

Report from the various helpers associated with the AHARS.

AGM February 2012.

Club Monday night Net

Jim Tregellas

The Adelaide Hills Amateur Radio Society club "net" is conducted every Monday night commencing at 8 pm sharp local time and ending around 9.30 pm. It is a forum in which all topics of interest can be discussed (excluding sex, religion and politics) and normally attracts around 15 to 20 participants. It is conducted via the Mt Lofty 2 metre repeater (Tx 146.400MHz Rx 147.000MHz).

Some years ago when the "net" was being run by VK5JST alone, it was realized that as AHARS is the largest radio club in South Australia, it should assume some of the general community role played by the old South Australian Division of the WIA which had just been closed. This resulted in an invitation being included in the opening statement of the "net" inviting all amateurs to participate.

This philosophy of a politically neutral meeting ground for everyone with a ham ticket has continued, and every Monday, around 20 people participate actively. It is probably the longest living, active, large radio group in South Australia.

Chairing a group like this is demanding and Dean VK5LB provided some much needed relief for Jim VK5JST by agreeing to share this on a 50/50 basis. Public thanks are very much due for this assistance.

Co- chairing of the "net" went on for a very considerable time until it was realized that the two chairmen were running out of interesting ideas to spark discussion, and had probably become boring to listen to anyway.

This led to the idea in early 2011, of expanding the number "net" controllers, and at present AHARS have 5 people on the list, these being Barry VK5BW, Steve VK5AIM, David VK5LSB, Dean VK5LB, and Jim VK5TR. The new volunteers have added much needed interest to the discussion, and their contribution should be applauded publicly.

Finally, an invitation is once again issued to AHARS members to join in every Monday night rather than sitting on the side sandbagging. Everyone has something worthwhile to contribute and it is your club forum. Hope to hear you there on VK5BAR.....

David Wilson

I feel privileged to be a part of the great team of people who volunteer to be Net Controllers / Operators for the AHARS Net on Monday Nights.

I have only been a licensed amateur for two years and only new to the hobby of A.R. and privileged to be part of the AHARS Net.

Originally when I first became a Net Controller on Monday nights I was a Foundation License Operator with the former call sign of VK5FDGW and probably the first Foundation Operator to run and control the net under the AHARS banner, it was a true privilege and honor indeed. Since those early days I have continued to learn more about the hobby and find the Monday Night Net a great place for information sharing, obtaining answers to difficult problems, educational, and at times, some fun times with a great deal of humor and tongue in cheek. The Monday Night Net also assisted me in my license upgrade to a Standard License now with my call sign being VK5LSB by being able to ask questions and obtain answers on the night while I was studying.

The Monday Night Net is an institution in Adelaide and a great meeting place for all and to benefit Amateur Radio and the community.

Credit must go to the other net controllers who I share the role with, VK5TR Jim, VK5LSB Dean, VK5BW Barry and VK5AIM who have supported me along the way in running the net.

I look forward to chatting to you all on a Monday night @20.00hrs local time on VK5RAD while I am using the Club Call sign VK5BAR.

Dean VK5LB

The Adelaide Hills Amateur Radio Society Monday evening net is conducted every Monday evening commencing 2000 South Australian time under the club callsign of VK5BAR..

It is conducted by five members of the club on a roster system and takes place on the club repeater VK5RAD - 147MHz with 600 Kc neg offset.

The purpose of the net is for cordial and informative discussion and to that end all licensed amateurs are welcomed at commencement.

A brief introduction usually takes place and those amateurs wishing to take part are encouraged to use phonetics and to give their name for the benefit of all.

The call signs, which are logged by the net moderator, are read out and those stations who may have called but were not heard are asked to try again.

It is an excellent opportunity to announce Club news and club activities are made known including future planned events.

A topic for discussion is most times offered by the moderator for participants to comment on and conversation always includes each persons weekly activities.

About 20 people usually call in with the net running through the list twice and then concludes at about 2130 South Australian time.

It is fitting to mention that Geoff Taylor VK5TY (SK) ran the net for a very long time until 2005 and his legacy continues to be honoured by the Club by means of the net.

AHARS is grateful to all amateurs who participate in the net for without their good humour and contributions the net could not continue.

Cheers Dean VK5LB.

Construction Nights Graham Dicker

This years construction night was a complete sucess with 75 PICAXE programmer boards constructed by members. The project presented a few challenges that tested the members powers of observation, and the small size of the printed circuit board provided a project that gave members some experience in working with the miniscule !! The board makers in Hong Kong, however managed to print the silk screen on the wrong side of the board, as expected this caused some confusion, but amateur spirit and ingenuity won out in the end. The boards will prove a great asset to those who will be attending the PIC programming course in 2012.

Historian Lloyd Butler

AHARS - History of the Historian

My first connection with Blackwood or Adelaide Hills radio history was around early 1990 when I decided to research the history of the early Blackwood Radio Club as a potential for an article in "Amateur Radio". I am not sure whether I was a member of AHARS at that time or not as I believe I joined some time in 1990, but I don't know exactly when.

The prepared article was sent to AR in September 1990 and published it in the March 1991 issue of AR. Amateur Radio first published the article (now re-displayed on the AHARS web site) and hence WIA (through AR) hold the re-publishing rights (with the author) on that particular article, not AHARS.

Apart from the Blackwood Radio Club, I had previously put in a lot of work tracking down the history of amateur radio in my home town of Murray Bridge and subsequently prepared the article "The Murray Bridge Story" which AR published in January 1988. This set me up for appointment as Historian which occurred at a general meeting not too long after I joining the Club.

As appointed Historian, I became the minder of all sorts of accumulated AHARS records and multitudes of loose photographs which I filed away in a large photo album that I purchased. The photographs kept coming for a number of years until everyone started using digital cameras and then the photographs suddenly stopped.

Apart from holding the AHARS records, foundation member of the Blackwood Radio Club, Gordon Ragless, handed over, to my care, records he had kept for many years of the Blackwood Club.

From February 1992 to February 2005, I sat on the AHARS Committee as Vice-President. As something useful in the Committee, and using my second hat as Historian, I decided to go through all the existing Club records and try to establish a chronological record of all the different appointments and Club activities concerned with the Club. This wasn't easy - many blocks of Club minutes were missing and there was nothing on paper to record happenings over a lot of periods. The yearly reports put out by Hans Smit and Alan Haines as Presidents were excellent as they gave a complete summary of all the Club activities for their year. Unfortunately, Geof Taylor's reports lacked this information. Also for most of that period, Alby Wood was Secretary and unfortunately his minutes were also lacking in the detail I needed. So for over that long period, I had to make use of what I knew as a member of the Committee and what I could find out by seeking information from the memories of others.

In tracking down historic information, I guess I have learned a few things. My experience is that the most reliable sources are those recorded on paper or some form of file. The human memory is very imperfect. Try to extract information from someone who you know has had specific experience in certain area and only sketchy information normally comes to light. There are exceptions - Gordon Ragless was one of them - As one of the foundation members of the old Blackwood Radio Club, his memory of the early activities of that Club was remarkable.

Anyway I was eventually able to put together a tabular form of facts and events which formed the basis of what is now the general historic record and which we now keep up to date as events occur. About that time (I think around 2000 era) Nicholas Bluhm VK5CX opened up a very basic web site for the AHARS through the QSL amateur Net. Through arrangement with Nicholas, the new record was loaded on to the new AHARS web site. In fact Nicholas compiled the original HTML. Looking at his encoding set me off learning to write my own HTML and build on the original with new information as time progressed to the present - it also encouraged me to start of my own web site which now contains about 80 of my articles, mainly compiled in HTML.

Now that I had HTML under control, I put together the Blackwood Radio Club article (originally published in Amateur Radio) in HTML form. As some of the early AHARS members seemed to have latched on to the idea that AHARS was a reincarnation of the old Blackwood Radio Club, I figured it appropriate that the new file should sit on the AHARS web site. (However, whilst a link to Blackwood Radio Club might have been the original intention of the AHARS Club founders, I did observe that there was nothing in the original Constitution concerning the Blackwood Radio Club and I found no reference to the Blackwood Radio Club in the minutes of the inaugural AHARS meetings). The file was handed over to John Elliott to put on the Club site as he had gradually taken control of the site and Nicholas Bluhm faded out of the picture.

On the question of whether the early AHARS members really thought that their new Club had a connection with the old Blackwood Radio Club, there is a little bit history I can reveal. When Radio Branch of the PMG was first granted my amateur licence in January 1946, they issued me with the call sign VK5BR. Further down the track, I was to learn that this was the pre-war call sign of the Blackwood Radio Club who never re-opened their Club post-war nor re-applied for their old call sign. I can remember that early in the 1980's (probably when AHARS was to apply for a licence), I was approached by someone from this Club (which I had never heard of before) to request whether I would like to give them my call sign. Of course I already had this call sign for over 35 years. I considered this request was much like asking me to change my name and so I kept my call.

I think Bryan Scott VK5NOS and Hans Smit VK5YX are probably the only members who attended the first few meetings and who are now still in the Club. Anyway, late in the 1990's, Bryan convinced me that I should look at researching the origins of AHARS and write up an article about those origins. This I did and wrote up the article which first appeared in AHARS Newsletters of 2000 and 2001. I ultimately re-compiled it in HTML and had it placed on the AHARS web site. The article commenced at the first meeting where the Club was formed. This was fine except that there was quite a bit of history we didn't know about concerning how several amateurs met and set up the scene to form the Club. One of those amateurs was Rob Burton VK5ZAL who returned to Adelaide (probably around 2005 & 2006) and read my article. He wrote a quite detailed letter to Hans Smit on the historic detail which was omitted and Hans sent the letter on to me. I was delighted to get this information and on May 2006 was able to revise the article with the information Rob had provided to re-issue what now sits on the web site.

In latter years I have concentrated on trying to keep the record up to date and add any new information which turns up. Each year new information of what happened that year, and who was involved, is added. I actually try to get my own master file up to date each month. I watch the programme carefully for a source of information - this can be tricky because things can change due to changed circumstances. Also since the new web site has been in operation, past months are deleted from the programme. This sometimes makes it difficult to track down what happened in those previous months.

In late 2007 my wife and I moved into a retirement village. There was no way I could accommodate, at our new location, all of the 60 or 70 years of accumulated radio gear, component bits, books, and other documentation. So before moving, I had to sort out, and get rid of, what I might be able to live without. I had no further need for most of the odd physical records which I had of the Club, or the old records of the Blackwood Radio Club which had been handed on to me by Gordon Ragless. I had already gleaned all the information I could use from these and asked the then President Jim McLachlan if he could find a new home for them. Jim took delivery of these things and immediately took the bull by the horns and appointed a new historian. I had to then explain that I could (and would) carry on the work I had been doing and that I simply had difficulty in accommodating storage for the items in question. So I retained the function of maintaining the historic information and its software and the only change was that George Southby VK5TAW became the minder of those hardware items (including the photo album I had put together).

As things stand, the ground work has been done to establish a record of happenings and other

statistics from the day the Club started until the present time. So the main operation now is to update the the files as events happen, or if past information not previously recorded comes to hand. (Typical of latter was the information from Rob Burton which recently appeared). And if any new information comes to hand concerning the old Blackwood Club, that file also gets updated.

The History files are now the only ones left sitting in the QSL net and referenced from the AHARS home page. Every few months I have been sending a copy of "aharshistoric2.htm" to John Eliote to bring the web file up to date with my master file. It is a simple operation which I could do myself in a few minutes if I had the password. But John seems to get into some sort of trouble doing this and it would be more sensible if I simply had direct access to the password myself. I do still have my own site on the QSL net with a few of my own files still there. To get over the need to send emails for updating, I have recently placed in there a copy of "aharshistoric2.htm" which can be used to overwrite the official AHARS web file. It is not referenced any place but it can be found on "<http://www.qsl.net/vk5br/aharshistoric2.htm>". This copy is now kept up to date with the master file and can be used at any time to update the one in the AHARS Web site.

I shouldn't forget that there are a number of secondary articles which have been created and as time progresses, there will probably be more. For example:

*At the request of the Committee, an obituary was written for Geof Taylor and this still sits in the History files.

*Following the 2010 Symposium, Christine Taylor wrote up a report which was printed in AR. I encoded this in HTML and latched it into the historic system.

*For the Shack activities, at the present there is a link into the Shack icon in the AHARS home page - if all those records there fade into oblivion, I guess that is the time when much of that information becomes history and should then sit in the history files.

I guess a work function in a Club such as this is what you make of it. But let's define one! "The function of the Historian is to research or track down, from the date of the Club inception, significant events in the Club and significant appointments or operations carried out by Club members. Such information shall be recorded by the Historian so that it is available to the Club and its members." I think that is what I have been doing.

Hopefully, that gives a bit of an overview of what has occurred over a few years.

Lloyd Butler VK5BR

Vice President and Assessor Leigh Turner

My work contribution in this area for 2011 was confined to assisting Paul Hoffman with some training and conducting licence exams at the Glenelg Scout training centre. I assisted in putting through a total of 13 candidates with their AOCF theory and practical qualification in 2011.

Paul periodically calls on me for assistance with his training and exam activities but Sasi and Barry seem to run their sessions without calling on additional assistance.....even though I'd mentioned to not hesitate calling on me whenever an extra pair of Assessor hands might be required for managing larger classes or exam sessions. There may be a case for greater coordination and scheduling here.

The requirement for Assessors is not great and is gradually diminishing as demand for amateur radio licences tapers off and approaches saturation. Perhaps the SA Advisory Committee might consider publicising and raising the profile of the Clubs as being the primary pathway and preferred point of contact for folk wishing to obtain their AOCF training and exams. Metropolitan Adelaide has over 20 Assessors + several others in the regional areas of the State so the ratio of Assessors is quite large in proportion to the relatively small demand for assessments.

Leigh

ALARA, Tina Clogg

I have kept the club informed about ALARA activities this year and also kept everyone informed about the YL International Meet in Adelaide 2012.

My role on the JST Kits committee is as bookkeeper. I have the records for the kits entered into the accounting package MYOB. I am responsible for making sure the bills are paid and records are kept.

Publicity Rob Gurr

A further attempt at publicising Monthly meetings, through the "EVENTS" column of the Messenger Press (Eastern Suburbs Courier and Hills Courier), were successful on one or two occasions only. Some reliable success was had with the Blackwood and Districts Community Times where cooperation was excellent.

Another avenue of advertising the Society about to be attempted, is to donate any Radio or Electronics magazines coming into our hands, to the various bookshops run by the local service clubs. Lions at Coromandel Valley and Burnside will be targeted, and each publication donated will contain a stamp indicating it was donated by AHARS, with details of our website, included on the stamp.

In this respect, donations of suitable publications by members, could be made to the Publicity Officer.

Other avenues of publicity are under consideration.

DVD Library.

The librarian alerted the committee to the slow demand for copies of DVDs of presentations made to the monthly meetings. With low sales, it may be necessary to consider the cost return against the expense of production and volunteer effort needed for this aspect of the Society's service to members, and the Australian Amateur community in general.

Club Newsletter

In December 2008 it was brought to our attention that John Elliot, the AHARS Editor had sent out a request for assistance with the publishing of the newsletter. This was discussed between us briefly at the time, then again even more briefly a few weeks later at the Christmas Luncheon, which resulted in us approaching and stunning John by volunteering our services. He wasn't sure we were serious and contacted us in February 2009 to make certain before he allowed himself to get excited. Since then it has been an interesting journey, starting with designing a new lay-out for the newsletter, then waiting for John's approval and the go ahead in setting it up. With his input and a format we had used in the past for other newsletters we have hopefully brought an interesting and appealing item for you all to read.

John is a marvel when it comes to obtaining enough information for a full 8 or even 12 page print. Teaching him how to 'time save' by setting out his articles onto pages in the same format as the final copy was a learning curve for us all, but a huge effort on his part sees this now occurring. Thanks to the internet we are able to e-mail material, request, ideas and messages back and forth with John. Early on this occurred over the course of a week (plus) which created a number of long hours and very late nights, but it seems we have managed to fine tune it all down to a 48 hour turn around.

Having John trust us to bring his ideas and planning together and getting his e-mail with "All Good - Go ahead and print", is a great sense of achievement. Working and coordinating with him has been a fun and enjoyable experience and at this moment in time we are quite willing (with everyone's approval of course) to continue for awhile longer with our services.

Mike (VK5FMTR) & Kaye Roden

Hi David
An update on the AHARS training outcome from January 2011-January 2012 for your AGM presentation

Foundation 15 passed
Standard 4 passed
Advanced 3 passed + 1 failed

Regards
Sasi Nayar

Repeaters.

This last year for the repeater has been quite uneventful, with no faults being experienced, and continued reliable operation. As any user of the repeater will be aware, we have had the usual 'rat bag' element abusing the use of the repeater, an issue that has been addressed to the ACMA at length by various people.

My thanks for a concerted effort by Dennis Haseldine in recording and logging the problems and then liaising with the ACMA, this has resulted in the escalation of this problem to a higher status and established more direct lines of communication with that organisation.

Unfortunately I can only control the actual operation of the repeater and not the content of it, nor do I want to be the 'policeman / censor' of it, that is not our function but the ACMA's domain. If you encounter these idiots, please do not give them any credence or recognition, just totally ignore them and carry on as if they are not there, this will deny them of their 'jollies' in annoying you and others.

In the coming months, the software will be upgraded to add more functionality in the control of the repeater unit, so you may some experience days when the repeater may not be available from time to time as we do tests on it.

Deceased Estates and Auctions.

We have seen a couple more deceased estates come through this year, and these were successful in raising funds for those families that had lost loved ones, and also added a few dollars to the Clubs funds. It is inevitable that we will see a few more this year as well, and again the Club will offer its services to the families concerned as we have in the past.

The AHARS deceased estate policy is now being considered by several other clubs for inclusion into their own procedures to enable them to handle events that affect their own members and families.

We will have several auctions as well this year, I have equipment already donated that will become available for auction shortly and throughout the year. This will also include the 'back table' that members can make a donation to the Club for gear that has been donated from time to time – always popular.

The Shack.

This year there will be our Saturday openings, the odd breakfast and also mid week courses in microprocessors by Graham Dicker and also projects for members, being developed now. The South Australian Aviation Museum is donating quite a bit of surplus electronics used for testing aircraft, rockets and the like, all with interesting 'goodies' and bits and pieces that any radio / electronics builder will be keen to get his hands on. These units will can be part of the Saturday morning exercise, with much of it to be stripped down to components , meters etc , but we will of course expect that a small donation to the club will be made for these items.

If you are attending 'The Shack' we ask that you donate a \$2 coin to the box on entry to help defray the costs of power, tea, coffee, milk etc, this is a very small price per individual for the facilities we have provided and will enable us to keep the venue available for all members.

Barry Williams

Website Manager:

As the website manager my role is primarily to maintain up to date information on upcoming events and provide info on AHARS activities. The aim is to make the website more pertinent to members and maybe attract new members.

The aim is to add content relevant to amateurs. This relies on input from members. Comments and suggestions to improve the site are most welcome.

DVD Manager:

This is a new role for me. While the club dutifully records all meetings there is little interest from members or others otherwise. This year we will try to improve the service. Details on changes and additions will appear on the website.

Cheers Richard Southcott

Other Helpers

Library Lesley and Lyle

Supper , Christine, Sue Penhale and Sue Mahoney.

AR notes Christine

DVD Production Greg

Kits, Wolf, Erich, Jim, Tina, Kim.

Auditor Alan Raftery.