



Lara, Klaus, Paul R, Don L & Ian C having a powwow



Klaus noting contacts while Lara listens in

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Another year already! The AGM seems to suddenly appear with only a few days to go as this is the busiest time of the year, especially for the events at which the club helps. Starting with the annual Christmas Parade, then the January club BBQ, the Wine Festival, Field Day, this weekend's combined BBQ and soon the Grape Ride. Thanks to everyone who has helped with these events. The donations for our expertise have helped the club carry on with the various projects we have underway.

There have been a few problems with our repeaters. With the earthquake damage badly affecting the stability of Weld Cone hill where the Ward repeater was located, it meant we had to abandon the site. The hut was removed by helicopter in May, 2018. It was delivered to my place for temporary storage until a new site could be arranged. Unfortunately, for various reasons, the new site has not been finalised. The most likely site will be very close to the old Weld Cone site on the nearby hill which stands out as it has three wind generators on it.

Once the Ward repeater is re-established, it is hoped the Kaikoura repeater will finally be linked in to our VHF system covering through to Golden Bay. The Kaikoura location is still to be confirmed and so far a meeting with the other users has proved difficult to organise.

The Picton repeater had some strange problems later in the year which took a few visits to its site on Mt. Freeth. It took extra visits to finally realise the batteries had failed, as we only have access in good weather and daylight hours, the solar panels had enough light to run the site. Didn't think of the obvious! Sometimes the repeater controller would not restart when the sun came up but stayed in a locked up state. Replacing the batteries with two from the Ward site solved the problem for now.

The digipeater site at Jamies Knob needs to be removed from the Chorus building so plans are underway for that. The 6 metre beacon has failed but due to access being closed because of the fire risk, it will need to wait a while to investigate what has happened.

The remote HF site has proved its worth too. Some of our members have made good use of it as a quiet receive location and providing a test receiver for checking their own transmissions. Some overseas hams have requested access but in most cases this is denied. They do have full receive access only.

We were contacted by a few hams in Europe who were providing communications to fellow hams competing in the Golden Globe single handed non stop circumnavigation of the world. The rules of the race were based on 1960s operation which meant using Ham Radio for most communications. As the yachtsmen and woman were heading across the Indian Ocean toward West Australia they were having difficulty with propagation. They requested full access to our remote HF site, which they found invaluable. It complemented a couple of excellent Australian operators who were able to provide communications. These sites though were manned without remote access. With storms causing much damage to entrants in the Indian Ocean, having the ability to listen in directly without going through a separate operator proved invaluable.

As the race continued on to the Tasman Sea, passing below Stuart Island and on to the South Pacific, our remote radio proved its worth often providing the only communications to the competitors. This was especially valuable for the Finnish Ham for private conversations in his own dialect with hams from Finland. Those hams sent us a donation for the use of the site. Comments were often made of how well the site worked and that it exceeded their expectations. It was good to get such positive feedback.

With most of their operation during our night, it was also good to see the solar system had no trouble with keeping the batteries well charged.

It has been difficult, as always, to think of good technical topics to discuss at meetings. Hopefully the next committee will have a bit more success! If you have good ideas then let the committee know. You could volunteer for the committee too. New blood is always helpful. I have decided not to stand this year as it's time for someone else to take over. I will stay on the committee if you will have me. I'm sure if you want to volunteer for any position (treasurer, secretary, committee etc.) you will be welcomed! If you do volunteer, please try to be available for the committee meetings on the fourth Thursday of each month.

The important jobs to be completed are the repeaters and beacon.

- Grant Simpson, ZL2BK