

Up The Stick— Winter July 2014 AGM

Manly-Warringah Radio Society VK2MB
...since 1923

MWRS President's Report, Carlo Nizeti VK2MXC

Special points of interest:

- Brand new President survives his first year (although has misplaced Presidential Jet!)
- Promoting knowledge exchange
- New events: Flagpole/Pirate Day & Maker Faire
- Russell VK2BYN retires as MWRS Treasurer after 37 years. *We've been counting on him!*
- 22 videos on MWRS YouTube channel.

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Il presidente onorario della società della radio arte ...

Well my first year as president of the MWRS has flown by, and I am still humbled by your approval and trust in me taking on the role.

I have always loved technology, tinkering with gadgetry and socialising and this club represents and promotes all 3 of these things to the wider community. Sure we are primarily an Amateur Radio club, but as our member base welcomes younger members we are seeing a brilliant knowledge exchange of electronic wizardry being handed down to the next generation while at the same time we are seeing the wonders of computers being demonstrated the other way. My goal is to continue to promote this and our membership continues to welcome in experimenters of all ages into the future.

It's been a full year of events, with the usual light-

house weekend, bbqs, training weekends, camping trips, JOTA and working bees continuing to be a huge success. I cant thank you enough for making these possible.

I was also hugely excited (as you will no doubt have seen during our meetings) to see new events like the pirate / flagpole weekend (arrrr) and the Maker Faire pop up in the calendar. Good fun stuff!

This AGM we will see a few of our longest serving volunteers retire their roles, and I think we all owe them a huge debt of gratitude. Some of them have been diligently handling their areas of responsibility for longer than I have graced the planet! I would ask you all take some time to reflect on their long work and thank them for helping us keep the show running. I would also like to take the time to encourage new players to step up into those roles, we may joke

around that non-attendance will get you a role but in all seriousness contributing to the club through a formal role is a highly rewarding thing to do and the perks are great



Carlo VK2MXC

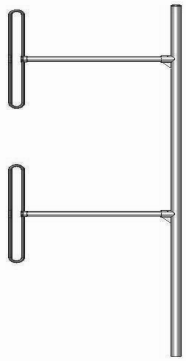
(Apparently we have a private presidential jet, but its been out of order this year. Weird).

I have had a blast this year, and certainly hope you all agree that this club just keeps on getting better.

Cheers

Lectures for 2013-2014

July	Digital Modes	Matt Maguire VK2RQ
August	Reflections of a Web Expert	Ben Ramsden VK2GHZ
September.....	The Lyndenne – Pittwater to Hobart and back.....	Tom Hughes VK2HUZ
October	Electric superbikes	Mal Faed VK2TMF
November	Crossing the Simpson	Tim Jensen VK2BT
January.....	Packet Radio.....	Matt Maguire VK2RQ
February	630 meter band and antennas	Nick Hacko VK2DX
March	Antarctica – trapped in Akademik Shokalskiy	John Black VK2FJDB
April.....	Beverage Antennas.....	Matt Maguire VK2RQ
May	Telescopes and Stars	Phil Angilley VK2BDF
June	SDR on Linux	Tom D'Netto VK2FFTW



New VK2RMB 2m array

"A 3-fold improvement was immediately apparent when we moved the antenna, and some fine-tuning of the audio levels improved reception even further."

Repeater Report, Geoff Van der Wagen VK2AVR

The last year has been productive for our repeater site, with several notable upgrades. The biggest upgrade was the replacement of our main VHF antenna. We were using a 5/8 wavelength amateur-grade vertical that had been in place several years, but the performance was degrading. Inspection revealed it was full of water! We have replaced it with a dual folded dipole array. This has restored the performance of the antenna system and, being commercial grade, should last for many years to come. Shortly after this upgrade, we had reception reports as far away as Jervis Bay (Dave VK2AWJ). Particular thanks to Tim VK2BT and Yves VK2AUJ for their assistance.

APRS also received a big upgrade, our iGate now uses a single folded dipole at the top of the tower. The previous iGate antenna was a magmount on the repeater

hut roof! With the relocation of our antenna to the top of the tower we are now capturing more packets directly and compensating for the loss of VK2US-1 in the CBD. A 3-fold improvement was immediately apparent when we moved the antenna, and some fine-tuning of the audio levels improved reception even further.

Our analogue VHF repeater now has a MicE interface. By interfacing an APRS transmitter with your normal mobile radio, you can send MicE packets on the tail end of your over. The MicE interface will receive these (and mute the retransmitted audio to save our ears). This is a great alternative to having a second transmitter, second antenna etc on the car. Credit to Mal VK2TMF for the MicE project.

There has been renewed interest in getting our 6m repeater back on the air. Work has been going on

behind the scenes in resurrecting our 6m repeater (Steve VK2KFJ). We are also designing a new antenna for the tower, most likely a 1/2 wave flowerpot.

On the DSTAR side, Matt VK2RQ has recently installed IRCDDDB to improve callsign routing, and a new linking module allowing us to connect to DCS and XRF reflectors in addition to the Dplus support we had already.

Finally, we are still chasing an interference problem that happens when our VHF analogue and DSTAR are used concurrently. It does not appear to be an issue either for this kind of work. Thanks again to all who donated so that our club could own this great measurement tool.

Education Report, Mark Plowman VK2MP

The MWRS Education team continued to provide AOCF training and Assessment services to the Amateur Radio community. A number of Foundation revision and assessment Saturdays were conducted at Terrey Hills club house with a number of others completing their higher level assessments. Please spread the word that MWRS has this capability. If there is a friend or a relative that has shown an interest in Amateur

Radio, let them know about the ultra-convenient one day format of the MWRS Foundation revision and assessment day. The MWRS Education team also offers a training course for Regs followed by the regulations assessment. This course and assessment takes approximately 4 hours. Of course we conduct upgrade assessments for those wishing to do one or more Amateur radio assessments. The Education

team conducted a total of 66 assessments over a number of different venues during the last twelve months.

A special thank you goes out to our clubhouse custodian for allowing us to use the Terrey Hills clubhouse for the Education and assessment days.

JOTA Report, Robert Drake VK2DH

JOTA 2013 was held over the weekend of the 19th & 20th October and we again invited the Scouts and Guides of the District to the Terrey Hills Guide Hall / MWRS Shack and this time we made use of the Terrey Hills Scout Hall too.

Fortunately the numbers weren't quite as many as 2012 but still the 120' odd was plenty. They camped at Narabeen camping ground and were bussed up to Terrey Hills over 6 sessions. We seem to

have a reasonably good process now and the flow of getting them through each activity gives them enough time to appreciate Ham Radio.

We had 5 different activities; Shack & Scout Hall (BattleShips), EchoLink, D-Star, Build a Ham Station (2m) and some activity tables for Morse Code, Phonetic Alphabet etc. The Battleships game was a big winner this year – each Scout / Guide had two

opportunities to play. We didn't do HF this year as it just isn't reliable enough in the short period we have with each group. I think this was the right idea. It put more focus onto Echolink & D-Star which gave the kids a good ability to find other JOTA stations from around the world and guaranteed the connections.

The weekend was successful due to the dedication of the members who assisted over



2013 JOTA —
Build a Ham Radio station.

120 Scouts&Guides achieved this

Social Report, Shaun Pitcher VK2XPP

BBQs.

We love a good BBQ at the MWRS and thanks to my blowing the budget last year with the Coles Country Beef sausages we have had a few BYO BBQs to get us financially back on track. BYO BBQs are extra special as the personalities of the members really shine. There was a circular sausage that looked like a sleeping snake. I tended to go for a steak and mustard. With all sorts of variations in between. The BBQ itself continues to serve us well however at some time in the future it will go where all great BBQs go, into the sky and BBQ heaven, and a rebuild will be required for this iconic piece of kit. (I have some cad plans of a super duper BBQ if we decide to proceed this way) I would also like to make mention of the XYLs and Harmonics that also attend and make these events extra special.

Flag Pole Competition – Yes I know it overlaps with contests reports but it is social contest.

Firstly a correction from last year's edition of 'Up the Stick'. The 25 foot Chinese made flag poles we purchased are in fact only 24 foot long. Thanks to Tim VK2BT for actually

measuring the unit. They must have different rulers in China. In any case the event was a success. I managed to scare my wife Annette, VK2FOX, when the Jolly Roger Flag that arrived at her work from Flea-Bay, as she thought we were being targeted/stalked in some way by some one or group. No need to worry dear, just your husbands antics.

Despite the scoring regime I think Geoff, then VK2MIA, now VK2AVR took out the fun side of the comp with both a flag on his pole, pirate hat and a protest from onlooker saying that he couldn't do what ever it was he was doing. Well done Geoff!

Christmas Party.

As with previous years another well attended event at the Terrey Hills Tavern in a similar location to last year which worked extremely well. It's a good arrangement as you purchase what you want when you want and simply eat it. Stories are swapped and laughter was a plenty as it is every year.

Jim's BBQ.

Jim G4WAO left us to go back to the UK in June and unlike last year where we

made a 'Bye Jim' sign out of sausages on the BBQ, photographed it and sent it to him Dom suggested that it may be prudent to hold the event *before Jim actually left*. Another great day and BBQ. It is the MWRS way, thanks Dom.

What's next?

Firstly, I have enjoyed my two years as a social officer, however the promised groupie like following of YLs has not been as expected. ;-)

I was hoping in the following year we could sneak in at least two more BBQ and in conjunction with the Publicity officer see if we can not make this flag pole contest a growing event. On top of that I was also thinking of some last minute dinners around Terrey Hills before the club meetings could also be encouraged. Drop me an email if you have any suggestions to vk2xpp@optusnet.com.au



The essential social equipment !

"...I have enjoyed my two years as a social officer, however the promised groupie like following of YLs has not been as expected"

JOTA Report (continued)

the weekend. I would like to thank those who helped out on Saturday: Dom VK2JNA, Rob VK2RL, Carlo VK2MXC, Richard VK2SKY, Chris VK2HX – with his rap morse code boombox!, Tim VK2BT, Yves VK2AUJ (the voice from around the corner, or was that from "Canada"?), Mal VK2TMF and Russell VK2BYN. Special mention and a huge thanks goes to Mark VK2MP, Katrina VK2FKAP, Felicity and Penny for providing lunch and keeping the sustenance flowing – Especially the Coffee

Machine!

On Sunday, the team was strong too – thank you to: Dom, Mal VK2TMF, Geoff VK2AVR, Richard VK2NRA, Sean VK2THT, Tim and Des VK2TGJ. Mark and Katrina turned up again with the coffee and morning tea and as well as helping out with the extra printing supplies.

I must also mention my two boys Tom VK2FTMD and Cameron VK2FDMC for helping us out all weekend. I would also like to thank Glenn VK2FWOO

for his 4G connection so that EchoLink worked and Ben VK2BEN for his 2m APRS kit, which helped us to monitor the bus trips all weekend.

Thank you to each and everyone who came and assisted. This made it one of the best JOTA weekends we've had.

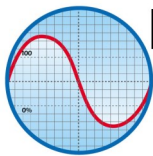
As you read this please put in your diaries the 2104 JOTA weekend please....

All day Saturday 18th & Sunday morning 19th October. As I said, the many hands made the weekend so much easier



Is it a flagpole...
Is it a pirate...
Is it a ham radio station:
Trick question, its all three!

Geoff VK2AVRrrr



VK2MB Manly-Warringah Radio Society
www.mwrs.org.au

Manly-Warringah Radio Society VK2MB
...since 1923

Terry Hills Girl Guides Hall
Beltana Ave
Terrey Hills NSW

Join us for an evening, every Wed
from 7:30pm.

Favourite frequencies include:
146.875MHz-
438.175MHz-
7045kHz

"It goes Up The Stick, Mullo's!"

WWW.MWRS.ORG.AU

Publicity Report, Richard Murnane VK2SKY

The lot of a Publicity Officer is a fairly straightforward one, mainly regular news releases for the WIA/ARNSW broadcasts to keep other Amateurs and clubs aware of our activities. Less frequently, I attempt to spread the word to the non-Amateur community, usually with less success. The so-called local newspapers aren't nearly as easy to get published in as they should be! Still, I try, and very occasionally get us a mention.

Upcoming PR in the works is my annual attempt to get coverage of our lighthouse operation at Barrenjoey, and I'm preparing an audio segment for the WIA national news to promote our new flagpole contest (listen out for a very corny Long John Silver impersonation in the lead-up to the contest!)

As always, I'm on the lookout for ideas to help spread our message further. If you have any, please let me know.



The VK2MB Shack, JOTA

Packet Report, Matt Maguire VK2RQ

Last year we had established a VHF packet radio station at the MWRS club room. Since then, we have gotten some great reports from packet users in the area. We also modified the hardware and upgraded the firmware on the TNC to TheNet X1J so it can run the NET/ROM protocol. This allows packet stations to exchange information on how to reach other stations, and automatically takes care of the routing so all you have to do is say which station you want to connect to, and the NET/ROM routing automatically works out how to get there. It is also more efficient than digipeating, which falls over very quickly over long hauls or under congested conditions.

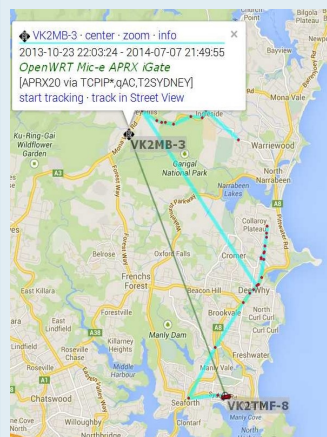
In order to raise some awareness with the members on what we had done, one of the lecture nights we talked about all things packet, which was particularly well received by our APRS enthusiasts (APRS is the Automatic Packet Reporting System, which allows hams to broadcast all sorts of useful information, such as their position, weather info,

repeater frequencies and off-sets, etc.).

Speaking of APRS, with the closure of the VK2US-1 digipeater leaving a big hole in the APRS coverage around Sydney, some of the members worked to significantly increase the coverage of the VK2MB-1 iGate, and this has gone a long way to filling in some of this gap. Also, Mal VK2TMF made some improvements to our 2m FM repeater to allow it to support mic-E APRS reporting. Here, when someone with a mic-E capable radio lets go of the PTT, an APRS packet is automatically sent reporting the radio's position. The packet is muted by the repeater, but is decoded and reported on the internet. Mal ran a workshop one night to show people how to modify their radios to support this, and some of the members have gone and done just that.

There have also been some exciting developments with the club's D-STAR repeater. As usual it was used for the Jamboree On The Air (JOTA) to allow Scouts and Girl Guides talk to other stations all around the world. The highlight for me was a Girl Guide talking to someone in the Caribbean, practicing her Spanish and asking if they'd seen any pirates lately!

The D-STAR repeater was upgraded to connect to the new IRCDDDB routing network, which allows it to route calls much more quickly through the network, and opens up exciting new possibilities like STARNet talkgroups. The linking software was also updated to allow connection to the DEXtra and DCS reflectors, as well as enabling linking to be done through "DTMF" codes. This makes D-STAR linking much easier to use. We intend to have a lecture in the coming year where we will talk about some of the recent developments in the D-STAR world.



Portable packet station?