Welcome

Hello all, and welcome to Issue 20, June 2016, of *'Out and About in VK5'* which focuses on South Australian (VK5) activities relating to Summits on the Air (SOTA), Parks programs (including WWFF and the VK5 National & Conservation Parks Award), portable operation, QRP, pedestrian mobile, mobile, etc.

During May I travelled with my wife Maria to Norfolk Island (DXCC 189) in the Pacific, for the Annual General Meeting of the Wireless Institute of Australia (WIA). Whilst there I managed to sneak in some radio time as VK9PAS, with a total of 6 activations, and racking up just over 600 QSOs back into the Australian mainland, USA, Canada, Alaska, Latin America, New Zealand, the Pacific, and a small number of European hams. This included a SOTA activation of Mount Bates summit, the highest point on Norfolk Island.

The entirety of Norfolk Island is also designated as VKFF-0392 for the WWFF program, and of course is also OC-005 for the Islands on the Air (IOTA) program. I have included a small article in this issue of my adventures from Norfolk Island.

The VKFF program continues to grow, and in its 3-year life, I have now issued nearly 1,500 certificates to VK & overseas hams. Work continues on a database for the VK5 National & Conservation Parks Award. Jonathan VK6JON who has volunteered his time to take on this project has now relocated with his family to Tasmania (VK7) from Western Australia (VK6) and thus, has more time to devote to this project.

The Mount Gawker summit for the SOTA program continues to see a lot of action, and I

was fortunate enough to make contact with Nigel VK5NIG and Stuart VK5STU from the summit whilst I was portable on Norfolk Island.

In this issue you can also read about the very interesting and novel 'Freeze your Butt Off' event, which has been organized by Ian VK5CZ.

Now that I am back home I will endeavor to complete the global rules for the WWFF program, which a number of amateurs have been querying. The modifications will make activating within WWFF much easier and less confusing. I also intend to expand the WWFF/VKFF program in New South Wales, Western Australia and Queensland. If you have any parks on your mind, that think are suitable for addition to WWFF, I am only too happy to hear from you.

I also wish to apologies for the delay in the VKFF Photographic competition. I will endeavor to place the poll with participants on the WWFF Australia website in the next week or so.

A reminder that later in the year, the VKFF Team Championship will be held on Sunday 16th November. If you do intend to enter into the VKFF Team Championships, then remember that you must register with me. More information can be found on the WWFF Australia website. The Keith Roget Memorial National Parks Award (KRMNPA) weekend is also being held in November and this is an event that is traditionally well supported by VK5's as both park hunters and activators. The 2nd VKFF Activation Weekend is also to be held in November and features in this issue.

I am very pleased to report that there were quite a few contributors to this month's issue. I thank all of those who have taken the time to contribute to 'Out and About in VK5'. In these times when there is considerable finger pointing at the WIA for not doing enough to promote the hobby and stimulate activity, I am very pleased to see that there are some hams out there who are prepared to take the time to submit articles for the benefit and interest of others. I just wish more VK5 hams did the same.

Whilst on the subject of contributors I wish to thank Craig NM4T who is a regular reader of *Out and About* and who has corresponded via email with me in recent times. I am very pleased to report that Craig has been given permission to share articles from his publication 'QRP Amateur Radio International' (QRP ARCI). You can find the first of those articles in this issue.

So, many thanks to everyone who reads this newsletter and particular thanks to those who contribute and to those who send me information for inclusion. I am pleased to report that I receive a lot of emails of appreciation from interstate & overseas readers.

If you have any information that you would like to see in the next issue, please drop me an email at.....

vk5pas@wia.org.au

Best 73 and happy activating/chasing/hunting.

Paul, VK5PAS.

Contents.

The Arduino Logger

By Rob VK4FFAB

This project came about after a long discussion with Brenton, VK2DDS on 40m one night about micro controllers what they can do and now fun they are to work with. At the end of this we kind of had a bit of a plan for an Arduino based logging application, which I was to some day code up and put into action. Well this sat on the idea shelf for a long long time and in that time, no one else had created a logging application for Arduino, and hating doing paper in the field or breaking expensive tablets, laptops etc, or having power hungry devices when out in a national park, I decided it was time for rubber to meet the road and to make this a reality.

There currently is no schematic for this project and i am not sure I really want to Frizting one up either, there is nothing complicated in the putting together of the components. If you have any basic experience with Arduino you should be able to do this blind folded, all modules are connected in the default way as per the module

libraries. What has been used is as follows.

1. Arduino Uno or preferably Mega
2. 20 x 4 LCD with I2C module
3. SD Card reader and SD Card
4. PS/2 Keyboard module and PS/2 Keyboard
5. Real Time Clock Module

FILES ALFALFA VERSION:

VK4FFAB-ARDUINO-LOGGER

FILES MUNG BEAN Version 1.00010:

ArduinoLogger-1.00011

In the ZIP file above, I have included the non default libraries I have used with the sketch. SDfat, RTClib, PS2Keyboard, and LiquidCrystal_I2C, these get installed into your arduino library folder.

The SD library is a resource hog, it allocates 50% of the available UNO SRAM to itself, which is annoying, SDFat is the trimmest of the bad bunch, sadly. Next version of the code will be for MEGA just so I have some overhead.

HOW TO USE THE ARDUINO LOGGER

On starting the Arduino Logger you are welcomed with this splash screen. Press ENTER

to continue to the Main Menu.

MAIN MENU: This is the main menu, from here you can perform all the tasks that the logger offers.

F5: Pressing F5 from the main menu allows for changing the band. Currently only bands that are in Meters are supported. 160->2m. 70cm and the microwaves will save as 70m 3.6m etc in the ADIF file as there are no checks for bands which end in CM not M.

F6: Pressing F6 will allow for the mode to be changed. All modes can be entered in this field, however there are no checks to ensure that you have entered a valid ADIF value for the mode. CW, SSB, FM, AM, PSK are all commonly used ADIF values for portable operators.

F7: Pressing F7 will allow for the changing of the Operators Callsign. Useful for when you have a single station and multiple operators. Also useful for awards programs where a different station callsign might be used to the operators call.

F8: Pressing F8 will allow the changing of the station callsign. The station callsign is the one with additional prefixes and suffixes used to identify portable, mobile and other types of operation. VK9/VK4FFAB/MM is an example of this, where VK4FFAB is operating maritime mobile in VK9.

F9: Pressing F9 will bring up the current station data, showing you the mode, band, station and operators callsigns.

F11: Pressing F11 will bring up the current date and time as stored in the Real Time Clock module.   In the above cause, it has been configured in UTC.

Adding a Log:

F1. Pressing F1 will allow for the adding of a new log entry. The log entries are saved in ADIF format for easy uploading into other log software or to awards databases. First it will ask for the call sign of the station you wish to log.

Next it will ask for the report you wish to give the station you are logging. Pressing enter straight away will log 59 in SSB etc and 599 when the mode is CW.

Next it will ask for the report you have received from the station you are logging. Pressing enter straight away will log 59 in SSB etc and 599 when the mode is CW.

Finally a summery of the log entry is show to confirm that everything you entered is correct. Hitting enter will save the log to file and return you to the main menu. Hitting delete will clear the log data and take to back to entering the Callsign of the station you are working.

TODO: There still needs to be some more testing in the field to see how the whole thing performs in the wild when you have people calling you. But from initial tests, it works very nice and the work flow it not painful at all. There are still some features I wish to add, a Comments section, so you have added name qth etc., or SOTA and WWFF references of the station you are working. And the other main thing is to be able to load an existing log, or

create a new log file. This will be useful if you are making a number of park or seta activations and wish to have a separate log file for each One.

DATA FORMAT:

All logging is saved in ADIF for easy importing and uploading to other log programs and programs like SOTA and WWFF.

INTERNALS:

Here is an image of the layout of my Adriano Logger, I have used a MEGA board, and have the SD card internal, which is probably a mistake access wise.

73, Rob VK4FFAB

KRMNPA Weekend 2016

By Tony VK3VTH

Hi All,

Just a reminder to open up those diaries and planners, (paper or electronic!) and add the Keith Roget Memorial National Park Award

activation weekend..........

This will be the 6th VK3 Parks activation weekend, and will happen across 4 days..... Friday November 12 to Monday November 14 2016.

This is a great opportunity for Activators to get focused on VK3 National Parks and work towards the Merit Award, which is 45 National Parks activated. This is a somewhat daunting task and to date has only been achieved by Peter VK3ZPF, Peter VK3PF, Julie VK3FOWL and Joe VK3YSP. It is certainly a "challenge"

For Hunters this weekend will be an excellent chance to Chase down those elusive ones.

Already on ParkNPeaks you will find a growing list of Parks to be activated across the November weekend, so please use this valuable resource to assist your planning.

And again, in 2016, there will be a Certificate for all registered VK3 National Park activators.

If you have any Questions please contact me direct or via the Group.

Information can be found at:

https://www.amateurradio.com.au/awards

Best Regards

Tony VK3XV / VK3VTH

WWFF Logging software
By Chris VK3PAT

There was a post during May on the VKFF/SOTA Facebook site, where someone asked about logging software that supported WWFF. I use a program called Log4om.

Not only is it brilliant. It's also free. It supports IOTA, SOTA, WWFF and even SANPCPA. It's so smart that it brings up the correct parks database based on the activating station's callsign, e.g., VK brings up Australian parks, ZL, New Zealand parks and so on.

It can also automatically upload your logs to HRDlog, LOTW and QRZ. Setting up the initial CAT connection can be a bit tricky, specially if you're using a cable with a non-genuine Prolific chip. If your radio supports USB to SB it's a breeze.

I've use HRD and MacLoggerDX and I reckon

Log4om b eats them both. It has excellent documentation and there's a user forum.

Here is a screenshot:

73,

Chris VK3PAT

Parks & Peaks event 2016
By Paul VK5PAS

Last year a Parks and Peaks event was held in Wagga Wagga in New South Wales. A BBQ lunch was held at the clubrooms, followed by a number of presentations, and then activations of Parks and SOTA peaks on Sunday.

Warren VK3BYD has been trying to organise a similar event for this year. Unfortunately, a 2016 event will NOT be going ahead at this stage.

Rob VK2QR has organised a get together at Adaminaby and a number of hams will be attending there.

Making your own linked dipole antenna
By Mike VK5FVSV

Introduction

Antenna Need

When I first started looking at Amateur Radio I had no idea about antennas. After much reading I decided to purchase a Hustler 5BTV vertical and set that up in the back garden. It worked fine but cost some $500+. Pretty expensive, and the performance wasn't as good as I expected. In all fairness, I didn't have a radial field and this obviously hurt performance somewhat.

At our future home site (50km away) I built a G7FEK MultiBand wire antenna that performs very very well.

While on holidays in the UK I bought a 4 Band Linked Dipole (80/40/20/10) from SotaBeams and saw the lightwith regards to cheap wire antennas for Portable work and temporary circumstances.

Wind forward 12 months and we have moved into a Granny Flat for the next 12 months or so while we build our new house and I was really wanting to get on the air but wasn't able to put up the vertical.

That's when I decided to make my own linked dipole for 80/40m. Despite my trepidations, it worked a treat. Only problem was changing

bands all the time, so I changed it slightly and turned it into a Fan Dipole by adding a 40m element and leaving the 80m element permanently linked. Works a treat. Great signal reports all over. Instead of an inverted V, it's actually strung up in a U shape only 3m off the ground and it still works very well. So the G7FEK, the Sotabeams linked dipole and my temporary shack up at the Granny Flat has me sold on wire antennas for non mobile situations.

Now I want to go portable with my new FT817ND so it's time to build a new linked dipole for that purpose. It is for 40/15/10m as these are the bands an F Call in Australia is able to use. No need for 80m as this band doesn't work much during the day anyway. And most Parks/Sota activations seem to happen on the higher bands anyway, mostly 40m.

So this article is how to build this particular variation of a Linked Dipole.

Antenna Analyser

If you're going to be working the Amateur HF Bands, then I strongly suggest you get yourself an Antenna Analyser. In the last 12 months I have found this to be the most used piece of test equipment I have. I use it at least once every couple of weeks even if it's only for confirming the VSWR on my existing antennas are still within limits. It is the best money you will ever spend in the hobby.

You will need to get one for this build to tune the antenna for lowest VSWR. You can either borrow one from your local Club or Amateur Radio friend, or buy or build one from a kit.

You can buy one of the many commercially available ones (MFJ, Sark, RigExpert and others).

Or you can build one from a kit. The one I use is the VK5JST Analyser Kit I got from my club, the Adelaide Hills Amateur Radio Society (AHARS). It's a very good kit, has everything included, and is not too difficult to assemble (requires a reasonable level of soldering skills). And it's only AUD$135 (for locals) including postage.

http://www.ahars.com.au/about/kits/

Other information here

http://users.on.net/~endsodds/aamk7.htm

Making It

Tools Needed

The usual including Soldering Iron, Solder, pliers, drill, saw, files etc

Parts Needed

8 Clips/Connectors
I used Anderson PowerPole Connectors (Singles) (http://andersonconnect.com.au/store/index.php?main_page=index&cPath=36_41&zenid=cc009e45c4a6343a a391236c5e850852 Various prices but cheaper than anywhere else and you know they are the real thing).

Alternatively pairs of Alligator Clips. Pairs of automotive spade connectors might work but these are difficult to separate.

Plastic for Top Plate

(and 4 Link Plates if you like)

(150mm PVC End Cap from Bunnings $7.90

http://www.bunnings.com.au/holman150mmp vcdwvpushoncap_p4770361) uPVC and plenty to make the top plate and 4 link plates and have heaps left over..

Plastic Chain

instead of Link Plates (Bunnings $5.35/m

http://www.bunnings.com.au/zenith8mmwhit eplasticchain_p4225313) Light and uPVC. You lose every second one freeing up single links, but the stuff is cheap enough. Cheaper to use leftover 150mm PVC End Cap though, which I

bought later.

22 AWG Wire

(SotaBeams Yellow/Green/Brown $11.74 for 100m + Postage

http://www.sotabeams.co.uk/antennawirelight weight100m) I couldn't get 22AWG anywhere is Australia so I got it from SotaBeams. 22AWG is stated as good for 100W. Approx 2 weeks for post from the UK. Heavier wire would work also but it'll be heavier to cart around if you're doing SOTA or Portable. More rigid too, hence why I stuck with the tested and proven 22AWG.

20m RG174 Coax

(Jaycar $24.95)

http://www.jaycar.com.au/Wire%2CCable% 26Accessories/CoaxialCable/Communication50 R/50OhmRG174UCoaxCable20mPk/ p/WB2018) Nuff said.

BNC Plug

Jaycar $4.95

http://www.jaycar.com.au/Interconnect/Plug% 2CSockets%26Adaptors/

RF/MaleLinePlugBNCSolderless/p/PP0652

Take out the screw and solder the centre into the hole left by removing the screw. Heat shrink to seal it up. Get some if you don't have any. Always handy.

FT11443 TOROID

MiniKits $2.65

http://www.minikits.com.au/FT11443?search=FT11443%20TOROID

Might be a cheaper source elsewhere, but they were local and delivered next day on normal post.

20m x 4m Poly Rope

maybe 3mm if you can find it. (Bunnings $3.97 Probably should be UV Resistant. Builders line will also probably do the job and is smaller when winding onto the wire winders.

http://www.bunnings.com.au/syneco4mmx20mpolypropylenerope_p4313938)

Wire Winders

(SotaBeams $4.30 each plus postage

http://www.sotabeams.co.uk/antennawirewinders/

Approx 2 weeks for post from the UK. Or home made from nylon chopping board; fairly rigid ones I would think 34mm thick; pattern here

http://www.bushcraftuk.com/forum/showthread.php?t=120472)

Got a Chopping Board from Coles for $3.00 which will make 2. 3.5mm thick. Cut with a Jig Saw on low speed slowly and carefully.
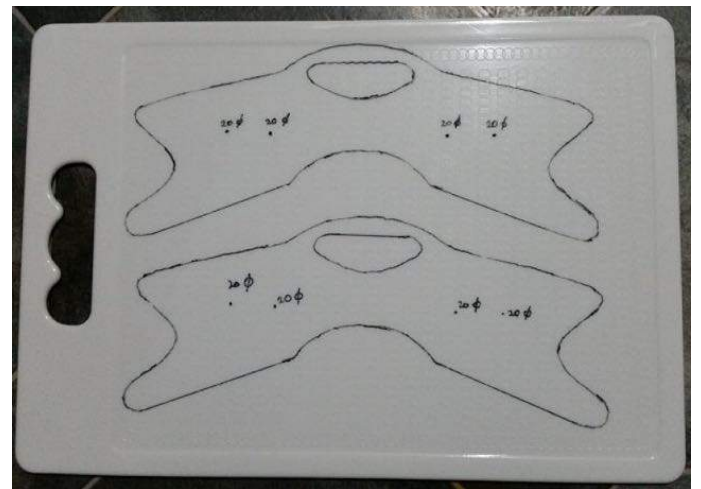
The end product

7m HD Squid Pole

(Haverfords $43 + Courier Delivery

http://www.haverford.com.au/telescopicpoles.html)

Parts Manufacture

Winding the Balun

These articles will help, otherwise see below.

http://www.arnsw.org.au/html/ARNSW%20Balun%20Day.pdf

and

http://www.vk3bq.com/2014/09/24/11current balun/

and

http://www.vk3bq.com/wpcontent/uploads/Current_balun_1to1.pdf

Simple job.   Requires the FT11443 Toroid, the RG174 and a couple of cable ties.

Start at the "bottom" and fix the RG174 to the toroid with a cable tie.

Now wind the coax around the toroid on the left hand side 5 full turns (each time the cable passes through the centre of the toroid is counted as a turn). When you get to the "top" (half way), cross the rg174 back over tothe "bottom" and wind the second half of the total winding on the right hand side. 5 Turns again.

Fix the RG174 to the toroid with another cable tie, and the job is done.
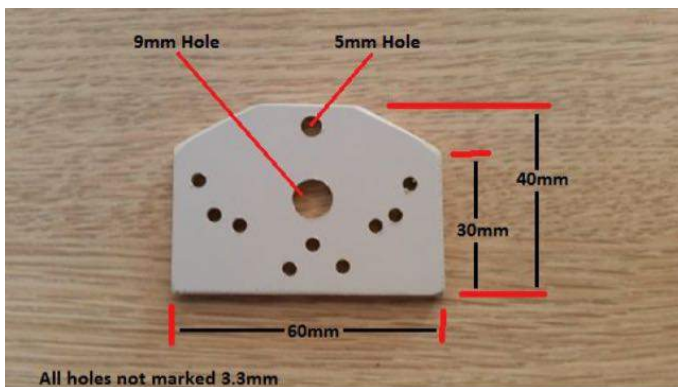
This method ensures the start and finish are at opposite ends. Note also that the RG174 enters on top and exits on the bottom of the toroid. See the pictures below. It's not difficult at all.
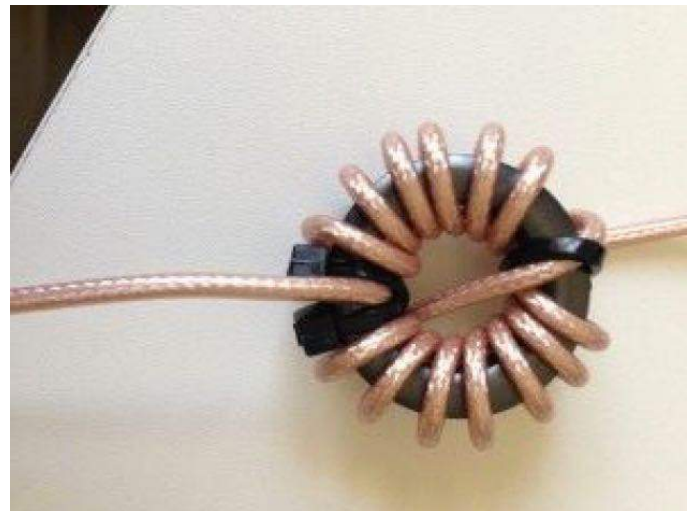
Making the Top Plate

Drill the holes in the positions as shown. 3.3mm holes are the old ⅛" (rivet drill bit) size.

Making the Link Plates (if you go this way)

Cut 4 plastic plates 50mm x 10mm and drill a 3.3mm hole at each end.

Putting It Together

Cut the wire sections to length

Depends on the bands you are wanting to use.

I did 40m, 15m and 10m as 80m is no real use during the day when Park Activations usually happen.

I used the SotaMaps Linked Dipole Calculator here

http://www.sotamaps.org/extras.php

My frequencies are middle of the SSB allocation in Australia (28700, 21300 and 7100kHz). Your requirements may be different to mine, so do as you require.

I ended up with wire lengths of 2.48m (10m Band), 0.86m (15m Band) and 6.69m (40m Band). 2 of each length.

Cut the RG174 to length and attach a BNC Male to one end

Cut a length of RG174 1012m long (10m is plenty but I cut mine to 12m too long really). Strip the outer case and centre insulator to the appropriate lengths and solder and/or crimp the BNC Connector as required. The connector you have chosen will determine this exact process. I have only loosely explained what I did with the connector I bought. Seal with 1 or more layers of heat shrink to waterproof and to help with mechanical strain relief if appropriate.
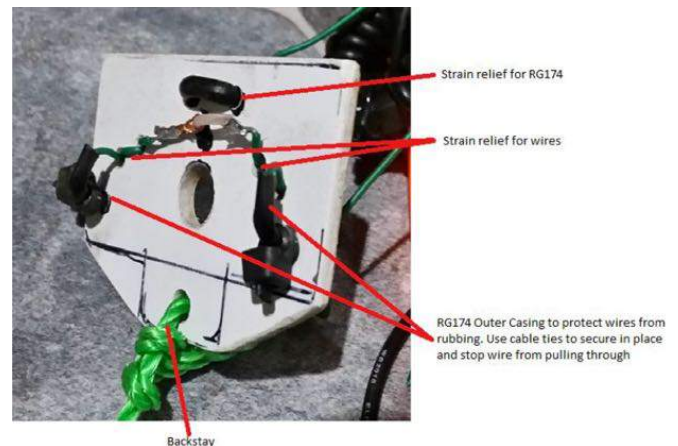

Cut the ropes to length

1 x 10m (Backstay)
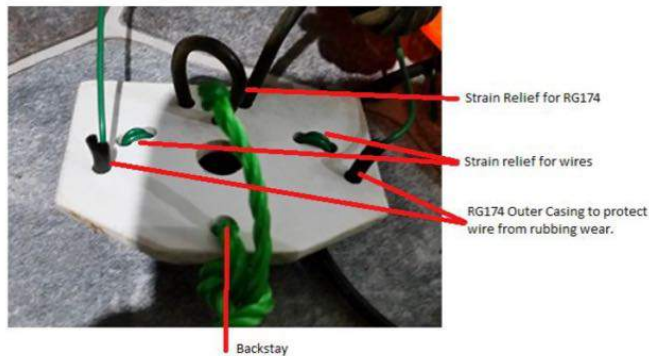2 x 3.5m (between the end of the wire and the Wire Winder)

Assemble the Top Plate

Thread the remainder of the RG174 through the top plate, then down the next hole then up the next hole. This acts to hold the RG174 firmly and will stop any pressure on where you join the 2 wires to the RG174.
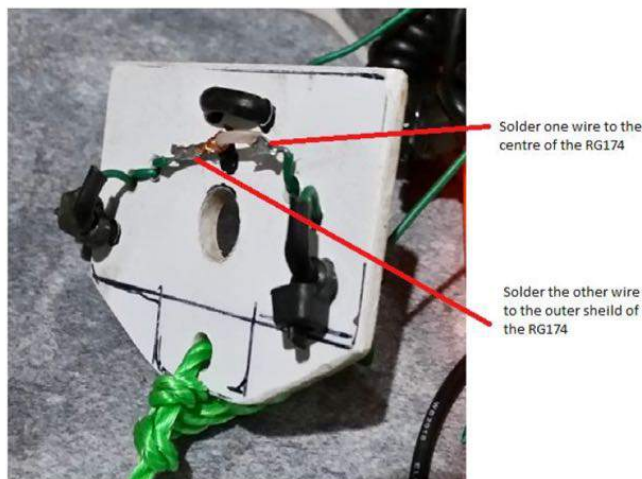

Thread the 2 inner wires, one on each side 2.48m long, into the top plate and loop through the strainer holes to bring them out next to the

RG174.

Strip the ends of the wires and enough RG174 to enable you to solder one wire to the RG174 centre and the other to the twisted up outer shield.


Once all your soldering is complete, check for continuity between one wire and the centre pin of the BNC connector. Then check the other wire against the outer casing of the BNC connector. If that's okay, seal the RG174 / wires to keep moisture out. Silicone, Araldite or a hot glue gun will suffice.

Tie the 10m backstay to the hole opposite the balun.
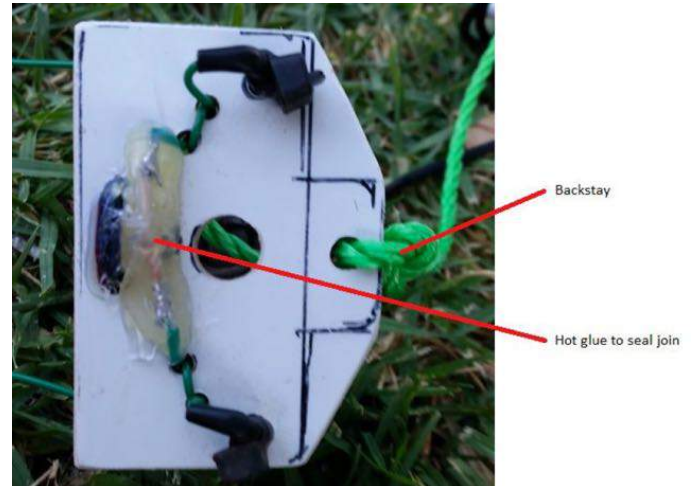
Assemble the Wires and Link Plates

Tie the loose end of one of the first wires to a link plate, leaving about 40mm free to solder on the link connector and for tune trimming. Repeat for the other side.
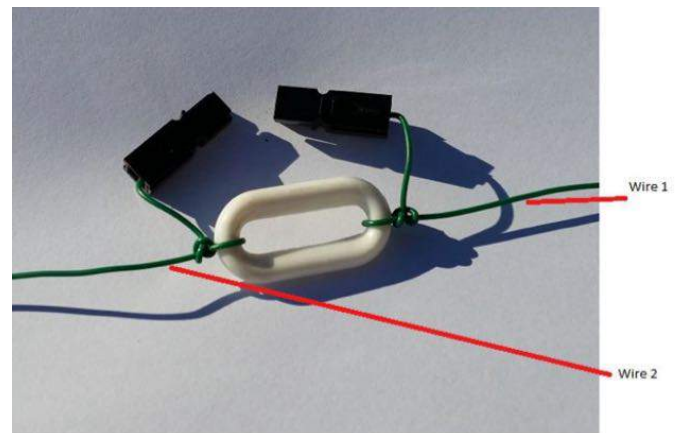
Tie one end of one of the second wires (0.86m) to the other end of the first link plate. Leave about 30mm free to solder on the link connector. Tie the other end to the second link plate. Leave about 40mm free to solder on the link connector and for tune trimming. Repeat for the other side.
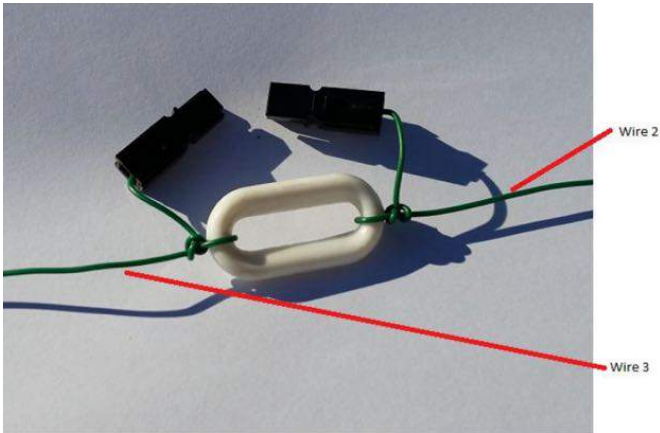
Tie one end of one of the third wire (6.69m) to the other end of the second link plate. At the outer end of this wire, there is no link plate to attach to. Tie a loop in the end leaving about 400mm of wire loose for tune trimming.
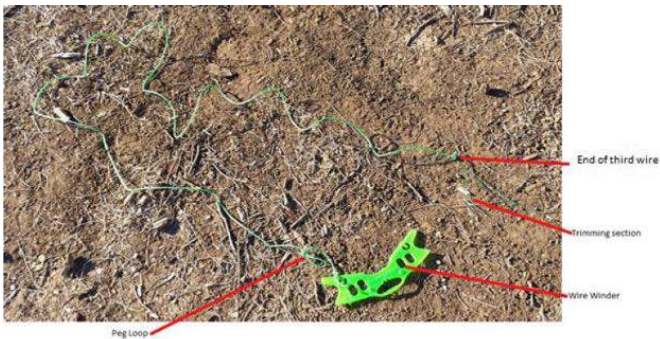
Finish off with the Ropes and Wire Winders

Tie one of the 3.5m ropes you previously cut to the loop you just tied in the end of the third wire. Repeat for the other side.

Make a loop in the rope close to the end so you can peg the rope to the ground. Tie a wire winder to the end. Repeat for the other side.
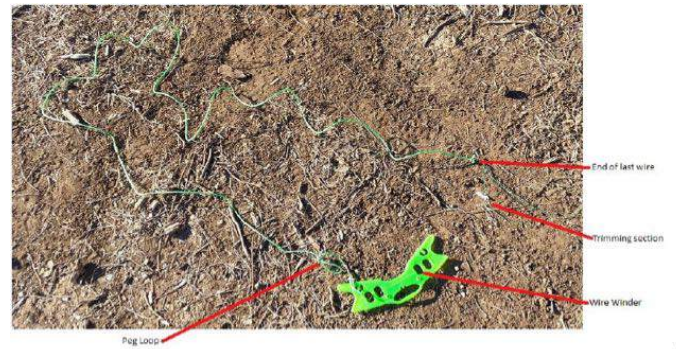
That's the assembly done. Easy.

Finished product. Green and orange winders contain the wires, the homemade white one contains the backstay and RG174 Coax feed.

Tuning

You will need that Antenna Analyser you bought, made or borrowed for this.

Start with the highest frequency (top sections closest to the centre, in this case the 10M sections).

Make sure the links between all the sections are not joined together.

Raise the antenna up to the height it will normally be used at. This can be on the squid pole you bought for this project or from a rope

slung over a tree branch. Doesn't matter, just get it up to the height it would normally be deployed at and peg it out into its inverted "V" configuration. If you have trouble doing it, check out this excellent video from SotaBeams. It tells you everything you need to know for an easy put up!.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RI6IRgQLokk

Thanks Richard.

Connect your antenna Analyser to the RG174 with the BNC connector you soldered on.

Go to the frequency you selected as your frequency band centre (in this case I selected 28.700mHz) and check the VSWR. Write it down.

Now go to the lower end of the band (28.300mHz). Check the VSWR again and write it down. Go to the top end of the chosen band (29.100mHz) and check the VSWR again. Write it down.

Now you can have a look at the numbers and get an idea if you need to lengthen or shorten the top segments to get the VSWR as low as possible. Remember, a VSWR below 1.5 is more than acceptable. You can go lower and there is nothing to stop you aiming for perfection, but the improvement in performance will be minimal. If you need to shorten the segments, you need to take the same amount off each side of the dipole. So, for example, if you want to shorten the length of the wire a bit, then take say 1 cm off each side. Always trim both sides equally, otherwise you'll end up with an unbalanced dipole, and then it is not a dipole.

Now look at the measurements.

28.300mHz VSWR 1.5
28.700mHz VSWR 1.0
29.100mHz VSWR 1.5

If they turned out like this, then that is as good as you're going to get, and you don't need to do anything. Go to the next step.

If they are like this ….

28.300mHz VSWR 1.0
28.700mHz VSWR 1.5
29.100mHz VSWR 2.1
Then the segments are too long.

Pull the antenna down and trim 1 cm off each side, put it up again, and check the VSWR again. Repeat until the VSWR is as low as you can get it. Remember, take small lengths off. It's harder to make it longer than it is to make it shorter. Then go to the next step.

If they are like this ….

28.300mHz VSWR 2.1
28.700mHz VSWR 1.5
29.100mHz VSWR 1.0

Then the segments are too short.

Pull the antenna down and add 10 cm of wire to each side (cover the solder joint with Heat Shrink to make as waterproof as possible), put it up again, and check the VSWR again. Repeat and trim or add until the VSWR is as low as you can get it. Remember, when trimming, take small lengths off. Now go the next step.

Once this first segment is tuned, solder on your Anderson connectors to the end of the first segment and the beginning of the second segment (on both sides of course), clip them together, and go onto the next one.

Repeat the process for the second band (15M). My centre was 21.300mHz (21.150mHz bottom and 21.450mHz top).

Repeat again for the last band (in my case 40M). My centre was 7.100mHz (7.000mHz bottom and 7.200mHz top).

Finally, recheck all 3 bands again (don't forget to unlink/link the segments as you do your measurements) just to make sure everything is as is should be.

Now, you're done.

Go have fun with your new 40/15/10M linked dipole.

Ham introductions

By Paul VK5PAS

G'day All,

My introduction to radio would be similar to some of the amateurs on the bands today in that I became interested during the great sunspot cycle of the late 70's early 80's (Solar Cycle 21?) with 27 Mhz CB radio. I attempted to learn CW with some tapes but got nowhere and therefore my amateur career never got off the ground back in the 80s.

In 2006 I discovered that CW was no longer a requirement and immediately jumped in and got my Foundation Licence (VK4FCCC). Thanks to the coaching and encouragement of Gav, VK4ZZ in Townsville, QLD.

Being a serving member we regularly deploy for several months at a time and while deployed in 2008 I took the opportunity to study for the Advanced Licence. Through the facilitation of Dale, VK4DMC I sat for and passed my exam in Dili, East Timor at the end of my deployment and became the proud owner of VK4GEE.

Shortly thereafter the ACMA made available a list of two letter callsigns, I applied for and received VK4FR.

In 2009 I returned again to East Timor and armed with an Advanced Licence applied for an East Timor callsign and for the final four or so months of my deployment I operated as 4W6FR.

Being a newly minted advance call and not knowing to much about DX operations I was not prepared for the experience of being THE DX! East Timor had been closed for 25 years so demand for 4W6 was high to put it mildly! I had never managed ever a meagre pileup, added to the fact I was there to work

and I was living in shared accommodation made the task fairly daunting.

Above:- Panorma of operating in East Timor. Image courtesy of VK4FR/5.

Thankfully several experienced hands offered support while I was there including Bob, W9KNI, Bill, VK4FW and Lyn, VK4SWE. Another ham from Portugal arrived, Al, CT1GPQ, working as a paramedic and using 4W6AL. He was an experienced DXer and while he worked CW primarily he was a great help with my operating practices.

Above:- 4W6FR and 4W6AL. Image courtesy of VK4FR/5

It was because I was sharing a very small space with other shift workers that I discovered the digital modes which allowed me to continue to make contacts without disturbing my fellow

(sometimes sleeping) workers. To the best of my knowledge 4W6 had, until that time, never been activated with the digital modes.

While at home in Townsville I enjoyed field operation in support of horse rides and scout activities and this is where I started to pull together my field kit. I also started to get a home station together with a tower and beam. I'm also a fan of APRS and my mobile installation gradually grew to APRS, HF, UHF and VHF.

My job requires regular postings and in 2014 I was posted to Adelaide. Due to my wife's work and both my sons studying at Townsville university I made the trek down to VK5 on my own.

My work here keeps me away for around 3-4 months a year so having a my family here wouldn't have been much better anyway. I try to get back to Townsville every 6-8 weeks. Long way from North QLD to VK5 on 40M chasing parks!

My transition to VK5 was made all that easier with the assistance of radio. A quick google

search revealed a bloke (Paul, VK5PAS) giving a demonstration on low weight field operations up in the hills. That sounded like my sort of radio so I headed up the hill to have a listen. It was there that I met up with Larry, VK5LY (SK), John VK5BJE and of course Paul. I soaked up the information on offer from these leaders in the field on portable operation, DStar, batteries and APRS.

My home QTH in Townsville is a little over an acre and supports the erection of my previously mentioned tower, a 40/15M vertical and any number of dipoles. Unfortunately my temporary QTH in Adelaide, while being almost in the city, has a few disadvantages. An S9 noise floor and a 1metre by 6metre courtyard make for a trying time getting on 40M!

The VK5 Parks award has allowed me to get out and explore VK5, experience a zero noise floor and see a number of fantastic places I may not have seen had I just been left to my own devices. I've explored the parks of Kangaroo Island, the Murray River parks and Lake Eyre.

Above:- operating at Lake Eyre. Image courtesy of VK4FR/5.

As my posting to VK5 has been extended for a further two years (2017) I hope to continue to get out and about.

I'm particularly interested in using the digital modes more in the field and have taken steps in that direction running DroidPSK on my phone and tablet. This aspect is allowing me low power (10W) access into EU on 20 and 40M. I have also been having a listen to CW again and now with the help of phone apps and the internet I feel I'm making some headway! I hope to activate a park in a Triple Play (SSB, Data and CW) sometime In the near future.

Above:- the mobile set up. Image courtesy of VK4FR/5.

I'd like to thank all those I've already mentioned and also those that have answered my calls when I've been in a park and those who have been in a park and persevered with me when I try to operate from my small block in the city. If you are looking for an online log (LOTW, eQSL, Clublog) I upload as 'VK4FR/P'.

Above:- Operating PSK in the Coorong National Park. Image courtesy of VK4FR/5.

If you need or would like a card, mainly the DX operators but local hams welcome too, drop me a line as I'm only to happy to post to your QTH.

I hope to catch you all from a park or in a park someday soon.

Cheers

73

VK4FR/p

FISTS Downunder
By Paul VK5PAS

FISTS Downunder supports the use, preservation and education of Morse code. The club is devoted exclusively to CW operators, CW operating and people who are passionate about Morse code.

The FISTS Down Under website can be found at.....

http://www.fistsdownunder.org/

FISTS Dowunder also have a Facebook site which can be found at......

https://www.facebook.com/groups/1765058520392148/

Evolution: From Radio Go Bag to Bug-Out Bag
By Craig NM4T

This article has been kindly provided by Craig NM4T, from QRP Amateur Radio International (QRP ARI), the club that publishes the QRP Quarterly Magazine that these were first published in.

As I write this (March 3rd) it's just above freezing outside with a 15 MPH+ wind that bites with the sleet it carries. The freeze line is precariously close to Huntsville, Alabama. Nashville, just north of us, struggles with icing issues as their day sets in. It's been a tough winter! Oh Spring time, where art thou?

Hopefully, now that you have received this Spring QQ , pleasant weather has set-in where you live. And I hope that your outdoor adventures are already in full swing.

So, this time, let's focus on how we can improve and (therefore) better exploit our QRP portable activities. There are endless ways to engage in such adventures—we'll only be able to take a look at a few, but we'll pick some real gems and include some valuable tips (lessons learned) for you to add to your hard earned collection.

First, let's talk about "missed opportunities."
If you're like me, you've had too many times where you could have participated in portable radio adventures, but life got in the way. You're been so preoccupied with (so-called) "high-priority must do now" items that the opportunity came and left. You respond with a (somewhat) pathetic "Oh, rats... That was last Saturday!

Ok, I'm guilty too, so no lecture here, just the reminder that this is the only life we get....

On the other hand, too many of us project manage our outings to aerospace standards only to find that our operational execution is abysmal. And most of us already have some kind of equipment "Go Bag" set-up for short,

casual, daytime operations. Or, we simply throw a bunch of stuff in our car, hoping that we didn't forget anything, prior to heading out to play radio.

So now, let's explore what can be done to extend our portable operational capabilities while gaining more utility from our investment. We can use some of my Go Bag configurations as examples that can be examined for further improvement.

The low end of the Go Bag spectrum is simple to assemble. Examples (Figures 1 and 2) include what you might use for casual operation from your favorite park in Parks on the Air (POTA), or for Summits on the Air (SOTA) radio operation. This approach focuses on keeping weight and mass to a minimum. Extreme sport backpacking and SOTA operators literally count in ounces vs. pounds. This type of Go Bag will (usually) include only what you need to operate on a single or a small number of radio frequencies and modes for a very limited amount of time. And, it is great when everything you brought works, but could it could become a disaster if anything fails. Even so, this will be all that is needed for SOTA or casual operations where you simply want to get outdoors and have some fun.

My classic ICOM 703+ with ICOM backpack and rechargeable battery is a good example of a Go Bag that stores just enough equipment to get on the air for a few hours. It barely has enough room for the items you would need to carry. This design does, however, have the ability to use the display a short distance from the main transceiver unit to facilitate pedestrian portable operation and it allows a small vertical antenna to be attached.

Figure 1—ICOM-703+ with ICOM backpack setup.

The Oriole fanny pack is lighter than the ICOM backpack and it has almost the same amount of storage space. Equipment is placed inside the various compartments and then the tensioning straps are tightened to protect its contents while traveling. One important feature that these two bags share is that they both have built-in rain covers that can be deployed when needed to better protect your gear.

Figure 2—K1 or Rebel with Kelty Oriole fanny pack setup.

So far nothing's changed, but things will start to get interesting when we adopt a few Rapid Deployment Amateur Radio (RaDAR) and some survivalist "Bug-Out Bag" principles. Our Go Bag configurations morphs into something quite different and our operational activities expand with new purpose as we pursue these.

I'm not suggesting that we all become die-hard "Preppers," but wouldn't it be great to have a portable operations bag that actually includes everything you will need. And, better yet-wouldn't it be wonderful to have it ready and waiting to be grabbed to address emergency situations, as well as fun portable radio outings?

I am suggesting that you take a significant step to add some additional communication capabilities, computing functionality and navigational abilities to your Go Bag. Or should I say "System in a Sack (SiaS)," as Eddie Leighton, ZS6BNE, creator of the RaDAR group refers to such bags.

As low-end examples, I have two Go Bag configurations we can use as typical RaDAR SiaS Go Bags for short outings. The first is a LowePro 170AW (all weather) camera bag that can be used standalone or as an insert that goes inside a more comprehensive Go Bag set-up (Figure 3). This bag contains everything needed to get my KX3 (with built-in tuner and internal batteries) on the air. It has earphones, compact headphones/MIC, hand MIC, Palm CW key and an EndFedz 10/20/40 QRP antenna, as well as cables, adaptors, etc.

Figure 3—LowePro 170AW (All Weather) camera bag.

Figure 4—Camelback Fourteener back-pack (with LowePro as insert).

This bag can be carried via the shoulder strap or belt mounted. Also notice that my iPhone and handy talkie are integral parts of this configuration. I also show documentation, but that could be stored in the iPhone to make room in the bag for something else of value. My second RaDAR SiaS example for day trips employs a Camelback Fourteener Backpack (Figure 4). It's amazing how much "stuff" you can get into this small bag! If you look closely, you can see that it contains a hydration system, complete with a drinking tube and an internal water bladder. This is strategically located between you back and the load you are carrying for added comfort. This small backpack allows me to carry rain gear, a change of clothes, a first aide kit, snacks/food, etc. Further, I can carry my LowePro 17AW radio equipment bag separately, or I can insert it into the bottom of the Fourteener bag for travel when I require fewer travel support items.

This example moves us closer to a Prepper's Bug-Out bag kind of capability that assures that his Bug-Out pack can provide everything required getting him from his home to a "safe" destination within 24 to 48 hours.

Before we move to my camping (longer term) backpack SiaS, let's discuss RaDAR for a moment to further differentiate it from casual radio operations.

First, as stated in the Google+ RaDAR Community's blog [Ref. 1], RaDAR is multi disciplined—it promotes the use of all methods of communications available to radio amateurs (including the use of satellite communications and cell phones) and it promotes the use of basic survival techniques that help operators gain experience with self sufficiency.

Second, RaDAR contact exchanges differ from other forms of radio operations by creating field operation opportunities that practice the communication of accurate positional information that is useful for navigation as well as for informing others of your precise position.

For example, my Maidenhead grid location is EM64. But having this information will only get a rescue helicopter to a general area. If someone is trying join me, or I am trying to navigate to a particular location-this resolution of positional information has limited value—especially if a life is at stake.

So RaDAR operators also gain experience for accessing and communicating grid locators to the 10-character accuracy (or even finer latitude/longitude detail) such situations.

And third, the thing that makes RaDAR operation most different to other amateur radio activities is the ability that RaDAR operators gain to move quickly. A typical RaDAR field operation activity, for example, would involve setting-up your station, doing 5 QSO's, and then moving a kilometer (or more) and then repeat the process at the new locations.

If you examine a RaDAR operator's SiaS more closely—you'll notice other significant differences. For example, you'll notice that a cellphone (or similar device) often become a key, multifunctional component of their SiaS. So, even if you don't have cell coverage where you're going-you can exploit your cell phone's computing power, its information storage capability as well as the convergent technologies it offers. This helps you extend your operational capabilities to log contacts, to access GPS, to serve as an additional

communication mode when needed, to record audio (QSOs, verbal or written notes), etc. It's also a great place to have important info stored and readily available (such as maps, etc.). You'll also notice that RaDAR operators bring their handy-talkie radios, not just for QSOs, but also to serve as another form of communications.

Getting back to Go Bag configurations- I exploit the sophisticated design of my Gregory Baltoro 65 backpack to achieve my most Prepper-like configuration (Figure 5). At this point, we're getting close to my physical load bearing limitations by assembling a Go Bag that includes as much gear as I can personally manage.

Figure 5—NM4T's Gregory Baltoro-65 "Bug-Out" backpack.

As you would expect-tough trade-offs must be implemented vs. how much radio equipment, camping gear, personal items and food/water, etc. comprise such a configuration.

I have this bag ready for emergencies, and I

store it in our tornado shelter when we have bad weather approaching. It includes a 3-person tent, a sleeping bag, a larger hydration system larger first aid kit, lights, stove, cooking gear, food (plus trail snacks) and more. Its contents will evolve as I gain more experience using it.

Before we end this short discussion about Go Bags, I'd like to share a new discovery I made that might serve you well with air travel as it did for me on my Buddies in the Caribbean Suitcase DXpedition to St. Lucia. As I packed my gear for this trip, I discovered that the suitcases I had were either too big or too small. After looking around in several stores, I came upon a great deal for a High Sierra suitcase that had a detachable backpack (Figure 6). Since I'm usually on small commuter planes to and from Huntsville, carry-on luggage is usually a problem— they want to check most carry-on bags into the belly of the plane. This is not a good place to put my (precious) radio gear.

The great thing about this suitcase is that I can detach the backpack to place it in the small overhead compartments and then place the remaining part completely under the seat in front of me-problem solved!

Speaking of obstacles, one of the biggest obstacles to overcome with portable operations—where A/C electricity sources are not available—is that of recharging batteries. Ok, you can use a car's system to do this, but what can you do when no cars are available?

I been experimenting with some solar charging equipment (Figure 7) and I have developed a new appreciation for the challenges that this approach presents. Batteries that discharge via radio operation in a few hours can take more than a day to recharge via portable solar panels. Worse yet, you can't depend on getting acceptable sunlight when needed, especially in weather emergency situations.

Figure 4—Camelback Fourteener backpack (with LowePro as insert).

Figure 7—AlexLoop and backpack solar charging setup.

If you decide to get a solar charging set-up, be sure that it's one that can be hooked-up and charging your battery while you is on the air. This will provide you with more operating time and it can often reduce the amount of charging you battery may require.

In addition, your cell phone, computing equipment and such all will also require an answer to this dilemma. On my last outing, I discovered that laptop computers deplete their battery charge faster than radios in high-usage situations (such as meeting the processing demands of JT65).

Obviously, there is a lot more to be said, but let's just transition to this quarter's challenge instead:

As you may have surmised, my challenge for you this quarter is twofold: First, invest in making improvements to your Go Bag to extend its intrinsic value, and second, invest in your ability to gain valuable experience with the aforementioned techniques in your next outings.

Now that we have briefly discussed a few Go Bag examples, it would be wise to take a sharper and more holistic look at our portable operation bags. We should assess how well our Go Bags address "The Ten Essential Systems," as defined in the book Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills (The Mountaineers Books, 2003).

How well are you equipped and trained
to address the following items?

1. Navigation Systems (map, compass,
GPS etc.)

2. Sun Protection (clothing, hats, sunglasses, skin protection creams)

3. Insulation (extra clothing)

4. Illumination (headlamps, LED flashlights, batteries, solar panels)

5. First-aid supplies

6. Fire (matches, fire starters)

7. Repair kit and tools

8. Nutrition (extra food)

9. Hydration (extra water, purification capability)

10. Emergency shelter and signaling devices (mirrors, radios, SPOT devices)

Of course, A.R.E.S., storm-spotting and other activities would also become more effective, perhaps even empower hams to save lives, by how prepared they are to address these.

Hopefully, this short article has provided you with some new improvement ideas and it has stirred you into action to refine your portable operation capabilities. (I'd love to get hear about your bag configuration and improvements via email and/or in person at FDIM.) I trust that the improvements you make will serve you well, not just for casual radio operations, but also for those unplanned emergencies that could (and do) happen to us along the way.

In closing, I'm reminded of the TV ad that asks,

"What do you have in your wallet?" Instead, I'll suggest that we Hams should be asking our peers "What do you have in your Go Bag?"

—72, Craig, NM4T

Reference

1. RaDAR Community: https://plus. google.com/u/0/communities/109283065808971118728?cfem=1

Submitting your logs for WWFF
By Paul VK5PAS

There has been quite a bit of discussion lately about park activators not submitting their logs for upload to WWFF Logsearch. I do my best to follow up on logs from those activators who are not quick in providing their logs. Many of the SOTA activators do not participate in WWFF, so please check with the activator as to whether they are operating as purely a SOTA activator or a combined SOTA/WWFF activation. You could also try a subtle and polite email to the activator.

My radio transportation box
By Michael Vk5FVSV

Here is a photo of my Radio box for Park Activations. Another small tool box contains the antenna, external battery and other big odds and sods.

2016 VKFF Activation Weekend

By Paul VK5PAS

A reminder that the 2016 VKFF Activation Weekend will be held on......

Saturday 26th and Sunday 27th November 2016.

Last years inaugural VKFF Action Weekend (held in November just gone), saw a total of 51 amateurs venture out to activate 77 unique parks all across Australia. There were over 3,200 QSOs made over the 2 day period.

Again, please drop me an email should you be intending on activating a park.....

vk5pas@wia.org.au

World Wide Flora Fauna (WWFF)

VKFF Activation weekend.
Saturday 26th & Sunday 27th
November 2016

If you do intend to intend to activate a park on this weekend, please send an email to Paul VK5PAS, at...

vk5pas@wia.org.au

So you want to buy a Head-set!

By John VK5BJE

A Review of the Heil Sound Pro-Set Elite Head-set and AD-1-YM adapter.

Head-sets, incorporating, either one or two head-phones and a microphone are *de jure* for DXpeditions. Have a look at the photos of DXpeditions. Operators sitting along-side of one and another all wearing head-sets are commonly pictured in *QST, CQ* and *Amateur Radio Magazine*.

They have many advantages: perhaps the most important is that they reduce extraneous noise, allowing the operator to concentrate on the voice or morse code content in what is being received.   And   amateur   hand-books recommend head-sets for morse operations!

Another considerable advantage, not only for the home station operator, but also for portable and DX field operators is that the use of head-

sets frees both hands for log-keeping and/or operating an electronic key or hand key.

Perusing the blogs of SOTA and Park operators (see *Parksnpeaks* for a list of active blogs) will show pictures of amateurs using computer head-sets, the Yamaha (CM-500) head-set not sold in Australia, but which receives very good reviews from the amateur community overseas and professional head-sets as advertised in *QST*. Perhaps the head-sets from *Heil Sound* are the best known?

Bob Heil, K9EID, is a very active US amateur. His business is *Heil Sound*. There is plenty of information about Bob Heil on the internet. And those of you who have listened to the *Eagles* will have heard of Joe Walsh, WB6AU, guitarist with the band. Joe Walsh endorses Heil products, reflecting the origins of Heil Sound as a sound equipment company for musicians. However, this does not make the products good. It is just great adverting!

I have never owned a head set until recently. I do own a venerable pair of low impedance (8 ohms) head phones labelled with the *Archer* brand. This was one of the brands owned and sold *Tandy* electronics, no longer active in the Australian market and now down-sizing in the US. I purchased these *circa* 1974 to use with my Tandy DX160 receiver. They made my head feel like it was being squeezed in a vice! I tried them on while writing this review. Actually I might have been a bit unfair with my comment. They are not too bad – reasonably comfortable and well cushioned and, more importantly, built like the proverbial tank! As a sign of earlier times the connecting plug is an old-fashioned ¼, yes, one quarter inch phono connector.

So what did I buy? Having studied the manufacturers' specifications, discussed options with other active amateurs who enjoy the outdoors and read the popular review sites, I decided to buy the popular Heil Sound Pro-Set Elite. The first thing a prospective buyer needs to do is to consider what transceiver you are going to use. Each manufacturer uses different wiring configurations and, in the case of ICOM, a lower level microphone pre-amplifier. Heil makes a special insert just for ICOM users. So make sure you read about different microphone levels and ensure you make the correct purchase. If you buy a head set from a US manufacturer, or the Yamaha CM500 you will need to consider the interface and connections to your transceiver. If you buy a Heil head set this is all taken care of: all you do is read the chart and make your selection. You select your head set then the appropriate adapter or adapters for your transceiver/s. This makes it easy. I want to use my head set with the Yaesu FT 817, 857 and 897 family of transceivers. Heil also provides suggested settings for the audio equaliser settings in your transceiver. This provides a great starting point in achieving an excellent transmitted audio for your specific purposes for example, DX or rag-chewing.

If you are going to get the best ergonomic results from your head set you will also need a foot-switch. I have two. The first is from *Jaycar* and was used as a hand operated push to talk set up on another transceiver where I use a studio condenser microphone. It works well but takes a bit of holding closed during a long over. The cable is really too short for me: it might work for a shorter person. I decided to buy the single channel Heil foot switch. It is very easy to operate.

This photo shows the head set connected to the foot switch and the Yaesu adapter terminating in the yellow modular plug. The unconnected ¼ inch phono plug, which incorporates a 3.5 mm plug as well, connects to the phono socket on your radio.

If you are going to use your footswitch to operate your transceiver in parks and on summits, you can easily destroy a perfectly good switch by using it in sand and mud. You will need a base: a small board or a mat or the tent floor or camper trailer.

The Bottom Line

The Pro-Set Elite is a most comfortable head-set: it sits firmly in place and does not exert too much pressure on your ears. I would even go so far to describe the head-set as comfortable. It is very important to adjust the head band so that the head-set does not slide down from your ears. I have field tested the Pro-Set Elite and have received very favourable audio reports about my transmitted signal. It is very important that you at least use the Heil suggested audio settings as a starting point. Move up to the two metre band to adjust your audio, wind down the power and enlist the assistance of friendly amateur nearby if you want to fine tune the settings. Keep a record of your microphone settings so you can quickly re-establish yourself if you want to revert to using your microphone.

I am delighted with this excellent addition to my portable kit and recommend this head-set to you for your consideration.

I purchased mine from friendly Ross (Strictly Ham Pty Ltd). Here is a link to Heil Sound http://www.heilsound.com/amateur/products/headsets/pro-set-elite

John Dawes
VK5BJE/VK5PF

Freeze your Butt Off
By Ian VK5CZ

I had been thinking about this Activity /Contest day for quite a while and I have seen some stuff on the net about the one they hold in America during winter. Lucky for us not all VK's who go out portable will experience snow and ice but it will be our coldest environment hopefully.

I will be sending out a copy of the rules to relevant clubs and scribes who put notes in the AR Mag and some of the regular Portable Parks and SOTA groups, Allen has agreed to post information on Parks and Peaks as well.

Thanks Paul for the forum of Out and About to spread the word. I hope as many as possible can take part there are 3 categories with varying comfort zones to choose from so please enjoy the day. Send in a log after and we will see who had the most fun.

I must thank Rik VK5MU for helping me get the rules worked out, as he is a keen contester and has had experience with contest rules.

Regards from Ian VK5CZ

Inac AH-521 antenna
By Paul VK5PAS

Here's an antenna you may be interested in....The Inac AH-521 magnetic loop (covers 40-15m), manufactured in Spain.

For more information check out the reviews of eHam.net......

http://www.eham.net/reviews/detail/12507

Promotional video for VK5 Parks Award
By Paul VK5PAS

I am seeking video & photos for a promotional video for the VK5 Parks Award.

I have created a folder in Dropbox for collection of the video and photos.

If you would like to contribute, please drop me an email and I will send you a link to the Dropbox folder.

I would greatly appreciate as much input as possible.

Free DV frequency
By Paul VK5PAS

I have been asked to remind everyone to try to keep the following frequency clear.....

7.177 mhz

This frequency is used in Australia for Digital Voice experimentation particularly FreeDV. This mode is being developed and written by David VK5DGR, who lives in Adelaide.

Out and About in VK5 stickers
By Paul VK5PAS

Who is interested in an *'Out and About in VK5'* sticker?

I have a quote back from Price Screen & Digital in Adelaide. They can do 50 x stickers at a total cost of $336.00. That works out to be $4.42 per sticker. Or 100 x stickers at a total cost of $359.70. That works out to be $2.42 per sticker. Next batch would be 250, which totals $456.50 and works out to be $1.32 per sticker. But I suspect I would never get interest in 250.

So, if people are interested, please let me know. Either drop me an email or post a message here.

vk5pas@wia.org.au

I did look at another large company that could do it cheaper, but I read a lot of reviews suggesting that their quality was quite poor.

Looking forward to hearing from people.

Elecraft KX2 being released
By Paul VK5PAS

Something else for the Christmas stocking is the KX2 transceiver by Elecraft. It is a fit in your pocket size transceiver.

More information can be found at…..

http://www.elecraft.com/

Recent Park Activations

The month of April saw the 3rd year anniversary of the VK5 Parks Award, so as would be expected there was a large amount of activity.

Here is a list of recent park activations by VK5's (that I am aware of)…… …

- ➢ Norfolk Island VKFF-0392, Paul VK9PAS (29/5/2016)
- ➢ Coorong National Park VKFF-0115, Jonathan VK6JON/5 (28/5/2016)
- ➢ Mebbin National Park VKFF-0311, Stef VK5HSX/2 (28/5/2016)
- ➢ Norfolk Island VKFF-0392, Paul VK9PAS (27/5/2016)

Above:- Paul VK9PAS operating from Emily Bay Norfolk Island

➤ Norfolk Island VKFF-0392, Paul VK5PAS (26/5/2016)

➤ Norfolk Island National Park VKFF-0392, Paul VK9PAS (24/5/2016)

➤ Norfolk Island VKFF-0392, Paul VK9PAS (23/5/2016)

➤ Lane Cove National Park VKFF-0281, Paul VK5PAS/2 (22/5/2016)

➤ Hat Head National Park VKFF-0230, Stef VK5HSX/2 (22/5/2016)

➤ Myall Lakes National Park VKFF-0375, Stef VK5HSX/2 (20/5/2016)

➤ Hopkins Creek Conservation Park VKFF-0893 & 5CP-093, David VK5PL/p (20/5/2016)

➤ Lincoln National Park VKFF-0286, Jonathan VK6JON/5 (17/5/2016)

➤ Lincoln National Park VKFF-0286, Jonathan VK6JON/5 (16/5/2016)

Above:- Jonathan VK6JON/5 operating from Lincoln National Park.

➤ Kosciuszko National Park VKFF-0269, Stev VK5HSX/2 (15/5/2016)

➤ Coffin Bay National Park VKFF-0106, Jonathan VK6JON/5 (15/5/2016)

Above:- Jonathan VK6JON/5 in the Coffin Bay National Park

➤ Whyalla Conservation Park VKFF-0808 & 5CP-253, Les VK5KLV/p (14/5/2016)

➤ Mike VK5FVSV (Aldinga Sscrub Conservation Park VKFF-0866 & 5CP-003 (14/5/2016)

➤ Kosciuszko National Park VKFF-0269, Stev VK5HSX/2 (14/5/2016)

➤ Brookfield Conservation Park VKFF-0822 & 5CP-025, Chris VK4FR/5 (14/5/2016)

- Livingstone National Park VKFF-0292, Stef VK5HSX/2 (13/5/2016)

- Barmah National Park VKFF-0739, Stef VK5HSX/3 (8/5/2016)

- Barmah National Park VKFF-0739, StevfVK5HSX/3 (7/5/2016)

- Lower Glenelg River National Park VKFF-0296, Keith VK5OQ/3 (6/5/2016)

- Gunbower National Park VKFF-0740, Stef VK5HSX/3 (4/5/2016)

- Little Desert National Park VKFF-0291, Stef VK5HSX/3 (1/5/2016)

For more information on the VK5 National & Conservation Parks Award please have a look at.....

http://www.vk5parks.com/

And for more information on the World Wide Flora Fauna (WWFF) program, please have a look at.....

http://www.wwffaustralia.com/

Recent SOTA activations

Ian VK5CZ and Hugh VK5NHGkept flying the flag here in VK5 for SOTA conducting numerous activations in the north of South Australia, along with Paul VK5PAS (VK9PAS) who operated from Mount Bates on Norfolk Island. The dynamic duo Nigel and Stuart headed to their favourite haunt, Mount Nigel....eh I mean Mount Gawler.

Here is a list of known recent VK5 SOTA activations.....

- VK5/ SE-013 Mount Gawler, Nigel VK5NIG/p (29/5/2016)

- VK5/ SE-013 Mount Gawler, Stuart VK5ST/p (29/5/2016)VK5/ Ne-081 Nackara Hill, Ian VK5CZ/p (29/5/2016)

- VK5/ Ne-081 Nackara Hill, Hugh VK5NHG/p (29/5/2016)

- VK5/ NE-071 Oulnina Hill, Ian VK5CZ/p (28/5/2016)

- VK5/ NE-071 Oulnina Hill, Hugh VK5NHG/p (28/5/2016)

- VK5/ NE-095, Ian VK5CZ/p (28/5/2016)

- VK5/ NE-095, Hugh VK5NHG/p (28/5/2016)
- VK5/ NE-107 Pualco Range, Ian VK5CZ/p (27/5/2016)
- VK5/ NE-107 Pualco Range, Ian VK5NHG/p (27/5/2016)
- VK9/ NO-001 Mount Bates Norfolk Island, Paul VK9PAS (23/5/2016)
- VK5/ NE-050 Stokes Hill, Ian VK5CZ/p (21/5/2016)
- VK5/ NE-047 Mount Jay South, Ian VK5CZ/p (21/5/2016)

For more information on SOTA in VK5, please check out.....

http://www.sota.org.uk/Associations/viewAssociation/prefix/VK5

New VK5 Parks Yahoo members

By Paul VK5PAS

Welcome to the following new members of the VK5 Parks Yahoo group......

- NIL for this period

A reminder that the VK5 Parks Award Yahoo group can be found at.....

https://au.groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/sanpcpa/info

It is a great way to keep up to date with the latest news, who is activating what park and when, etc. It is FREE and EASY to join. Why not check it out and consider joining.

VK5FMAZ QSL card

By Paul VK5PAS

Marija VK5FMAZ has a 'portable' QSL card available for any of her activations.

If you would like a card, please send your QSL card to:

Marija Simmonds,

PO Box 169,

Mount Barker,

S.A. 5251

Morialta Activation with the Magnetic Loop antenna

By Steve Vk5SFA

This year, I went portable in the Morialta Conservation Park during the VK5 Parks activation weekend.

I have tried all sorts of antennas for portable work but this time, my new two turn 40 Metre Transmitting Magnetic loop Antenna (TMLA) was pressed into service.

The antenna has a diameter of 1.2 metres, a turn to turn spacing of 200 millimetres, is approximately 7 kilograms in weight and is brought into resonance using a Jennings 6.5 to 50 pf vacuum capacitor rated at 10kV.

It has a 2:1 VSWR bandwidth of approximately 8 kHz making it ideal for SSB communications.

The main loops are made from 32mm Heliax Wave Guide and the primary excitation loop is made from RG213 coax, being 240mm in diameter.

PVC pipe, cross pieces and T pieces form the non-metallic scaffold.

The whole antenna can be dismantled and compressed down to fit into my sedan vehicle.

Here are some more photos of my activation. Antenna set up time took less than 4 minutes!

Note the Common Mode 1:1 Balun to balance the antenna and to stop currents flowing down the transmission line.

Conditions were good on 40 metres and I managed to get 38 stations into the log. Signals strengths were mostly 59 both ways using only 50 watts of power.

VK1, VK2, VK3, VK4, VK5 & VK7 call areas were all logged. Amazing performance from such a "Dinky" little antenna!

For more information on how to build a TMLA visit my website

http://members.iinet.net.au/~sadler@netspace.net.au

73 Steve VK5SFA

Norfolk Island

By Paul VK5PAS

I'm back on the mainland from Norfolk Island, VKFF-0392 and OC-005. I managed to get on HF on 6 occasions as VK9PAS and I made a total of 617 contacts whilst on the island.

Countries worked:- Alaska, Australia (VK1, VK2, VK3, VK4, VK5, VK6, VK7), Canada, Canary Islands, Costa Rica, Croatia, French Polynesia, Guam, Hawaii, Italy, Japan, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Norfolk Island, Russia, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, & United States of America.

Propagation is totally different out on Norfolk compared to the Australian mainland, and unfortunately I worked very very few Europeans.

For any of the VK's who would like a VK9PAS QSL card please send a SSAE top the address shown on QRZ.com for VK9PAS. For the DX stations please QSL via my Manager, M0OXO.

Thanks to everyone who called.

More info and photos have been posted on my Wordpress site which can be found at.......

https://vk5pas.org/
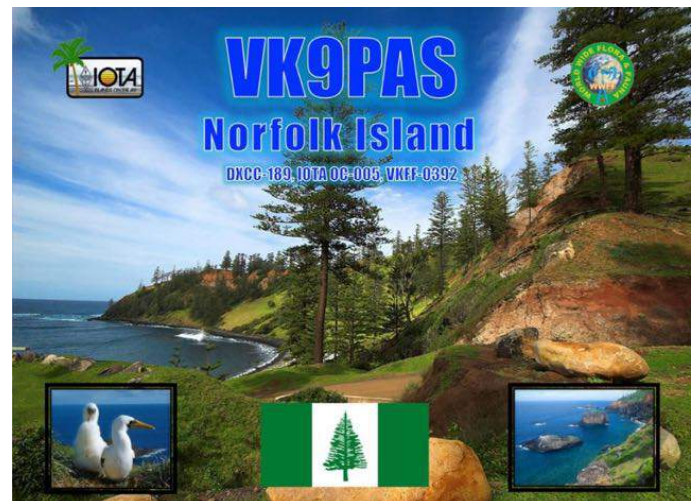
Nuts and Volts
By Paul VK5PAS

Nuts and Volts is written for the hands on hobbyist, design engineer, technician, and experimenter. For more information please have a look at......

http://www.nutsvolts.com/
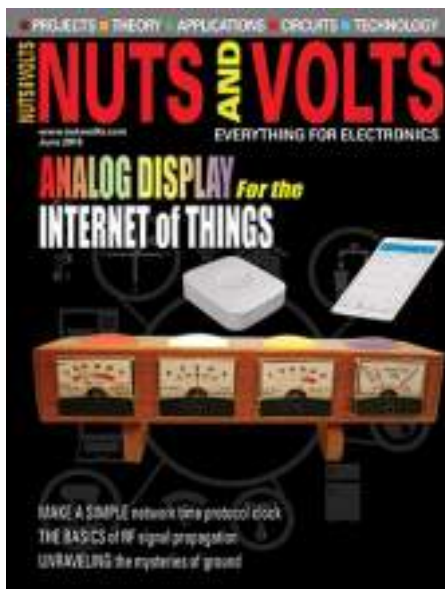
KRMNPA Activation Weekend 2016
By Paul VK5PAS

The 2016 Activation Weekend for the Keith Roget Memorial National Parks Award (KRMNPA) will be held on....

Friday 11th to Monday 14th November 2016

If you do intend to activate a park, don't forget to place an alert on parksnpeaks.

More information on the KRMNPA Award can be found at.....

https://www.amateurradio.com.au/awards

There is also a KRMNPA Yahoo group which can be found at.....

https://au.groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/krmnpa/info

New VK5 Parks Facebook members
By Paul VK5PAS

The VK5 Parks Facebook site now has a total of 89 members all across Australia, Europe & USA.

Welcome to the following new members to the site....

- ➢ Damien VK5FDEC
- ➢ Michael VK5FMLO

The VK5 Parks Award Facebook site can be found at.....

https://www.facebook.com/groups/528980233 908284/

RealHF Mobile Facebook site

By Paul VK5PAS

The Real HF Mobile group now has a Facebook site. It can be located at......

https://www.facebook.com/groups/154419374 2552232/

Alert SA website and mobile apps

By Paul VK5PAS
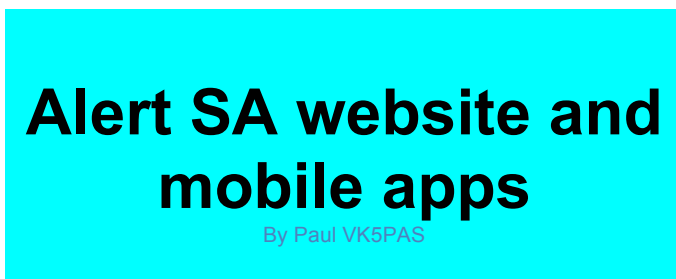
The Alert SA website and mobile app provides you with access to the most comprehensive source of official real-time event and warning information in South Australia including: fire,

flood, storm, earthquake, power outages, road closures, traffic and transport disruptions, and much more.   Fourteen agencies are now providing this data to Alert SA.

You can find the new website at.....

https://www.alert.sa.gov.au

And download the mobile app from.....

https://www.alert.sa.gov.au/download/

Recent Award recipients

By Paul VK5PAS

Here is a list of VK5's who have recently qualified for SOTA, WWFF, VKFF, VK5 Parks, and KRMNPA awards.

Interstate recipients of the VK5 Parks Award are also included.

If you do receive a certificate, please drop me an email to let me know, with preferably a copy of the certificate, so I can include it here.

vk5pas@wia.org.au

Summits on the Air (SOTA)

- **NIL known**

World Wide Flora Fauna (WWFF)

- **Stef VK5HSX**
  - Global Activator 11
  - Murray River Parks Hunter-20
  - Gold VKFF Activator
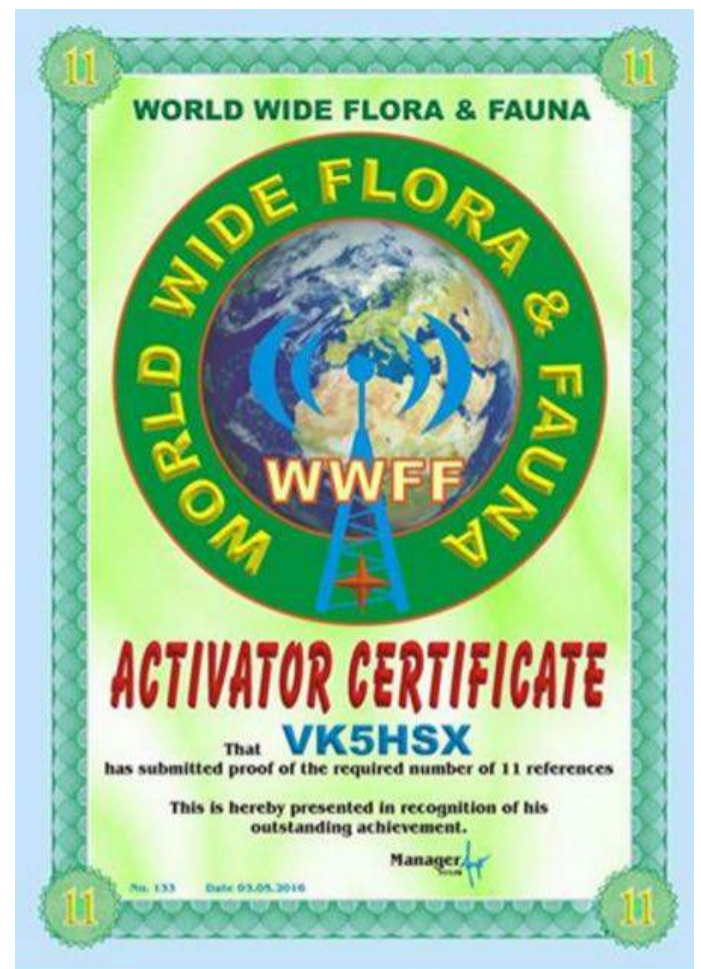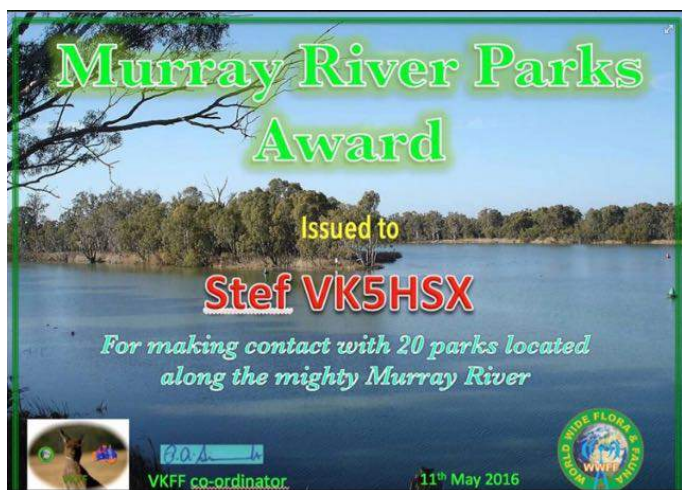
o   WWFF Hunter Global 44

o   Park to Park-10

- **Paul VK5PAS**

  o   Global Hunter 644
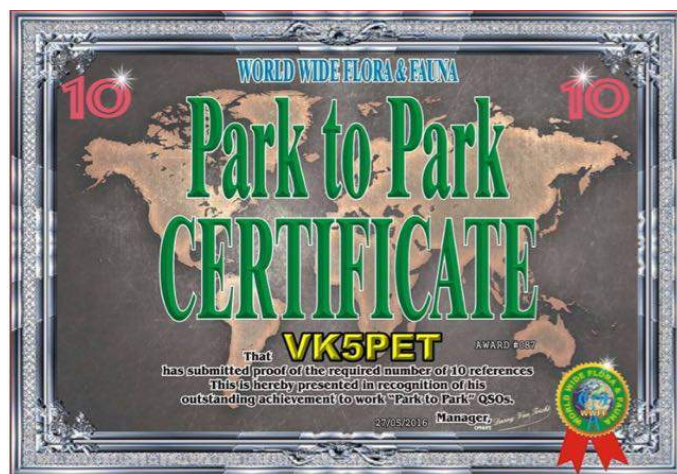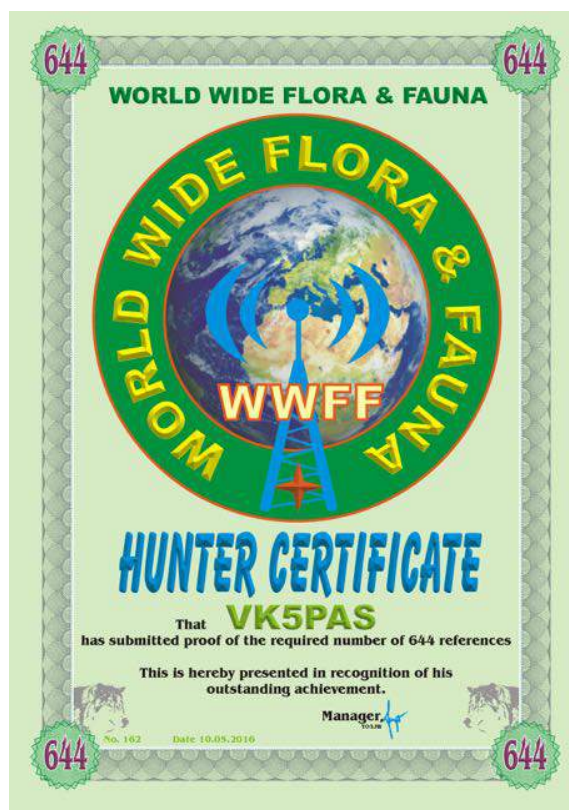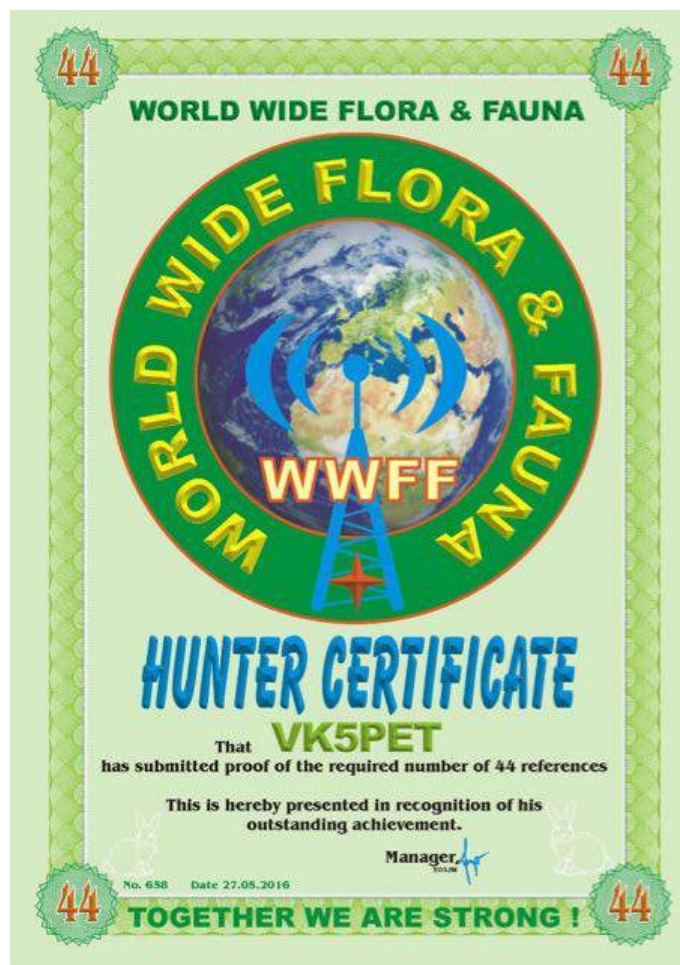
▪   **Peter VK5PET**

- **Mike VK5FVSV**
  - o   Bronze VKFF Hunter

- **Les VK5KLV**
  - o   VKFF Hunter Honour Roll 175

- **Greg VK5ZGY**
  - o   Bronze VKFF Activator
  - o   Murray River Parks Hunter-20

VK5 Parks Award

- **NIL for this period**

Keith Roget Memorial National Parks Award.

- **Nil for this period**

Other awards

- **NIL**

Working VK5 from Cleeve Hill G/ CE-001

By Mike 2E0YYY

Short report on band conditions and my activation of Cleeve Hill, G/CE-001 Saturday 14 May.

My visit to G/CE-001 Cleeve Hill to try and work some DX, meant a very early 0330 local time, alarm call on Saturday morning. The reason for choosing Cleeve Hill, I wanted to give the VK/ZL chasers, what would almost certainly be a unique summit. Due to a diversion on the M6, the journey took the best part of two hours.

Rather foolishly, I entered Cleeve Hill into the sat nav, confidently assuming it would take me take to... Cleeve Hill.

Instead, it took me to the Cleeve Hill golf club. I spent the next 15 minutes driving around in circles, before I realised I had picked up a police car on my tail. At this point I pulled over and and so did the police car. I got out of my car to explain my plight, ie, I was lost and looking for the car park at the summit of Cleeve Hill. The very nice policeman said, "no problem sir, follow me and when I turn on my blue light, turn left, this road will take you to the summit car park." Brilliant service from the local constabulary!

The summit of Cleeve Hill is as flat as a pancake, more like a bowling green than a hill! The walk to the trig point took all of four

minutes, with a total ascent of zero feet. Setting up the station didn't take long and at 0553z I self spotted on the 20m band.

A combination of a summit with an HF take-off which IMHO, isn't exactly brilliant and lousy band conditions, would make an already tough activation, even tougher :-(

My first three calls were all EU... SV3CKY, OK1DVM, LZ1ZC, then an exact repetition of last weeks Billinge Hill activation, my fourth contact to qualify the summit, was courtesy of Steve VK7CW in Tasmania, who seemed delighted with a unique.

Plenty of EU contacts making the log, however, DX was at a premium. There was nice signal from **Paul VK5PAS** and then a comfortable s2s with **Ian VK5CZ** up on VK5/SE-003, Hallett Hill. More EU's were logged when I heard a weak but workable, Roald VK1MTS, my only ACT contact of the morning.

The final VK to enter my log was Ernie VK3DET at 0624z and that was the end of the DX on 20m, with nothing coming out of ZL.

I worked a further 25 EU contacts on 20m before taking a look a the 2m band, which.produced a total of 29 contacts. A visit to the 15m band left me with just 6 contacts in the log, the best of it, Marc V55DX in Namibia, who would normally have a big pile up...Not on Saturday, though...

Trying to find DX on the higher HF frequencies is still a real challenge.

Thanks to all the chasers...

Mike 2E0YYY

Australia's most isolated SOTA peak

By Paul VK5PAS

Any ideas on Australia's most isolated SOTA peak? This topic was floated a few years ago on the SOTA Yahoo group. I'd love to hear your thoughts.

I have posted this query on the VKFF, SOTA & All Activations Facebook site. Look forward to seeing your comments.

VKFF Team Championship 2016

By Paul VK5PAS

The VKFF Team Championship will be held on **Sunday 16th October 2016 between 0000 UTC and 0600 UTC.**

- Create a team of 2 or more amateurs (maximum of 4)
- Create a name for your team (please be sensible)
- Register your team with the VKFF co-ordinator, Paul VK5PAS (failing to register will make your activation void for the VKFF Team Championship).
- Activate from a qualifying VKFF park.
- Make as many contacts as possible within the 6 hour period (0000 UTC - 0600 UTC).
- Stay in the park for as long as you like.....6 hours, 3 hours, 1 hour. What ever you choose.
- Operate on as many bands (excluding the WARC bands) as desired (but remember VKFF rules, in that repeaters, IRLP, Echolink do not count for valid VKFF QSOs).
- Operate as many stations as you would like, e.g. one op on 40m, another on 10m, etc.
- Ensure you abide by all VKFF rules.
- There is no requirement for a contest exchange, e.g. 5/9 001.
- Suggested call: *CQ VKFF Team Championship*
- At the end of the VKFF Team Championship, submit your log to the VKFF co-ordinator, Paul VK5PAS.
- The log MUST be in ADIF format or by using the CSV file template.

A variety of prizes are on offer.   Sponsors include.....

- **Pages of Cobram**
- **SOTABeams**

More information can be found on the WWFF Australia website at......

http://www.wwffaustralia.com/

Danny OT4V/p
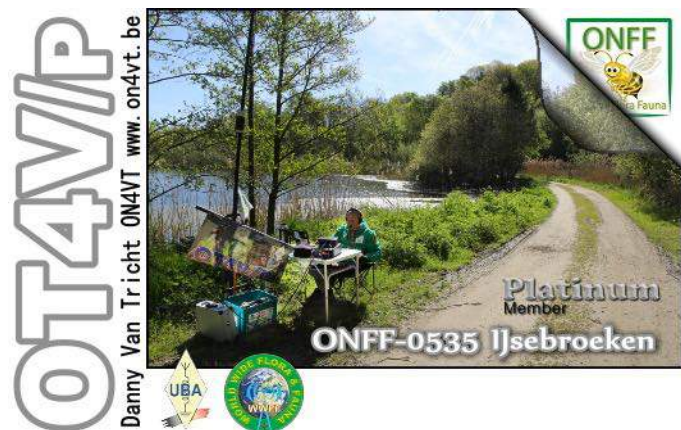
PD0ARI/p

Has a WWFF park been activated before?

By Paul VK5PAS

If you would like to see if a park has been activated before for the WWFF program, this can be done by clicking on 'Reference Report' in WWFF Logsearch. This will bring up an Activation Statistics page listing all of the parks around the world which have been previously activated. The list includes the total number of activations from the park, the total number of QSOs, the number of unique calls, and the % logged.

If you would like to limit this to the VKFF program, then click on the dropdown box titled 'All programs'. Select 'VKFF only'. In the drop down box titled 'All-time' you can limit your search to particular years. Of you can click on 'Unactivated'. This will show you a list of those parks which have not been activated for the VKFF program.

Please note, that the 'Unactivated' list indicates parks where a log has not been provided for upload to WWFF Logsearch. An amateur may have operated portable from a particular park in the past, but may not have been provided a log for upload to WWFF Logsearch. Therefore the park shows up on the Unactivated list.

http://logsearch.wwff.co/index.php?status=refrep

Band conditions and Great Orme, short report

By Mike 2E0YYY/p

Having to go to work in Llandudno North Wales, this morning, I took the opportunity to activate Great Orme GW/NW-070. This meant an alarm call at stupid 'o clock...

It took a little under two hours to complete the journey to Llandudno and I was QRV at 0523z. Unfortunately, my CQ's went unanswered for the best part of 20 minutes :-(

Then, there was a run of 7 East Europeans, before John VK7CW called in at 0557z. John was in and out of the QSB, nevertheless, signal reports were exchanged. More Europeans were making the log, however, the regular chasers signals were way down. Next bit of DX was **Paul VK5PAS** and he was followed straight in by Dov 4Z4DX in Israel.

Next to call in was Walter 9G5SW from Ghana followed by a call from Gerry VE8GER in the rare Canadian Northwest Territories province, at 0709z of all times! Gerry stuck me on the cluster, however, things were really slow with very little interest in my CQ's. After about 10 minutes and just out of curiosity, I called Gerry to see if he was still listening. He came back with a nice 5/9. We spent the next 10 minutes rag-chewing, before I had to go to work.

Big thanks to Ernie VK3DET, for trying.

My log for this activation certainly flatters to deceive, the 20m band was very hard work, with just 35 contacts logged as a result of 2 hours calling.

Mike
2E0YYY

Great Outdoors Radio Club

By Paul VK5PAS

I have previously mentioned the Great Outdoors Radio Club (GORC) and their Pine Cone Award, but thought it was worth telling readers about it again.

The Pine Code Award is available to GORC members. You are limited to counting a maximum of 5 QSOs in a 24 hour period. When you have accumulated 25 QSOs according to these rules, you can apply for your first Pine Cone. You can apply for a second Pine Cone after logging an additional 25 QSOs, and so on, up to a maximum of five Pine Cones.

http://thegorc.org/

Field Radio Adventure

By Paul VK5PAS

Did anyone from VK5 participate in the Field Radio Contest "Adventure' which was held on 28th May 2016 between 0000 UTC – 2359 UTC?

If you did, I'd love to hear from you. Send me a quick article which details of your outing.

Naming of WWFF logs

By Paul VK5PAS

Just a reminder to please name your WWFF logs as follows.....

callsign@referenceYYYYMMDD

e.g. VK1ABC@VKFF011520150501

Please check out the following page on the WWFF Australia website.....
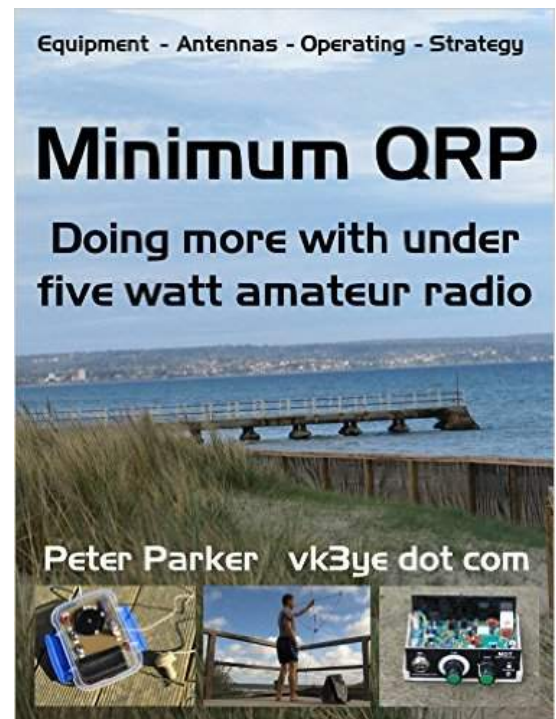
http://www.wwffaustralia.com/how-to-create-an-activator-log...

Minimum QRP ebook

By Paul VK5PAS

Minimum QRP, the Kindle edition, is full of ideas for the radio amateur who wants to get the most from their modest station and antenna.

https://www.amazon.com.au/Minimum-QRP-Doing-under-amateur-ebook/dp/B016CIB51G

Work the activator
By David VK5PL

It is always worth making contact with an activator in a park, even if you have worked the park before. I spoke with Stef VK5HSX in Little Desert NP the other day as he was looking for his 44 contacts, But I knew I had worked the park before as I had worked it for the KRMNPA. However when I looked at logsearch later I had another park confirmed and it turned out it was Little Desert NP. The previous activator I had the QSO with had not uploaded his log. Thanks Stef for another new one.

Don't fall into this trap with Fast Log Entry
By Paul VK5PAS

Just a reminder, that if you use Fast Log Entry (FLE), do NOT place your name in the operator box.

The Station Call Sign box is the logging station's call sign (the call sign used over the air). The operator box is an optional area, if the call sign of the operator is different to that of the station call sign, e.g. you use a club call sign or a special event call sign.

ADIF files created that use christian names in the Operator box will be rejected by the Logsearch system.
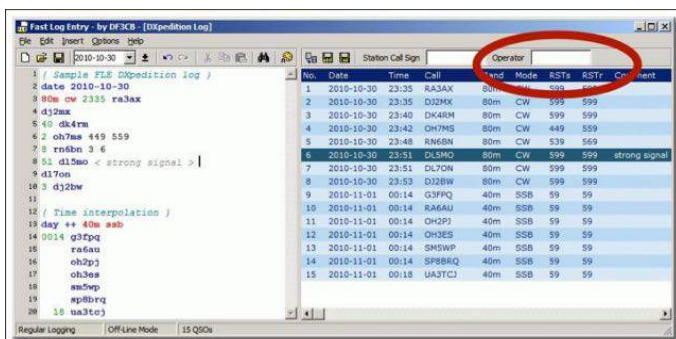
For more information on this, please read the FLE instructions, It talks about these 2 call sign boxes.

Ever wanted to create a KML file?
By Paul VK5PAS

Have you ever wanted to create a KML file for use with Google Earth and/or Google My Maps? I have placed some instructions on my Wordpress site which I hope you find useful.

https://vk5pas.org/2016/05/12/creating-a-kml-file/

Change of name of Facebook site
By Paul VK5PAS

Rob VK4FFAB has changed the name of the VKFF & SOTA Facebook site to 'VKFF, SOTA & All Activations'.

Park to Park contacts
By Paul VK5PAS

I have also received a few queries asking why Park to Park contacts are not showing up on Logsearch. Hopefully the following blog will answer those queries and assist people when recording Park to Park info accurately in their log.

Here is the link...

http://vk5pas.org/.../ensuring-park-to-park-contacts-are-rec.../

KFF website
By Paul VK5PAS

The USA (KFF) program now has a website which can be located at.....

http://wwff-kff.com/

Chasing overseas SOTA & WWFF
By Paul VK5PAS

If you have worked an overseas SOTA or WWFF station, please send me the details to....

vk5pas@wia.org.au

...and I will include it here.

To work the SOTA & WWFF DX, keep an eye on SOTA Watch….

http://www.sotawatch.org/

And WWFF Hamspots…..

http://hamspots.net/wwff/

Below is a list of VK5 to DX (SOTA & parks contacts) that I am aware of.

Paul VK5PAS.

- JG1XMV/0, SOTA JA/ NI-059 (20/5/2016)

- 2W0YYY/p, SOTA NW-070 (19/5/2016)

- ON7QR/p, ONFF-0051 & Windmills on the Air (14/5/2016)

- PD0ARI/p, Windmills on the Air (14/5/2016)

- 2E0YYY/p, SOTAG/ CE-001 (14/5/2016)

- OR7Z/0, ONFF-0507 (14/5/2016)

- G7UFI/p, pedestrian mobile (12/5/2016)

- OT4V/p, ONFF-0534 (12/5/2016)

- 2E0YYY/p, SOTA G/ SP-017 (6/5/2016)

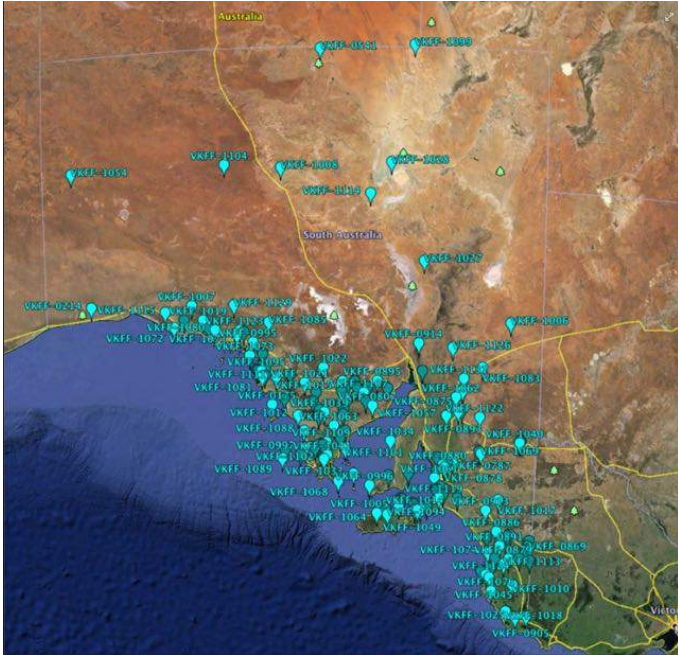- OT4V/p, ONFF-0099 (6/5/2016)

- OT4V/p, ONFF-0535 IJsebroeken (5/5/2016)

VK5 Parks not previously activated
By Paul VK5PAS

I have put together a KML file which shows VK5 Parks not previously activated for the WWFF program. It can be downloaded from the files area of the VKFF & SOTA Facebook site and used with Google Earth or Google MyMaps.
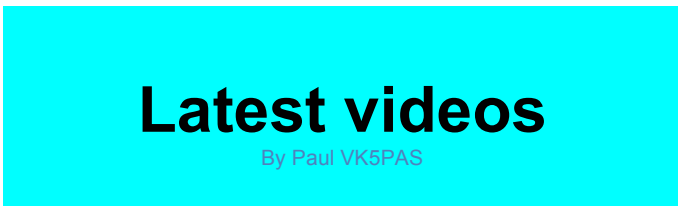
Latest videos

By Paul VK5PAS

If you have put together a You Tube video, or spotted a video of interest somewhere, please let me know.

3rd year anniversary-VK5 Parks Award

https://youtu.be/R2UE3xDvMaw

Fast Log Entry (FLE)

https://youtu.be/-4xh8tyAeis

VK5PAS operating as VI9ANZAC

https://youtu.be/pSRSl4Bnjx4

VK5PAS activating Mt Bates Norfolk Island

https://youtu.be/2jflgd89Qzc

VK5PAS activating Anson Bay Norfolk Island

https://youtu.be/2PAFM2M2sy4

VK5PAS activating Emily Bay Norfolk Island

https://youtu.be/KXw3P5I19NU