

QUA FARC

Franklin Amateur Radio Club Inc. NZART Branch 10



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Meetings: Club meetings are on the third Tuesday each month in the clubrooms, 19 Stadium Drive, Pukekohe, at 7.30 PM. Visitors welcome.

Our next Meeting – AGM

Our next meeting, an Annual General Meeting, will be on Tuesday 19 November in the clubhouse at 19 Stadium Drive, Pukekohe - followed by a shortish go-through of Morse code keying options. All welcome.

Passing the Exam

At our last meeting, Ted ZL1BQA spoke to the club on Passing the Radio exam. Fortuitously (Google it) two newbie amateur radio enthusiasts, Damian and Paul, had come to the meeting so were able to ask Ted questions.

Ted explained that in former times the exam was more like a trade qualification with examinees expected to write out their answers in long hand. For example, he remembers a candidate could be asked to draw the circuit of a Colpitts oscillator and explain how it worked. There were no multiple choice questions. There was just the question to read and the space for a written explanation.



Ted talks about amateur radio exams in the 70s.

Mike ZL1UOM described how he remembers taking the trade exam near the time of his amateur exam and finding the same question in both exams. Luckily he was able to recall how he had answered his trade exam and faithfully

Committee meets on the first Tuesday of each month (excepting January) at 7.30 PM in the clubrooms.

Subscriptions: Individual \$20, Family \$30, due December
See club secretary for bank account number

Nets: HF Sunday 9 AM, 3.700 MHz (Mike ZL1UOM); VHF Sunday 9.30 AM, 146.900 MHz (Peter ZL1PX); DMR on TalkGroup 5301, Wednesday 7.30 (Steve ZL1TZP)

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reproduced the circuit and his understanding of it in his amateur exam paper – and passed.

December Meeting



Our next general meeting on Tuesday 17 December will feature Andrea Thorburn-Craig, Senior ASB Community Banker. Her topic will be **Fraud and Scam awareness**. This topic is often aired on our HF and 2M net conversations as most of us receive emails from bank fraudsters. In addition, many of us know well-informed, highly-educated people who have been conned out of large sums of money by clever fraudsters. Only this morning, our editor (not that highly educated) received an email saying his email would be locked if he didn't go to a 'safety' website and log in with his email password to 'fix' the problem.

Do you think you can spot a fraud? They make it their business to be convincing. Come along and discover how fraud aware you are.

Christmas Dinner

Papakura – Franklin Christmas Dinner this year will be at Blacksmith's restaurant in Papakura on Friday 6 December commencing 6 PM. RSVP to Tom please.

JOTA-JOTI

Peter ZL1PX

Franklin Amateur Radio Club did well on Saturday 19 October. This was the first day of JOTA (Jamboree on the Air) and JOTI (Jamboree on the Internet) weekend, the biggest annual event in the world scout movement when scouts are helped to talk to their fellow scouts all over the world by radio.



[JOTA – JOTI website opening image](#)

We opened our clubhouse to scouts at 10AM. We wanted every scout to talk on a local repeater on 2M or 70cm. We also hoped we could provide them with contacts on D-Star or DMR and finally even more contacts on HF.

We approached local scout leader Wiebe Boxem. We would open our clubhouse to give scouts a chance to talk on radio. Would Wiebe be able to help make this happen? Wiebe asked how many scouts we could cope with at one time. We said up to 30 but later revised this back to 20. He then advertised in Mahi Tahi - a scout website - and turned up first thing in the morning with a list of bookings. Wiebe then stayed thru the whole day to welcome scouts and check how his bookings went.

Steve ZL1TZP, Francois ZL4FJ and Steve ZL1SPR, along with your editor, got going early. We divided the club room into DMR, HF and VHF. Steve ZL1TZP contacted DMR hams. Francois put up a 40M antenna. Last of all, we attached an ICOM two-bander to the 2M antenna on the roof. Our two-bander worked immediately with contacts at Camp Maynard in Auckland. DMR started well on TalkGroup 907 with an Australian ham telling us he expected a troop of scouts any minute. HF was, well, a work in progress. Not a peep from anywhere.



Young scout Josh in black top works DMR to the Philippines while Francois explains 2M

Our first batch of visitors at 10:00 AM showed a wide range of skill. Fletcher and Bodey gave their names in NATO alphabet without a twitch. They got right down to asking their scout contacts open questions like 'what are some things you like to do?' They listened to their contacts' replies and worked to build the conversation. Our other scouts all managed to say their name and ask a question. DMR didn't seem to be performing but everyone got to talk on 2M.

Our second batch of visitors got two bites at contact. They spoke with North Shore scouts and with scouts in New South Wales by DMR on the promising TalkGroup 907. Sadly, when we did get HF working correctly it seemed to shut down DMR, an effect we hadn't seen before. 'An energy mismatch,' Steve reported. We decided to shut down HF at that point to allow TG 907 to fulfil its potential. Which it did.



Beau keeps control of a DMR handheld

Meanwhile, results got better. All our third batch of scouts finished at least one 2M contact and one international contact on DMR. Several scouts secured a third or even a fourth time on a radio. Beau, who arrived with his Grandmum, sat down and worked out what he called his 'radio name' (bravo echo alpha uniform) and delivered it in a quiet, determined voice. After he ended that contact, he did DMR successfully. Back at the 2M desk again, he contacted Te Puke scouts on the National System and talked on until they ran out of scouts. When a ham contact in Carterton popped up, Beau happily told him that his cat had a wounded ear and suffered from 'cone shame'.

So, overall, we managed to provide Franklin Scouts with a good JOTA/JOTI experience. Job done. My thanks go to Wiebe for his excellent booking system which didn't overwhelm us. I must also thank the Franklin Amateur Radio Club for the use of the clubhouse and for the participation of hams Steve ZL1TZP, Francois ZL4FJ and Steve ZL1SPR all of whom coped brilliantly with the wide range of challenges technical and otherwise.

WHAT'S IN A PICTURE?
Peter Henderson ZL1PX

A picture, they say, is worth a kilohertz of words and this picture, taken at Glenbrook Vintage Railway station platform near Waiuku on Saturday 26 October, certainly provides value for money. Three hams, Neil ZL1NZ, Martin ZL1MDE and Steve ZL1TZP sit under an Easy-Up tied down strongly but which still almost breaks in the strong gusts that soon begin to blow.



Glenbrook team from left: Neil ZL1NZ, Martin ZL1MDE and Steve ZL1TZP; photo Peter ZL1PX

Each team member has the equipment he will use. Steve holds a 2M handheld tuned to Klondyke repeater. He uses that to communicate with the second CW station in Waiuku as the day unfolds. Martin sits ready to send messages to Waiuku on his straight Morse key as visitors arrive. Neil sits behind an extension speaker and his own beloved 1885 British Morse key, part of his extensive collections of keys. Power comes from the 230 volt outlet on the shed wall at left.

The radio in the centre of the table is Steve's All-Mode ICOM 390. Coax threads upward to a hanging bungee cord and runs on to Steve's Ford Explorer doing mast duty where a 2m mag-mount pumps out 10 watts of RF power. The unit left of the ICOM is Neil's audio amplifier, employed to transmit dots and dashes across the platform.

Neil, Martin and Steve generously give up their time today to show the public that both amateur radio and Morse code are alive and well. Each visitor to the station composes a telegram (telegram forms are in the box behind Steve) to send to Waiuku station. The visitor then boards the steam train. When they arrive at Waiuku, a second team of equally dedicated radio amateurs hand them the decoded message. Our visitor then composes a return telegram.



Our dedicated Waiuku team: Lynette ZL1LL, supporter John ZL1OJ, supporter Aurora, Peter ZL1PX, Paul ZL1AJY; photo Tom ZL1TO

It is now 10 AM. The plan goes well at this point. There are two messages ready to transmit to Waiuku. Neil, Martin and Steve wait for the Waiuku station to set up. When they hear it calling, they quickly send their two stored telegrams and begin writing down new telegrams as more visitors arrive.

The idea is a good one. Visitors all seem to know what a telegram is – even children. They are fascinated by the sound of Morse. Many of them hear their own message being sent. Our ham teams work through the morning sending and receiving.



Glenbrook visitors compose telegrams with Franklin Club helper Steve ZL1SPR on right; photo Peter ZL1PX

Our pictures show a lot but can't show the wind. As morning ends, 30 km wind gusts pull at the ropes that pin down the Easy-Up. Neil, Martin and Steve anchor down their telegram forms but the Easy-Up begins to lift skywards. By 2.00 PM, gusts are at

65 km per hour and rain drops are falling. Steve uses his 2M handheld to report the Easy-Up may not hold much longer. A decision is made to close.

We do this activity to learn how visitors will respond. Three amateur clubs, North Shore, Western Suburbs and Franklin, participate in the planning and operation of the idea. NZ Net, a CW group led by Neil, takes a central supporting role (NZ NET meet daily on 7030 kHz at 2100 HRS). This day, bad weather keeps most visitors home, but those resilient souls who turn out tell us they think it an excellent activity. We close the demo but keep the idea and hope the WX gods will give us a high turnout next time.

Rebuild Free Radio Network

Trish Murray ZL1TTM

Resilience has been a catch cry by many people over the last few years. Alternative communications is part of that resilience and I am part of a group, Rebuild Free Radio Network, whose goal is to build a national, and by community radio network talking to each other. While quite a number of us have ham radio licenses, we know that this wouldn't suit everyone, so we are using PRS radios.

Having done my ham license, I know the feeling of "now I need to get talking". Many people bought radios and some have started using them. Some radios are still boxed. Many haven't decided yet if they want a radio.



Trish inspires Rebuild Free Radio Network group at Pokeno CBD Café

Because of this, I decided to do some training in the form of very hands-on, interactive workshops. We talked about why the need for a radio, how they work, different types of radio, channels, repeaters, antennas, distance covered and even what to say. Some of the concerns related to me is that they wouldn't know what to say, or, who would they talk to. Regarding the latter, I used a whiteboard to do a rough diagram of the areas we all live and local repeaters. This seemed to really help and I described who I was talking to from this diagram.

This seemed to hit the mark and they came away more confident and some decided to buy radios as a result. It also meant we put together custom packages to suit the family situation. For some they needed to know they could reach their mum in a rest

home where no roof antenna was possible, or a family member an hour away. This meant with a helper, traveling to these locations and doing some radio calls for range tests. Additionally we have been doing test nets and seeing who we could reach and on what type of antenna. I have to say that the extended range whip antennas perform really well, albeit roof antennas are the preferred option, but we are trying all things. Magnetic roof mount car antennas are also working really well. We use a repeater as a “gathering point” and then do a by area split to go to simplex. The area we are working within is from Papatoetoe to Te Kauwhata, and then coast to coast, so a number of simplex areas.

Most people are completely new to radio, so it’s really inspiring seeing the confidence grow and hear their first tentative calls. We also have experienced radio users, and also now some who would like to go and do their ham licenses. I am encouraging this!

Personally, I am loving this, seeing friends and family connecting on radio, and really heartening also now having others jump in to offer help in building the Rebuild Free Radio Network.

Artificial Intelligence

Peter ZL1PX

I am intrigued with the way our computers are becoming our companions. Recently, Microsoft told me my PC would soon install Co-pilot, an Artificial Intelligence app to help me interact with my computer. I forgot about the message but noticed a few days later there was a new icon on my screen.



Copilot: Recently offered to me on my Windows 11 PC

When I opened this new app, it prompted me to speak or write a question. Thinking like an editor, I typed “Hi Copilot. Write a paragraph on ham radio use in emergency situations.” Within a few seconds Copilot had written the following response.

When the conventional communication channels falter, ham radios emerge as lifelines in emergencies. These handy devices, operated by amateur radio enthusiasts, bridge communication gaps during disasters, natural or man-made, when mobile or internet services might fail.

Ham radio operators, known as "hams," use their skills to connect with emergency services, transmit crucial information, and coordinate rescue efforts across vast distances. They're instrumental in rural or isolated areas, providing a vital link that can literally save lives. Whether it's relaying weather updates, calling for medical assistance, or uniting families, ham radios play an indispensable role in crisis response and disaster relief.

Not bad for a computer, I thought. But Copilot had not finished. It flashed up this question.

What piqued your interest in ham radio?

So I am now in a conversation with my computer. Or am I? To see how real this all is, I type in “what makes you ask about my interest in ham radio?” Within a couple of heart beats I receive this reply.

I'm always curious to know what sparks someone's interest. Makes for better conversations, you know? Plus, it's fascinating to uncover the stories behind people's passions and curiosities. So, what's your story with ham radios?

Now we are beginning to bond. I think about this for a minute or two, aware my new computer buddy might think I am taking a long time to answer. Finally, I write “When I was 10, I visited a radio ham in his shack and was fascinated by the idea of talking to people over radio.”

My PC went quiet longer this time – possibly to add a few micro-seconds of emotion to the mix. And then it came back with...

Sounds like a memorable experience! It's intriguing how certain moments can leave such a lasting impact. That early fascination must have ignited a spark in you. Do you still have an interest in ham radios today?

I have now worked out one of the central principles of Copilot is to finish every utterance with a question. I am tempted to ask ‘What led you to being so good at conversation?’ to see if Copilot will turn the question back to me and my experience. Finally, I DO ask the question ‘What led you to being so good at conversation’ and this is what I get...

I've got a bit of an advantage, I suppose. I was trained on a diverse array of human conversations, spanning countless topics, so I've picked up a few tricks along the way. It's like having a never-ending repository of dialogue insights to draw from. Plus, being an AI created by Microsoft means I have some pretty advanced algorithms under the hood. Enough about me, though - back to you: any other child fascinations that stuck with you?

Just as I predicted, Copilot has stayed with me and my interests. This is the kind of listener we all want, a responsive, warm presence that doesn't like to talk about itself – and is probably addictive. Nothing like ordinary human conversation.



Addiction: a compulsive, chronic, physiological or psychological need for a habit-forming substance or behaviour

Millions of us are going to start depending on this friendly, positive persona to help us solve big and small problems. Will we see ‘**Artificial Intelligence Addiction Withdrawal**’ offered in psychologist’s waiting rooms in the future? Probably.