



## Western Suburbs Radio Club Inc.

### September 2018 Newsletter

ZL1AC, Branch 03 NZART 3000 Great North Road New Lynn,  
 PO Box 15-122 New Lynn WAITAKERE 0640  
 President: Ian Sangster ZL1RCA, Vice President – Grant Manning ZL1GSM.  
 Secretary: Andrew Mitchell, Z11AF, Treasurer Merv Thomas ZL1SK,  
 Newsletter Editor – John Neill ZL1NE.  
 VHF Club Net Wednesday 08:30pm 146.525 MHz,  
 HF Club Net Fridays 08:30pm 3.650 MHz  
 Website <http://www.amateurradio.co.nz/>

## Club Calendar

Wednesday	19 <sup>th</sup>	September	Informal Meeting at the Clubrooms 9:30am
Saturday	22 <sup>nd</sup>	September	Committee Meeting – 9am
Saturday	22 <sup>nd</sup>	September	Club Meeting – 10am. Video Search for a Better Battery
Sunday	30 <sup>th</sup>	September	Daylight Saving Starts
Wednesday	3 <sup>rd</sup>	October	Informal Meeting at the Clubrooms 9:30am
Wednesday	17 <sup>th</sup>	October	Informal Meeting at the Clubrooms 9:30am
Monday	22 <sup>nd</sup>	October	Labour Day
Saturday	27 <sup>th</sup>	October	Committee Meeting – 9am
Saturday	27 <sup>th</sup>	October	Club Meeting – 10am. Topic to the Announced
Wednesday	31 <sup>st</sup>	October	Informal Meeting at the Clubrooms 9:30am
Saturday	3 <sup>rd</sup>	November	WSRC Used Equipment Sale – 217 Rosebank Road Sellers 0800, Buyers 0900
Wednesday	7 <sup>th</sup>	November	Informal Meeting at the Clubrooms 9:30am
Wednesday	21 <sup>st</sup>	November	Informal Meeting at the Clubrooms 9:30am
Saturday	24 <sup>th</sup>	November	Committee Meeting – 9am
Saturday	24 <sup>th</sup>	November	Club Meeting – 10am. Topic to the Announced
Wednesday	5 <sup>th</sup>	December	Informal Meeting at the Clubrooms 9:30am
Thursday	13 <sup>th</sup>	December	Christmas Dinner – Avondale RSA 6:30pm. <b>Note: that this is on a Thursday!</b>
Wednesday	19 <sup>th</sup>	December	Informal Meeting at the Clubrooms 9:30am
Tuesday	25 <sup>th</sup>	December	Christmas Day
Wednesday	26 <sup>th</sup>	December	Boxing Day
Tuesday	1 <sup>st</sup>	January	New Year's Day
Wednesday	2 <sup>nd</sup>	January	Day After New Year's Day

## Meeting Agendas

If you have a topic that you would like to present at a club meeting, could you please contact the President or Vice President prior to meetings so that the item can be programmed for a future date.

## September Meeting

The September Meeting will be a Video on the Search for a Better Battery. The world is on the edge of a major change in motor vehicle transport to Electric Vehicles. We are also dependant on batteries to power the countless electronic devices that we must have, including portable Transceivers. However, before this can become a reality for most of us there is a need to improve the batteries that power these vehicles. This video looks at the development of batteries for all applications.

## August Meeting

The august meeting was a discussion on QRP, or low powered, transceivers. This was presented by Andrew, ZL1AF, and Roy, ZL1LK. Roy has purchased a QRP transceiver and he described its operation. The radio is a mcHF-QRP (or one with another name but it is actually the same radio with only cosmetic differences) is actually a Software Defined Radio (SDR) and all manner of functions could be called up from the very few controls on the front panel. The rig, in operation, is pictured below.



Front panel of the QRP Radio



The Connection Sockets on the End

Andrew has recently built a QRP transceiver from a kit and has it up and running well. He has used it a couple of times on the Friday night HF Net and has received very good signal reports from some quite distant stations. Andrew's talk focused on the construction of the radio. He bought a kitset and proceeded to assemble the radio. The make is a Micro BITX Version 4. It comes with completed circuit boards and it is mainly only necessary to assemble the various boards, provide a power supply, attach antenna connections and a case to install it in. It has a digital display which provides information on all the functions of the radio. The kit comes with only very limited assembly information and it is necessary to access the information from the web to be able to build it. Andrew has mounted his in a steel tool box purchased from the local hardware store.



The General Layout of the Transceiver



Close-up View of the Circuit Boards

## Informal Wednesday Meetings

Informal meetings are held fortnightly on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month and the 5th Wednesday if there is one. There is no programme. Just turn up for morning tea and a chat. Bring with you the project that you are having trouble with and perhaps others will be able to point you in the right direction. The numbers attending each meeting has been approximately six to ten people. They are proving to be very popular so do come along if you can make it.

## Examination Pass



Congratulations to Simon Walkden on his success in the Amateur Radio Operators Examination last Friday at the Clubrooms. We wish Simon all the best in the hobby. Simon is still in the process of having his callsign allocated.

## Club Nets

VHF Net 146.525 MHz **8:30pm** every Wednesday,  
HF Net 3.650 MHz +/- QRM/QRN **8:00pm** every  
Friday. All are welcome to check in on the nets.

The HF Net roster is opposite. The full HF Net Roster  
can be found on: <http://www.amateurradio.co.nz/>.

**Please note that the HF Net is now starting at  
8:00pm. There is no change the start time of the  
VHF Net.**

21-Sep-18	ZL1BAK	Graeme
28-Sep-18	ZL1NE	John
5-Oct-18	ZL1AF	Andrew
12-Oct-18	ZL1RCA	Ian
19-Oct-18	ZL1LK	Roy
26-Oct-18	ZL1BAK	Graeme
2-Nov-18	ZL1NE	John
9-Nov-18	ZL1AF	Andrew
16-Nov-18	ZL1RCA	Ian
23-Nov-18	ZL1LK	Roy
30-Nov-18	ZL1BAK	Graeme

## WSRC Used Equipment Sale

The annual Western Suburbs Radio Club used equipment Sale will take place on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2018. The same venue as in previous years. Details of the sale are at the end of this newsletter.

## AREC

Merv, ZL1SK, has developed a spreadsheet to allow us to have a record of the radios and equipment available and the capability of the operators in the AREC Section should we need to mobilise the team at any time. Most of the section members have been asked to fill this in already but if we have missed you, then please let Merv know, and he will send you a copy of the spreadsheet. Merv's email is: [mervthomasmusic@gmail.com](mailto:mervthomasmusic@gmail.com).

If you are not part of the AREC Section and would like to become involved, then also give Merv an email.

## Brian's, G4BIP, Yachting Trip in NZ Waters

They say that it doesn't get better than this; Sailing your yacht around the Bay of Islands, New Zealand at Christmas time! Indeed, it's a beautiful place and we were fortunate with wonderful weather and some excellent sailing. But it does get even better with Amateur Radio on board!

It was an extravagant holiday anyway but the icing on the cake would be to explore the radio bands from a very different location and try to meet the challenge of setting up a radio and aerials on the rigging of a yacht!

The first challenge was the radio. I was fearful at trusting an expensive item of fragile electronics to the mercies of the airline baggage handling systems so I explored the possibility of renting/borrowing a

radio locally. After getting my request aired on the New Zealand Amateur Radio news bulletins, I had a response from Ian ZL1RCA in Auckland. He had a spare rig and was happy to loan it! The next challenge was how to meet up with him during our brief transit stop in Auckland but he very generously offered to drop the radio off at the marina for me to collect! That was like a round trip from London to Manchester as the Bay of Islands is not that close to central Auckland. Sure enough a large box was there in the marina office.

So, after the mandatory Christmas festivities (a wonderful BBQ on the boat in gorgeous warm sunshine!) we set sail!

Our first nautical adventure was just manoeuvring our not-so-expensive yacht out of its mooring past all those very-very-expensive floating palaces without any bumps or scrapes. Oh, and as soon as we are out of the marina - there is that big car ferry bearing down on us. Now, powered craft are supposed to give way to sail but only the brave will rely on that!

Open sea at last and its a paradise of pristine blue green and fresh sea air. It's buzzing with craft out there needing continuous lookout - a motor boat zips past our bows and we notice just in time that they are trailing a long cable from their stern towing two people under a parachute - a good idea not to get that snared in our mast rigging!!

Now we are safely at anchor in one of the sheltered bays I can think about radio!

I have brought a wire dipole with a toroidal balun feed and some length of coax - now to hoist it up. I discover that there is no spare halyard to the masthead. Only a light weight halyard up to the rigging spreaders for small signal flags. I want the highest possible centre point so the only option is to detach the main sail from its halyard and use that. Not forgetting to attach a length of rope as a downhaul - it rather spoils your day if the end of the halyard ends up at the top of the mast with no way of getting it down again!

Daniel in the photo is more interested in the kayak while I could use a hand pulling one end of aerial into place! ( Editor, I'm afraid that the photo was missing from the email I received.)

Up goes the antenna and it's a fun task avoiding tangles and snagging the rigging and at the same time keeping the wire dipole away from the metal stay wires. The resonance of my aerial is severely affected by the close presence of other wires.

A quick check with my small antenna analyser shows a tolerable match on 40m (7MHz) 20m (14MHz) and 15m (21MHz) so now to make some calls.

When operating a radio abroad, most countries have reciprocal arrangements and will accept the UK Amateur Radio Licence as suitable qualification to operate however one is still bound by their own licensing terms and conditions. So it's vital to carry hard copy of both UK and the New Zealand documents. I then have to modify my UK callsign to represent the fact that I am operating away from home base and also on the "high seas" so I add a prefix of ZL and a suffix of MM to my call making it quite a mouthful of "ZL/G4BIP/MM" and even worse in Morse code!

I make contact with a good number of New Zealand stations in North and South Island and also a few in "West Island" (That's the Kiwi for Australia!) All these signals would be very hard to hear let alone contact from home!

Its always a balance between radio and the family holiday but the best distances for radio contacts from our small 35-foot yacht out on that huge Pacific Ocean were up north to Japan and way off east to Brazil! It was amazing to listen on the radio to many European signals that were so very very faint but completely clear of background noise. It's a major issue here at home that few are even aware of the

levels of RF pollution that emanates from the myriad electronic devices we use and all that broad band internet that connects us all!

And so with the boat safely back on its moorings in the marina and the radio safely returned to its owner with grateful thanks, its back down to earth with a bump!

We hear the weather turned a tad nasty in the week after we left - Force 5 gusting 7 with 2.5 meter ocean swell - would be a serious challenge for us rookie crew!

Best 73 from ZL/G4BIP/MM

## Cabot Tower

Ian, ZL1RCA's, daughter Shona, has just visited Newfoundland. She sent these two photos to Ian of a tower and Radio Station that she saw while there.



General View of Cabot Tower



Radio Operating Room

### Signal Hill History: (Editor: From the Web)

Dominating the skyline and located overlooking the narrow entrance to St. John's harbour, Signal Hill has been a key part of this province's military and communications history and has shaped Newfoundland's place in the world.

On June 27, 1762, during the Seven Year's War, St. John's found itself under attack by French forces under the command of the Comte d'Haussonville. After successfully capturing St. John's d'Haussonville based his forces around Signal Hill. To retake the settlement English forces under William Amherst landed at Torbay on September 13. The Battle of Signal Hill took place on the morning of September 15 when the 200 English soldiers climbed Signal Hill attacking 295 French infantry. The attack, which caught the French by surprise, resulted in the French forces retreating and surrendering three days later.

The Battle of Signal Hill was the final battle of the Seven Year's War in North America which secured Great Britain as the prominent European power in North America.

In 1897, Cabot Tower was commissioned to commemorate the 400th anniversary of John Cabot's discovery of Newfoundland and Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. An excellent example of late-gothic revival architecture the tower was designed by St. John's architect William Howe Greene.

In 1901, Signal Hill was at the centre of a major international breakthrough. Guglielmo Marconi, using an antenna suspended 500 feet by kite, received the first transatlantic wireless signal, the letter 'S' in Morse code. Marconi's breakthrough, which was part of an ongoing rivalry with many inventors, led to a new age in communication technology.

Today Signal Hill offers a number of opportunities to visitors. Cabot Tower is a must see – a stone fortress at the top of the hill where soldiers and signalmen kept a watchful eye. On the main floor of the tower you will find the Heritage Shop. Come in and enjoy the music and laugh with the staff about the weather and the wind while you shop a great selection of gifts, craft, music and books. Pick up a copy of *The Lookout* and you will learn about the people who lived and worked on Signal Hill. Detailed interpretation of the site is available at the Visitor's Centre. In addition to the site's history it boasts breathtaking views of St. John's and the rugged coast of the Avalon Peninsula. There is also a hiking trail which leads from Cabot Tower to the Battery and back.