



BARG News

Ballarat Amateur Radio Group
Inc. #6953T
April
Monthly Newsletter

Next Meeting
Friday 24th April @ 7:30pm

Virtual Meeting via Webex

All Welcome



Contacting us

You can write to the club at the address below, or e-mail the secretary

The Secretary : B.A.R.G. Inc.
Box 1218
Mail Centre
Bakery Hill Vic. 3354

Or E-Mail : vk3bml@barg.org.au

We're on the web
www.barg.org.au

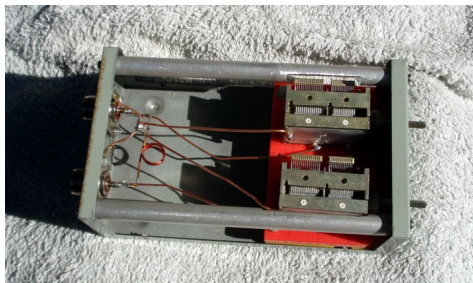
Presidents Report

Welcome to the April newsletter. It's been a pretty strange Easter break with everyone confined to home. Fortunately our hobby is one that allows us to connect even when locked away. So there's actually been an up tick in usage of the bands and the local repeaters. The coffee morning has been running on 2m VK3RBA. There's an isolation net every day at 10am on 70cm RBA. And the new 6m chin wag net at 8:30pm on 6m VK3RWU.

Personally I made the most of the time locked in playing with WSPR. I don't have any permanent HF or 6m antenna so started off running a 40 EFHW out the back door. Set up the FT-817 to drive ½ a watt into it and managed 17,000 km most evenings, which I was pretty happy with. As I was setting it up one Sunday afternoon I even managed an SSB contact into VK1 also on ½ a watt.

That worked well until the cockatoos decided the squid pole would make a good perch.

With the new 6m net it seemed like a good idea to look at setting up a 6m antenna. A bit of googling found an article by [VK1NAM on a 6m vertical dipole](#). That worked pretty well with an SWR about 1.7 across most of the frequencies I was interested in. After hooking up the FT-897 with it's associated tuner I



discovered the tuner doesn't work on 6m. I was told it had a fault when I got it, but had never been able to work out what that was. A bit more googling on 6m tuners, it looked like it shouldn't be too hard to make one up. With bits picked up over a few George Fowler auctions, I managed to build up a simple tuner that easily pulled the 6m antenna back to a 1:1 SWR.

Most days 6m was getting a couple of hundred km's. One particular day when running 20w I was being heard in Brisbane by multiple stations, and I was hearing them.

It's been an interesting exercise seeing how far the different bands go as the day progresses.

With the lock down continuing for a while yet, the next general meeting will be a virtual one. We looked at a couple of platforms, ultimately deciding on Webex. As an attendee you don't need to sign up. Ben will be sending out the meeting details including the URL. All you need to do is click on the URL. First time you do that a plug in will need to be downloaded. That's only required the first time.

There is an app you can use too, that has a few more features. If you don't have a PC there's phone apps that work well too.

If you want to host your own meeting, it's free for personal use. [Signup here](#).

Please try and use a Webcam. Virtual meetings work much better when you can see each other.

Ben's planning to host some test sessions too. If you've not tried this before, join one of those and Ben will give you some tips.

Malcolm - VK3OAK

VK3MCL's Ballarat and Western District Chin Wag Net

8:30pm, every Tuesday. (Might be 9pm if the group decide to move it.)

6m FM net on VK3RWU

53.650Mhz RX / 52.650Mhz TX

FM with a 91.5 tone

HF NET: Every Thursday Night at 8 pm on 3.608 MHz - VK3BML

DATE	NAME	CALL	NAME	CALL
30-Apr-20	Doug	VK3DRE	DAVID	VK3KQT
7-May-20	David	VK3KQT	IAN	VK3AXH
14-May-20	Ian	VK3AXH	MICK	VK3GGG
21-May-20	Mick	VK3GGG	CHRIS	VK3QY
28-May-20	Chris	VK3QY	Paul	VK3TXR
4-Jun-20	Paul	VK3TXR	SCOTT	VK3MCL
11-Jun-20	Scott	VK3MCL	Craig	VK3KG
18-Jun-20	Craig	VK3KG	Doug	VK3DRE
25-Jun-20	Doug	VK3DRE	David	VK3KQT
2-Jul-20	David	VK3KQT	Ian	VK3AXH

VKS-737 Radio Network 2020 Codan Envoy Raffle

The Australian National Four Wheel Drive Radio Network, otherwise known as the VKS-737 Radio Network is in the middle of yet another Codan Envoy Raffle, with tickets available until the draw on Friday 12th June.

First prize is a Codan Envoy X1 HF 100 Watt Radio with your choice of autotuner, valued at nearly Five Thousand Dollars. Second and third prizes are metal detectors from Minelab.

The radio comes pre-programmed with all the VKS-737 Radio Network frequencies. For Licensed Amateur Radio Operators, the radio also comes programmed to VFO throughout the Amateur HF Bands. All controls are on the microphone.

If you want to know more about the Codan Envoy, go to our Network's website (VKS737.radio), hover over the BULLETIN tab and click on NEWS. You'll find our review of the Envoy in there.

Tickets are just Five Dollars each and proceeds will assist the Network's vital function to travellers throughout Australia. You don't have to be a subscriber to the VKS-737 Radio Network to win but the raffle is not open to anyone overseas.

Yes, I know that you are stuck at home until this Nationwide emergency ends but that gives you heaps of time to work out where you might mount your lovely new Envoy should you be the lucky winner.

Go to our Website (vks737.radio) for details. If you need to use the Australia Post Snail Mail service to order your tickets, make sure to mail the form well before the end of May and please, remember to include the postage cost. We don't want to have to give over a fifth of what we raise to Australia Post; we'd rather use that for our travellers' benefit.

Make sure you get cracking if you want a chance.

Cheers... Robert (VK3ARM)

The VKS-737 Radio Network is a Public Benevolent Institution Established in 1993. Committed staff and volunteers provide information and support for Australia's remote travellers on land, at sea, or in the air.

VHF and Above for April 2020

Hello again to all the VHF and above enthusiasts. This month has shown a wide range of propagation characteristics which have been quite good at times and also the reverse as well. Activity on the 2mx band SSB portion has been quite lively within VK3 and VK5 being the most common.

On a few occasions good propagation has occurred up to 1296MHz with contacts from Ballarat on this band into Mt Gambier, Hamilton and Camperdown areas with quite good results especially into Camperdown with full scale "S" meter readings.

I've received some reports that our 1296 beacon is not being heard so well. A quick check from my qth only a couple of Kms away indicates it's working but may be at reduced power. It's being heard at S9 ok but should be stronger.

I have heard Andrew VK3TOT calling CQ whilst beaming north and north east on 2mx as there were lots of signals being heard one evening recently into VK2 and VK4. I understand some contacts were made via 2m repeaters but not sure about the SSB part of the band.

By listening around I've heard a couple off club members are getting operational on 6m wspr. Some stations taking part are VK3TXR, VK3BNC and possibly others as well. This activity can only be reported if someone lets us know.

Please send any reports to me of your findings in regard to contacts and/or propagation characteristics as I'm sure they will be of interest to other club members.

Antenna Construction Update

At this stage we now have all the boom material, bolts and nuts, mounting blocks a drilling jig for the mounting blocks but still have the aluminium tubing to come. Due to the current virus situation no info is available as to the time this will become available. An update will be provided when info becomes known.

A spread sheet is planned to show the costs for individual members which will need to be paid to the club preferably by direct deposit over the next week or so. I prefer to wait until all the parts are available before any payments are asked to be made.

Till next time 73 de VK3AXH