



NEWSLETTER

December 2011



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS



REMINDER

of

Annual General Meeting

**on Tuesday 13th December 2011 at 1930
hours**

**at Clubroom, 400 St Johns Road,
Kohimarama.**

Agenda:

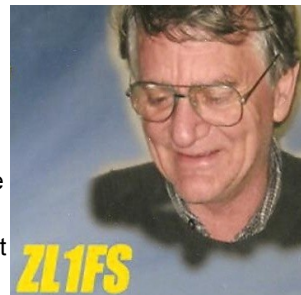
- Reports: President, Treasurer, and AREC Section leader
- Election of Officers and Committee
- General Business

(Formal notice was given in last month's newsletter).

President's Report for 2011 from Steve, ZL1FS

This has been a relatively quiet year for me at Auckland Branch 02 of NZART. For I have been over-worked with renovation projects; the latest being my own home at Napier. But there are new curtains in the clubroom, thanks to my partner, Christine who also audits the financial accounts.

That is not to say that the Branch has been idle. Far from it. Winning the Montgomery Cup was its first achievement on the Jock White Memorial National Field Day. Selwyn, ZL1BRC planned, and Gwynne led the team on the day, to this popular success. Getting possession of the actual cup was an exercise in itself, but it was tracked down at Papakura Branch. Their Secretary, Ian Ashley ZL1AOX, had it repaired, engraved, and then presented it to us at our August General Meeting.



At our monthly meetings, presentations were made by Paul ZL4AX, Ian ZL1AOX and Steve ZL1FOX. A fox hunt was set in Dingle Dell, hosted by Wallace ZL1WAL from his QTH. This was a fun event for all Branches to compete in an atmosphere of fellowship. To improve our future performance, we held a fox-hunting training day so as to better understand triangulation and orienteering techniques that beats bush bashing towards the hidden transmitter. According to QUA FARC, Franklin Branch have started a project to design and build sniffers. They intend to set such an event (possibly in Waiuku forest). I say, bring it on.

I am grateful to the Committee; to Ray ZL1AJR who runs both our VHF and HF nets every Monday evening and keeps us fed with yo-yo biscuits every Saturday morning; to Wallace ZL1WAL for ably performing his combined duties of Secretary / Treasurer. He has showed determination to get our finances in order by selling some of our unused assets. Wearing his other hat as Newsletter Editor, he keeps our Members very well informed.

For those Members who have not visited the Clubroom lately, you will see a change. Scarbros have vacated the yard, leaving a moonscape type appearance of our surroundings. This offers us scope to erect long antennas. You might also see that the 80m antenna has been erected at long last. I am assured that we shall have a telephone line into our clubroom very soon.

Finally, let me wish you all a very merry Christmas and may we hear you on our nets in 2012.

Treasurer's Report for 2011, Wallace, ZL1WAL



At last year's AGM, I presented a Budget that showed a projected loss of \$500.00.

Accordingly, Members at the AGM voted to trim our usual donation for use of the Suburban Branch repeater at Musick Point to \$150.00 and Membership subscriptions were raised to \$33.00.

Membership is steady at 41 and maintenance expense was practically zero. No costs have been incurred at our Monthly BBQs which we owe to Gwynne's ZL1AAR generosity. Similarly Ray ZL1AJR, at his cost, has provided exotic biscuits at our Saturday mornings get together for a chat and cuppa; and suppers after our Committee Meetings..

Nevertheless, until October this year, we were on track to show the above mentioned budgeted loss. But TradeMe came to our rescue with the sale of 13 items that realized \$1,570.00. Hence I am pleased to report that our bottom line is in the black.

The Committee recommends that subscriptions be set at \$30.00 for next year.

It also recommends making a donation of \$250.00 to Suburban Amateur Radio Club at Musick Point whose repeater we use for our Monday evenings VHF net.

AREC Report for 2011 from Japie, ZL1JJN

It has been a relatively quiet year for the AREC sections in Auckland this year, in sharp contrast with Christchurch where AREC has been active in handling their disasters. As a result, AREC has gained valuable information and experience during these activities.

I have kept in regular contact with other AREC units around New Zealand and with the national manager. I have attended the regular quarterly meetings and reported in at the monthly net meetings.

We received our ID cards this year. These are intended to assist at future integrated activities.

A big, warm "Thank you" to those Branch Members who participated in our activities, with help, advice, attendance and refreshments.



Auckland Branch NZ Association of Radio Transmitters (Inc.)
Societies' Organisation 2223300

Income and Expenditure Statement for Year Ended 30 November 2011

printed 01-Dec-11

Income		Expenditure	
2010	2011	2010	2011
\$1,057.00 Subscriptions	\$1,335.00	544.43 Insurance Premium	\$556.53
\$191.00 Donations received	\$232.00	\$758.46 Repairs and Maintenance	\$19.95
\$166.62 Interest received ASB	\$309.06	\$300.00 Donations made	\$150.00
\$815.00 Component Sales	\$164.33	\$135.00 Post box	\$145.00
TradeMe sales	\$1,613.00	Magazines and Subscriptions	\$0.00
\$1,014.84 Commission earned on sales	\$77.50	Telephone - Woosh	\$165.50
\$0.00 Exam Fees	\$10.00	\$178.80 Secretarial Postage, Envelopes, Labels	\$140.09
\$30.00 Fox hunt	\$30.00	\$351.75 Lawns	\$414.00
\$302.10 BBQ & supper money	\$101.70	\$2.50 Bank charges	
		Radio / Equipment repairs	\$158.18
		\$80.00 NZART subscription	\$95.00
		\$102.94 BBQ & Field Day Expenses	\$0.00
		\$100.00 Subsidy - Club Function	\$171.02
		\$900.00 Asset Purchases (shelves)	\$76.50
		Miscellaneous - TradeMe fees / postage	\$172.60
\$20.00 Key deposits (treated as income)	\$10.00		
		\$142.68 Excess Income over Expenditure	\$1,618.22
\$3,596.56	\$3,882.59	\$3,596.56	\$3,882.59

Auckland Branch NZ Association of Radio Transmitters (Inc.)
Societies' Organisation 2223300

Balance Sheet as at 30 November 2011

Printed 01-Dec-11

2010	2011	2010	2011
\$27,236.32 Accumulated Funds	\$30,078.10	\$11,433.13 Building	\$11,147.30
\$142.68 Excess of Income over Expenditure	\$1,618.22	\$1,721.87 Furniture and Fittings	\$2,049.68
		\$129.14 Burglar Alarm	\$116.23
\$0.00 Estate sales not yet dispersed	\$0.00	\$86.09 Rotator	\$77.48
\$2,699.10 Equipment write down	-\$1,428.42	\$172.19 Create Design CD318 Antenna	\$154.97
\$30,078.10 Accumulated Funds	\$30,267.90	\$107.62 Kenwood TS700A	\$96.86
		\$129.14 Icom Dualband Transceiver	\$116.23
		\$107.62 Power Supply	\$96.86
		\$150.66 Kenwood TR751A all mode 2m	\$135.60
		\$258.28 Inverter 13.8V to 230VAC	\$232.45
		\$43.05 KAM Modem	\$38.74
		\$43.05 Coax Cable	\$38.74
		\$344.37 Suzuki Generator	\$309.94
		\$215.23 Portable Toilet	\$193.71
		\$47.30 Vacuum Cleaner	\$42.57
		\$52.84 Office Chairs	\$47.56
		\$11.81 Serving Trolley	\$10.63
		\$698.71 Chairs	\$538.84
		\$1,407.00 FT1000 Transceiver	\$1,266.30
		\$100.00 Laser copier	\$90.00
		\$300.00 Kenwood TS430S	\$270.00
		\$500.00 Icom 751	\$0.00
		\$50.00 Atlas 210	\$45.00
		\$500.00 KW Linear	\$450.00
		\$100.00 KW Scope	\$90.00
		\$100.00 KW Tuner	\$90.00
		\$50.00 ZC1	\$45.00
		\$100.00 PC HP 256Kb	\$90.00
		\$50.00 VHF antenna	\$45.00
		\$500.00 PC HP ex ZL1CY 1Mb	\$450.00
		\$1,000.00 PC 4Mb & LCD monitor ex ZL1TUJ	\$670.00
		\$650.00 Kenwood TS450	\$585.00
		\$21,059.10 Assets at Cost or Valuation	\$19,630.68
		\$1,143.39 ASB Society Cheque account	\$427.20
		\$1,134.98 ASB Savings Account 52	\$4,209.54
		\$0.48 ASB Savings Account 53	\$0.48
		\$7,000.00 KiwiBank Term Deposit	\$6,000.00
		-\$259.85 Unpresented Cheques	\$0.00
		\$0.00 Cash	\$0.00
		\$30,078.10	\$30,267.90

President _____

Treasurer _____

I have examined the Income & Expenditure Statement and Balance Sheet as at 30th November 2011
and find them to be in agreement with the books and records of the
Auckland Branch NZ Association of Radio Transmitters (Inc.)

Christine Watson December 2011

Auckland Branch NZART Inc.

Printed 7/12/2011

BUDGET FOR

Average over 10 years	2010 Actual	Year ended 30 November	2011 Budget	2011 Actual	Variance %
		Income			
\$1,033	\$1,057	Subscriptions	\$950	\$1,335	40%
\$339	\$191	Donations	\$100	\$232	130%
\$500	\$167	Interest received ASB	\$180	\$309	70%
\$494	\$815	Component Sales	\$500	\$1,777	260%
\$1		Exam Fees & NZART incentive	\$30	\$10	-70%
\$30	\$30	Fox hunt	\$50	\$30	-40%
\$102	\$302	BBQ & Supper collection	\$250	\$102	-60%
\$78	\$1,015	Commission on Consignment sales	\$100	\$78	-20%
		\$0 Newsletter Contribution	\$0		
\$18	\$20	Key deposits	\$0	\$10	
	\$0	Miscellaneous	\$0		
	<u>3,596.56</u>		<u>\$2,160</u>	<u>\$3,883</u>	<u>80%</u>
		Expenditure			
\$550	\$544	Insurance Premium	\$550	\$557	0%
\$422	\$758	Repairs and Maintenance	\$500	\$20	-100%
\$205	\$300	Donations	\$100	\$150	50%
\$15	\$179	Telephone line - Woosh	\$150	\$166	10%
\$73		Magazines and Subscriptions			
\$72	\$135	P.O. Box Rental	\$150	\$145	0%
\$293	\$128	Secretarial Postage, Envelopes, Labels	\$100	\$140	40%
\$230	\$352	Lawns	\$400	\$414	0%
\$208	\$0	Photocopying	\$0		
	\$3	Equipment repairs	\$0	\$158	
\$38	\$80	NZART subscription	\$80	\$95	20%
\$35	\$72	BBQ & Field day expense	\$100	\$0	
\$79	\$131	Subsidy	\$80	\$171	110%
\$449	\$900	Asset Purchases	\$450	\$77	-80%
\$75	\$0	Miscellaneous - TradeMe Fees, postage	\$0	\$173	
	<u>\$3,582</u>		<u>\$2,660</u>	<u>\$2,264</u>	<u>-10%</u>
<u>-\$14</u>	<u>\$143</u>	Excess (loss) Income over Expenditure	<u>-\$500</u>	<u>\$1,618</u>	<u>-420%</u>

AUCKLAND BRANCH, NZART (inc.)

Annual General Meeting Minutes

On: Tuesday, 14th December 2010 at 1938 hours

At: Branch Clubrooms

Present: ZL1LS (Chairman), ZL1WAL (Secretary /Treasurer), ZL1BRC, ZL1TUJ, ZL1JJN, ZL1KNI, ZL1FS, ZL1TOU, ZL1AFU and guest: Vaughan Henderson, ZL1TGC.

Apologies: ZL1AAR, ZL1AJR, ZL1AMZ, ZL3CX, ZL1BJN, ZL1UMC, ZL1TEZ, ZL1GWE, ZL1UXB, ZL1UWL, ZL1BJZ, ZL1BBQ, ZL3TE and non-transmitting members: Gordon Sutton, Garth Allen, Soren Low, and Ian Falgar. Sustained ZL1TUJ / ZL1KNI

Silent Keys:

ZL1LS led the meeting to stand in silence for a minute in memory of two Honourary Life Members who became silent keys this year:

- Gerard Kilpatrick, ZL1BBS - SK
- Donald Webster, ZL1CY - SK

Previous Minutes: Minutes of the AGM on 8th December 2009 were taken as read. ZL1WAL/ ZL1TUJ

- ZL1AFU requested that the minutes should include an opinion that he expressed at that meeting: "That swap meetings with neighbouring branches should continue." ZL1WAL begged the question of re-cording every remark made. ZL1AFU restated that he was disappointed. ZL1TUJ said a 'phone call could be made to other clubs to ascertain their interest in such swap meetings.
- Under General Business 3. "AMSAT-NZ" and "Ian Ashley" should be correctly spelled.

Accepted as amended ZL1TUJ / ZL1JJN

Reports:

- **Presidents:** Having been published, it was taken as read.

Received ZL1WAL / ZL1TUJ

- **AREC:** Having been published it was taken as read.

Received ZL1JJN / ZL1LS

Financial: The Treasurer stated that the Accounts of the Branch have now been audited.

Having been published, they were taken as read and received ZL1WAL / ZL1FS

Matters arising:

- ZL1AFU asked for the Treasurers Report about the accounts. The Treasurer said that he would defer his comments until the Budget came up for discussion under General Business.
- **Subscription for 2011:**
The Committee recommended that next year's Membership Subscription be \$33.00; no discounts.
Accepted ZL1WAL / ZL1LS
- **Auditor:**
The Treasurer recommended that Mrs Christine Watson continue as Auditor.

Accepted ZL1WAL / ZL1TUJ

Elections:

1. **President** Steve Miller, ZL1FS

Elected after Nominations declared closed ZL1TUJ / ZL1WAL
ZL1FS assumed the Chair for the rest of the meeting.

3. **Vice President** George Marr, ZL1TUJ

Elected ZL1KNI / ZL1FS

3. **Secretary** Wallace Bottomley, ZL1WAL

Elected ZL1FS / ZL1TUJ

4. **Treasurer** Wallace Bottomley, ZL1WAL

Elected ZL1FS / ZL1TUJ

5. **Committee (maximum of six):**
Gwynne Rowe, ZL1AAR

Nominated by ZL1FS / ZL1TUJ

Ray Chapman, ZL1AJR

Nominated by ZL1WAL / ZL1TUJ

Japie Nel, ZL1JJN

Nominated by ZL1TUJ / ZL1FS

These three committee members were declared elected

Minutes of AGM of 14th December 2010 (continued)

Vacancies:

Graham O'Neil, ZL1ONL subject to his agreement
Brian Wilson, ZL1UXB subject to his agreement
Ian Robinson, ZL2ATD subject to his agreement

Nominated by ZL1FS / ZL1WAL

Non-Committee responsibilities

AREC Section Leader	Japie Nel , ZL1JJN
Deputy AREC	Steve Miller, ZL1FS
Call sign Trustees	Steve Miller, ZL1FS and George Mar, ZL1TUJ
Repairs and Maintenance	Steve Miller, ZL1FS
Remotely controlled station	George Marr, ZL1TUJ
Webmaster	Andrei Chatalov, ZL1TM
Computers	James Knightly, ZL1KNI
Technical Advisor	Simon Watt-Wyness, ZL1SWW
Tutor	Selwyn Ross, ZL1BRC
Newsletter Editor	Selwyn Ross, ZL1BRC
Librarian	Vacancy
Membership	Vacancy

Confirmed ZL1FS/ ZL1TUJ

General Business:

- **Auditor:** President Steve, ZL1FS suggested that an alternative Auditor should be elected because he was the partner of the Auditor. It was noted that she had been appointed before he was elected, so this was not deemed improper. The matter was resolved by noting that Steve had declared a conflict of Interest.
- **Budget:** The Treasurer said that whereas the Accounts presented for 2010 are nearly break-even, a loss of \$3,000.00 would have occurred had it not been for the largesse of the Committee and Members, Donations of equipment, Component Sales and Commission earned. The expectation of more such windfalls occurring in 2011 could not responsibly be included in the Budget for 2011 that was published in the Newsletter. He asked for the Budget to be discussed before being recommended to the Incoming Committee. He pointed out that this Budget had been trimmed by the Committee from a loss of \$2,000 to one showing a loss of \$500.00. He explained that he had analysed the accounts for the previous 10 years and noted three years when the Branch did not make a donation. ZL1FS suggested selling transceiver assets that were not being used regularly.
- **Donation:** That a donation be made to Branch 86 for the purposes of repairing their 5775 repeater antenna for their mutual use in 2011.

Approved ZL1FS / ZL1KNI

The amount of the donation shall be \$150.00

Approved ZL1FS / ZL1BRC

Amateur Repeater Trustees Association Inc:

ARTNZ has written to all Branches and seems to be duplicating representation and negotiations that NZART have with the hosts of repeaters. Vaughan Henderson, ZL1TGC, our guest and NZART Councillor, was asked to explain how NZART interpret the formation of this Association. Vaughan traced the history of this Wellington based group. He said that while NZART preferred that this group work with NZART's Administration Liaison Officer, he recommended waiting until next year to see if this group's achievements are better than their previous failed attempts. The Treasurer said he had been forwarded a copy of a memo suggesting a donation of \$150.00 be sought from every Branch.

FT1000:

ZL1BRC reiterated that he had received reports of its instability. He said that it is now intermittent and that the radio should be sent to Colin McKenzie for repair, suspecting its instability may be caused by over-tightening a slim profile SO-239 Antenna Socket A.

6. Social Gatherings in lieu of Monthly Meetings:

ZL1AFU recounted how monthly meetings were held hitherto. He suggested getting guest speakers on any topic, rather than holding formal meetings that he opined were boring. ZL1FS stated that it was embarrassing to have so few Members attend a presentation by an invited guest speaker, and then find one or two Members fall asleep. BBQs are successful. ZL1WAL suggested fox-hunting and inter-branch competition. Such sport may also attract youngsters to become Amateurs.

- **Get Well** A card was signed to be sent to Gwynne Rowe, ZL1AAR.

Meeting closed at 2145 hours followed by supper.

COMING UP

- Dec. 13 Annual General Meeting at Clubroom at 1930 hours. **Come and enjoy the fellowship.**
- Jan. 1 Kordia National System Award. This is a FUN award, available to all amateurs to
until demonstrate the coverage and use of the National System, to promote our history
Feb. 6 and Category 2 Historic places.
All details for this award, are available at:- <http://zl1ux.tripod.com/nsaward.html>
- Feb. 4 DX Weekend Contest, 50 MHz and up. The operating times are: Sat. 1700 to 2300 NZST
and Sunday 0700 to 1300 NZDST. Rules: <http://www.vhf.org.nz/VHF-UHF-SHF-ContestRules>
- Feb. 25 Jock White Field Day. **Register with Gwynne ZL1AAR on 524-9969 as an operator.**
- Mar. 10 NZ Amateur Radio Day @ 1000 to 1400 hours

Increase in Amateur Power Limit

As announced by our President, Roy Symon, ZL2KH, in the November Official Broadcast, NZART is pleased to advise members that Radio Spectrum Management has agreed to our request that the general power limit for Amateur bands be increased.

From 30 November 2011, the power limit for most bands will rise from 500 watts to 1000 watts peak envelope power (pX), as defined in ITU Radio Regulation 1.157. The only exception to this increase is for those bands (130 to 190 kHz, 505 to 515 kHz, 26.95 to 27.30 MHz and 921.00 to

928.00 MHz) which currently have lower limits and, in these cases, the current limits will continue to apply.

This is a very satisfactory conclusion to the HBARC remit to the 2011 NZART Conference and will assist NZ Amateurs:

- * to participate in weak signal work including EME, meteor scatter, DXing etc;
- * to remain competitive, despite our remoteness, when participating in contests.

For further information on licence conditions, please see the updated Amateur General User Radio Licence (GURL) on the RSM website:

<http://www.rsm.govt.nz/cms/licensees/types-of-licence/general-user-licences/amateur-radio-operators>

de Don Wallace, ZL2TLL, NZART Administration Liaison Officer

Call-sign Clean-up

Further to the information in Headquarters Infoline Issue 221, Radio Spectrum Management have advised that they have now completed emailing Amateurs, who have a client email address in SMART, asking them to update their contact details. This exercise resulted in a low level of phone calls to the RSM Business Service Centre and a low number of emails to RSM so the records appear to be more accurate than originally thought.

RSM will now progressively attempt to contact the 2,000 Amateurs, who do not have an email address, by post over the next few months asking them to update their Client Records.

Looking for an old amateur

My father Nelson John Winch was an active radio operator in the 1940 /1950 era and I would like to include his call sign in a history I am putting together. Do you have any records that can give me that detail? If so, contact NZART HQ.



NZART CONFERENCE 2012
IN HAMTASTIC NELSON - BIRTHPLACE OF ERNEST RUTHERFORD

QUEENS BIRTHDAY WEEKEND 1st – 4th JUNE 2012

Your Host: Branch 26 Nelson

Venue: Tahuna Beach Conference Centre,
Nelson - Tahuna Beach Holiday Park

Chairman ZL2STR Stewart Robinson: strob@xnet.co.nz

Secretary ZL2LS Topsy Scott: scott@tasman.net

Postal Address Branch 26 NZART Conference 2012, PO Box 1820, Nelson, NZ 7040

AUCKLAND BRANCH, NZART (inc.)

Minutes of Committee Meeting

Date / Time / Place: Tuesday 6th December at 1935 hours; Clubroom.

Attendees: George Marr ZL1TUJ(Chairman); Wallace Bottomley ZL1WAL (Secretary / Treasurer); Ray Chapman ZL1AJR; Gwynne Rowe ZL1AAR; Ian Robinson ZL2ATD, Japie Nels ZL1JJN, Steve Miller ZL1FS was on Skype.

Visitor: Ole Runge ZL1OLE /DE.

Minutes of the previous Committee meeting on 1st November 2011, as published in the November newsletter.

The Secretary apologized for not having printed a copy to bring to this meeting.

Taken as read and accepted ZL1WAL / ZL1AAR

Correspondence In:

- Newsletters from neighbouring branches: North Shore, Franklin, Papakura
- Break-in
- ARTANZ Annual report
- **Arising:**
 - Newsletters from VHF Group are neither posted or emailed, though a request has been made for them.
 - Secretary will provide Branch 86 with postage-paid envelopes for them to send QSL cards quarterly.

Correspondence Out:

- Selwyn re content of proposed practical exam suggesting that Q codes are irrelevant to a SSB QSO.
- Selwyn re role as Contact person.
- NZART Training Officer ARX supporting proposal for practical test for the general licence exam. However the Committee states that testing for the use of Q codes is considered irrelevant to SSB communication.

Approved ZL1TUJ / ZL1AAR

Finance: The Treasurer presented the year to date report. It is being audited in time for the AGM next week.

Received ZL1TUJ / ZL1AAR

Expenses requiring approval for payment:

• R. Higgins	Lawns	\$34.50
• W. Bottomley	Keys	\$12.00
• J Lowe	Woosh	\$102.00

Approved ZL1TUJ / ZL1AJR

General business:

Reports:

- AREC Nothing to report
- Membership Nothing to report.
- Exams Nothing to report
- Batteries Checked by Japie, OK
- Remote Station George is providing another computer to interface the pan adaptor for the K3.
- Phone line George reported that Chorus had quoted \$100 for the relocation of the NTE. He said that he gave them the go-ahead, but this cost will be his donation to the Branch.

Gate keys are held by:

1. Auckland City Retail Leasing Dept.
2. Buried under leaves at the base of the gate post
3. Beneath the alarm pad in the Clubroom (in case a Member's car gets locked in)
4. Steve ZL1FS
5. Wallace ZL1WAL
6. Andrei ZL1TM

- Gate keys were requested by Gwynne, Ray and George (Cost: \$6.00 each).
- Original gate keys should be returned to the Secretary. Scarbros use these keys elsewhere in their firm.

Maintenance

- **Painting roof.** Student Job search was attempted last year but bureaucratic issues arose about Health and Safety, scaffolding, etc.. The Committee accepted Japie's suggestion to engage his teenage son early this summer. It may take about half a day. Approval to buy Bitumin-Aluminum paint has already been mandated by the Committee. Nails have been purchased in case they are needed first.
- **Painting walls.** The back wall is more important. It has already been water-blasted. 10 litres of white paint has been donated by Ray ZL1AJR.

Minutes of Committee Meeting (continued)

• **Antennas**

- Gwynne ZL1AAR erected the 80m antenna and he has tuned it to 3.600 MHz.
- It is intended to add another dipole tuned to a higher frequency. This will be connected to the balun and appear as a bow tie with spacers at each end.
- The alignment of the beam is the next priority, say on 14th January 2012. A halyard should be attached before the pole is re-erected.
- Wallace suggested that we make use of the vacant section to erect a Beverage antenna or a multiple wavelength antenna suitable for 160m.
- The project for switching antennas is of lower priority, though a band switch controller has been made.
- Wallace said that he would like to see software installed on one of the computers to steer the satellite antenna (donated by Eric Bullough ZL1TWD — SK), at the front of the clubroom. AMSAT freely provide such software now and it has Doppler tuning capability. It is not known what has become of the pre amplifiers associated with this antenna.

• **Planning for JWFD:**

- Gwynne assured the meeting that he has the planning in hand and that he has scoped the position and best take off direction for each antenna. Interference between antennas will thus be minimized.
- Since the yard is unlikely to be occupied, there is ample scope to erect better antennas. He requested help on Saturday 18th February 2012 (a week before 25th February) to erect the poles for the antennas and thus allow adequate time to have them tested. He intends to follow a recommendation by Dr David Donnelly ZL4RR / K2SS (see article appearing at www.qsl.net/zl1aa > Newsletters > 2011 > September) for a 3 element wire beam at 30 feet for 40m. Gwynne will also use the very successful delta loop antenna for 80m..
- Gwynne needs a **commitment of operators on 25th and 26th February 2012**. He would appreciate a response by mid February to **phone 524-9969** by those Members who will participate. Those who cannot operate for the whole weekend have to be scheduled—preferably not at the last moment.
- Wallace has made a list of all other Branches' call-signs and their previous year's contacts. He said that he had found this list was useful to prompt him when looking for CW QSOs and matching them with Branch numbers given in the exchange of information.

• **AGM :**

- Reports have been written by Steve, Wallace and Japie with recommendations therein.
- The Financial Accounts are being audited by Mrs Christine Watson and should be completed in time.
- Committee members will prompt other Members on their phone tree to ensure a good attendance.
- Nominations for Office have been received and agreed.
- Non-Committee jobs assignments were discussed, e.g. Contact person, Librarian, Newsletter.
- A tidy up of the clubroom will be done this Saturday.

• **Honorary Life Members:**

- Recommendations will be made to the Annual General Meeting to nominate:
 - Selwyn Ross ZL1BRC
 - Bob Murphy ZL1AFU
- Wallace is to ask each for their acceptance before the AGM.

Agreed ZL1TUJ / ZL1AJR

• **Change to the Constitution:**

- Having Steve ZL1FS "present" at this meeting via Skype was considered to be successful. However the Constitution does not allow him to be counted towards the numbers making up a quorum for a Committee meeting. Since video conferencing is becoming commonplace, the Committee consider that the Constitution should be brought up to date by deleting the final words "in person" from Section 6 PROCEDURE OF THE COMMITTEE, paragraph (c) so that it reads:
"A Quorum of the Committee shall be four (4) committee members."
- It was suggested that a Special General Meeting be notified early next year to put this amendment to Members. It will require a three fifths majority to change the Constitution.

Meeting closed 21:10 followed by supper provided by Ray ZL1AJR.

Signed _____ Date _____

(Chairman)

Absence of sunspots make scientists wonder if they're seeing a calm before a storm of energy

Sunspots come and go, but recently they have mostly gone. For centuries, astronomers have recorded when these dark blemishes on the solar surface emerge, only to fade away after a few days, weeks or months. Thanks to their efforts, we know that sunspot numbers ebb and flow in cycles lasting about 11 years. But for the past two years, the sunspots have mostly been missing. Their absence, the most prolonged in nearly 100 years, has taken even seasoned sun watchers by surprise. "This is solar behavior we haven't seen in living memory," says David Hathaway, a physicist at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala.

The sun is under scrutiny as never before, thanks to an armada of space telescopes. The results they beam back are portraying our nearest star, and its influence on Earth, in a new light. Sunspots and other clues indicate that the sun's magnetic activity is diminishing and that the sun may even be shrinking. Together, the results hint that something profound is happening inside the sun. The big question is: What?

Groups of sunspots forewarn of gigantic solar storms that can unleash a billion times more energy than an atomic bomb. Fears that these giant eruptions could create havoc on Earth and disputes over the sun's role in climate change are adding urgency to these studies. When NASA and the European Space Agency launched the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory almost 15 years ago, "understanding the solar cycle was not one of its scientific objectives," says Bernhard Fleck, the mission's project scientist. "Now it is one of the key questions."

Sunspots are windows into the sun's magnetic soul. They form where giant loops of magnetism, generated deep inside the sun, well up and burst through the surface, leading to a localized drop in temperature that we see as a dark patch. Any changes in sunspot numbers reflect changes inside the sun. "During this transition, the sun is giving us a real glimpse into its interior," says Hathaway.

When sunspot numbers drop at the end of each 11-year cycle, solar storms die down and all becomes much calmer. This "solar minimum" doesn't last long. Within a year, the spots and storms begin to build toward a new crescendo, the next solar maximum.

What's special about this latest dip is that the sun is having trouble starting the next solar cycle. The sun began to calm down in late 2007, so no one expected many sunspots in 2008. But computer models predicted that when the spots did return, they would do so in force. Hathaway was reported as thinking the next solar cycle would be a doozy: more sunspots, more solar storms and more energy blasted into space. Others predicted that it would be the most active solar cycle on record. The trouble was, no one told the sun.

The first sign that the prediction was wrong came when 2008 turned out to be even calmer than expected. That year, the sun was spot-free 73 percent of the time, an extreme dip even for a solar minimum. Only the minimum of 1913 was more pronounced, with 85 percent of that year clear.

As 2009 arrived, solar physicists looked for some action. They didn't get it. The sun continued to languish until mid-December, when the largest group of sunspots to emerge in several years appeared. Even with the solar cycle finally underway again, the number of sunspots has so far been well below expectations. Something appears to have changed inside the sun, something the models did not predict. But what?

The flood of observations from space- and ground-based telescopes suggests that the answer lies in the behavior of two vast conveyor belts of gas that endlessly cycle material and magnetism through the sun's interior and out across its surface. On average it takes 40 years for the conveyor belts to complete a circuit.

When Hathaway's NASA team looked over the observations to find out where their models had gone wrong, they noticed that the conveyor-belt flows of gas across the sun's surface have been speeding up since 2004.

But the circulation deep within the sun tells a different story. Rachel Howe and Frank Hill of the National Solar Observatory in Tucson have used observations of surface disturbances, caused by the solar equivalent of seismic waves, to infer what conditions are like within the sun. Analyzing data from 2009, they found that while the surface flows had sped up, the internal ones had slowed to a crawl. These contradictory findings have thrown the best computer models of the sun into disarray. "It is certainly challenging our theories," says Hathaway.

These changes are raising questions not just about the sun itself but also about the extent to which the sun's activity affects our climate. There are those who believe that the solar variability is the major cause of climate change, an idea that would let humans and their greenhouse gases off the hook. Others are equally convinced that the sun plays only a minuscule role in climate change.

The extended collapse in solar activity these past two years offers the possibility of an experiment to resolve this dispute, allowing scientists to examine what happens when you switch off one potential cause of climate change and leave the other alone. With so few sunspots, the amount of solar radiation bombarding our planet has significantly changed. "As a natural experiment, this is the very best thing to happen," says Joanna Haigh, a climatologist at Imperial College London. "Now we have to see how the Earth responds."

Frigid Europe

Michael Lockwood, a professor of space environment physics at the University of Reading in England, may already have identified one response: the unusually frigid European winter of 2009-10. He has [studied records](#) back to 1650 and [found that severe European winters](#) are much more likely during periods of low solar activity. This fits an idea of solar activity's giving rise to small changes in the global climate overall but large regional effects.

Another example is the so-called Maunder minimum, the period from 1645 to 1715 during which sunspots virtually disappeared and solar activity plummeted. If a similar spell of solar inactivity were to begin now and continue until 2100, it would mitigate any temperature rise caused by global warming by no more than 0.3 degrees Celsius, according to calculations by Georg Feulner and Stefan Rahmstorf of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany.

However, something amplified the impact of the Maunder minimum on northern Europe, ushering in a period known as the Little Ice Age, when colder-than-average winters became more prevalent and the average temperature in Europe appeared to drop by between 1 and 2 degrees Celsius. A corresponding increase in temperatures on Earth appears to be associated with peaks in solar output. In 2008, Judith Lean of the Naval Research Laboratory's space science division published a study showing that high solar activity has a disproportionate warming influence on northern Europe.

What the sun will do next is beyond our ability to predict. Most astronomers think that the solar cycle will proceed but at significantly depressed levels of activity, similar to those last seen in the 19th century. However, there is also evidence that the sun is inexorably losing its ability to produce sunspots. By 2015, they could be gone altogether, plunging us into a new Maunder minimum -- and perhaps a new Little Ice Age.

Of course, solar activity is just one natural source of climate variability. Another is volcanic eruptions, spewing gas and dust into the atmosphere. Nevertheless, it remains crucial to understand the precise changeability of the sun and the way it influences the various regional patterns of weather on Earth. Climate scientists will then be able to correct for these effects, not just in interpreting modern measurements but also when attempting to reconstruct the climate stretching back centuries. It is only by doing so that we can reach an unassailable consensus about the sun's true level of influence on the Earth and its climate.

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Scientists find a big drop in the strength of solar magnetic fields

Although sunspots are making a belated comeback after the protracted solar minimum, the signs are that all is not well. For decades, William Livingston at the National Solar Observatory in Tucson has been measuring the strength of the magnetic fields that puncture the sun's surface and cause the spots to develop. Last year, he and colleague Matt Penn pointed out that the average strength of sunspot magnetic fields has been sliding dramatically since 1995.

If the trend continues, in just five years the field will have slipped below the threshold needed for sunspots to form. How likely is this to happen? Michael Lockwood, a professor of space environment physics at the University of Reading in England, has scoured historical data for similar periods of solar inactivity, signs of which show up as increases in the occurrence of certain isotopes in ice cores and tree rings. He found 24 such instances in the last few thousand years. On two of those occasions, sunspots all but disappeared for decades. Lockwood puts the chance of this happening now at just 8 percent. On only one occasion did the sunspot number bounce back to record levels. In the majority of cases, the sun continued producing spots albeit at significantly depressed levels. It seems that the sunspot bonanza of the last century is over.

First 'habitable zone' planet found outside solar system

For the first time, astronomers have detected a rocky planet in another solar system that has the most basic and essential conditions needed to support extraterrestrial life.

This artist rendering shows a new planet discovered by astronomers in the Goldilocks zone, meaning that it's just right for life: not too hot, not too cold, not too far from its sun and not too close to it either. And it is relatively close to Earth at 120 trillion miles. It also makes scientists think that these examples of habitable planets are far more common than previously thought.

