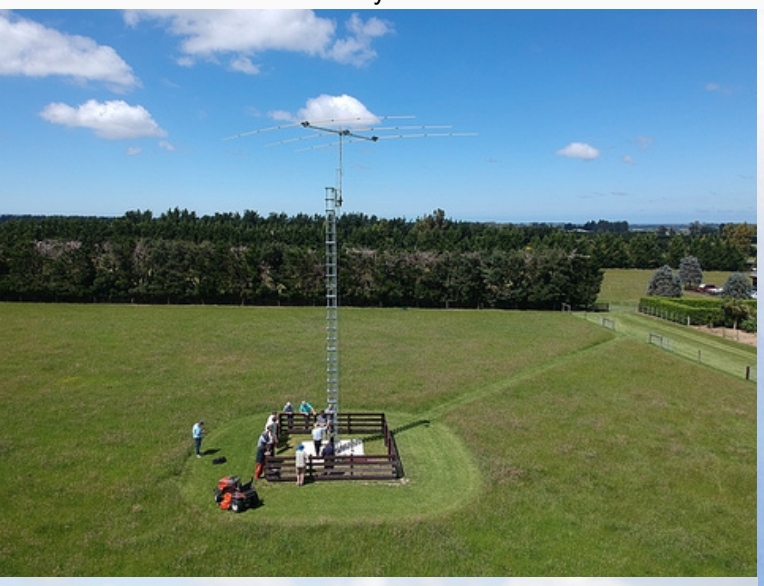
That's it. No tower, no rotator, no high-power amplifier.
A full portable setup fits in a backpack.

Tracking & Timing
The only thing you really need to get right is tracking. You must know:
- When the satellite rises
- Its azimuth and elevation
- When the "sweet spot" of the pass occurs

Free apps such as Gpredict, Orbitron, and ISS Detector make this easy.

A VISIT TO ZL3HWs STATION

We were invited to see ZL3HW's new antenna and tower setup in Canterbury
a truley awesome tower with winch to raise and lower the antenna



WES ZL3HW

MORSE CODE - STORIES

CARYN KD2GUT

"Squirrels are the best thing to grow on trees."

"What are you doing with that equipment? Are you trying to contact E.T.?

My 10-metre mast, end-fed random wire and my radio equipment and coax had caught the eye and the ear of a visitor recently at Edgewood Oaks Brush Plains Preserve in Suffolk County, N.Y., where I was setting up for Parks on the Air.

"Well," I told him, "you'll be the first to know if it happens. I'm only using 10 watts of power and E.T. is what we consider DX. In his case, he's extreme DX." In short, if you want to reach the home planet of an extraterrestrial, operating QRP - even doing CW with an Elecraft KX2 - might not be the optimal strategy. I explained to him that ham radio operators who use Morse Code and very little power can make the most of every single watt because the narrower bandwidth concentrates all the power we're using to transmit - better than, say, the wider bandwidth needed if we use a microphone. From southeastern New York, where the park is located, there's no telling where your signal might land when you're calling "CQ POTA" from your paddle.

On that day, my signal landed nicely in various parts of Europe and, over land, into the American West. Canada called me too. My signal traveled up and down the East Coast and, in an hour or so, I got exactly what I'd come for - an activation (10 contacts or more). I could happily pack up, taking a short detour to reward myself with a takeaway coffee to bring home.

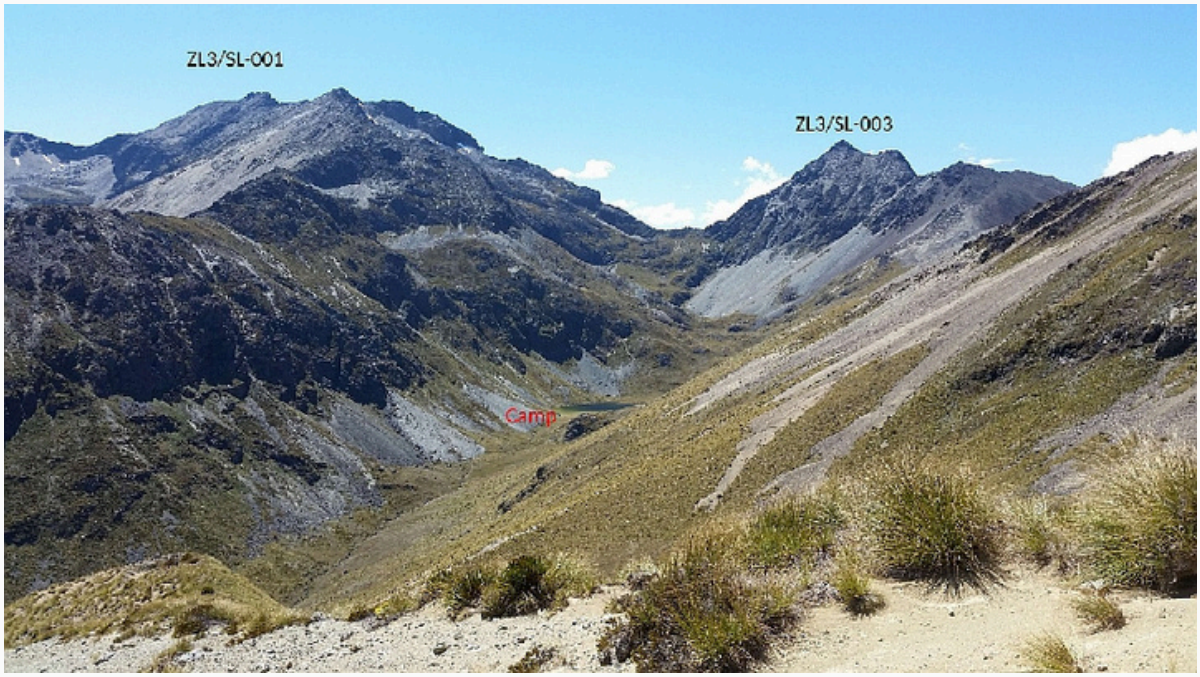
The most important contact I made that day, however, never made it into my log. No, it wasn't E.T. (he doesn't have a callsign, anyway, so it would have been bad form for him to try to work me.) It was the visitor who stopped by to watch me set up and to wonder out loud just what the possibilities were on that day for my radio success -- and maybe one day his own. He went away wondering what his own radio success might be one day if he stayed as curious as he was that day. Yes, I'm wondering too.

CARYN

KD2GUT

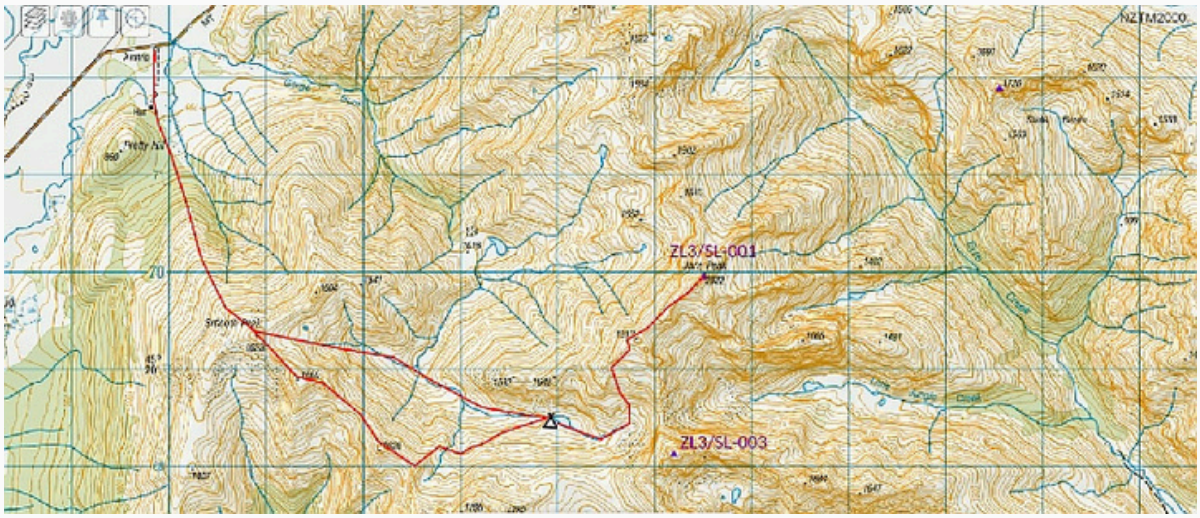
MATT ZL4NVW

Jane Peak - ZL3/SL-001



My promise to myself for 2022 was to spend less time playing SOTA and more doing the boring things I'm supposed to be doing! As such I set myself the goal of focussing on 10 pointers and activating either the 001 summit for each ZL3 region or – where that's beyond me – the highest summit within my abilities.

So I figured I'd start 2022 with an activation of the 2022m Jane Peak ZL3/SL-001 – the lowest 001 summit in the South Island.



Jane Peak lies in the Eyre Mountains (there's a literary link in there somewhere). A great area of trampable ridgeines and flat valley foors with an excellent network of huts. Beech-clad valeysides rising to rounded tussock an scree tops and dropping to tussock flats on the valley floors. All that lets the Eyres down is a lack of tracks between catchments– meaning most trips are either off-track, or there and back up the valleys.

The normal route to Jane Peak is up the Gorge Burn with route guides giving complicated advice on dodging the various gorges. A slightly tougher, but more staright forward route is to cross the 1632m Smooth Peak and drop into the head of Gorge Burn, sacrificing 300m but avoiding all the rortuous gorge-avoidance. The southern head of the Gorge Burn holds a series of small lakes, and I set up camp beside the first – having headed in on the Saturday evening. The lake water was swimming-pool warm and very welcome after the 1100m climb from the road in baking heat.

From the head basin a straight-forward scrambled climbs 600m, zigzagging between layers of bluffs to reach the ridgeline leading to Jane Peak. The eastern side of the ridge is a sheer drop into the head of Eyre Creek and 'vertiguous'.

A slow, careful scramble along the knife-edge ridge leads to Jane Peak itself – the final 20m being the worst. Amazingy, a cairn has been built atop the knife-edge summit – itself no more than 600mm wide!

I find 20m-or-so of reasonably safe and flat ridgeline and manage to deploy the 40m EFHW. The SOTA activation is straight forward with 11 good contacts on 40m – enough for the summit and the park.

The descent to camp is straight forward on jelly-knees.

POSSIBLE ASCENTS OF ZL3/SL-003

I took a good look at ZL3/SL-003 for future reference, but was not in condition to ascend it on this trip. The only viable approach is from the broad saddle to its west (right in the above photo). The 1st outlying peak should be achievable, and also looks as if it can be bypassed on high scree slopes to its north. The first crux is the 'L' notch between it an the main peak which has no ovious bypass so the steep ascet from it to the next peak must be climbed on the ridgeline. High rubble faces above sheep bluffs may be passable (as may the knife-edge ridgeline) as far as the base of the main peak. Contours show the rock stack forming the summit is 40m tall. The lower section is scree, but the top appears to be sheer rock. It may be possible to reach the activation zone without leaving the scree. Climbing the last 20m-or-so of bare rock looks very challenging.

Time	Callsign	QRP	Port	Mode	Frq (MHz)	Snt RS	Rcd RS
20:38	ZL3GA	☐	☐	SSB	7.09	59	53
20:39	ZL3QR	☐	☐	SSB	7.09	59	58
20:40	ZL1BQD	☐	☐	SSB	7.09	59	59
20:41	ZL1SKL	☐	☐	SSB	7.09	52	42
20:42	ZL3MR	☐	☐	SSB	7.09	58	55
20:44	ZL3OV	☐	☐	SSB	7.09	59	59
20:46	ZL3DMC	☐	☐	SSB	7.09	59	55
20:48	ZL2STR	☐	☐	SSB	7.09	55	44
20:48	ZL2RMC	☐	☐	SSB	7.09	41	44
20:49	ZL2SAR	☐	☐	SSB	7.09	41	44
20:50	ZL1TM	☐	☐	SSB	7.09	58	52

KAIKOURA AMATEUR RADIO MEETUP/SOCIAL

Leaving behind the bright lights and bustling streets of Christchurch, I headed north toward the seaside town of Kaikōura, about 180 km away.

It was already midday, so I had missed the early morning get-together and the shared chicken lunch I had so desperately wanted to devour. The goal for the day was to reach the campsite at Peketa, about 10 km south of Kaikōura, get set up, and then join the rest of the group for a joint dinner out, followed by a QRP and CW activation on the shoreline.

As I drove north out of Christchurch, I was overtaken with a feeling of relief, awe, and relaxation. No phone calls from work, no thoughts of the ever-growing workload—just the rolling hills of the Waipara Valley, the South Island's very own wine country, and the growing views of the Southern Alps as the Inland Kaikōuras came into range. Waipara is a picturesque valley of rolling hills with beautiful golden-brown hues and splashes of green. The area has dry summers with hot days and cool nights, and the right mix of fertile soils where grapes flourish, producing award-winning wines. Alongside the Iron Ridge Quarry Park, with its amazing steel sculptures, there are biking and hiking trails for those wanting more adventure. Sadly, there was no time to stop and enjoy the wares—activations and fellowship awaited.

Leaving Waipara behind, the hills grew steeper and windier, the valleys closed in, and after a short while I emerged onto the eastern coast, where the true majesty of the Kaikōura Ranges came into view. Visible even from the southern coast of the North Island, the Kaikōura Ranges cover roughly 2,000 square kilometres. The Inland Kaikōuras peak at 2,885 m with the mighty Tapuae-o-Uenuku, while the Seaward Kaikōuras reach 2,608 m with Mount Manakau. And it was in the shadow of Mount Manakau, nestled in the settlement of Peketa, that I found myself based for the night.

After checking in at the campground we headed into Kaikōura township and enjoyed an incredible meal together—accompanied by a gang of seagulls that swooped in at every opportunity, gobbling up leftovers the moment people vacated their seats. A coordinated attack that would make many a military strategist proud.
After dinner we made our way down to the beach, where a group of us set up for a CW and QRP competition. Drawing plenty of attention from passersby, the antennas and poles were erected in record time, and within minutes we were on the air. Amazingly, on just 6 watts, a 5/9 QRP contact was made with France, along with many other contacts from around the country. As the sun set, it was clear that tomorrow would be another great day, and I returned to camp for some sleep.

Pics by Gloria, Carol, Phil, Greg

KAIKOURA cont.

After sleeping in—and receiving a knock on the window—I hastily packed up and headed down the road for part two of the trip: the PMR-171 radio competition. I decided not to take part, having already had plenty of time on the radio, and instead let others enjoy making contacts. A Spiderbeam mast towered over the table where the radio was set up, and in turns the group spent 20 minutes each trying to make as many contacts as possible. Contacts came in from around New Zealand and Australia.

We tested a Spiderbeam dipole for 40 m activations and the GH-V5 antenna from Guohetec, both of which performed incredibly well. After a few minor adjustments to smooth things out, it was clear everyone was enjoying themselves. We had people attend from Christchurch, Nelson, and Blenheim, and it was amazing to see the effort many had made to travel south—or north—to be part of the weekend and the fellowship.

ZL2NEB won the competition with the most contacts and points, taking home an impressive Spiderbeam pole as his prize.

Lunch was provided by Greg and Gloria from the Ham Shack, and it went down an absolute treat.
It was an incredible weekend away, surrounded by like-minded people, and big thanks must be given to the Ham Shack for their continued support of the ham community and for organising events like this. With the competition over and stomachs full, it was time to pack up and head home. A mix of happiness at having taken part, and sadness at leaving such a stunning location and wonderful people, hung in the air—but the next event will be just around the corner.

A big thanks to everyone who took part, and to the Ham Shack for organising the weekend. It was a pleasure to finally put faces to so many people who chase us during our usual POTA events. And another huge thanks to all who chased us during the three-hour competition. A lot of fun was had.
Until the next event—73 to all.

Phil
ZL3PAE

Stewart ZL2STR won the POTA setup competition (setting up a mast with antenna and ready to make the first contact. The prize was a lightweight 40m dipole. Well done Stewart.

PMR171 DX PEDITION NOVEMBER 2025

What better way to test a new radio than with a competition! Points were awarded for every local contact, two points for a contact with OZ and 3 points for any contact outside of NZ and OZ.

The antennas were set up and each operator had 20 minutes to make the most contacts. We started on 40m in a park thinking that that might generate some support and in 100 minutes the team had accumulated 78 contacts on 20 watts. It was not CQ WW SSB but a lot more chatty and fun.

On 40m we used a Spiderbeam 404 assymetrical wide band antenna on a 12m Spiderbeam mast and on 20m we use the Guohetec GH-V5 antenna and tripod.

It was three first, 1st competition for the radio, 1st time using the Spiderbean 404 antenna and 1st time using the Guohetec GH-V5.

Operating slots were allocated by a random draw and we kept the slots to 20 minutes to try and give everyone a chance as the band conditions changed.

Nick ZL2NEB won the 10m Spiderbeam mast for making 23 contacts in 20 minutes.

We made one contact into VK on 40m and a few local contacts on 20m.

The Ham Shack supplied food and sponsored the prizes.

Not a DxPedition in the true sense of the word but I wouldn't have missed the camaraderie for anything.

Thanks to everyone concerned it was really great fun.



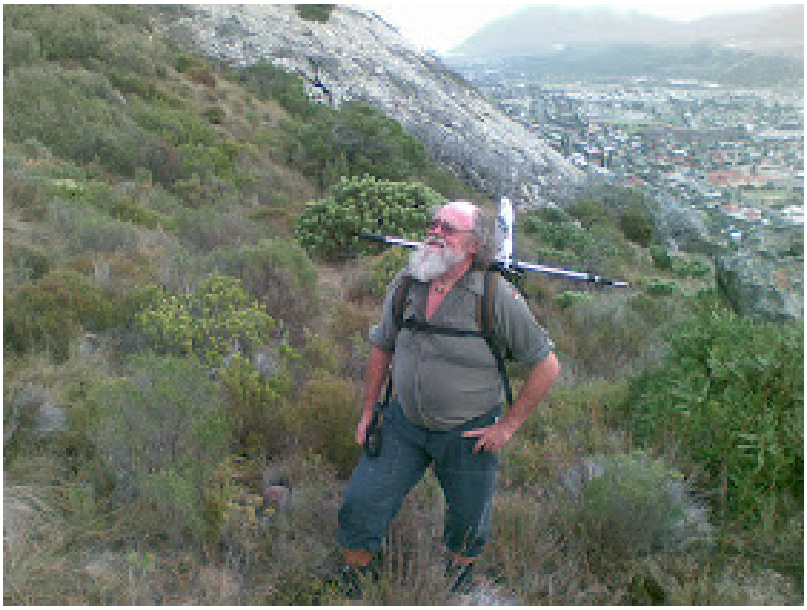





ZR1AAH - Africa Correspondent

ELSIES PEAK SOTA ZS/WC-070 ALLEN WOOD

Dennis, ZS1TC, and I activated Elsies and Fishhoek peaks together. The two peaks are are only about 2.5 kms apart and linked by a well defined path with with beautiful patches of indigenous flora and abundant bird life.



To the left, a rather apprehensive looking Allen trying to make out the route upwards. We started the hike from the incorrect starting point so had to make our own route upwards until we met the correct pathway about two thirds of the way up !

Allen at the Elsies Peak beacon with a rather grey and bleak looking False Bay in the background.

The beacon is on a rocky outcrop above and to the east of a radio repeater and cell phone mast & station.

https://www.sota.org.uk/

“From Shed Shack to Conning Tower Shack” Brian ZL4WX

I became interested in Amateur radio as a school boy in Clyde, Central Otago in the 60’s. I travelled up to Lake Hawea to go fishing with my mate and his father who was a keen ham. On our travels up country his father Jim Collier, ZL4KE (ex RNZAF Comms Officer, survived bombing raids over Germany) was chatting to someone in USA with a massive home brew radio in his car and I found that incredible.

Onward to 1974 when I shifted to a one man police station in Owaka, South Otago.There I met a local ham Matt Johnstone ZL4JO who used to talk world wide almost every day. His son, Graham, ZL3JO, lived in Christchchurch up to about 15 yrs ago and I knew him well. One of his fathers regular daily calls of his was to ZS5FV in Rhodesia at that time. Matt had a great site at Newhaven next to Catlins estuary with sea water on both sides which allowed a great take off point for his HF beams.

I brought a comms receiver, a Drake SSR1 and did a bit of listening.

In 1977 my father and I both sat our ham tickets and were allocated call signs, me ZL4TJS and Dad ZL4TJT. They were not multi choice questions either in those early years. !!!
In 1981 I was posted to another one man police station, Waikari in North Canterbury.

When the morse requirement was lifted in the 1980’s (I think) applied I applied for the callsign ZL4WX and my old man was allocated ZL4WZ. WX (Waikari) was my station code and “WXR” was my work callsign. I set up an HF shack with my first set, and Icom 730, (which still works) in the old station cell which was no longer being used as a local lock up.

For over fifty years I was involved in Search and Rescue, and Management and comms. In my role as Deputy Principal Rural Fire Officer in Hurunui District Comms was also a vital issue.

Waikari village was blocked from VHF Amateur signals directly from Christchurch owing to a range of hills. In 1994 the North Canterbury Branch of Amateur Radio established a Repeater site at Mt Noble at 1240m, above sea level. This gave excellent coverage to a very wide area including Kaikoura, Christchurch and inland to Lake Sumner with a UHF link to the West Coast. This repeater will be the subject of another article from my perspective.

In 2010 I retired from the police after having served 42 yrs and spent 36 yrs in two, one man stations. (I hold a bit a record as the longest serving officer in a sole charge position in the NZ Police). We shifted to Christchurch for two years during earthquake time and in 2013 shifted to a lifestyle block in the foothills of Oxford. I set up an HF & VHF station at Oxford and only during Lockdown did I start regular daily use of HF, “Backyards on the Air”. I am not a technical person by any means but enjoyed operating especially from remote locations and family camping sites and on previous hunting trips to Stewart Island.

Two of my sons who have their own lifestyle blocks a short distance from us have both sat their ham tickets, Dave (ZL4WZ) and Sam (ZL4WY). Three years ago my 13 yr old grandson, Charlie from Christchurch passed the Ham Cram and was allocated the callsign ZL4WV. Notice the sequential callsigns in our family? Dave's son Matai 13yrs has recently shown an interest in ham radio. You see, I have a big family, 9 children, 26 grandchildren and one great grandchild, so far !!!

Nowadays in Oxford we have quite a number of ham operators in the area. My near neighbour Mike (ZL4GMT) and Linda (ZL3GWX) live opposite us and we each clobber each other with 60 DB signals on HF!!! In recent times with my mobility issues I have had friends, family and hams help with re-erecting antennas and shifting my shack from the shed inside to my little shack room on the third story of the main house. This I call my Conning tower shack as it has windows all around to 270 deg, enabling viewing in all directions. More carpentry needs to be done to complete the shack. I have a long run of LMR400 coax to my 80m antenna to the SE as I like to keep the dipole as far away as I can because of a road power transformer to the NE, between Mike and I.

Having only recently moved into the conning tower shack, one of my helpers Paul (ZL3SAJ) made a transformer for me, an EFHW so I could get on a few more bands, tuned for 40m up to 10m. I had a fan dipole but that blew down in a recent gale force wind, but with quite a few helpers a better 80 dipole has been erected. I have always been a dipole fan and still am, but am very grateful for Pauls help, as it was very simple to put up and hang out from my Conning tower shack, but the tuning of it took time with a Nano Vna and clipping short bits off the end to get it just right with a little fold back.

Locally we have established a PRS net with neighbours and locals to assist in an emergency when power goes down or the alpine fault decides to shake a little.I would encourage amateurs to join the Alpine Fault HF net and take part in the NZ wide net on the first Sunday of each month.

In summary I have enjoyed being involved in amateur radio for a long time and made lots of contacts and friends. Since 2021 I have been a regular on HF. It is a consuming hobby and very interesting especially with propagation changes every day.

Brian
ZL4WX

40m and 20m to 70cm

Packed size 52 x 13 x 3cm (comes in a bag)

If you are looking for a portable antenna that covers 40m and then 20m to 70cm look no further than the Guohetec GH-V5. I call it my “bunny ears” antenna.

I bought the tripod that is optional and the antenna screws onto the thread on the tripod.

The tripod is fabricated from stainless steel and is 1200mm long for transport and extends to 4000mm long.

You arrive at the location, set up the tripod 1 minute, attach the antenna 1 minute, extend the whips to the etched frequency marker 2 minutes, connect the coax 1 minute.

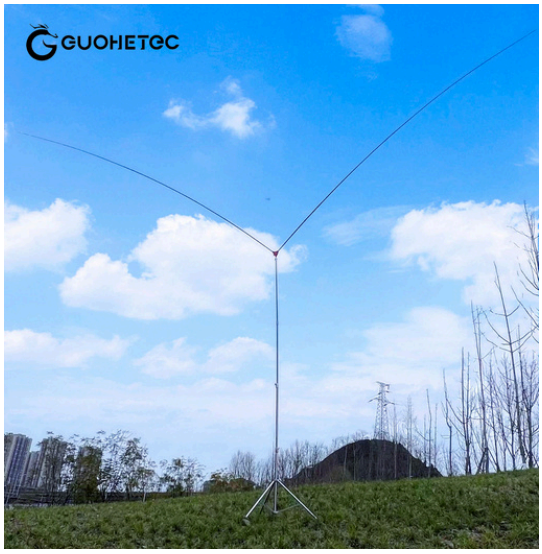
Ready to operate in 5 minutes

The antenna is a full dipole with a balun and when testing it, it is very wide band.

For 40m the bag includes two wire dipoles that get attached to the balun and then from 20m to 70cm you extend the whips until you see the selected etched frequency marker. And you are ready to operate.

It is that easy.

In heavy winds put a sand bag or some weights on the tripod.



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Turning Radius: 14 feet 9 inches.
Mast Diameter: 1.25 - 2.0 inches OD.
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