

VK4WIL

Lockyer Valley Radio and Electronic Club Inc.

NEWSLETTER

JUNE - JULY 2011

Club meetings:

2nd Sunday of the Month at 2 pm

Venue:

**Laidley Shire Community Care Assn,
Mary St Laidley**

**But check prior to coming as we
have occasional meetings at Lake
Dyer.**

**The best place to confirm where
the meeting will be held is on
the web site. And of course the
repeater.**

On air meetings:

**3570KHz Friday nights at 0730
local (0930 Zulu)**

**And most nights on the RIL
repeater**

**Club repeater: VK4RIL - 147.700
(negative offset)**

**Echolink Node 491940 Please feel
free to use the Echolink Function.**

2011 VK TRANS TASMAN 160m PHONE CONTEST

Five members of the Club gathered at the QTH of 4QH to work the contest. The usual suspects, VK4QH, VK4SN, VK4HS, VK4MN, VK4BYX along with a FT1000 MkV Field, a 160m loop, and software in the form of VKCL (contest logging) and Voice Keyer (our guest speaker) were all here ready for action. Trouble reared its ugly head early as both software programs decided they didn't want to share the FT1000.

After much discussion and some alterations with a soldering iron we still had one problem, wrong adapter - still won't work. Either Ken or Alan had a brilliant idea; as it was only a single band contest we don't actually need VKCL to read the frequency so dispensed with OmniRig. On air, VKCL and Voice Keyer both working.



The contest started slow due to poor propagation; the first hour saw only 13 contacts. A slight increase with 15 in hour 2 and 18 in hour 3. As the night progressed we started to see an improvement in propagation; hour 4 saw 26 contacts made and about the same number over the last 2 hours. Final score 666.

All in all it was a great night with heaps of laughs, a BBQ, a few drinks and of course the usual chit chat. Until the next contest 73, es gud dx.

Keeping in a 160m theme we include a reprint of an article on **Low Band Noise Problems** (taken from <http://topband.blog.cz>)

In this world of microprocessor-based toys and gadgets, there are many sources of RF noise that find their way into the best shortwave receiver setup. While having a good quality receiver and antenna system is a great start, it will be well worth the effort to locate and reduce any local RF interference that you have control over.

Modern homes are flooded with devices that generate RF signals. Many small electronics devices are passed by the countries regulations for emissions but they can still radiate RF for a short distance at levels your quality receiver will pick up. Here is a list of possible sources of noise:

- * Florescent Lighting
- * "Touch" Lamps - Even when the lamp is off, the control circuitry is still operating in the background and can generate RF noise.
- * Automatic Outdoor Lights
- * Automatic Indoor Night Lights
- * Standard Light Bulb that is going bad
- * Holiday / Christmas Tree Lighting
- * Electric Blankets
- * AC Powered Smoke Detectors

What's In This Issue:

Trans Tasman 160m Contest

Low Band Noise Problems

*Contesting with Alan and
Warren*

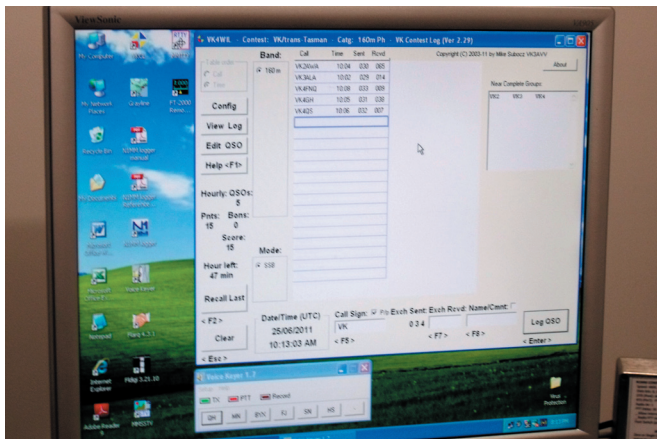
160m All Time Score

Dangerous Leads

Age Stats

- * Kitchen appliances
- * Bug Zappers or Electronic Pest Control Devices
- * Standard Electrical Switch that has bad contacts
- * Televisions
- * Radio / Police Scanners
- * Bad Insulators on Powerlines
- * Computer Systems and Accessories
- * Anything with an AC wall adapter - sometimes these wall adapters are poorly constructed and the diodes inside for DC conversion generate RF noise.
- * Portable Games / Electronic Kids Toys
- * If you live in an apartment, any one of the above mentioned items may be your cause. Another source of noise not normally considered is the grounding in your antenna system. It is very convenient to have a ground rod mounted right next to your home but this may also be a source of noise coupled into your receiver.

The above mentioned items may transfer noise into the AC wiring in your home and couple down to the ground rod you are using. This is especially true if your radio ground is in close proximity to the AC mains grounding system. You may want to consider mounting your ground rod as far from electrical noise sources as possible.



Also it is highly recommended to use coax to feed your receiver from the longwire. Further improvements are to use a matching device like a longwire antenna match to improve reception.

The list goes on and on, but hopefully this will give you an idea of what to watch out for to enhance your listening enjoyment. These same items also apply to the AM broadcast band as well.

You can make a simple detector by the use of a battery powered AM pocket radio set where there is no station (loudest background noise). When you get close to the noise source, you should here an increase in the

background noise of the radio. Some noises are too small to detect this way and require a more sensitive detector to find the source but this is a good way to find most culprits of RF noise.

73 Petr, OK1RP

Contesting with Warren VK4FJ and Alan VK4SN.

VK4KW set another record for Oceania this year in the CQWW WPX with a tentative 27.7 million Points in the multi-two category. 6 operators (VK4BAA, TI, SN, NDX, DX, 7ZE) made an easy job of the contest.

Club members have been active in most of the contests in the last couple of months. The 80m VK-Trans Tasman at Ken's place was a huge success and the 160mtr is being held there as well. By the time you read this, it will have passed. (See report front page)

The VK Shires contest has passed and many a comment was made regarding the 'common' LV4 shire designator. There were 6 people active in the shire and 4 from our club. Club members who participated were VK4KML, VK4QH, VK4MN and VK4SN.

Likewise, the Harry Angel sprint saw many members participating, VK4HS - 41points, VK4FJ - 49, VK4QH - 61, and VK4SN - 78.

Club members receiving recognition this time around are,

- Al and Ken as VK4WIL - 1st place 6hr portable all-mode HF -John Moyle
- Ken, VK4QH - 4th place Phone, Harry Angel contest
- Al, VK4SN - 1st place Mixed mode, Harry Angel contest
- Al, VK4SN - 1st place VK4, QRP Hours CW/PSK31

Still many a contest to have a go at, so please keep your eyes on the club pages keeping you up to date with the latest contests and info. And now it's over to the clubs digital guru, Warren VK4FJ for the latest on his contesting blog.

Well G'day again and welcome to my blog on contesting and just what contests I have been mucking around in. I was asked if I had anything to add for the newsletter and said "yep, no probs" as I thought that I had only entered a couple of contests since the last newsletter, well a look at my contesting folder on C drive quickly showed that I have entered 9 contests since I last put pen to paper in March, Maybe I should become a professional contesting amateur? Just wondering what the pay rate is like?

Anyhow the first contest was the CQWW WPX SSB in March, I entered in the single Op 15m low non-assisted category and made 178qso's, 147 WPX, 34 countries, 21 zones with a claimed score of 72030 points.

Next was the SP DX RTTY in the 15m single low cat, with 33qso's, 8 countries and 8 zones with a claimed score of 7800 points.

Next was the ARI RTTY in the single op all band low cat with 113 qso's, 27 countries, 17 zones and a claimed score of 20210 points.

Followed by the Trans Tasman RTTY on 80m, I managed 12 qso's for the test as there was not much activity on the RTTY side of it, probably would have helped if I had a better antenna system for 80m and also if I had of contested in the right part of the 80m band, hihi.

And then another RTTY test was next and this was the VOLTA RTTY, in the ALL Band Low Cat, I finished with 79 qso's, 28 countries, 18 zones and a claimed score of 9879345 points. A rather high scoring contest.

Next was our own local Contest on 80m which this year was held on the 21st of May, This contest is held once a year to celebrate the life of Harry Angel VK4HA SK who was 106 years of age when he passed away in 1998, the contest runs for 106 minutes exactly. I was just looking at a copy of a 1946 WIA call sign listing and Harry held the Call at that time so I am not sure just how long he held the call sign for. I finished with 49 qso's for the contest and as it is a local contest you do get to take time to exchange your name and have a brief chat if someone wishes to do so.

Number 7 was the EU PSK DX test in PSK63 mode, I entered single op 15 high and finished with 108 qso's, 26 countries, 15 zones with a claim score of 36080 points. As always most of the EU ops are a bit surprised when a VK or ZL pops up on the band in these contests.

Nearly there, hi hi, Just for something a bit different I entered in the CQWW WPX CW contest at the end of May in the 15m single Op low assisted Cat. I finished with 131 qso's, 117 WPX, 34 countries, 22 zones and a claimed score of 41296 points.

As I use N1MM to send and log the QSO's and FLDIGI to decode I thought I would test myself a little this time and filled quite a few pages of call signs and numbers. I would listen to the call and write it down and wait for a report and write that down then I would have a look at the decode screen to see if I was hearing it correctly before actually trying for a qso with a station, I must admit that if some of these stations would slow down a bit it would probably make it more tempting for some of us to have a bigger go at it.

Also some of the stations seem to cut to many of the numbers they are sending, I for one can handle the 599 being sent as 5nn or the leading 0 of 5nn 035 being sent as 5nn t35 but when some of them cut every number in some way it makes a little bit daunting to us operators who do not have the ability to compete at that level. Still had plenty of fun brushing up on the CW a little bit.

Lastly was the DIGIFEST test which is run in 3, 8 hour blocks, the contest runs for 8 hours and then stops for 8 hours, then on again for 8 hours then stops for 8 hours again and then finishes with the final 8 hour block. There are 5 digital modes which can be used, they are RTTY75 (75 baud), BPSK 63, MFSK 16, HELLSCHREIBER and OLIVIA (250 Hz, 4 tones). There is a few different categories that can be entered in this test, I entered the All Band Single Mode section with PSK63 being the mode of choice for me. I finished with 67 qso's with 23 countries worked, not sure of my score as I was using N1MM to log with and it does not support this contest so I have let the contest robot work it out for me, hi hi.

Interestingly I have imported these 9 contests into a LOGGER32 database and it shows for these 9 contests I have worked 70 countries, 6 continents and 29 zones.

For those of you thinking about digital contesting I have found N1MM interfaced with MMTTY works well in the RTTY tests and N1MM interfaced with FLDIGI works well in the PSK63 tests. Once you have your "F" key macros all sorted out it is quite easy and enjoyable.

N1MM can be found at <http://n1mm.hamdocs.com/>

MMTTY can be found at <http://hamssoft.ca/>

FLDIGI can be found at <http://www.w1hkj.com/>

For general digital work MMTTY or FLDIGI will work ok but if you would like a program to run a logbook as well as do a heap of different digital modes then have a look at HRD <http://www.ham-radio-deluxe.com/> or another good logbook program is LOGGER32 <http://www.logger32.net/index.html>

A good website for keeping up to date each month with contesting is <http://www.sk3bg.se/contest/>
CU on the Bands ... TU GL DX ... 73 ... Warren VK4FJ

The following is an extract from the CQ WW 160m Contest website and the table shows the ALL Time records for the SSB Single Operator Assisted section of that contest.

Most of the higher scores are in more densely populated regions, with higher proportions of amateur radio operators and therefore more 160m operators. The Oceania and South American scores reflect the much smaller proportion of 160m operators in these regions. The most interesting point here is that the all time high score for Oceania is held by VK4ZD.

World - Single Operator Assisted

Data following the calls are year of operation, score, QSOs, states/provinces, and countries.

World	S57DX	2009	399,000	901	18	66
Africa	CT9L	2009	291,662	356	25	58
Asia	H22H	2009	121,632	265	1	47
Europe	S57DX	2009	399,000	901	18	66
North America	W4MYA	2010	385,614	1,111	57	54
Oceania	VK4ZD	2009	810	14	4	5
South America	LU6QI	2010	66	3	0	3

Dangerous Multi-meter Leads.

Recently I was using my 22 year old digital multi-meter to check a lead acid truck battery for voltage and checking the current while charging. I got a few funny readings which I put down to a poor connection of the probes to the battery terminals. When using the leads to check current flow the readings went crazy and after a bit of wiggling of the leads, I narrowed it down to a break in the probe leads where the wire exits the plastic probe handles. Refer Fig1.

Even though there was no danger in what I was handling at this time, it may have been disastrous if I had been measuring to see if voltage was present on a 240V outlet for example.? I may have got zero volts when in fact it was a live terminal. Moral of the story is to keep an eye on old probe leads, as we take it for granted that everything is ok, when in fact it may not be.

Keep safe and 73's from Alan, VK4SN.



Mike KH6ND, operating from KH6YY, just published his score in AA CW on the 3830 reflector.

He put up some statistics based on his 1769 QSO's log:

“Some very telling age statistics:

Only 5 callsigns worked for 7 QSO's under 20 years of age.

27 QSO's with stations between 20 and 29 years of age.

72 QSO's with stations between 30 and 39 years of age.

386 QSO's with stations between 40 and 49 years of age.

519 QSO's with stations between 50 and 59 years of age.

516 QSO's with stations between 60 and 69 years of age.

201 QSO's with stations between 70 and 79 years of age.

23 QSO's with stations between 80 and 89 years of age.

2 operators sending 92 worked for 3 QSO's, thanks for being in my log, JA1AA & 8J1VLP.

Average age - 56.5 years.”

73 Mirek VK6DXI