



GATEWAY

October 2009

NEXT MEETING This Friday Oct 16 2009 at 8 pm

WHERE : Cranbourne Girl Guide Hall, Grant St off Sladen St.

SPEAKER : Chris Long VK3AML

TOPIC: DX Atmospheric Optical Communications

Chris is a world class authority on this subject, and will present on his activities over many years in the field, and in particular the World Record distances achieved in Tasmania and the US, where Chris was invited to present on the subject. He will also bring along some equipment used in these activities for show and tell. This is a quite novel and very interesting subject from a hobby and a technical perspective.



STOP PRESS!! YOUR HAMPER DONATION IS DUE *not if perishable!*

GATEWAY MAGAZINE IS THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE GIPPSLAND GATE RADIO AND ELECTRONICS CLUB inc.



The Working Bee

*Photo
Chris
VK3QB*

Megan VK3HOP undertaking some minor trimming of tree branches!

“Worked QSOs through VK3RLP Award”.

Objective: To encourage members (and the general radio community) to integrate radio operation in with other family/social/travel activities and to promote the hobby of Amateur Radio and GGREC from November 2009 to March 2010.

One reason for choosing our repeater/IRLP node is that by being on 70cms it makes operation far easier and more convenient for members. Take the handheld with you on the next weekend away, or for the more adventurous, build up a portable high gain antenna and try for the Distance Award or Difficulty Award on the next 4WD trip or holiday.

Category 1: The Distance Award

The member who completes a QSO via VK3RLP the furthest distance from the repeater's location. This category is designed to encourage members to make a contact via the repeater from far-away locations and experiment with antennae, choice of location and propagation.

Category 2: The Difficulty Award

The member who has a QSO via VK3RLP from the most difficult location to access. This category is for those who like the challenge of accessing difficult or challenging locations.

Category 3: The Oddball Award

The member who has a QSO via VK3RLP from the strangest location. This category is really just for fun and imaginative operations.

Category 4: The Interesting QTH Award

The member has a QSO via VK3RLP from the most interesting location. This category is to see what interesting and different locations members may visit.

Category 5: The Non-Member Award

This category is for non-GGREC members and will be assessed on a combination of the previous 4 categories. Essentially, this category will be awarded to the applicant who makes the most interesting, strangest, farthest, and most difficult contact via the clubs repeater, either direct via RF or IRLP, or a combination of these characteristics.

Rules:

1. All QSOs in Category 1 & 2 must be by direct RF contact into the VK3RLP repeater.
2. QSOs in Category 3 & 4 may be originated via another IRLP device or direct into VK3RLP.

Cont'd next month

GIPPSLAND GATE RADIO & ELECTRONICS CLUB

Club meetings are held on the third Friday of each month at the Cranbourne Girl Guide Hall in Grant Street. Prac nights are held on the first Friday night in the Peter Pavey clubrooms. Both nights commence at 8:00 PM. **Visitors will be made welcome.** Committee meetings are also held in the clubrooms.

President	Chris Chapman	VK3QB (9708 8320)
Secretary	Stephen Harding	VK3EGD (9791 3182)
Treasurer	Albert Hubbard	VK3BQO (5659 6562)
Committee Members: Max VK3TMK, Graeme VK3BXG,		

Magazine Editor : Susan Coleman VK3LOV
 Magazine Photographer : Paul VK3TGX www.paulstubbs.pozzie.net
 Magazine Printer : David Wright VK3FW
 Distribution Snail Mail : The Clifton Family VK3HGG
 Distribution Email : Albert Hubbard VK3BQO
 Club Station VK3BJA located in the clubrooms.

6M Repeater **VK3RDD** : Freq. In 52.575, out 53.575 MHz
 70cm Repeater **VK3RLP** Freq. In 434.475, out 439.475MHz
 CTCSS 123Hz IRLP Node Number- **6794** (Using **VK3RLP**)
Call in Frequencies : HF on 28.325 MHz, USB, VHF 145.450 MHz, FM
 and UHF on 438.850 MHz,

Visit our internet site at: **www.ggrec.org.au**
 Current GGREC Inc. Membership Fee Schedule
 Full Member \$37.00, Pensioner Member \$22.00
 Junior Member \$22.00, Extra Family Member \$17.00
 Fees due after each April Annual General Meeting.

The deadline for magazine items is the third day of each month.

Please direct magazine articles to:
 Susan Coleman email editor@ggrec.org.au

All other Club correspondence to P.O. Box 1098, Cranbourne 3977
 or Email : secretary@ggrec.org.au

Disclaimer. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the official view of the GGREC Inc and the GGREC Inc cannot be held responsible for incorrect information published.

Incorporation Number A0016893M

From the president ... *Chris Chapman VK3QB*

Good news! Solar Cycle 24 may be starting to wake up properly.... At least that's the impression that appears to be filtering through from various sources. During the Oceania Contest (more on that later) I worked a W6 station who is kind of keen on 21Mhz – he has a 7 element mono-bander on top of his 25 meter tower – he was 59+ at the clubrooms and gave us a 59 as well – and he told me that this weekend were the best conditions he has heard on 15 meters for about 2 years. Other sources suggest similar indications – a few sunspots in the last week or 2, following none in August and 4.2 in September. Whilst NASA announced the commencement of Cycle 24 in January 2008, I think we'd all agree that 2008 was a pretty poor year HF-wise and 2009 has not exactly offered many surprises to date. However, according to the Ionospheric Prediction Service things should start to establish a solid positive trend in the first quarter of 2010 and quickly rise to a cycle peak in 2013.



To far more local observations, you will notice that the surrounds at the Club Rooms are looking much smarter. A small but dedicated troop gathered on Friday 2nd October for a working bee at very short notice – primarily to get the long-wire antenna back up in the air for the contest, but it turned into a full blown tidy-up. Many thanks to the following: VK3s EGD, BXG, NYV, TXG, HOP, ADG, and QB. Steve also did a sterling effort firing up the BBQ and cooking up a storm as well as containing the enthusiasm of Graeme, who, from here forthwith, shall be named the clubs “Landcare Officer” J. Graeme’s ute, chainsaw and grass mower, coupled with Brian’s brushcutter ensured we got through the work quickly and efficiently – Graeme even took the resultant tree clippings home with him.

A bit of a contest crew is beginning to establish itself at the club with VK3s QB, HOP, BSN, GHM, EGD and TMK *Cont'd over*

From the president ... *Chris Chapman VK3QB cont'd from previous page*

(apologies from CBV and BQO) participating in the Oceania DX SSB Contest on 3rd and 4th October. It was a most enjoyable and fun contest; we learnt a lot and have some opportunities for projects to make the station even more competitive for the next contest. More on that in the next issue of Gateway.

Many thanks to Albert VK3BQO who gave a very informative and succinct presentation last month on what can be done with the Antenna Analyser that I know many of you have been involved with – this followed on very nicely from the Antenna/ATU/Impedance Session that Tim VK3IM delivered earlier in the month. Those of you who were unable to attend Tim's session missed a most informative and entertaining experience, but it's fortunate Tim provided some very thorough notes that are available to anyone interested. Please see either Brenton VK3CBV or myself at the next meeting. I have extended our thanks to Tim and invited him back for a follow-up, perhaps including some demonstrations of his well known top loaded vertical mobile antennae.

The Morse Code classes have now kicked off. We have a full complement of students and progress is generally very good – and I'll provide updates via this one and the News Broadcast.

As you know, the club started this fortnightly News Broadcast 30th September – and whilst we're still in "startup mode" I think it was a success, with about 20 people calling in following the broadcast, including one VK7 and also a "station" who downloaded it via the internet – thanks to Steve VK3EGD for getting the broadcast recorded and up on our website within 20 minutes of its conclusion. Please help us keep the broadcast interesting and informative and send your news items, requests or articles of interest to news@ggrec.org.au.

Having just received Amateur Radio Magazine in the mail I see the news about VK100WIA. *Cont'd opposite*

From the president ... *Chris Chapman VK3QB cont'd from previous page*

If any members would like to propose a club event and participate in this significant milestone for the WIA please let me know. Refer to <http://www.wia.org.au/newsevents/centenary/about/index.php> for more details.

A few quick reminders:

- News Broadcast at 8pm on 145.450Mhz or 3.670+QRM on 14th Oct, then every 2nd Wednesday
- General Meeting on the 16th with Chris Long VK3AML on DX Atmospheric Optical Communications.
- JOTA on the 17th.

If you are able, please bring along your non-perishable contribution for the Christmas hamper – see Max at the meeting. Perishable items can be brought on the day– December 5. See Event Q. That's about it from me for this month, but as usual please refer to the Club's website for the most up-to-date calendar of events. Til next month 73, /Chris VK3QB

A-NONY_NONY_MUS

The phone rings and the lady of the house answers, "Hello."

"Mrs. Sanders, please."

"Speaking."

"Mrs. Sanders, this is Doctor Jones at Saint Agnes Laboratory. When your husband's doctor sent his biopsy to the lab last week, a biopsy from another Mr. Sanders arrived as well... We are now uncertain which one belongs to your husband. Frankly, either way the results are not too good."

"What do you mean?" Mrs. Sanders asks nervously.

"Well, one of the specimens tested positive for Alzheimer's and the other one tested positive for HIV. We can't tell which is which."

"That's dreadful! Can you do the test again?" asks Mrs.Sanders.

"Normally we can, but MEDICARE will only pay for these tests once."

"Well, what am I supposed to do now?"

"The MEDICARE Helpdesk recommends you drop your husband off somewhere in the middle of town. If he finds his way home, don't sleep with him..."



THE WORKING BEE

Most important eat.

Second launch a fishing line over the tree, then replace that with nylon trimmer line.

Then, keep the Guides happy, but watch out for the wire antenna! It's still down.

Cont'd opposite



Photos and words
Paul Stubbs VK3TGX

Then tie it all to a handy fence post. Normally one would use some black nylon, but when the request went out nothing was said about what it was for, so the standard orange was supplied.



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MORSE ANYONE? GGREC'S LATEST COURSE NOW UNDERWAY

Upcoming Events

Oct 10th	6:00pm	Oceania DX Contest (cw)	Club Shack
Oct 16th	8:00pm	General Meeting	Guide Hall
Oct 17th	2:00pm	JOTA / JOTI	Club Shack
Oct 24th	6:30pm	Pub Night	Pine Grove Hotel
Oct 26th	8:00pm	Committee Meeting	Club Shack
Nov 28th		VHF / UHF Field Day	
Nov 20th	8:00pm	General Meeting	Guide Hall
Nov 30th	8:00pm	Committee Meeting	Club Shack
Dec 5th	12:00pm	Christmas BBQ	Chris VK3QB's QTH
Jul 17th	10:00am	GGREC Hamfest	Cranbourne Public Hall

PROFILE Chris Chapman VK3QB *Cont'd from page 13*

40mtrs. 7.007 or thereabouts. Good freq to leave the rx running on. You never know what random DX stations will pop up calling CQ. Good band to drift off to sleep to.

I first joined GGREC back in about 1992 – mainly as a number of amateurs I knew were members – and it seemed like a fun and active club – and it was. My membership lapsed some years later (can't recall why) but I rejoined eventually after returning from some years living in Sweden (as SMOYKS).

An average week probably sees me on HF 4-6 hours, and on 145.450 another 2-3 hours, but I do spend A LOT of time listening as I work from home most days. At the moment I get most satisfaction from working a new DXCC entity, running pileups and working a really difficult CW signal – the challenge of pulling a signal out of the mud or pileup and completing the QSO is very satisfying. I have also rekindled my interest in contests – which was my first exposure to radio and what attracted me into the hobby.

Since rejoining the club it has been great to hook up with many friends from my earlier years and make new friends as well. GGREC is a club with a diverse membership base with different interests and backgrounds, yet all sharing the common interest of radio. We are also a unique club - and I think what makes us so unique is that we have a relatively small membership base (about 70 members) with so many enthusiastic and active members as well as a great club room facility; something many other clubs cannot match. *Chris VK3QB*

PROFILE

Chris Chapman VK3

“still being too young to drive. I had also met Phil VK3YB (VK3PMJ back then) on 80mtrs when I was pushbike mobile!”



In 1984 at high school (I was 16) my science teacher was a Radio Amateur, Tom, VK3BMF. At that time I was a mad keen computer nerd (very rare back then) and Tom asked me to write a logging program for a radio contest he was participating in – the RD Contest. I sat in on the contest to make sure the computer (a Commodore VIC-20), and program, worked ok and I was fascinated by the radio activity.

Following from the RD Contest Tom saw my interest and encouraged me to study for the Novice Licence. My dad helped me buy an FT77 from Dick Smith Electronics and I used to listen on it most evenings whilst studying for the exam.

Amateur radio was always a hobby for me. I saw computers as having greater career potential (I had heard about how much computer people got paid!!) - although at one stage I did commence an Electronics Course at TAFE – but quickly decided a Computing Degree was what I wanted to do.

My first radio exam would have been (from memory) the October 1984 exam at the Camberwell Civic Center – many will remember those days I am sure. I then played radio as a Novice until 1986 when I knuckled down and studied for my full call – causing my parents much stress as this was also my final year of high school (HSC as we called it then). I passed the exam (Tony VK3PJC drove me there) and I was issued with the call VK3BMG.

I joined FAMPARC [radio club] in 1985. I lived fairly close to some other members who were able to collect me and take me to the club, still being

too young to drive. I had also met Phil VK3YB (VK3PMJ back then) on 80mtrs when I was pushbike mobile (another story) and he and his family were also members of FAMPARC. Some time later (I think 1992) I joined GGREC for the first time.

In the early days it was all ½ wave inverted vee dipoles – one for 80, 15 and 10 tied to a common coax feeder. I also had some fun with a helical whip for 80mtrs on my pushbike. That's when I learnt about capacity spikes for top loading, the corona effect and RF burns. Fun!

My first radio was a Yaesu FT77 – the 30w version. It was a great little radio and I worked many countries and had a lot of fun – especially on 15mtrs. However, in due course (probably within 3-4 months from memory) I upgraded to an FT101E and spent a lot more time on 80mtrs.

I still have a soft spot for the FT101E – many many fond memories from my early days on the air. Sadly, I sold my original one, but have since managed to acquire another in very good condition which I enjoy using from time to time. My other HF radio is an FT950 and I believe it's an excellent "value for money" radio with more than enough functionality, and options can be "set and forget" allowing me to just get on with playing radio. It is well featured and the firmware/software is upgradeable. Overall I give it a 9 out of 10 for usability, but once the few "quirks" are mastered it's a great radio to use for DXing, CW and contesting.

As to antennae, not much has changed – other than the feedline. I still use a dipole (approx 20mtrs per side) and feed it with home-made open wire feeder. This design is easy to construct, flexible and extremely efficient on all bands from 80-10mtrs – it's also a reasonable performer on 160 when the feeders are tied together and it behaves as a top loaded vertical against earth. It's also fun to construct antennae and the matching units – although these days I use a commercial ATU for the convenience.

As to frequencies, I tend to prefer the lower bands due to the lack of propagation on the higher bands:

160mtrs. DX is a challenge. I like playing around to solve the problem of getting a decent signal out, and having a good rx antenna.

80mtrs. Good for a ragchew. Nice balance between armchair copy and static crashes - another reason I enjoy the lower bands.

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Brian Smith VK3BSN is Social Secretary

The club welcomes Brian. The committee extends our thanks to him for taking on this role, which will involve coordinating and facilitating social events for the club. Should any members have ideas or feedback in relation to social initiatives, please contact Brian.

cont'd from page opposite **GENERAL MEETING MINUTES SEPTEMBER 2009**

Business Arising cont'd :

QSL Cards - some suggestions for backgrounds have been received. Submissions will be accepted until the end of September

Club mugs – some still available. New members pay \$12 per mug.

VLF project – floated as a possible project for next year.

Presentation - to David of prize for guessing Hamfest entry numbers.

New business :

Oceania contest – Steve VK3EGD, Megan VK3HOP, Brian VK3BSN, Max VK3TMK are available. Details are on the website.

Social Secretary – Chris asked for volunteers. None were forthcoming.

Club rooms - Thanks to Pat for cleaning the shack. Chris generally requested members clean up the rooms when they have used them.

Verbal questionnaire – Chris asked some general survey questions about the Club and its activities.

Club broadcast – Chris floated the idea to get member's reactions. Significant interest was shown.

An online forum was suggested by Bruno. Frequencies to be used initially will be 145.45MHz and 80m. We will inform local clubs as well. If the broadcast can be successfully recorded it can be provided as a podcast on the website.

Presentations – The mix of meeting speakers seems to be OK. Some suggestions for future topics included satellite ops., aircraft reflections, 137KHz, meteor scatter, digital modes, SSTV, computer control of radio.

Tea and coffee – Chris asked if the current tea and coffee at the meetings was the right mix. The consensus is that it is OK.

Expenditure limits - Albert talked about new expenditure limitations, being that only consumables may be purchased without committee approval.

G&C pricelists – and brochures were tabled for specials for the month.

Meeting closed : 8:52 pm

Next Committee Meeting : Monday 28th September

Next Prac Night : Friday 2nd October Next General Meeting : Friday 16th

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES SEPTEMBER 2009

Date : 18 Sep 2009

Start time : 8 pm.

Location : Guide Hall.

Chairperson : Chris VK3QB

Minute Taker : Steve VK3EGD

Guest Speaker:

Albert VK3BQO presented on the antenna analyser kit and its uses and limitations.

Present : Attendance sheet

Visitors and guests :

Apologies : Graeme VK3BXG, Ian VK3BUF, Dianne VK3DJI, Ross VK3ZAP, Glenn VK3JGC, Geoff VK3ZGW, Phil VK3YB, Helmut VK3DHI, Grahame VK3XK.

Correspondence received : Listed and tabled

Correspondence sent : Listed and tabled

Treasurer's report :

Read : Albert VK3BQO **Moved :** Albert VK3BQO **Seconded :** Chris VK3QB **Carried.**

Income : \$214.00 **Expenditure :** \$418.66 **Balance :** \$-204.66 **Total :** \$8,646.53

New Call signs : nil

Previous Minutes :

Read : as per magazine **Moved :** Steve VK3EGD **Seconded :** Russ VK3MWR **Approved.**

Business arising from the previous minutes :

RD Contest – our score has been submitted – cross checking will follow before we receive a placing.

Morse code - classes started last night. Eight people are attending. One potential new member for the classes. Notes are available. The course will run for the next 10 to 12 weeks.

XMAS Hamper - Max has obtained the basket – tickets on sale now. Please bring non-perishable items for the basket.

Slogan competition - Albert reported on the process and read out the results - spoke about pricing for stickers. Brian VK3BSN spoke about a potential printer. 15 hands up as interested but few commitments. More suggestions about layouts and options. Suggestion about producing under licence. The club decided not to proceed by consensus.

Pub night – last pub night a success - next pub night is on 24th October at Pine Grove Hotel. Details are on the website.

Cup weekend - not going ahead.

ATU construction day – feedback from attendees that it was very worthwhile. Tim VK3IM might come along for another one. Agreement from the floor that it should be organised.

Megan will reproduce and perhaps transcribe the notes.

cont'd opposite

Morse code classes