



QST 63

WWW.ZL2VH.ORG.NZ

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

Branch 63 Clubrooms
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August 2011

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Presidents Report

Hi everyone... as you will all know Jamie Pye ZL2NN passed away suddenly in July. Jamie was a life member of Branch 63, and is the third such member to pass away this year. I attended Jamie's funeral and spoke to his history with the club (see separate report of the speech). I wish to thank members of the club for attending his funeral, and supporting his family over this sad time.

Activities in the club are still going on even though the current weather would indicate not. Trips to Mt Climie are only being undertaken on an as required basis this time of the year and as the weather permits; so there is unlikely to be any working bee's on site until at least spring time in the September/October time frame. So in the meantime, if you can assist with the AREC exercises for the Kapi-Mana MC please contact Malcolm ZL2UDF, as many hands make for light work.



The D-Star UHF Repeater is up on site and for those able to operate this mode some interesting results are being had. There is a great learning curve here, especially in operating on the mode, so I encourage you all to share your experiences with the membership, either via email or perhaps as an article for an upcoming newsletter issue.

A D-Star VHF Repeater has been purchased to replace the analogue repeater. A variation of the licence has been applied for, and once approved should see this new repeater on site in early August. With this repeater, the D-Star mode should begin to get a real work out, as you should also be able to operate cross-band repeat (VHF-to-UHF and vice versa). This ability is one of many that the D-Star hardware offers out of the box without a great deal of setting up.

The D-Star Gateway PC (internet access mode - similar to the way IRLP operates with the IRLP node PC) has been completed by Gordon ZL2ARN. The next step that is being worked through is how to get the internet up to Mt Climie. Various options are being investigated and if you have anything to add by way of experience or knowledge then come along to the Friday night meetings to share your knowledge. We can all learn something in this area. We are looking at using the commercial licence free WiFi band at 5.8 GHz. Some initial work up of the path loss indicates that this is a viable solution, using high gain antennas.



The pirate on 730 is still appearing from time to time, so any reports as to his location are required. Try listening on the repeater reverse of 147.900 MHz when he is active and let's see if we can narrow down his location.

Well that's about it from me....good DX and 73's.

Mark ZL2UFI

Branch 63 Repeater Update

1292 23cm

Nothing to report

860 DStar 70cm

The Icom D Star repeater has been installed on site and has been running with no issues. From limited tests the mobile coverage appears to be at least as good as the Analogue 860 Repeater.

5425 2m Repeater

The DStar module has arrived and is due to be installed early August pending licence allocation.

730 2m FM Repeater

The Innovative Energies SR250A 250W PSU has been repaired and returned. It is due to be installed in a upcoming site visit along with replacement standby batteries.

Branch 63 Repeater articles

John ZL2TWS has not just been busy working on our repeaters but has also been writing about them. They were written while he was at sea and can be found on our club website.

<http://www.zl2vh.org.nz/resources.html>

AREC Report

On Sunday 3rd July Gavin ZL2ACT and Ted ZL2TED supported the KMMC quad bike event in the forest. Ted kindly supported us who is from Branch 18. On Sunday 10th July Malcolm support the KMMC MX event in the forest, this was more traffic control.

Kapiti Mana Motorcycle Club (KMMC) has requested our support for the forest and other off track events later in the year.

The next planned event is 25th September 2011. Some members have offered support for this event.

Other future KMMC events where our assistance could be required are
19th November
26th November
27th November
13th January 2012
14th January 2012

I will discuss with Mark I ZL2UFI and Gavin ZL2ACT the need for those involved in AREC events providing contact information, next of kin, vehicle type (4x4) to assist in AREC support.

73 Malcolm ZL2UDF Br63 AREC Section Leader.

**Club HF Net 3.715 MHz
Every Tuesday at 0800 UTC**

If you can't hear anyone give a call.

From The Treasurer

Now that Conference is over, we can settle back into the normal running of the club.

Members are reminded that subscriptions of \$25 for the 2011/12 Financial Year are now due.

If you could make a deposit to 03-0774-0897536-00 and make sure that your name or callsign, and the Code SUBS is recorded, it would be very much appreciated. Otherwise, I am usually at the club-rooms on Friday nights, or you may post a cheque to my home address

73

Gavin ZL2ACT
Club Treasurer

International Lighthouse Lightship Weekend 2011

Hi All,

Can you please send out to all club members that we will again be doing the International Lighthouse Lightship Weekend 2011 over the weekend 20-21 August 2011- Duration 48 hours.

It is our intention to return to the same place we did last year. Once we get the nod I shall register it on the events web page.

The fees for using the batch have not changed, \$10.00 a night per person (payable by each member attending) sleeping 8 comfortably and any amount if some are prepared to rough it, mattress on the floor, couch or where they lay their head.

Access is 4x4 only and weather dependent, if it rains and we don't get out quick enough we could be there for a couple of days extra while the river drops.

I will be going in a couple of days early and returning a couple days after the event ends.

I am prepared to make a couple of trips out to the gate to collect people. Cars can be left behind a locked gate and to date no vehicles have been tampered with.

Those interested could they please let me know ASAP as I want to start to get things under way.

Tom
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Radio Classes Starting Wednesday August 10, 2011

Amateur Radio classes for the wider Wellington area commence 7.00pm Wednesday August 10 at Branch 18 Clubrooms Philip Evans Reserve, (Service Lane off Birch st), Waterloo, Lower Hutt.

The course is 6 weeks in duration and the \$95 fee includes a copy of the training manual, the exam, radio licence, call sign, membership to NZART and membership to Branch 63.

The classes will follow that in the link

<http://www.vhf.org.nz/pubs/VHFGuide/>

Please advise Branch 18 Secretary, Chris ZL2POS, of anyone interested in attending the course.

Jamie (James) PYE - ZL2NN (ex-ZL2TGP) 1940 - 2011

Good afternoon everyone.....

My name is Mark Gooding, ZL2UFI President of Upper Hutt Branch 63, the local amateur radio club that Jamie was a member of.

So what part did amateur radio or ham radio play in Jamie's life, quite a bit really.

Some of you may know of Jamie's involvement, others may not..... I will focus on the local involvement as Jim ZL2BHF has/will focus on the national/international side.

So let me wind the clock back, to the early years....

Jamie was first licensed as a radio amateur in 1966 with the callsign ZL2TGP, and this was later changed or in amateur terms of the day, upgraded to ZL2NN. This callsign was the one that Jamie still holds today.

When looking at the branch history it's amazing what pops out of the wood work..... so here a few of the highlights.

In 1970 the branch decided to commence a FM Repeater project which Jamie joined as a member of the design team. In the same year subscriptions were raised to the mighty sum of one dollar - currently in 2011 they are twenty five!

In 1973, the subscription was increased by fifty cents to one dollar fifty, as the club was somewhat cash strapped at the time, so Jamie and Gael offered financial support to the club so it could meet its financial commitments. This perhaps shows the first signs of support at a local level and how important amateur radio was to Jamie. I cannot see in this modern age, members taking on such a task or responsibility.

The FM repeater referred to earlier was installed on Mt Clime on 10 May 1973 - in various forms this repeater and the site it operates on is still in active service today, some thirty eight years later!

In 1974 Jamie was elected secretary of the branch and the club was now a good financial state!

In 1975 Jamie was awarded the very first "Branch 63 Merit Award" for the design, construction and commission of the Mt Clime 10 Metre Beacon. A beacon is used to indicate to those listening that a particular radio band is open for DX or distance contacts. So many people around the world listen out for beacons then they know to call amateurs in New Zealand on that band.

In 1975 Jamie demo'ed the 'Pye' family techniques in winning the Frequency Measuring contest. This is a radio contest where a signal is transmitted, and the people talking part try to work out the exact frequency that is transmitted. This was important as in those days many radio amateurs hand built or what is known as home brewed their own radio equipment, and they needed to be on frequency.

In 1978 Jamie proposed a six metre beacon. Which was later also built.

In 1980 Jamie was elected President of the club.

He was made a Life Member of NZART Upper Hutt Branch 63, after many years of service in the club, not an honour that is passed out easily.

During the 1980's he tutored many radio classes over many years and I believe proudly had a 100% pass rate. He was a NZART Councillor from 1983 to 1993.

He was also a keen supporter of Wellington VHF Group 74 and Wairarapa 46, as well as Upper Hutt Branch 63. I met Jamie just a few years ago when at the time I was the NZART webmaster. Jamie had been trying for some time to prize the webmaster role off the then webmaster (not me). Jamie, as was I were disappointed with the look and feel of the NZART web site, as it was New Zealand's window to the world and is was poor reflection on the New Zealand amateur association's national body to allow this to continue.

After two years I passed the role over to him, which I believe gave him a new lease on life. He completely revamped the site, updating it and putting his own stamp on it. It now garners well over "200 hits" a day, well up on the hand full I inherited, and better that I was able to archive in my time in the role.

He also took on many other roles within the NZART structure, that many people would be unaware of - I know that the currently General Secretary of NZART Debby Morgan has said that many jobs Jamie did have now become hers. She is now looking for some one to take these on as you could always rely on Jamie to do what was required, without any fuss and to be on time. A very hard skill to find these days.

Finally, to sum up... I was speaking to a fellow amateur radio operator at my work just yesterday and he had this to say and about Jamie. This was not solicited by me in any way and I think goes to the measure of the man.

"Jamie was Just a guy you wanted to talk to, very personable, just a nice guy...."

Richard Harkett ZL2FY

Finally, farewell Jamie and 73's and thanks for the memories.

D-Star: First Operating Experience – 14 July 2011

I thought I'd share with you all the recent experience I have had while mobile operating on D-Star, via the Mt Climie 860 UHF D-Star Repeater.

I have swapped out my analogue only mobile transceiver (Alinco DR-635T) and replaced it with a new ICOM ID-880H purchased from ICOM New Zealand, as part of the Branch 63 deal.

On the commute home from my workplace in Porirua I had pre-arranged with Jens ZL2TJT to call him and try out D-Star mobile.

At first I tried calling from the car park at work but there was no response from the repeater at all. I was disappointed as I had operated from there before. The car park had allowed me to access the 860 Repeater (analogue) after the installation of the new co-linear antenna. Although not exactly in the same place I thought it would have worked?

I then travelled towards SH 58 and called Jens just after passing the Paremata Boating Clubrooms on SH 58. I got the reply from the repeater that ZL2VH B was responding, then as I rose up and over the hill at Ivey Bay just prior to the first turn off to Whitby Jens came back to my call. From this point on and until I stopped in the CBD of Upper Hutt at no time did the repeater and/or the audio drop out, become noisy, flutter or any other indication of poor audio.

As I drove in and out of the various bays along SH 58 the S meter went from about S3 to S9. I transmitted through the cutting by the Judgeford sawmill, a good place to lose signals; and again nothing was lost (as reported by Jens). The next difficult point was driving up the passing lane before the house removal site, and again no problems at all!

I was running full power of 50 watts, until I reached the top of the Haywards Hill before the descend towards the power station where I reduced to the MID power setting of 15 watts. Jens could make so determinable difference in my audio or signal strength. Once down of the valley floor just north of the Silverstream bridge on SH 2 I reduced the power to the LOW setting of 5 watts as I was now line of sight of the repeater. Again all good.

In all my years of travelling this road over the last 15 years I cannot recall ever having such a good contact as this on UHF. This experience reminded me of the days when Belmont 710 and the National System at Belmont were at their best, which of course they are not now, along this road.

So after an initial non-start at the work car park, I cannot praise enough the results I experienced on this commute. I now look forward to the D-Star VHF Repeater as something to compare against 730 with.

The only change in my mobile set up was the swapping of the radios, everything else in this installation is the same as the analogue set up.

Mark ZL2UFI

Further D-Star experiences...

Recently I emailed out my experiences on using D-Star via the new 860 Digital Voice Repeater, in my commute from work to Upper Hutt (as reported above).

Recently I did a similar trip, but this time I travelled from work south on SH 1 to Johnsonville, down the Ngauranga Gorge, Thorndon and then home via SH 2 (via the Hutt Valley). The signals were interesting in that for the most of this travel the signal strength was up anywhere from S 0 to S 9 (and S9 and over).

Most of the time, when in what I would consider difficult locations, the audio was unchanged. From work travelling south on SH 1 to Johnsonville, for the most part the signals were good except at about the turn off to Churton Park where the signal was lost. This area is quite tight into the hills and cuttings along this part of the motorway - the moment was brief but it did occur.

The signal around Johnsonville shopping area and the like was very good. In driving down the Ngauranga Gorge, no signal lost in either receive or transmit was experienced. While the time of day favoured me, just before 4.00 pm I also took the opportunity to travel as far as the Hawkestone exit, do a circuit of Molesworth Street and back on the motorway, to head north. In the canyon effect of the high rise buildings - no effects were experienced, good audio and strong signals.

The drive north on SH 2 was for the most part very good, again except for an area just north of the new Dowse interchange where I believe I was behind both a hill here and together with being behind (at some distance) the Silverstream ridge the signal on transmit and receive was lost. This lasted only a few moments until I was clear of this hill obstructing my view to the north. The rest of the trip was excellent as you would expect. Having not been mobile on the 860 when it was an analogue repeater I have no comparison results to speak about over this route, but that said John ZL2TWS was of the opinion that the digital version is giving excellent service and that from many places where I had coverage he had not experienced 860 in those places.

I now cannot wait to see the VHF Repeater on Mt Climie installed to see how that compares.

Most of the time I was running full power on UHF some 50 watts, until I was on the motorway heading into Wellington city, where I dropped to the MID power setting of 15 watts. North of Silverstream the LOW power setting of 5 watts is all that is required, as for the most part you are line of sight of the repeater anyway.

These are interesting times!

My mobile set is an ICOM ID-880H transceiver, and a Diamond NR770 dual band antenna.

Individual D-star active stations, no specific order

ZL2UFI—ZL2BRG—ZL2VH—ZL2ACT—ZL2ARN—ZL2FY—ZL2TWS—ZL2TJT

- Nearly there

ZL2ADP—ZL2SET—ZL2UP

73 Jens (ZL2TJT)



**Failed attempt to carry out maintenance and repairs at Mt Climie
26th July 2011**