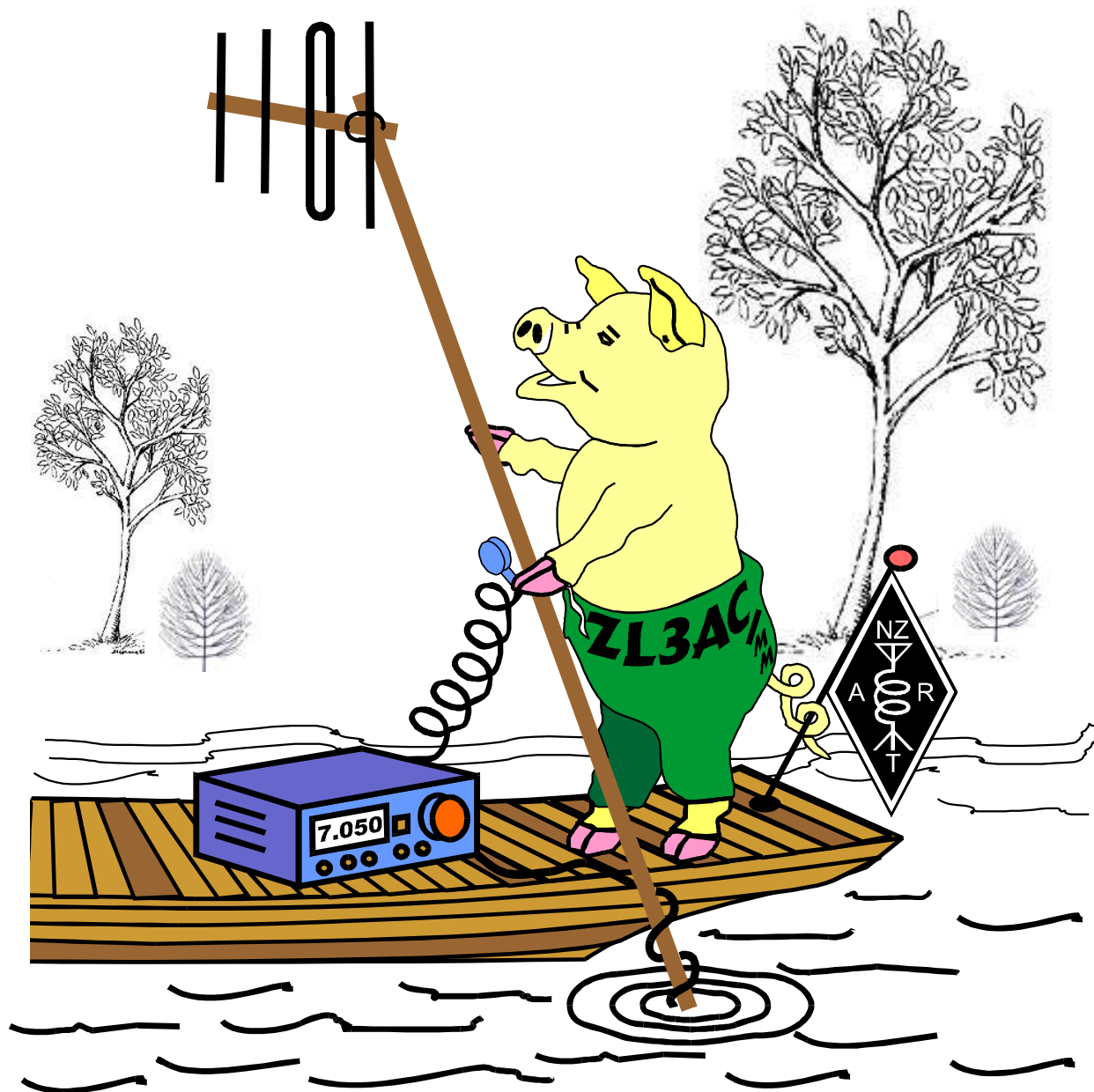


HAMLARKS

Christchurch Amateur Radio Club



APRIL 2014

Branch 05 Club re-occurring events

MAIN BRANCH MEETING First Wednesday of the month 7.30pm, except January. *All visitors welcome.* At 5 Idris Road, Fendalton.

ACTIVITIES and STUDY NIGHT Every Tuesday 7:30pm at 5 Idris Road, Fendalton. *All visitors welcome.*

COMMITTEE MEETING 1st Monday after branch meeting 7.30pm
At 5 Idris Road, Fendalton

AREC MEETINGS Normally the 2nd Wednesday of the month 7.30pm. At 5 Idris Road, Fendalton

DEADLINE FOR HAMLARKS COPY 11 days before the main branch meeting.

WEEKLY CLUB VHF NET Every Sunday 8:00 PM on 145.625MHz repeater if available, otherwise 147.050MHz repeater.

OFFICIAL NZART BROADCAST Last Sunday of the month 8:00 PM on 147.050MHz repeater.

NEW ZEALAND YOUNG AMATEURS CLUB NET (Branch05)

Meet every Tuesday night at Branch05 clubrooms.

Branch 05 Website www.chchhamradio.org.nz

Programme for next branch meeting**To be confirmed –**

Richard Smart ZL4FZ and Daniel Ayers ZL1DFA will present the thinking and results behind the cyclone watch LUCI website. This new concept of crowd source data is an idea that will be widespread in future remote sensing, and this talk will show how it can engage and benefit radio amateurs everywhere.

Secretary Rory's ramblings - ZL3HB

Well – another meeting with Council on site to try & resolve garaging issues without any definite success. There are some conflicts with Reserve act & city plan which means extending the clubrooms towards the road might be the easiest option. But probably the more expensive too. Issue seems to be around boundary setbacks. This will no doubt all be discussed in detail at meetings.

The tables of high quality gear (junk) in the corner of the room is mounting so please lessen the pile as we will start dumping some soon. We have added some fire extinguishers and mounted the first aid kit so things are slowly falling into place.

Talking to Scouts re the rest of their gear so we can better assess the space there in case we need to modify anything & get costings for any work we might decide to do.

Fletchers have removed the last piece of their gear (data cabinet) from upstairs and we found the HWC leaking so need to look at that ASAP. There's always something to do when you have clubrooms. Just like times of old!

We still haven't managed to get up Mt Herbert yet. Too much rain over last month or so and it might be an issue before winter. Planning to try again soon.

Rob ZL3RX & Matt ZL3PM have been to Marleys with a 'spectrum Analyser' to look for National System interference but nothing found due to high levels of signals there. Will need to try again with a better instrument.

So lots of little bits happening as this great hobby chugs along!

See you at next meeting.

Cheers

Rory ZL3HB

Presidents report ZL3TAO

On the subject of future meetings:

"I think the way forward is for each club to have its own meetings (and) advertise the speakers, but not duplicate them. (To this end) we should probably coordinate with 56 on meeting topics.

I think our show and tell meeting was very successful. For the few that attended the "unmeeting" (last month) the discussions were interesting. Once our clubrooms are sorted we should also consider spending money on speakers – why not fly a good speaker from Auckland?

I am also quite interested in fostering special interest groups that meet regularly (could be weekly, monthly, quarterly etc) to discuss a particular facet of ham radio. In some ways we already have SIGs for AREC, YAMS and RadioTek.

For example we could start a Software Defined Radio SIG. The meetings can be as formal or informal as the group desires, but should lead the club's involvement in SDR. After suitable investigation they would put proposals to the committee to purchase SDR equipment for the club. They would be encouraged to report regularly in Hamlarks. Most in the group would be expected to be members of the club, but including non-members may encourage them to join.

We would end up with more meetings, but members would attend the regular meetings they are interested in.

*Cheers from my temporary house in Spreydon,
Ian 2TAO*

Hamlarks editor on the mic - ZL3KB

You will have noticed the editor of Breakin, John Walker ZL3IB, has finally retired from the post after 18 years service, so we are looking for anyone who would like to take on the role. Good luck John, I hope you enjoy your second retirement!

Did no-one spot the Christmas tree left on the Hamlarks front cover until March? If anyone would like to design a new front cover for us, I am open to offers.

Cheers, Kelvin 3KB

Payment Due. Special for 2014

Chch Branch 05 Subscription for 2014

Call _____ Name _____

Single Membership

\$10 if paid by 30th April

\$20 if paid after 30th April 2014

Family Membership

\$15 if paid by 30th April

\$30 if paid after 30th April 2014

Junior Membership if still at school \$ free.

Our Club Bank Account number is: 030826 0145249 00

If you pay by internet banking, please make sure that you use your **Call Sign** as the transaction **reference number** so that our treasurer can identify you.

If you are posting your Subscription, please send to:

Christchurch Amateur Radio Club

P.O.Box 1733,

Christchurch.

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ Hamads \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

Wanted Any Denco coils for transistor radios, these are the brightly coloured coils on B9A plug bases, mostly Blue, Yellow or Red, with a slug adjuster at the top. Call Kelvin ZL3KB 323 8377

Wanted: Information on an article in Silicon Chip magazine February, March and July 2011. If you have any of these would you please contact John Haynes ZL3TR. Phone 338 4495. Any costs fully compensated.

AREC News ZL4FZ

The last month has been extremely busy for AREC both here in Christchurch and also involving North Canterbury, Ashburton and Timaru and the month is not over yet with another SAREx to be held next weekend involving Christchurch North Canterbury and Blenheim

At the beginning of the month Br68 where asked to provide communications for an Equestrian Endurance Ride. For those who have never done one of these it is little like the Coast to Coast but in slow motion. The apparent slowness is however very deceptive because the need for good and accurate communications is just as important - with the same consequences for injured animals and or riders.

An Equestrian event comprises a series of courses or loops of different lengths. Riders are entered into one or more categories such as the 160km ride, a 100km ride and various shorter rides. Each ride will involve one or more loops some to be ridden more than once to make up the overall length. After each loop, the riders are required to care for the horses, involving careful rubdowns, new saddle blankets, feed, water and a veterinary inspection and a mandatory stand-down period. The communications component means that at different points often where loops intersect a radio operator will be stationed. As each horse passes, the number of the horse and time are radioed back to the base camp where the progress is monitored.

Because of the distances involved a number of the events start as early as 1am or 2 am in the morning, and may continue until late afternoon with the various events spread over a 2 or 3 day period. If you have never done one of these, I strongly recommend the experience. You will need to have an ability to stay awake and focus, be able to operate a portable VHF station (very rarely HF) and good log keeping skills. If you have operated successfully on the Coast to Coast you will not find this too hard.

There is another endurance event coming up at Easter which will be held in the surrounds of Mayfield (about 1.5 hours South of Christchurch on the inland route to Geraldine). If you are keen to give it a go, contact Jim ZL3ND. For those with out transport, call Jim anyway and we will be able to sort transport. Two man checkpoint teams are ideal and there are base station roles as well.

Two weekends ago, Christchurch branch got the first chance to put into action a plan that was proposed last year and developed in it's early stages by Andrew (ZL3CC) and had at the last moment a website added to put the 'finishing touches' to. This was the monitoring programme for Cyclone (later depression) and much later (small event) Lusi. It was a chance for amateurs around New Zealand to take part in a monitoring programme with some similarities to the Skywarn programme used in the US. Although not exactly the same, and intended to provide a different class of information, the idea behind this is that ANY amateur operator and some members of the public will be able to contribute critical information that can be used by the authorities such as Civil Defence to target areas that require attention

in relief or recovery. Although the project has a long way to go to finally deliver all that is hoped for, the first trial run has been a huge success with considerable interest from at least three Civil Defence groups in Canterbury and others further away.

Next weekend, another SAREx is planned in the Acheron area of the Molesworth. This will be a joint exercise between Canterbury, Blenheim and Kaikoura AREC and SAR teams. In addition it is planned to run trials with a company that is testing UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) operations.

During the time since the Coast to Coast, there has been considerable maintenance work carried out on the AREC Civilian. It has had antennas repaired and tuned, cables relabelled, Electrical WOF completed, weighed to check compliance with regulations and new diagrams of the radio systems and DC systems drawn up. An ongoing project will be to complete re-writing the manual for the vehicle. The Daihatsu is next to get the overhaul treatment. My thanks go to Geoff ZL3PX for a sustained effort to get the needed repairs completed in this time.

Today, Andrew Townsend ZL3AJT placed a YouTube video clip onto the web of his time working at Mt White for the Coast to Coast. The clip is very good and for those that have not had a chance to see the operation at Mt White I encourage you take a look at what Andrew has put together. The clip can be found by typing this URL into your web browser, or click the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWoxOQJMC4>

Richard Smart
ZL4FZ/ZK9EA

National System issues Christchurch

As those of you who monitor the national System will be aware there has been considerable interference at times on the system.

It has been thought it is coming from locally and today we had a chance to investigate it.

I turned on my handheld today around lunchtime & noticed it was there so rang Greg ZL3IX who is repeater trustee and can control the system via the engineering link.

Various tests were carried out and the following was ascertained.

As the system stood the local port was set at -104dBm sensitivity.

Initially Greg could see audio pulses on the input of the local port but not RF but with further testing very short pulses of RF were observed.

I could hear nothing here in Hornby on the input with a collinear at 7m.

Turning off the local port stopped the pulsing but turning off north or south ports didn't. So it is assumed it is local.

Cutting the gate sensitivity back to -86 dBm didn't stop it. My input signal was measured at -79dBm and I could be heard with the pulsing still on the signal.

The gate was further reduced to -70db & that stopped the interference getting in. But that of course also means it will take a very strong signal locally to access it!

As we have had numerous complaints from around the country it was decided to decrease the non CTCSS gate sensitivity for the foreseeable future. So we have a dual gate on the National System local input with tone access for maximum sensitivity. 123Hz tone will get you in at -104 dBm. If you don't have CTCSS available then you will need a considerable signal to access the system. Maybe 50 watts or a gain aerial or both. Standard handhelds without CTCSS probably won't make it.

Of course if you do access the system then you will open the gate & the interference can still get in with your signal so the problem is not fully solved.

We need to try & find the source of the signal. This might not be easy as the pulse seems to be of such short duration it might not open the squelch on a rig. And who wants to sit there with an open squelch running all the time!!

There is a thought that it is more prevalent on the weekends? Has anyone noticed this?

So at this point we would ask anyone monitoring the system who hears the interference to try & listen on 434.975 input frequency and see if they can hear any pulses. Now that we have a split gate you generally won't hear the problem unless it comes through with a signal so we might need to turn the dual gate off at times to try & track it. If you do hear the interference please let us know so we can try & narrow down the area it may be coming from. Of course – if it is being generated locally at Marleys it may be high enough to get into the system but not high enough to be heard down in Chch. We can but try. Someone might have to go up to Marleys & sit there with a beam to try & narrow it down. Some real DF needed. The issue is who is going to do that, particularly if the interference is intermittent. We might need to establish a roster of seekers!!

So that is the situation at present. We will monitor it over time & see what evolves. I do not listen to the NS here generally so we need those that do to report back to us. Either to myself or someone else on the committee please.

This type of issue is likely to become more common as time goes by so be prepared for CTCSS to become a permanent feature on repeaters. I don't like the idea but it might be the new normal!! Today has been a learning curve for me so I will try to answer any queries you might have.

As this info is only going out to club members (& other clubs) please tell anyone you know who uses the system who might not be members of a club.

Thanks Rory ZL3HB

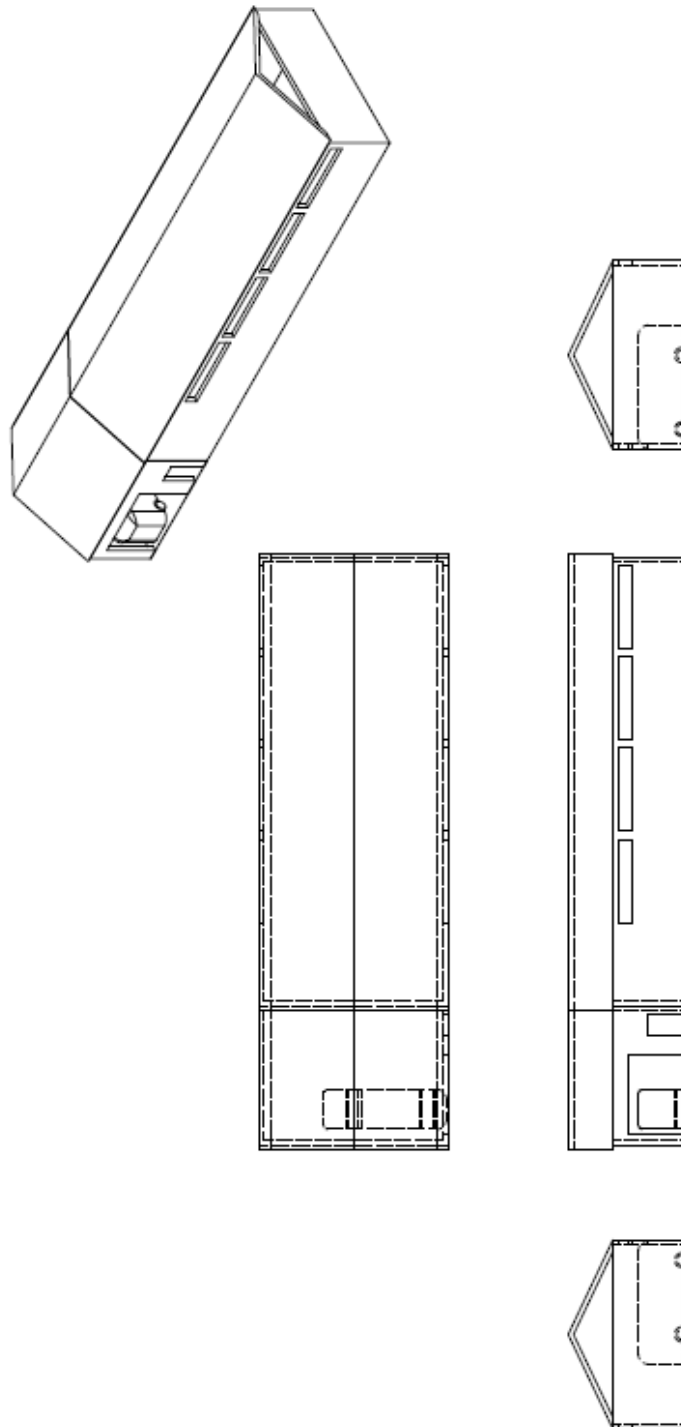
3446292 or 0211314599 rory1@xtra.co.nz

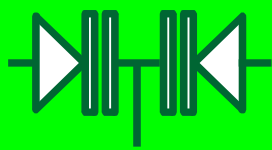
Or Greg ZL3IX by email greg.smith@tait.co.nz

Extensions to 5 Idris Road – Draft

The drawing below is the first suggestions for an extension to 5 Idris road to accommodate two AREC vehicles. The idea is to extend a little way towards the road with the vehicle doors on the side.

Of course, this is subject to approvals from the club and the Council.





RadioTek

Christchurch
Amateur
Radio
Club

A day of Radio Technology

Christchurch Amateur Radio Club presents

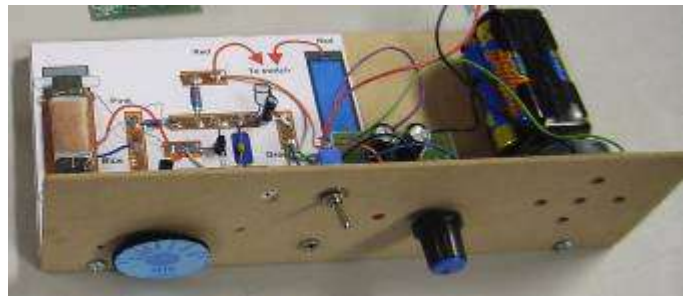
RadioTek day
Sunday 18th May 2014

A day of building radio electronics, learn how radio works, radio games and operate powerful radio transmitters.

Open to all students age 9 to 109, interested in radio technology or Amateur Radio but no experience necessary. Can include a parent, friend or helper.

Cost \$15 per student.

Radio Clubrooms,
5 Idris Road, Christchurch.
Car parking and facilities on site.



The day will start at 9.30AM and finish around 4PM. Tea/Coffee

Snacks provided. Bring your own lunch. Very limited places, so book quickly.

Web <http://www.radiotek.org.nz/>

Contact Rory Deans ZL3HB email rory1@xtra.co.nz

or phone Rory on 03 344 6292

Christchurch Amateur radio Club is a branch of the New Zealand Amateur Radio Transmitters organization. RadioTek is sponsored by Radio Science Trust and Tait Electronics Ltd

Minutes of the Branch 05 meeting

The March 2014 meeting of Branch 05 Christchurch Amateur Radio Club was an 'unmeeting' so there were no minutes. A few members discussed club matters such as club classes, the building, AREC, in more detail than we usually manage, which was good. A productive meeting.

Christchurch Amateur Radio ClubCommittee for 2014 email: rory1@xtra.co.nz

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