

BARG News



Official Newsletter of the Ballarat Amateur Radio Group Inc. # 6953T
ABN 44 247 200 143

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President: Bob Pitcher VK3NBV
Secretary: Ian McDonald VK3AXH
Treasurer: Gordon Cornell VK3FGC

NEXT MEETING - FRIDAY November 30, 2007
At 7.30 pm

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 1261
Mail Centre
Ballarat. Vic. 3354.

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



BARG Inc. Life members

Kevin Hughes	VK3WN
Ian McDonald	VK3AXH
Charlie Stewart	VK3DCS
Bob Terrill	VK3BNC
Jim Wright	SK
Norm D'Angri	VK3LBA
Phil Seddon	
Stan Widgery	SK

CLUB INFORMATION

REPEATERS and BEACON

VK3RBA	(Voice)	146.750 Mhz	Mt Buninyong
VK3RWA	(Voice)	147.100 Mhz	Mt Ben Nevis
VK3RPC	(Packet)	144.750 Mhz	Mt Warrenheip
VK3RBU	(Voice)	438.475 Mhz	Mt Hollowback
VK3RMB	(Beacon)	435.535 Mhz	Mt Buninyong
VK3RBU-1	(APRS)	145.175 Mhz	Mt Hollowback

IRLP Node 6310 using VK3RRWA

CLUB e-mail vk3bml@barg.org.au.

CLUB NET VK3BML 3.610+/- QRM Thursday Nights at 8 pm E.S.T (Summer & Winter)

WIA Broadcast and Club Call Back. Sunday's 11.00 via VK3RWA (IRLP Node 6310)

NEWS ITEMS Send to Harry VK3KGL

Broadcast Times and Dates on VK3RWA Repeater

Every Sunday at 11.00 am, WIA National News, followed by VICLINK

Every Monday night at 9.30 pm, ARRL News

Every Tuesday night at 9.30 pm, WIA National News Repeat

Every Wednesday night at 9.30 pm, Spectrum Tasmania News

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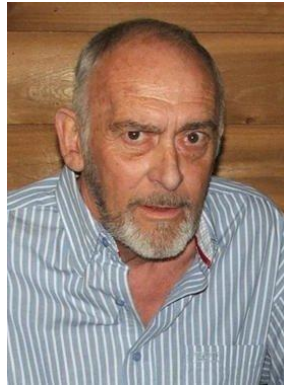
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Geoffrey Alexander Smith VK3ADB/VK3NLZ.

April 11, 1942 – October 22, 2007



Geoff grew up in the Maryborough district and learnt his trade as a cabinet maker at Phelan's. He went on to train as a trade teacher and was appointed to Ballarat North Technical College. It was here that he came under the influence of Leo McPherson who was an avid "Ham radio operator". With Leo's skills Geoff soon qualified as a "ham" with the call sign of VK3NLZ in 1978. It was then that these two teachers set about building with the students help the schools own station. From here many students were able to communicate far and wide around the world with other hams. These electrical and operating skills were attained by them and today many of these ex-students have call signs of their own.

Along with Leo, Geoffrey set up the Ballarat chapter of the International 10/10 network, which is a worldwide special interest club. It was here that Geoff established lots of life long friendships and to mention just two special ones, Bob WD6DFB in Sacramento California and Bobbie in Phoenix Arizona who at one time came out to Australia just to visit the "guy at the other end of the microphone".

It was about this time that these "twins" Leo and Geoffrey set about establishing a radio station at Sovereign Hill as a special event station to help celebrate activities with the sister town of "Ballarat" California, USA also an old gold town of the eighteen hundreds.

Geoff was instrumental in establishing some of BARG's operating awards and at the same time promoting the International 10/10 award.

When BARG took the plunge to establish their own club rooms at the airport the club turned to two of our "resident builders" Neil Davidson and of course Geoff to direct operations and provide the building skills required.

Well there was lots of "men's only" talk that took place up in the ceiling during the renovations. They did assure us all that it was "technical talk" but it certainly wasn't for the ladies ears!

If you ever heard Geoff being referred to as "Sterling Moss" well you needed to have been on our clubs Fox Hunting exploits of a Monday evening to get the picture. The object being to find a hidden transmitter somewhere in the Ballarat district in the shortest possible time. He always assured us that he obeyed the speed limits but usually managed to beat other cars by large margins and that's why Harry, who was his navigator is white haired today!

Geoffrey always managed to put very good signals into Europe and USA on the ten metre band thanks to a large quad antenna he built. Geoffrey's trade skills often came through and this was no exception and was admired by all who saw it and realized the reason for such a successful signal.

Geoffrey served in the capacities of Secretary and also that of President in BARG. He also served in the Wireless Institute Civil Emergency network and participated in the particularly bad fires in and around Maryborough. He was a member of the Wireless Institute of Australia.

Geoff's enthusiasm for amateur radio was such that when he met this lovely lady from across the

world well she just had to get involved. And so it was that she studied and subsequently passed the examinations and became a ham with the call sign of VK3 FVAL. Well this produced some matrimonial problems when they both wanted to use the radio and the occasional “bugger I’m using the radio” could be heard in the background. Val often has problems with the Aussie “lingo” and Geoff was called on to decipher some words like “Tom-mate-o”!

I’m sure that amateur radio to Geoffrey was indeed an important part of his life with so many friendships made and many an hour spent rag chewing and agonising over some technical problem through the years and not to mention the endless cups of coffee.

It will take time for the airwaves to convey Geoffrey’s passing and to filter around the world to all his old buddies but to a man we will miss him.

73’s Geoffrey Alexander Smith. VK3ADB.

Bob VK3BNC.

FROM AN ARTICLE "THE LAST PLACE
ON EARTH"

11 ...to make radio contact with the rest of the world

ON 28 July 2006, amateur radio enthusiasts received the news they had been waiting for. Swains Island, a minuscule atoll in the Pacific Ocean more than 300 kilometres north of Samoa, was officially on the air. It thus became the 337th and last place on Earth to make radio contact with the rest of the world.

Swains Island, population 37, was on air for only six days, but in that time it made a lot of people very happy. For many radio hams there is nothing better than to collect a “QSL card” – confirmation of two-way radio contact – from an obscure location on the other side of the world. Swains Island was (and still is) one of the most sought-after locations.

In amateur radio parlance, these locations are called entities. There are 337 in total, on a list administered by the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) based in Newington, Connecticut. Entities range from nation states recognised by the UN to tiny specks of land that barely register a dot on the map. Radio hams strive to collect QSL cards from as many

entities as possible, and anyone who collects 100 or more is eligible for the prestigious DX Century Certificate.

To qualify as an entity, a location has to fulfil a simple condition: it either has to be a discrete political entity or a discrete geographical entity. France, for example, qualifies, but so do its overseas territories such as Guadeloupe. Swains Island is on the list because although it is administered by American Samoa – itself a US territory, administered from Washington DC – it is far enough from the main group of islands to count as a discrete geographical entity.

What took radio hams so long to conquer Swains Island? Actually, nothing. The ARRL only declared the island a separate entity on 24 July 2006. Four days later it was on the air, thanks to a team of Japanese, French and American hams who were poised in Hawaii awaiting confirmation that Swains Island was on the list. This is a familiar tale with new entities. When Ducie Island, an uninhabited atoll 540 kilometres east of

Pitcairn Island, became the 335th entity on 16 November 2001, a team of hams set sail the next day. Then appalling weather forced them back, but they eventually made it and started transmitting in March 2002.

This irrepressible desire to send and receive radio signals from far-flung places means that radio hams have visited some of the most remote and inhospitable places on Earth, including Bouvet Island (see page 34) and Scarborough Reef, a guano-covered shoal in the South China Sea. Besides having barely enough dry land to support a radio transmitter, ownership of the reef is contested by China, Taiwan and the Philippines. An amateur radio expedition there in 1997 almost sparked an international diplomatic incident.

The ARRL updates its list of entities every year, so at some point Swains Island will be joined by a 338th. No doubt it will then quickly cede its title as the last place on Earth to make radio contact with the rest of the world. Graham Lawton



VK3AXH

The Secretary's Page

Minutes of BARG General Meeting October 2007

Welcome: Meeting opened by President Bob VK3NBV at 7:38pm

Apologies: VK3CAZ, VK3HRZ, VK3CIS, VK3FPOL, VK3FSDH, VK3CFH, VK3ZRF, VK3FITM, VK3PAL, VK3GND, VK3KQB, VK3HHK

Minutes of the September General Meeting as per the Newsletter

Moved Vk3BVI/VK3VBA Carried

Secretary Report:

Correspondence: Incoming – ARV, VK3FHUT, Account VK3PAP, Donation Anon, Subs VK3PH,

Outgoing – Card to Val Smith VK3FVAL

Moved VK3AXH/VK3ADX Carried

Treasurers Report: Finance Statement tabled – Balance \$7004.07

Moved VK3FGC/VK3FGLD Carried

Reports:

Mast – Jeff VK3PAP reports still some work to be done i.e. steel winch cable, rotator Cable and antenna's

Beacons – Roger VK3ADE reports some progress made and expected to be finished in one month's time.

Repeaters – Ian VK3AXH reports no further progress with the Ben Nevis repeater due to other commitments. Same situation with VK3RBA.

Radio Modernisation Project – David VK3UR reports the system is actually working but now requires antennas to further test the system.

Amenities – Doug VK3VBA – Supper after the meeting and Doug was able to pick up 4 good chairs to add to the clubs furniture.

Hamvention – At this point in time Ian VK3AXH reported that 47 tables have been booked. A meeting of the sub committee and other volunteers is to be held at the club rooms on Monday 29th October. Setup is planned for Saturday afternoon at 1pm. Ian to contact the WIA re table availability.

IRLP – New radio transceiver and power supply to be purchased as replacement for the Tait 500. The new equipment being Vertex VX2200 and GME power supply. Roger VK3ADE will wire the interface cable to the PC.

Construction Group – The RF project is proceeding well and the group is looking for future projects. Craig VK3CMC suggested an RF coupled frequency readout for rigs.

JOTA – approx 70 children took part and some good contacts were had on both HF and VHF. The group included scouts and girl guides. Those attending were VK3CHF, VK3VBA, VK3CMC and VK3NBV.

General Business:

A motion was put by Bob VK3BNC that monies be made available for the purchase of the Radio and Power Supply for the IRLP facility....expected cost to be \$330 and \$100. The funds being part of the grant from the City of Ballarat.

Moved Vk3BNC/VK3FSTU Carried

Meeting closed approx 8:45pm



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Don't forget your raffle tickets!!!!
Only 10 tickets to sell.....
Makes a lot of money for club use...



QST Report with Craig, VK3CMC

Content review of current QST in library



QST Review 2007-11 Nov.

A quick skim through the pages of the latest magazine in the library

- P30 Comparisons of HF Mobile antennas.
- P34 Building Kits to learn.
- P37 The handy Yagi antenna. For 440Mhz.
- P39 Simple Sideband, another approach.
- P45 Changes to the American FCC rules and its affect on amateurs.
- P58 APRS Motorcycle mobile.
- P62 The Doctor: Battery terminal care, Splicing coax cables, Lightning strike probability under antennas & use of fibre optics for amateurs.
- P64 Short Takes looks at *Elsie 2.13* software for Bandpass filters.
- P65 Motorola Micor VHF radio modifications *Pt 2* continues from Oct.
- P67 Hands on Radio. Exp #58. Double Stubbs 2.
- P69 Hints & Kinks. Third hand tools, MFJ Analyzer hints x2. Modify Battery pack for Elecraft KX1 or other Lithium batt devices.
- P71 Product Review. Kenwood TM-V71A dual band radio new APRS and Echo-link compatible.
- P74 Product Review> ICOM IC-2820H Dual band FM. Has optional D Star and GPS features.
- P77 Read about D-STAR operation of the IC-2820H new radio from ICOM.
- P82 Another side of Public Service. Emergency services and Fox hunting problem signals.
- P88 Old Radio. Restoration of a 1931 Tuned-Grid-Tuned Plate 75W home built transmitter.
- P92 Microwavelengths. Frequency mixers.
- P94 Eclectic Technology. Win US\$1million to design a wearable power pack of 20Watts and life of 96hrs and weigh less than 4Kg.
- P96 Review QST from Nov 1932, Nov 1957 and Nov 1982.
- P98 New Product, 1500W Automatic ATU from MFJ.
- P103 Hamspeak, Terms found in this months copy of the magazine.

That's about all from the Nov 2007 edition.

DO YOU OWN A TH3-JR Triband beam ??? If so the article on pp19 of AR magazine WILL be of interest to you. It may suit someone who is about to sell their antenna because it appears to not be up to performance specs.

The original article by the "Two Rons" was in Random Radiators of April 1992 and warns about incorrect measurements for the Driven Element on setting for the Phone or CW band segments. It appeared that "Two different editions of the TH3_JR handbook both have the 20M measurements transposed " and "a TH2 handbook has it right." A diagram and corrected figures is presented in the AR article. They quote that the beam appears to now have two S point over a dipole when correctly adjusted.

Hope this may help someone with a problematic antenna.

Valves/Tubes available FREE at VK3CAZ

Quantity	Type		Quantity	Type		Quantity	Type
5	6L6		1	VU331		4	VT25
2	6X5		4	6SJ7Y		1	VR65
4	5Y3GT		6	6H6G		1	VR56
2	866A		1	6J8		2	ECH35
2	5AS4		1	12K8		1	6A7
1	6057		5	12AT7		2	12AX7
1	95A1		1	6J6		1	6AN7
1	955		9	6V6		8	6SH7
1	VR102		3	6SQ7		1	6K8
4	7193		2	AV11		1	VT52
3	5U4G		1	6B7		1	VT144
1	OA3		1	6T7		1	6SC7
1	95A1		1	12AU7		7	8BL8
1	6AK5		3	6AM6		1	6AQ6
2	6BA6		4	6A8G		2	6K7G
1	6U7G		8	6AC7		1	2C26
2	EF50		1	EBF35		1	868
1	A609		1	EK82		1	884
4	807		2	QQEO320		1	KT88
1	1T4		1	6AG8		1	ECC88
2	6AU6		1	6AQ5		1	6C4
2	6D6		3	6J7G		2	6SK7
1	EBF2G		2	6G6		2	6B8G
1	5Z3		1	VT115		3	1204
1	6A6		1	6N7		1	6E5
1	12SJ7		1	VR150		1	1R5
1	6AL5		3	EF86		1	6AK5
1	90C1		1	6AS7		2	QQVO310
1	3BP1		3	89D		1	DB27GH
1	130BUR31						

All valves have some emission and have been checked on an old Palec Valve Tester or removed from functioning equipment.

Reg de VK3CAZ

Guest Speaker Dennis Kenan will be at the next BARG meeting,
Friday 30th November. He is a Molten Metal Specialist.



Bob, VK3NBV

A few words from the President.....

G'Day All,

What a busy month it has been, starting off with the great Hamvention out at the "Woolshed". I can only say how proud I was (as president) of you all turning up for the working bee out there on the Saturday and again on the Sunday. Thank you all, and a special big thank you to Ian AXH for the work that goes on all year getting all the traders there so we and others can get our bargains and Good Goodies.. Great Job Ian...

Coming up next Friday the 30th is the November General Meeting with guest speaker Dennis Kenan who is a molten metal specialist. After the heat of this Doug's putting on a sandwich supper.

You will notice that beautiful tower at the clubrooms with a big new beam shining on top, that got there with the guidance of Jeff PAP and his band of Saturday Morning Helpers. Also running round that morning was Peter POL cutting grass and anything else in site, such as number plate covers !!!

Now December means Christmas and we wind down a bit and I guess spend more time with families and friends.

With that in mind the proposed Construction Night is CANCELLED, the next one will be in February 08. But what we do have in December is our Christmas windup BBQ Tea at the Clubrooms on Friday 14th at 6.30pm. This is a BYO drinks and wife, girlfriend, boyfriend, mistress, but only if they know about each other, please. Also if you could bring along a salad or sweet per couple for sharing. The Club is supplying the meats and Onions.

Thank you all for being so supportive during the year and I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

73's Bob Pitcher. Vk3NBV...



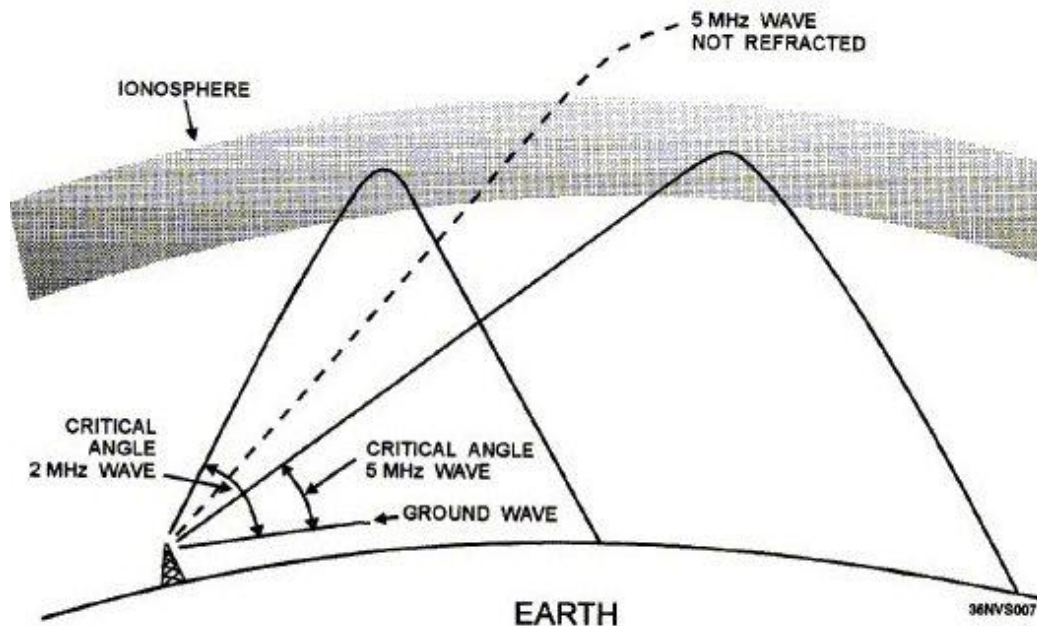
CHRISTMAS FUNCTION

Friday 14th December at 630pm Clubrooms.

BYO Drinks Partners and a bowl of salad or sweets.

Club supplies Meats and Onions etc.

Great Night assured .



Propagation Report for November 2007

HF Bands

I hear Neil VK3GND has been playing with a modified antenna tuner and listening around the HF bands of late to see how its all working. There are some reports of activity on 160 metres but nothing of any special note. However when Neil did some tests with locals VK3KQB and VK3AIG it seems the power may not be getting to the radiating element. Some head scratching for Neil !!

VHF Bands

There has been a lot of activity during this past month. Ian VK3IDL has now had a few more EME contacts on 2 metres with both into Japan and the USA. Kevin VK3WN, Craig VK3CMC and Ian VK3AXH have recently had some success on 2 metres and 70cm into both VK7, VK5 and VK6. Stations heard and worked include VK5ZLX, VK6JRC, VK6WG, VK6BE and VK6JR. The 2m and 70cm beacons from Mt Barker had been at good strength for a few days.

In addition to the above there has been an increase in activity on 2 metres using the digital modes by K1JT known as WSJT. Contacts have been had using this weak signal mode to VK5 when it's not been possible to use voice. Those heard to be using this mode were VK3IDL and VK3AXH. In the evenings you can often hear strange tones on 144.225. I'm aware that Jim VK3II south east of Melbourne has had contacts into Sydney using this mode during the past month. If you are looking for a challenge why not look into this mode of operation.

At this time of the year great DX can be had on not only the SSB parts of the VHF/UHF bands but also on FM via repeaters etc. I saw a report on the VK Logger that Craig VK3MCW from Colac recently worked a VK6 via FM so keep your ears on and see if you can work that DX.

VHF/UHF Spring Field Day

The weekend of 17/18 November saw many amateurs setup and take part in an event where enthusiasts of VHF and above enjoy the challenges of making as many contacts and on as many bands 50MHz and above as possible. Three club members VK3AIG, VK3IDL and VK3AXH ventured into the field and setup a station located a Green Hill behind the Ballarat University. Operating in the 8 hour section on 6m, 2m, 70cm, 23cm and 13cm many contacts were made.

On 50MHz contacts were made into VK3, VK4 and VK5. On all the higher bands contacts were in VK3 and VK5 with the highlight being on 13cm (2.4GHz) with 5x9 signals to VK5SR the Mount Gambier Amateur Radio Club. Ian VK3IDL was burning the midnight oil Friday completing a power divider so our two 2.4G gridpack antenna's could be connected together for around 3dB extra gain. With Ian holding the antenna's one in each hand and juggling the direction we soon easily completed this great contact. The equipment was one of the club project transverters from minikits SA and amplified by some ex pay TV amplifiers running approx 12 watts output.

In the future perhaps the club may consider this as a club event where many more members can take part in this event. Other clubs heard to be active were FANPARC, EMDRC, SERG and no doubt many others.

In the picture below you can see Ian VK3IDL making some minor adjustments to the antenna's before commencing the event. The view is to the West overlooking the Ballarat University.



Construction Group

All is progressing well with the RF milliwatt meter project. On our last construction night several units were tested and some calibration carried out on this most useful piece of test equipment. We will now get ready for the next part of this exercise with a low powered SWR meter. Thanks to all those that have taken part this year with the many projects undertaken. Still needed are new ideas to keep us using the soldering iron and those magnifying glasses.

Till next time 73 de VK3AXH



BARG Hamvention 2007



Well its come and gone and although I sent out an abbreviated report after some thought there may have been some points missed. Treasurer Gordon VK3FGC will provide the financial details of our success at the General Meeting in November.

Again I'm particularly pleased with the support given by club members leading up to and during this important event. The number of members involved does make things easier for it to come together on the day. Leading up to the event Doug VK3VBA continued to be in contact with as many advertisers as possible to get maximum exposure to locals of the Hamvention. As a consequence I received calls from a few people wanting to know if it would be a place where old radio equipment could be repaired or simply what the event was all about. Bob VK3BNC and Kevin VK3WN and others worked on the PA system to get it working for the day. Kevin also spent some time cleaning the toilet facilities which were not up to any sort of reasonable standard.

On the setup day there were 20+ club members to help arrange the layout and get the trading tables setup in a most effective layout. It was good to see that plenty of space was provided for visitors to sit down and just chat or have something to eat and drink. I believe the caterers were happy with the day. I noted not only were the traders able to Purchase hot egg and bacon rolls but at 10am I noticed several visitors make a charge to the food counter.

I was able to chat with most of the commercial traders about their sales and most seemed to be satisfied with the day's trading particularly "Ballarat Electronic Supplies" trading as Jaycar were very happy with their day. Most notable comment was its nice to deal with people who know what they are looking for. I would like to thank Icom, Vertex, TTS and Alan V_k3XPD for their generous donations for prizes.

Traders were also very grateful for the help provided in getting there equipment to their trading positions both during setup and packing up. You can be proud of what has been achieved and providing the same support is provided at subsequent events I'm sure our Hamvention will continue to grow in strength.

We still need however to address the method of prepayment and door prize tickets. Whilst I congratulate David VK3UR and Peter VK3FPOL for their tireless effort I'm sure what was done could be improved. I don't believe we can be criticized for the few that had to wait in a queue on arrival at 10am onwards as any similar event attracting numbers at a particular time has a queue ala football matches, picture theatres etc.

The use of the holding area was a great success.

Again the member support in cleaning up after the Hamvention was great. The old adage that many men make light work sure is true.

Some thoughts for next year's event. I have seen in the paper that the Melbourne Cup will most likely be a gazetted holiday for the entire State of Victoria next year. There are A few traders who are reluctant to return next year if BARG holds the event on the Sunday prior to the Melbourne Cup. Worth thinking about is the last Sunday in October which had always been the date for the BARG Hamvention. Already penciled is the first Sunday in November however this can be change (sooner rather than later).

Unfortunately I made a mistake by overlooking the "Home Brew" competition part of the event. Our Website needs to be updated to reflect that next year this event will include this section to encourage both experienced and new amateurs to display what they have been able to achieve as amateur radio enthusiasts.

As the outgoing Coordinator of this event I wish to thank the Hamvention Sub-Committee and all that have supported me and the club over the past four years and wish the new Coordinator the same ongoing success for the next and future years.

73, Ian – VK3AXH

More from the President.....

In regard to my Ramblings I can't seem to get Peter's call sign right it is VK3FPOL.

Also I didn't mention HUTCH who was cutting grass around the back of the clubrooms and didn't find any number plates to cut up.

Thanks Peter?

This may add to report from Macca. Last Sun 11/11 two meters was wide open to VK5 and VK6. I heard the VK5RSE 70cm Beacon and also the Albany VK6RST beacon and worked VK5DJ. The Currajung Beacon VK3RGI in South Gippsland was also heard at good strength. There were VK5's and 6 worked I believe but didn't hear them at all. The next night 12/11 heard at exceptional signal strength the 2&70cm beacon VK5RSE and VK3RGI. I also heard the VK6RST beacon like it was just sitting next door. I then worked Wally VK6WG on 2m and then shifted to 70cm where we just made contact before a long slow and deep fading interrupted us. When the slow fade finished I heard him working another station but he couldn't hear me afterwards.

Again on the 15th 2metres was open after tea and I heard the beacons VK3RGI and VK5RSE on both 2M & 70cm. I then worked VK7LCW, 7DBW, 7HDX, 7FWAY and V3II. The VHF field day may also bring some interesting signals as well.

73 rig VK3CMC