

# BARG News



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

**VOLUME 31 ISSUE 5 MAY 2008**



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

**NEXT MEETING - FRIDAY MAY 30, 2008**  
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](mailto:vk3bml@barg.org.au)

## BARG Inc. Life members

Kevin Hughes	VK3WN
Ian McDonald	VK3AXH
Charlie Stewart	VK3DCS
Bob Terrill	VK3BNC
Jim Wright	SK (VK3CFB)
Norm D'Angri	VK3LBA
Phil Seddon	Formerly VK3AQM
Stan Widgery	SK (VK3SE)
Maurice Batt	SK (VK3XEX)
George Small	SK (VK3DKJ)

## CLUB INFORMATION

### REPEATERS and BEACON

#### D—STAR

<b>CALLSIGN:</b>	<b>MODE:</b>	<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	<b>TX OFFSET:</b>	<b>USER SETTINGS</b>
VK3RBA	Analogue FM	439.275 MHz	-5.0 MHz	CTCSS: 91.5 Hz
VK3RBA A	Digital Data	1298.700 MHz	Nil (half duplex)	URCALL: VK3RBA RPT1: VK3RBA A RPT2: not in use
VK3RBA B	Digital Voice	439.9875 MHz	-5.0 MHz	URCALL: CQCQCQ RPT!: VK3RBA B RPT2: not in use

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)	432.535 Mhz	Mt Buninyong
VK3RBU-1	(APRS)	145.175 Mhz	Mt Hollowback

**IRLP** Node 6310 using VK3RWA

**CLUB e-mail** [vk3bml@barg.org.au](mailto: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

Or mail to Box 1261 Mail Centre BALLARAT 3354 or e-mail [vk3kgl@barg.org.au](mailto:vk3kgl@barg.org.au)

#### 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



VK3AXH

## The Secretary's Page

### Minutes of BARG General Meeting April 2008

**Welcome:** Meeting opened by President Bob VK3NBV at 7:35pm

**Apologies:** VK3HRZ, VK3HHK, VK3WB, VK3WL, VK3FGC, VK3DCS,  
VK3AIG, VK3CFH, VK3FGLD, VK3CAZ, VK3FHUT

Minutes of the March 2008 General Meeting as per the Newsletter.

Moved VK3CMC/VK3UR Carried

Business Arising: 70cm beacon freq to be amended in the newsletter

#### **Secretary Report:**

Correspondence: Incoming – City of Ballarat re acquittal of grant, Ballarat Model Rail re local expo, QST, Email from VK3ADX.

Outgoing – letters of thanks to Icom and others for support relating to Dstar. 4WD Club re local expo.

Moved VK3AXH/VK3VGA Carried

#### **Reports**

President Bob VK3NBV gave an overview from the committee meeting which included an email from VK3BNC re the purchase of the Sheet Metal Bender, Guillotine, replacement batteries for the multimeters and possible purchase of some additional meters. Bob to liaise with VK3CFH.

Ammenities: Doug VK3VBA organised a raffle with 3 prizes. Tickets Costing \$1 each raised \$32 for the club. The lucky winners were Bob VK3NBV- a bottle of sauce, VK3AXH- a bottle of coke and VK3HHJ Dean a nice bottle of stuff that could easily in giving you a headache.

Doug is still investigating costs etc of shirts bearing the club logo. Supper tonight will be Anzac biscuits – well done Doug.

Peter VK3FPOL has been busy making the rooms look much brighter with a generous donation and installation of some “green” lights and lightshades. The members showed their appreciation of Peter’s personal effort and thanked him for his efforts to brighten up the club rooms.

Beacon – The beacon licence has now been received so plans are now underway for the installation of both the equipment and new 23cm antenna. David VK3UR gave a detailed presentation of the installation of the DSTAR equipment at Mount Buninyong and the need for CTCSS to use the new analogue 70cm repeater. Lots of photographs showing equipment location etc. – Well done to David VK3UR, Roger VK3ADE, Richard VK3JFK and Paul VK3XDE for their effort to get the system in and running in such a short time frame.

Construction Group – The HF SWR bridge project is progressing well and a suggestion was also made to perhaps make a CTCSS module for some of the older rigs allowing access to the new 70cm repeater and any other repeater that may require CTCSS for operation.

The morning coffee group met at the Beechworth Bakery on Thursday morning 24<sup>th</sup> with approx 8 members and 3 wives attending. The gathering of the group allows those members unable to attend meetings to keep in touch with club activities. We look forward to more attending the next morning coffee session on 29<sup>th</sup> of May.

Education: Craig VK3CMC reports his effort to gain support in running amateur courses and exams has now been supported by Gordon VK3FGC and Bob VK3NBV. Any more offers would be well received.

#### General Business:

There is a problem with the main entry door not closing properly – Doug VK3VBA to look at resolving this problem.

A bus will leave Maxi Food carpark at 8am on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May for the Moorabbin Hamfest – The bus is fully booked.

There are still some loose ends to be resolved with the remote base access project such as the rotator control. Approx 8 members now have the authorization to use this facility which is working well.

Merv VK3ADX has tendered his resignation from BARG. The members accepted his resignation with regret. A letter is to be sent to Merv advising this outcome.

Moved VK3FPOL/VK3TJW Carried

It was suggested the club reintroduce a financial penalty for not wearing name badges. The penalty being 20 cents for club coffers.

Moved VK3KQB/VK3BNC Carried

A motion to purchase a comprehensive collation of articles that have appeared in QEX in the form of a CD at a cost of \$50 plus P&P to be retained in the club library was Moved by VK3CMC/VK3AXH Carried

As no member has volunteered to be the Auctioneer at the upcoming George Fowler Memorial Auction, Bob VK3BNC has kindly agreed to make this his last auction.

Hamvention Coordinator: Whilst no individual member has volunteered to take on this role there has been a number of members ie VK3ADE, VK3CMC, VK3FPOL and VK3NBV who will undertake a joint role for this activity.

BOB VK3NBV gave an overview of the committees decision to seek a rise in club membership fees. This is mainly due to the costs of running the club getting very close to the income generated. A \$10 increase was suggested. This matter will receive further discussion at subsequent meetings with a final decision to be made at this year's AGM

Meeting closed 8:40pm

## DECISIONS IN PURCHASING YOUR FIRST TRANSCEIVER.

I have just finished reading an article in the May 2008 QST by sub editor W1ZR aimed at newcomers to the hobby about purchasing costly transceivers to get on air with. The article looks at a number of radios and also how to categorise them by different criteria's.

Times have changed drastically since I was first licensed and many amateurs then built their own receivers followed by the transmitter to give themselves a basic station. There was a mass of ex Government disposals about that allowed us to do so and the only complete receivers were still very large, heavy and ex disposals.

Sometimes you were lucky to pick up an Murphy B40, AR7, AR8, R1155 or an AR88 but they were big and heavy and did not cover the VHF bands of 6M and above. To get up there you had to build your own converter that used an Intermediate Frequency [IF] and allowed you to receive the higher frequency band and then to translate or down convert it to a suitable frequency tuned by your receiver. To get a signal onto the VHF band we built the transmitter from scratch parts taken from disposals equipment or purchased new from various radio parts stores that existed then. The transmitters started with a crystal oscillator {fixed frequency then} and you harmonically multiplied the output from each stage until you reached the band you wished to transmit in. Methods of modulation on the VHF bands were initially Amplitude Modulation [AM] and Narrow Band Frequency Modulation [NBFM] The other mode was of course Morse Code [CW]. The signals were all suitable for demodulating in the base station receiver although the NBFM required some tuning to get the signal on the band pass slope of the IF to get enough audio recovered. Cost of all this gear was relatively low as you could obtain a veritable supply of parts from the war disposals equipment that was about in the 1950's to perhaps early 1970's and it allowed construction to continue relatively easily.

Today we face many different challenges to getting on the air. !

Apart from the fact that disposals of suitable gear is now fairly hard to get there is another change in the face of amateur radio and that is the move to miniaturization and integration of components. This means that one component can now do many tasks in its encapsulation and also the device is quite small and difficult to solder to without certain skills and suitable working tools.

Another challenge is the introduction of the Foundation licence which specifically forbids a licensee doing any work to a radio transceiver them selves. Interestingly it does not preclude using a separate receiver that they are able to "delve into" but just the transmitting side of the gear. Of course all gear that is now being marketed and used by most amateurs is commercially built "black boxes" that combine the Receiver and the Transmitter within the one case and they are interconnected.

The Foundation licence also restricts the operator to a power level of 10Watts and when produced by a modern piece of equipment its assumed that the active devices inside will be transistors and not vacuum valves which require a much higher operating voltages.

So, getting back to the start. The newer operator has to make some decisions about what type of rig are they going to look for.? What bands and modes are they interested in ? and also can they afford a new rig right up front.?

It would pay anyone looking for another rig to read this article in QST as it lays out the process choice they should consider although be warned the prices are high for the upper end level of radios and also some radios are not found in this country as a rule.

You need to decide the main application for the radio i.e. main bench or mobile/portable radio. Do you need it to transmit high power or can a lower power level be accepted. A linear can be obtained later and incorporated in the shack design. I have advised a number of new members to look at advertisements in Amateur Radio magazine and the Ham Adds section to look for availability and typical market costs for a particular type of radio. Of course you need to also assess the physical sizes and its condition.

From this data its possible to construct a tabulation and monitor the market “forces” in the averaging of prices being asked for a particular type of rig.

Another way to gain this information is to look at the E-bay network for a particular radio type and observe the prices asked and received for different rigs. This gives a feel for the price s, however you also need to consider postage costs, insurance and freight.

In looking at older types of sets do a Google search and see what reviews and owner comments come out for different sets.

The ARRL’s magazine QST has always included excellent equipment reviews and the WIA’s Amateur Radio magazine also has reviews from time to time.

Of course if you are looking at an older set you should look in the archive copies to see what has been said about them in the past.

Once you have gathered the details about a couple of these units you are now able to compare the major points and decide which is the most likely one for you.

Now irregardless of whether you are looking for a new or second hand unit this method is good because it allows you to list and compare all salient features of interest and then to look and compare the market prices and availability. This works for both new and preloved gear.

**Craig, vk3cmc**

**We are still missing Amateur Radio magazines for April and also June for 2007. They had come into the club rooms but someone has borrowed them and forgotten to sign the book. It now means that the clubs copies are no longer complete. I am trying to keep complete sets for both AR and QST for the past ten years as some articles will become dated after that. We should of course try and keep our volumes together so that articles that may run over a series can always be found when required.**

**73 Craig**



## **GEORGE FOWLER MEMORIAL AUCTION**

**Don’t forget our annual George Fowler Memorial Auction on Sunday May 25, 2008.**

**Soup and rolls will be supplies starting at midday.**

**The Auction will commence at 1 pm by our auctioneer**

**For people wanting to clean out your radio shack, bring in the goods.....**



**QST Report with Craig, VK3CMC**  
**Content review of current QST in library**



**Review QST 2008-5 May 2008**

- P30 Computer Simulation of 160M Inverted L Antenna's.
- P33 The TAK-40 SSB CW Transceiver.
- P38 Very Special Mini Radio installation. Small cars.
- P42 Dual Band Handy Yagi.
- P44 Review. Yaesu FTM-10R Dual band mobile transceiver.
- P46 Motorcycle mobile with the FTM-10R.
- P47 SteppIR 40-30M Upgrade kit.
- P50 Technical Correspondence: National Electrical code  
Coupling probes to short antennas. Connect CRO's and counters to HV circuits.
- P52 Interview with Sec General of the ITU.
- P55 What I did for my Summer vacation. 50kW and a Rhombic.
- P58 FCC Denies Two Petitions to bring Morse Code testing back.
- P64 The Doctor is In: Looks at the following.  
Wide Band AM on the 80M band. An IC 706 in mobile car operations.  
Getting Amateur radio onto the Moon. FCC rules about 6M beacons
- P66 Short Takes: The HENDRICKS QRP Long Wire kits.
- P67 An Electronic Turns Counting Dial.
- P69 Easy Upgrade to an Amplifier Controller.
- P71 Getting on the Air: Selecting your first HF Transceiver.  
Worth while reading for new and older licencees.
- P74 Hands on Radio. Exp #64 Waveforms & Harmonics.
- P76 Picking a Microphone for that New Station.
- P77 Hints & Kinks. Restore rotary switches, PL259's, Emergency batteries, Using surplus gear.
- P79 Contesting.
- P86 World above 50Mhz. Transatlantic Communications.
- P93 Old Radio: 3ZO and Horace Beale Jr.
- P95 Eclectic Technology, SMD's Resistance is futile.
- P100 75, 50 and 25Years ago in nthe QST magazine.
- P101 Hamspeak. A Glossary of used terms this edition.

Well that's your lot this month. !!!!, happy reading.

**73 Craig VK3CMC**

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# Are your arms too short?

Then take a look at this for a great eye saver!

A while ago I was looking for a suitable data logging hardware and accompanying software to assist in my radio astronomy interests. After trying one from DataQ I was pointed in the direction of a local firm that provided a great multimeter equipped with data logging hardware. The unit is the “DigiTech model QM1538” and is available thru Wiltronics at less than \$50.00. It comes with its own software,un-believable, particularly as the previous imported unit had cost nearly twice this figure.

The meter is connected to your computer com port1 with the lead provided.

The software is easy to install on your computer and when you run it you will be delighted to see a screen sized multimeter with all the ranges available as on most multimeters and what is more you can read it from across the other side of the shack.

The display is either an analogue meter scale and a large digital scale together or singularly displayed and makes it a breeze to do any adjustments. Colours can be changed to suit your shack curtains.

The user manual leaves a lot to be desired but I wouldn't be any good in writing a manual in a foreign language.

A plug in temperature probe is provided and if you want you can let it purr away and record your shack temperature for 24 hours or a week if you wish.

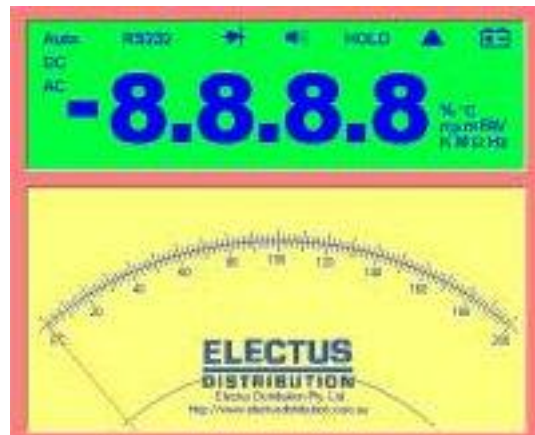
If data logging is your interest then its all available in easy steps.

Tha attached screen snap shot shows the meter in detail.

So there you have it throw away the glasses and use this great combination.

With the “Web Master's” permission and co-operation it will all be available on display at our next BARG meeting.

**Bob VK3BNC.**



**Thursday 29th at 10.30 am. Morning Coffee at  
Beechworth Bakery in Grenville Street Ballarat.**

**Ladies and Gents welcome.**



# Installation of new equipment VK3RWA on Ben Nevis.

Rodger, Jeff and Shaun went up the hill Saturday May 24





Bob, VK3NBV

## A few words from the President.....

Hello All,

I hope you have all been enjoying the activities of BARG over the last month. A new activity that has turned out quite well has been the coffee morning, it's a good get together for the retired and the ladies to come along and socialize. I didn't hear any radio talk going on at all.

The next Coffee Morning is at Beechworth Bakery in Grenville st, next Thursday Morning at 10.30am.

Plenty of parking outside and in their yard. Easy to get there by bus also.

General Meeting is on Friday night May 30 at 7.30pm.

Our AGM will be coming up at the August meeting. We will be looking for new office bearers and committee. We have a great club for new people to be running and putting your ideas into action, and adding to the modern assets we now have at BARG.

Nomination Forms will be coming out with the next newsletter. Get your thinking caps on !

Coming up on June 9<sup>th</sup> Construction Night 7.30pm. Queens Birthday Holiday.

Committee Meeting. Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 7.30pm

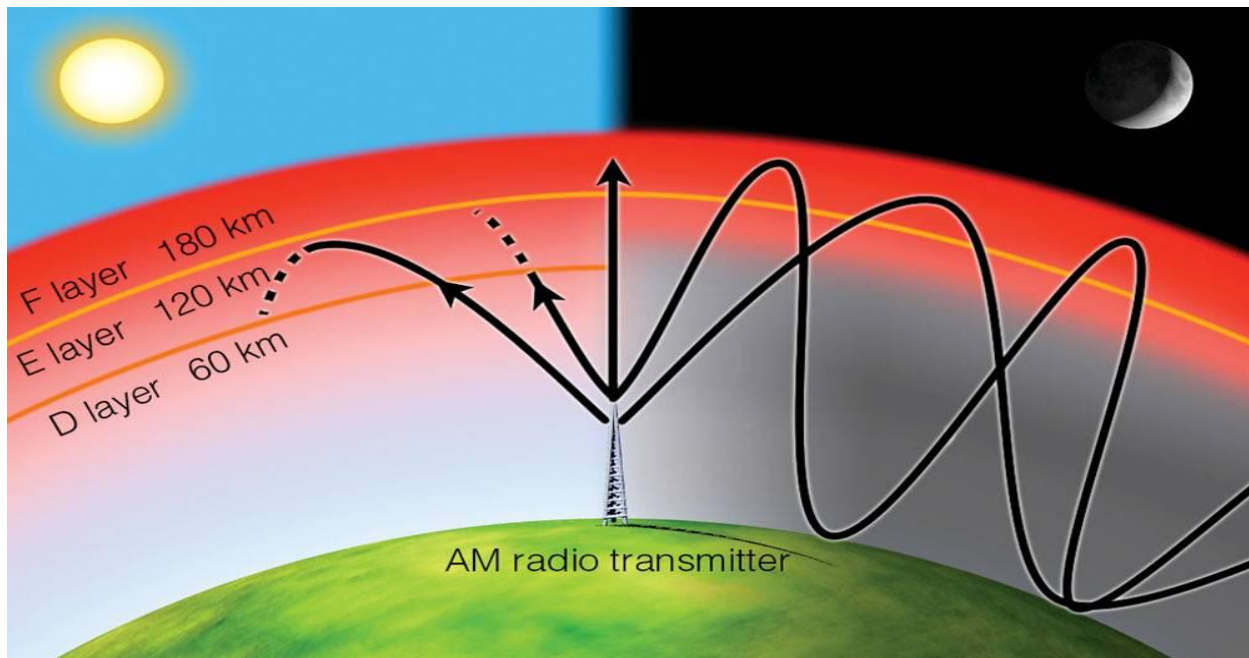
Dining Night Friday 20<sup>th</sup> at 6.30. Ballarat Leagues Club, 52 Humffray St North, Ballarat.

Coffee Morning Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> June 10.30am

General Meeting Friday 27<sup>th</sup> June 7.30pm.

That's it from me, see you at a function soon.

73's Bob Pitcher. VK3NBV...



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Due to computer problems, we won't be able to print the "Propogation etc. page" in this newsletter.