

WANSARC NEWS



Wansarc is an affiliated club of the Wireless Institute of Australia

Volume 41 Issue 2—March 2010



Western and Northern Suburbs Amateur Radio Club VK3AWS
Incorporated in Victoria A7611S



The sign as you enter Kinglake says it all.....following the devastation of the “Black Saturday” February 7, 2009 fires, the Yarra Valley Amateur Radio Club operated from just outside of the Kinglake township one year later, on February 7, 2010, with the special call sign VK3KIAH. This operation aimed to recognize the significant efforts of amateur radio operators in providing communications services to the community and response/support agencies after these devastating fires. John, VK3FMPB, visited this station and the Kinglake memorial—his story can be found on Page 3 of this month’s WANSARC news. Club members heard working VK3KIAH included VK3’s PI, EL, FMPB, CH, FAME, FIRE.

Photograph John VK3FMPB.

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Calendar for MARCH 2010

- **Friday March 5 2009—It’s the AGM—Annual General Meeting. Come and support the club**
- **Tuesday March 9,16,23,30 - CLUB VHF NET** Come on and join in and catch up with the latest member projects and news. 146.450MHz is the club net frequency on FM and we look forward to hearing from members and visitors.

MARCH MEETING—2010

FRIDAY MARCH 5, 2010 — A reminder to club members that the next club meeting will be held at the clubrooms, Seaver Grove, Reservoir, commencing at 1930 hours.

This will incorporate the Annual General Meeting (AGM), at which Office bearers for the 2010—2011 year will be confirmed.

A number of members have indicated their intention to nominate for positions—this is great news! Have you thought about nominating for a position?? Why not give it a go—you will be contributing directly to the well being of the club in having a hand on the “tiller” steering the clubs future.

Nomination forms have been mailed to all members via snail mail or email, together with a formal notification advising of the Annual General Meeting.

AROUND THE CLUB—RANDOM SNAPS

Following are some happy snaps of some of our members during the month of February. Clockwise from left (1) it



just goes to show that age is no barrier when you need to service your antennae!! Laurie VK3DPF with his Nally tower down for some maintenance. Graeme VK3PGK (2) has a worried look on his face during the Kyneton Hamfest, however it was a new customer calling to ask to have a snake removed from the front yard of a house in Sunbury. Graeme is now a qualified snake handler (as per his T-Shirt) so remember this if ever you need to relocated a slippery serpent. Now members know that Graeme VK3NE and Trevor VK3FTDX organized the transport of the radomes from EMDRC—(3) and (4) show how they did it!! Well done lads!!

Finally I advise all readers of this magazine that I have decided to hang up the pen and camera and hand over the reins to someone else in the club. Mick, VK3CH, has offered to nominate for magazine producer/editor and given a magazine producer in the hand is worth two in the bush, I will not be nominating to continue with the mag. I have enjoyed producing the magazine on your behalf since March 2007 (on an interim basis!!) and I trust that WANSARC supporters will continue to provide such a high standard of articles to Mick.

73 de Mark VK3PI



KINGLAKE—Beautiful place by John VK3FMPB

The sign as you drive out of King Lake says it all. **KINGLAKE THE TOWN STILL TOO TOUGH TO DIE.**

Almost brings a tear to your eye. I just had to stop and get a pic of the sign. Then I saw a sign on a fence of a house that said “please no pictures” - so I stopped.

The weather was hot but not as hot as Black Saturday was last year, thankfully. The oval was full of people who had come to commemorate with the locals who were there in force. I saw SES, CFA, Army Majors, Captains and even a warrant Officer or two. Lots of soldiers too. The Salvos, the Ambo's were all there. The oval was full of locals playing footy and cricket and chucking Frisbies and chasing their kids and dogs around. Oh, and having a beer too.

No hoons here today.

There were a couple of large tents and marquees set up with seats and they were also full. People needed an outlet for their pain at this stage. So they gathered here to look for that outlet



I was in Kinglake for the commemoration of the role that amateur radio played in the black Saturday bush fires of last year. The special callsign allocated to the Yarra Valley Amateur Radio Group was VI3KIAH.—KIAH is an Aboriginal word meaning beautiful place and Kinglake

Surely is a beautiful place. We all know that -we've been there.

Some stats from that terrible day are;

The Black Saturday bushfires were a series of bushfires burning across the Australian state of Victoria, ignited on Saturday 7 February 2009 during extreme bushfire-weather conditions. These fires resulted in Australia's highest ever loss of life from bushfires— 173 people died as a result of the fires and 414 were injured. As many as

400 individual fires were recorded on 7 February, 2009. Following the events of 7 February 2009, that date has since been referred to as Black Saturday. It is not the first “black” day—in 1939 devastating bushfires burned across Victoria and this day was named “Black Friday”.

“Black Friday” bushfires of 13 January 1939 destroyed more than 700 homes, 69 sawmills and many businesses, farms and other buildings. A total of 1,300 buildings were lost. The temperature on that day in Melbourne was 45°C. Between 1.5 and two million hectares were burnt and 75% of the State was affected in some way. A Royal Commission set up after the fires said ‘it appeared the whole State was alight on Friday, 13 January 1939’. Also in his commission report, Judge Leonard Stretton said the experience of the past could not guide the victims to an understanding of what might, and did, happen. The sign said it all.

The Kinglake spirit will surely never die.

KINGLAKE—THE TOWN STILL TOO TOUGH TO DIE.

John VK3FMPB



The Greatest Hamfest in the Universe by Mark VK3PI

March 20, 2010, dawned with a spectacular sunrise in Melbourne with an aura of excitement for your Secretary/Magazine Producer. It was time to trek to Kyneton for what had been billed as the greatest Hamfest in Australia, no, the world, no the Universe!! Well, it must be true I thought as when was the last time Mars, or Jupiter etc. held a Hamfest? I rest my case.

Martin VK3FMJP made a silent entry into the PI household just before 0800 as the PI brewed coffee and concocted bacon and avocado toasted sandwiches (limit two per customer!!). **Ian VK3QL** made a slightly noisy arrival by ringing the doorbell allegedly once, however their must be some bounce in the switch because my trustworthy XYL Gayle assured me (assured is perhaps a little soft) that it was more than once., succeeding in stirring the sleeping household. Thanks Ian!!

Martin and Ian tossed a coin for the driving and Martin won—off we go! Ominous low clouds greeted us on the Calder Highway south of Macedon and it seemed that the day may be damp, however as we tip toed into Kyneton the weather cleared and the sun shone over the Kyneton Racecourse.

Good lord—look at all of those amateurs waiting to enter the racecourse. At first I thought that a two letter full call may have keeled over and this was part of the ballot system. Silly me! This was the Hamfest vultures waiting to devour whatever was presented to them inside the hallowed gates of the racecourse. Everyone ready, light flashing, starter ready and their off! No finesse here, just follow the leaders. Have to ignore the commercial traders in the first instance because their may be other bargains outside.

As the crowd disperses to inspect tables it is great to catch up with some old acquaintances. We catch up with **Rod, VK3CR** and **Peter, VK3APO** for some lengthy chats. **Lionel VK3NM** is flogging wares on a table, and two rows down **Randall VK3RM** is doing the same. WANSARC is well represented—aside from **VK3PI, VK3QL** and **VK3FMJP**, sighted **Rod VK3MRT, Graeme VK3PGK, John VK3FPRC, Bob VK3EL, Jess VK3FJPM, Chris VK3FY, Nick VK3FNIK, Karl VK3ZKH** and **Frank VK3ZFS**. **Trevor, VK3FTDX**, had a “special” role during the Hamfest as a trading assistant of **Anthony, VK3JIA**. Meanwhile **Graham, VK3NE**, did his bit for the fledgling Mount Macedon Radio Club and XYL **Pam, VK3NK**, was at the stall next door selling the virtues of being an Australian Ladies Amateur Radio Association (ALARA) member.

Some very good bargains could be had by all—ask **John VK3FPRC**, who picked up an immaculate Kenwood R1000 HF receiver for a bargain \$145. Not too sure what the other gear was that John was struggling with, but it was heavy!! **Frank, VK3ZFS**, scored an ex-SES CODAN HF crystal locked transceiver for around \$20!! **Martin VK3FMJP** scored some very nice tuning capacitors with matching porcelain feet and some balanced line. **Karl VK3ZKH** and **Mark VK3PI** purchased 2.4GHz mesh parabolic dishes for some microwave experimentation.

Having selectively ignored the commercial traders on the way into the Hamfest for fear of not scooping up pre-loved bargains it was time to venture back into the capitalistic side of amateur radio. Wait—are you sure that YasKenIcomwoodeu box does not microwave, make popcorn or provide succulent steak sandwiches?? Oh, OK, they are options. Call me old fashioned but I am afraid I like old boxes that can be dedicated for one mode of operation at a fraction of the cost of a new box. And yes, I can still see the innards of my boxes and have a reasonable chance of fixing something if it fails. Putting all your eggs in one basket, or in this case, rig, goes against the Disaster planning mitigation strategies drummed into my brain. Having said this, to all amateurs, keep upgrading your gear because at some stage I may pick up your pre-loved equipment for a fraction of the price. And that includes pre-loved gear from “F” calls because I know that they are not allowed to use anything other than commercial rigs and they are not allowed to modify them.

With the crowds waning, it was time to find some food. Although the CFA sausages were tempting some other culinary delights awaited. It was strange to find an Indian restaurant in the main street of Kyneton masquerading in a National Trust Mill building. The waitress, a native of New York but now living in Australia with her Indian husband, was delightful. And so was the food. Roti bread would have to be a favourite and low calories too!!!!?!!

Alas our late lunch had to end and we three headed back to Melbourne—what a wonderful day! **73 PI**

DIGITAL TELEVISION VK3RTV (Part 1) by Mick VK3CH

The following is a summary of salient points from a recent presentation to the North East Radio Group (NERG) by Mick, VK3CH. This presentation was on the subject of receiving and transmitting digital television.

Receiving VK3RTV

If you can't get channel 31, forget it, you need to improve your antenna. VK3RTV is on 446.500MHz, your TV or STB needs to cover this frequency, a list of what does is on the VK3RTV website. The repeater must be sending signal for your TV / STB to lock onto it.

Just enter frequency in, 7MHz bandwidth, it will scan for it and auto allocates the 2 channels. Call on 147.4MHz FM, ATV liaison frequency and ask for someone to put up video when you tune.

Even though the repeater is now digital, you can still go in on analogue on 1250MHz; this will always come out on channel 1. The old analogue input of 1283MHz is no longer in use.

Recommend you get going receiving VK3RTV first, then you can come on 147.4 FM and ask questions and persons with Minikits like yours can demo to you on your TV in the comfort of your own home and assist you! Lots of good info at <http://www.vk3rtv.com/>

VK3RTV is going stereo, you can add a second sound sub carrier at 6.5MHz if you want, for right hand channel sound. But use the left hand channel only, for any control tones to VK3RTV.

Set Top Boxes known to work on new digital VK3RTV

A full list here; <http://www.vk3rtv.com/atvrx.html#Receivers>

VK3RTV DTMF Control Tones

Too many to list; look here <http://www.vk3rtv.com/ttone.html>

Minikits ATV Modulator Kit

You don't need a CRO, or anything fancy, VK3RTV is your test equipment! Just adjust things until you get a good picture and sound, takes about 5 minutes!

Don't use the 5k Ω trim pot on the board for tune, run some thin coax or shielded cable to a 5k Ω potentiometer on your front panel to adjust tuning.

As seen at NERG, it's not so sensitive, after all it's a 7MHz wide signal, but watch the delay in VK3RTV as you tune, make sure you're on VK3RTV1. You don't need a PLL, free running is fine, drift is minimal, just monitor yourself on a TV and tune as needed. I have only had to adjust tune after a few minutes on either really extreme hot or cold days, but I operate from inside the house with the usual temperature comforts.

If you have low power from your PA, then consider removing the 7 dB cut option on the output of the board, remove the 3 resistors and take your output from 10pF capacitor from the ERA5 chip. It's a real good idea to go to a hams place that has a TX beam that is known to get into VK3RTV so you know the antenna is not an issue when first getting on to the air. Plus a 'new' pair of eyes is really good to spot anything that may be wrong...

Minikits Sound Sub Carrier Board

The output capacitor of 47pF should be changed to 150pF if your sound is too 'thin'. Once you have a picture up, adjust the slug in the can until you hear yourself, with no bars across the screen, and make sure to use an insulated tool to stop stray capacitance, be gentle with the slug.

Try various settings on both the input trim pot and output trim pot. If you're going to use many different sources for sound, consider using a potentiometer on your front panel instead of a trim pot.

VK3RTV uses a sub carrier of 6MHz, don't use the supplied 5.5MHz SFE, order a 6MHz one, better to do a group purchase and save postage.



Mick VK3CH presenting to NERG's on ATV



The NERG crowd watching the presentation and the presentation watching the crowd!!!

Calling all John Moyle Field Day operators

WANSARC (VK3AWS) has won the last three John Moyle Field Day contests in the 6 hour section and it is our aim to do the same again this year.

So, do you want to be part of a fun day where our portable operating skills on air and with equipment are put to the test?

Don VK3HDX, Mark VK3PI, John VK3FMPB and Rod VK3MRT have confirmed their ability to attend. Please consider your availability for Saturday March 20, 2010 between 0930 to 2030 or parts thereof. Arrangements have been confirmed to use the same site as the previous three years. If you are willing to participate, please contact **Mark VK3PI** on **0425 611 640**, at the next club meeting or via email at **vk3pi@australiaradio.com.au**.

The John Moyle 2009—an ominous storm approached from the north/north-west which assisted our packing up!! Won't happen in 2010 but bring a raincoat just in case!



BNC ANTENNA POLE by Martin VK3FMJP

Well, OK, just when you thought it safe to read another newsletter without something from me, here I am again.

This is a little unit I thought up to get a bit of height for the antenna for my little Yaesu FT60. Again I use a length of the Plasson 3/4" plastic pipe. The idea is that a double female chassis mount BNC is mounted into the end-cap, the plastic drills easily for a clearance fit for the BNC plug. Then select your length of pipe or join a couple of lengths, thread your pre-terminated BNC coax up the pipe and attach to the cap. In this case I have a little Diamond RH771 2mtr/70cm antenna.



What to use it on? Well, you could attach a strap to the pipe and carry it over your shoulder when walking (long enough to keep it above head height perhaps), attach it to a back-pack, a bike, camera tripod etc. Limited only by temperament or imagination...

73s Martin VK3FMJ



NEW CLUB NET CONTROLLER NEEDED

After many years of conducting the VHF club net, **Bob, VK3EL**, has advised of his intention to, in his words, "have a rest". As a consequence a new club net controller is needed—are you available on Tuesday evenings at 1930 for an hour? Put your hand up at the next meeting. **Thanks, Bob, for your sterling efforts over a long period of time. May you in future enjoy "checking in" rather than "controlling".**

BEWARE THE TAX MAN contributed by Graeme VK3NE

Heard a story of a farmer that had a visit from the Australian Tax Office.

The tax bloke reckoned he was not paying proper wages and demanded, "I need a list of your employees and how much you pay them".

"Well" replied the farmer, "there's me right hand man who's been with me for 3 years. I pay him \$600 a week plus free room and board". "The cook has been here for 18 months and she gets \$400 a week plus free room and board." "And then there's the half wit. Works 18 hours a day, does 90% of the work around here. Makes about \$40 a week, pays his own room and board and I buy him a bottle of whisky every Saturday. He also sleeps with my wife occasionally".

"That'd be the guy I want to talk to, the half wit" says the agent.

"That'd be me", replied the farmer.

Insurance explanation from an Anonymous WANSARC member

I am writing in response to your request for additional information in Block No. 3 of the "Accident Reporting Form".

I wrote "poor planning" as the cause of my accident. You said in your letter that I should explain more fully so I trust that the following details will be sufficient.

I am an Amateur Radio Operator.

On the day of the accident I was working on the top section of my new tower. When I had completed my work, I discovered that, over the course of several trips up the tower, I had brought about 150 kilograms of tools and spare hardware. Rather than carry the now unneeded tools and material down by hand, I decided to lower items down in a small barrel by using a pulley, which unfortunately was attached to the gin pole on top of the tower.

Securing the rope attached to the barrel via the pulley, I went to the top of the tower and I loaded the tools and materials into the barrel. I then went back to the ground, untied the rope, holding it tightly to ensure a slow descent of the 150 kilograms of tools.

You will note from Block No.11 of the "Accident Reporting" form that I weigh only 70 kilograms.

Due to my surprise at being jerked off the ground so suddenly, I lost my present of mind and forgot to let go of the rope. Needless to say, I proceeded at a rather rapid rate of speed up the side of the tower.

In the vicinity of the 20 metre level I met the barrel coming down.

This explains my fractured skull and broken collar bone.

This slowed me only slightly. I continued my rapid ascent, not stopping until the fingers of my right hand were two knuckles deep into the pulley.

Unfortunately by this time I had regained my presence of mind and was able to hold on to the rope, despite the severe pain.

At approximately the same time the barrel of tools hit the ground and the bottom fell out of the barrel. Devoid of the weight of the tools the barrel only weighed about 10 kilograms. I refer again to my weight in Block No. 11.

As you might imagine I began a rapid descent down the side of the tower. In the vicinity of the 18 metre level I met the barrel coming up and this accounts for the two fractured ankles and lacerations to my legs and lower body.

The encounter with the barrel slowed me enough to lessen my injuries when I fell on to the pile of tools and fortunately only three vertebrae were cracked. I am sorry to report that as I lay there among the tools in great pain, unable to stand and watching the empty barrel 10 metres above me, I again lost my presence of mind and let go of the rope.....

WANSARC CLUB PROFILE

History

The Western and Northern Suburbs Amateur Radio Club (WANSARC) was first formed in 1969 and since then has served the needs and interests of amateur radio operators, short wave listeners and those interested in hobby radio and electronics. The club is not gender specific, having both female and male members. Members come from all walks of life with a mix of experience, young and mature, novice and technical. The most important aspect of the club is the willingness of all members to share their knowledge for the benefit of others. Members mainly reside in the west and north of Melbourne; however membership is encouraged from all interested.

Meetings

FIRST Friday of each month except January at the Ern Rose Memorial Pavilion, SEAVER GROVE, RESERVOIR. (See map). 7.30pm local time start.

Talk in on 146.450MHz FM—call club station VK3AWS.

Benefits

Free technology and related presentations, sponsored construction activities, discounted (and sometimes free) equipment, network of like



minded radio and electronics enthusiasts, excellent club facilities and environment plus an informative monthly newsletter for members to post articles, news, classifieds for all radio, test equipment, etc, featuring Amateur Radio news from WANSARC, WIA, ACMA, Melbourne Clubs, VK and Worldwide.

Club Nets

146.450MHz FM each Tuesday evening commencing 7.30pm local time. Also monitor 28.470MHz on 10 metres USB.

More Information: Website: www.wansarc.org.au

Email: wansarc@wia.org.au



Don't forget the "club" meets on air regularly on 146.450MHz FM.

If not delivered within 7 days, please return to WANSARC, PO Box 336, Reservoir, 3073

Australia Post stamp here

Next meeting AGM Friday March 5, 2010 at the Clubrooms, Seaver Grove, Reservoir, commencing at 1930 hours SHARP.