

GATEWAY

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL
OF THE GIPPSLAND GATE RADIO AND
ELECTRONICS CLUB

OCTOBER 1998

Gippsland Gate Radio and Electronics Club Inc.

Club Meetings are held on the third Friday of each month
at the Cranbourne Girl Guide Hall in Grant Street.
The doors open at 8:15 PM & the meeting commences at 8:30 PM.

Visitors are most welcome.

Committee Members 1997/1998

President	Peter Pavey	VK3VB
Secretary	Pat Pavey	VK3OZ
Treasurer	Mike Ide	VK3KTO
Committee member	Ivan Blezzard	VK3ARV
Committee member	Reg Goddard	VK3UK
Magazine Editors & Printing and Dispatch	Robin Linn Ph. (03) 9807 3083	VK3TFA

Deadlines for articles is Thursday week prior to the Meeting.

Articles can be sent to robin@fox.net.au.

Club Station VK3BJA Located at the Guide Hall

Club Repeater VK3RDD Freq. in 52.575, out 53.575 Mhz

Call in Freqs. are HF on 28.325 Mhz, USB

VHF on 146.225 Mhz, FM and UHF on 438.850 Mhz, FM

Visit our internet site at:

<http://avoca.vicnet.net.au/~ggrec/>

Current GGREC Inc Membership Fee Schedule

Full Member \$30.00, Pensioner Member \$15.00

Junior Member \$15.00, Extra Family Member \$10.00

Fees due after each April Annual General Meeting.

THE PRESIDENTS REPORT

Well, I am not sure what its been like at your QTH, but here in Tooradin we had some really strong winds of late from the West and Northwest mostly. One tree in the front yard gave me a nasty turn when, just home from work and armed with weed wand I wondered why the ground was moving up and down just beside me. I know it's an old cliché about the ground moving but this was for real and anyway it was only 10.30am and I had imbibed just 1 cup of coffee and 2 cups of tea, but I digress. Each gust of wind was causing this dead tree to rock back and forth lifting its roots each time, and I was concerned as one branch if it fell could easily have pulled down the SEC cable and part of the barge board as well. After a few phone calls I persuaded a chainsaw chappie to call around and he swiftly donned climbing irons (better him than me the ground was moving up and down even more now) and soon turned errant tree into tame fire week. But with such an expert on site, we impinged on his kindness and one other tree reduced to a short stump and a third trimmed here and there. Now that left an almost dead pampas like a sore thumb in the centre of the front yard. Five hours with spade and mattock, axe, full overalls, gloves and two trips to the tip and the front yard is once more a place of relative peace. And yes, getting trees cut down is not cheap, but at least we have fire week ready for the next cold spell and barrowing the wood up the back yard has kept me out of mischief for a few hours too. Keeping fit...yes fit to drop.

Now onto radio, we have to find a new fixing point for the G5RV, lucky one tree was only trimmed. We are about half way through the clubs year and our event queue is looking good into the New Year, but once more, I am requesting ideas for talks and events for 1999. What are your friends or family into? Work or hobby, would it be of interest to club members? Any flashes of inspiration contact Pat or myself for dates available for next year.

Dorothy and Helmut have been up north and safely returned no doubt with stories to tell of things seen and done. Ian, Diane, Ross and Hal are enjoying the delights of the outback. Skeds have been both families, its good to hear club members up and about

keeping radio watch. I know Pat and I appreciate the odd sked when we are away. Peter and Marion late of Gove N.T. are to build in Ballarat and so will not now be moving to The Alice. I guess 146.750 Will be use keep in touch with them.

Jota is upon us. It's the 41st year of the event and makes me realise how time has flown. I can't claim to have been there at the start, but certainly operated in the 3rd, 4th & 5th JOTA in th UK. If you have not yet indicated your willingness to help at the guide hall on the 17th, don't delay, ring Bruno VK3BFT ASAP. His QTH is ok in the club directory. Remember the sweets and coffee night on the 16th Oct., start is usual 8.30pm. Bring a sweet to share, your own plate and spoon. Tea and coffee will be provided by the club.

24/10/98 – The Bangholme to Patterson Lakesbike ride is definitely on. Cyclists assemble at Bangholme (Mel ref 94HB) at the cycle track, beside the Dandenong creek, off Perry Rd at 11.30a. Plenty of parking. For those meeting at the BBQ site, the details are Mel ref 97E6. From McLeod Rd Carrum, enter Launching Way to its end, up over the ramp, the BBQs are close to the water to your right (not left as shown on some Mel-ways). We hope to also have the clubs BBQ there so come along for a pleasant Saturday jaunt.

There is one more exam opportunity scheduled for this year at Tooradin on Saturday 7/11/98, if you intend sitting, please have your completed forms and fees into us by 19th October to PO Box 7, Tooradin, 3980.

For other club activities see the event queue
73s Peter
VK3VB

Ps. Please give your Christmas hamper donations to either Jenny Goddard or Pat Pavey . TU.

A Postcard from the Centre

Ian Jackson VK3BUF

The halfway mark of our journey is here and now, at Alice Springs. Having at last unfolded the tarpaulin for a bit of shade and unfolded the folding chairs, next to the unfolded folding table, I am now ready to unfold the laptop and type. Lets see how the story unfolds...

We left Melbourne, camper trailer in tow about two weeks ago. We stopped over at Philip Pavey's VK5VB in Adelaide on our trek to the north. As my navigation of Adelaide's suburbs is a bit sketchy, Philip was able to talk us in over 2 metres.

Our first Sked night on 80 metres was to be from Coober Pedy. We arrived half an hour before dusk and could see rain clouds moving in on the town. By Sked time there was a full blown thunderstorm over the town complete with gale force winds and driving rain. Several adjacent tents were blown over and flooded. I was unwilling to put up anything higher than a toothpick that night let alone the 80M dipole. The 80M whip proved to be fairly ineffective and the static crashes were constant so I turned the 101E off. Ten minutes later a lightning strike killed all the power in the town. So much for taking up the powered site option.

After a bush camp on the Stuart Highway we stopped at Woomera for a peek at the old rocket operations centre. This was incredibly interesting, as the visitors centre there showed footage of some very advanced rocketry. It seems that when we were on the brink of being one of the premier satellite launching sites in the world, the government of the day got cold feet and closed up shop. We are likely to hear more of this place in the future with some American companies getting involved.

Onwards to Ayres Rock and the Olga's. The new camping and hotel resort there known as Yulara is a large complex that caters for backpackers, campers and five star jetsetters alike and is now reputed to be the fourth largest town in the Territory. We spent three nights here camped in the crimson sands, during which time we climbed the Rock, walked around it and took

pictures of it. The temperatures slowly climbed to the mid thirties. The recent rains in the region have made the desert bloom, with green grasses peppered with blue, yellow and violet flowers as far as the eye can see. This was one of the noticeable changes I observed from when I was here last in '82. Another change I witnessed was the way in which tourists, upon reaching the top of the Rock, would flip open their cellular phones in a Captain Kirk like fashion and say "Hi Mum, guess where I am!"

The next leg took us to Kings Canyon, just a few hundred kilometres to the North East. The terrain here was magnificent. One morning we arose at 7am and walked around the upper perimeter of the Canyon in the relative cool of the day. The trail is dotted with fossilised remnants of ancient seabeds. The walls of the Canyon appear to have been machined smooth on a grand scale. After a couple of days here, soaking in their pool we prepared for the next step towards Alice Springs on the Mereenie Loop road, for which we had to acquire the appropriate travel pass.

This trail is about 300 km of corrugated hell. Picture a road paved entirely with soup cans and old car batteries and you will get a rough idea of the terrain. It was nonetheless, spectacular and I was glad to have travelled this way. The day was hot and it rose to about 37 degrees as we arrived at Alice Springs.

As the camper was being set up, we noticed that the fridge door had come ajar and a couple of coke cans, with most of their paint rubbed off, had ruptured and leaked on the floor. There was also a hint of ammonia in the air from a cracked coolant line in the 3 way fridge. This was bad news as it had happened on a previous occasion on Cape York where we found that the only two places in the country that will repair and re-gas these fridges were both in Melbourne, for a \$450 starting price!

After a day of appropriate market research, we purchased an 30 litre Engel fridge/freezer that runs on 12 and 240V. This put a \$1200 hole in our travel budget, but I am sure it will be of great use in the future.

Last night I got up at around 3am to 'water the horses' and noticed that it was still 28 degrees. This sort of climate makes us want to spend most of the time vegetating around the pool sipping

cordial before our big push to the south.

On Saturday the town will be staging their annual Henley-On-Todd regatta in the dry Todd River. After we have witnessed this Flinstones like spectacle, we shall be setting off for the Flinders Ranges via the Oodnadatta Track.

Many thanks to the Club members who have come up on 80 Metres for our 8:00 skeds. It's great to be able to turn on the rig and hear a few familiar voices.

73's for now de VK3BUF, VK3HDI, Ross and Hal



GENERAL MEETING 21.08.98

Chairman – Peter VK3VB **Minute Taker** – Pat VK3OZ

Present – as per attendance sheet

Apologies – Doug VK3KMN Jason Jones

Correspondence Received – August AR, FAMPAC, EMDRC, Bank Statement, Postcard David Russell, Melbourne ARDF Group, Diprose mag returned (incorrect address), WANSARC

Correspondence Out – Letter of thanks to Dick Smith, Barry Wilton. WIA subs. Letter to AR (Club news). Letter to WIA (broadcast)

Visitors – VK3DBF, VK3MWR

Treasurers report tabled VK3KTO –

July income \$1532.60

Expenditure \$ 278.21

Total Balance \$4455.12

Seconded VK3ARV Carried.

Minutes of last meeting read VK3OZ, seconded VK3UK.

Business arising – Need for magazine editor to relieve Robin. BBQ purchased and used. Dave suggests bush camp at Woods Point. At least 6 interested. No costs involved. Approx. 3-3.5 hours travel. Dave to show video in coffee break. Ian still waiting to hear from Guides about hall for classes. Discussion of White Elephant plans for 1999. Ideas for using outside space for extra stalls, food to be outside, change of exit/entrance, selling of tickets outside prior to opening. Bruno taking charge of JOTA, also taking names of operators. Bruno

has seen Graeme re: TV Circuit board tour Sept 12th at 10.00am. In Moorabbin, 10am. At least 12 people interested. Details fro Ian (Melbourne Printed Circuits). Rhododendrons Olinda 2pm Sunday Sept 20th. Labour Day camp Phillip Island. Forms available from Mike VK3KTO. Slow scan TV kit has been purchased for the club. 444Mhz being acquired for SSTV (Ian has ordered)

General Business – Reg to give demo on extra bright LED's. Peter and Marion Diprose to give talk. Peter and Marion and Colin(?) didn't receive magazine. Meeting closed 9.05pm.

VISIT TO NATIONAL RHODODENDRON GARDENS

Steve (EGD) and I almost didn't go on this outing. I logged on to the club's web site and it wasn't listed in the Event Queue at the time I checked in, so I left a message to the effect that it must have been cancelled and I was sorry it wasn't on. The September club magazine arrived the same day and I was very pleased the outing was on for Sunday, 20th. This would be a great opportunity to test my brand spanking new fire-engine red electric wheelchair in the outdoors.

We arrived at the Gardens at Olinda at the appointed hour. There wasn't a group waiting outside and as Reg's (UK) car was in the parking lot unoccupied, we figured that whoever is here is inside, so in we went. It didn't take us too long to come up behind a familiar foursome: Peter (VB), Pat (OZ), the aforementioned Reg, and Jenny. We went around as a sixsome and had a jolly good time of it.

There was something for everyone: there were trees and flowers, as you would expect in something calling itself 'gardens'. If you know nothing about trees and flowers and didn't feel you could make an intelligent comment on them, there was some splendid mountain scenery and a family of ducks – actually two mothers and several ducklings with the dads looking on - none of whom were particularly distressed by humans being very close, and later a kookaburra.

Knowing precious little about matters horticultural I felt pretty pleased with myself identifying an almond tree (?)

and banksias. I left all the plant identification to those who appeared to know quite a bit about it and concerned myself with not running other walkers down on the path or not tipping myself out of the chair. I was successful on both counts, but felt the odd walker was giving me a wider berth than was necessary.

It was a glorious day and it is estimated that we walked 3km (well, they did – I rode) in two hours before settling into refreshments at the coffee shop. It was a great chance to catch up what is happening and to get ourselves included in the club's booking for Phillip Island for the 1999 Labour Day weekend.

The Olinda area is a beautiful part of the country and the Club might consider scheduling an outing to Rickett's Reserve some time. What I have seen of the carvings of Aboriginals and Australian fauna in the garden setting makes it a must see. It has been featured in a number of lifestyle programs, including 'The Great Outdoors'.

Maria Harding

AMATEUR RADIO – HOW I BEGAN!

I suppose it all started just before 5.30am when I was about five and a half years old. Back then the broadcast stations closed down overnight and began each day with a tone signal prior to voice transmissions. My father's radio was a McMichael with wood cabinet and big round tuning dial on the front. It sat up on a shelf in the kitchen. At that stage, we lived in an isolated country cottage, no tap water, no electricity, no gas, no flush loos – ah, the good old days! Dad and I left home each weekday about 6am for work and school in the city. On this particular day I can remember noticing the tone on the radio stop and the Big Ben half hour chimes followed by an announcement like “Good morning everyone, the time is 5.30am on the And this is Armond Adel bringing you the early morning news.” Now the radio ran from batteries which stood beside the set (it was easier than having to keep lifting the set down to change them) one large 120 volt multi tap dry battery and one lead acid LT accumulator and spare. These LT batteries were recharged at various radio shops. I can still remember large bank o charge whilst an apprentice in an electrical/radio shop in 1956-61. Having heard this, I asked the question “Where is that noise coming from?” The answer was not really up to par and it puzzled me for a couple of years as my father pointed at the batteries and said “There, look.”

My interest in wires, batteries, globes (no torch remained in one piece for too long) and constant trips into Dads shed for tools, etc, was noticed as one day when I was about 8 or 9 years, the McMichael was moved by my father up to my bedroom, complete with a portable wind up gramophone which he had fitted

with an electric pick-up to plug into the auxiliary input on the back of the radio. I can remember that after lots and lots of pleading, I was allowed to borrow a bakelite desk mike and so spent many happy hours announcing and playing the collection of 78rpm records that came my way. The radio reception of some of the stations was quite poor with the short piece of wire I had hung up in the bedroom and after a bit of pestering, I was given enough insulated wire to reach an apple tree about 10 metres from my window. Dad drilled the hole in the window frame and I was given instruction on how to proceed and reminded to save enough wire for an earth connection. The following day I had the antenna up and managed to scrounge an old bucket from Mum, which I duly filled with soil from the garden and somehow got it up the stairs and into my bedroom without her noticing. When Dad came home in the evening, I proudly showed him my day's work. "What's the bucket for son?" Grown ups are so dumb sometimes, aren't they? "That is the earth for the radio." The laughter took some time to subside, and I learnt the difference between earth and 'earth'. Needless to say that Birthdays and Christmas brought electric train set, Meccano and motors, crystal sets, etc. When I was eleven, we moved into a brand new housing estate on the outskirts of the city and it had 240v mains, tap water and inside and outside loos – wow! No more of the daily chore of carrying water from the outside rotary pump 150 metres from the house to the kitchen and a transformer for the electric train instead of batteries.

There were lots of other changes too. I moved to

a secondary school and could cycle there in 15-20 minutes, instead of taking the bus or school taxi. My father treated himself to a new Murphy mains powered radio with magic eye tuning and a few more shortwave bands and with a good external wire antenna, we received stations well from all over. Strangely I can't ever remember picking up any amateur operators on it, neither can I remember just what became of the McMichael although I have a suspicion that my curiosity with a screwdriver, etc probably netted lots of spare parts and a radio no longer working. About this time, Dad also obtained a public address licence and we would spend Saturdays at various events providing music and information. He had two large speakers mounted on the car roof with the amplifier on the back seat with me. When we were mobile, I was allowed to do the announcing, so I had early exposure to using microphones. This set up was extremely useful for the street celebrations in 1952 for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Great excitement too! We were only the second house on the whole estate (there would have been 600-700 houses at that stage) to have a TV. A 12 inch (that's a bit over 30cms) black and white fringe single channel. The antenna was mounted on a wooden mast secured in a wooden U shaped box cemented 2 metres into the ground. It had 8 wire guys which had turnbuckles anchored to long pieces of angle iron cemented firmly down too. The pole was about 30 feet high and the double H antenna came with its own 10-foot support pole, so all up the antenna was some 40 feet high. This needed a planning permit even back then with all the in-

spections to go with it. The antenna was a 4 element vertically polarised beam with a sleeved dipole feed. None of us had seen TV before even though London had fast scan TV prior to 1939 from a transmitter at Crystal Palace, so any picture was good. Fro the size of the elements, the frequency must have been in the 5-6-metre band. The transmitter was located on a hilltop outside Cardiff in South Wales. It was 90 kms away and had many ranges of hills to negotiate before it arrived at our QTH. The test transmissions were mostly vague hadows in the snow, but then, when the station really came on line, the picture was quite good, maybe 4 to 4.5 on a scale of 5 most of the time.

My ambition as a young teenager was to find an apprenticeship in an electrical or radio field. My father had arranged during my last year at school for me to join a family business not far from my hoe. It consisted of a shop and various stores and workshops with expertise in Radio, TV, Refrigeration and Electrical Contracting. As I went through the final year of schooling, my first choice was most certainly to enter as a radio mechanic, but this was not to be as at some stage in this year, an apprentice had been signed up in radio, so I accepted an electrical apprenticeship, my second choice. I left school one month after my 15th birthday and, with a small and shiny tool kit, began work on 1st January, 1955. ..To be continued...

HF DX NOTES

What to look for on the bands

YM75TA Turkey Special Event Station Active until
October 29th.

5V7FA Togo (I Need this one) on 14.173Mhz
around 2100 UTC until July 1999

8Q7IO & 8Q7IQ Maldiv Islands 160-10 tr CW SSB
& RTTY. Active 18th Oct – 5th Nov.

ZD7IL Tristan De Cunha See Aug Gateway.
ZD7??? Saint Helena Island Number of stations to be
active on 11th Oct – St Helena Day.

WP2Z Plus others U.S. Virgin Islands Activity
19th – 27th Oct.

C56 The Gambia is another sought after prefix.
Activity fro here after 14th Oct until 27th. Sorry,
no details given.

For further info, see the DX pages in your favourite ra-
dio magazine.

Happy hunting...

The Club is conducting a bush camp at Comet Flat camping ground near Woods Point, over the Melbourne Cup weekend, Saturday 31 October to Tuesday 3 November 1998.

In 1991 many of the members camped at this scenic campsite which is about 5 km south of Woods Point township. See the map below.

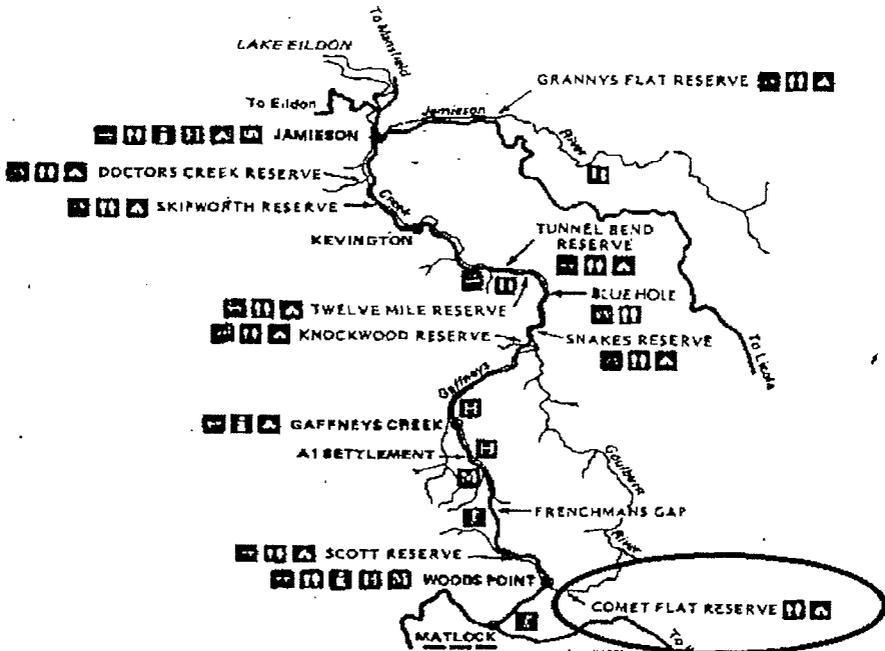
The facilities provided are dry weather access to toilets, picnic facilities and 20 campsites. It will be necessary to ford the Goulburn River to get to the campsite.

A small camping fee of \$2.00 is payable to a local Committee of management.

Located in the area are a hotel, museum, store, other camping sites and Ross hydro-electric plant.

The recommended access route to Woods Point is via Jamieson according to the Parks Victoria ranger. (1 Oct. '98)

Information sheets are available to any members interested in going along on this event from David VK3XMF.



EVENT QUEUE FROM OCTOBER

- Fri 16/10/98 8.30pm Meeting/Coffee & Sweets Night
Followed by JOTA preparation.
- Sat 17/10/98.... JOTA Cranbourne Guide Hall
Times as per roster.
- Sat 24/10/98 11.30am Cycle Ride. Assemble Bangholme Mel
ref 94HB. BYO everything BBQs Mel
ref 97E6. C U there.
- Sat 31/10/98 – 3/11/98 Camping at Woods Point. Details at
meeting 16/10/98. VK3XMF
- Fri 6/11/98 8.30pm Prac night preceded by Committee
meeting.
- Sat 7/11/98 1.00pm Exams at Tooradin. Last for year.
Form into PO Box 7, Tooradin, 3980
by 19/10/98
- Fri 20/11/98 8.30pm General meeting followed by Equipment
info by Dick Smith Electronics. Don't
miss.
- Sat 28/11/98 Proposed visit to Imax Theatre. Details
VK3XMF
- Sat 12/12/98 1pm Club break up. BYO
VK3KTO map to follow. Nov. mag.