

Silent Key.

It is with regret that we begin this week, with news of a silent key.

The Hornsby and Districts Amateur Radio Club have advised of the passing of their friend and member, George Archibald VK2BGU, on Tuesday the 17th of March.

George was an amateur for many years, a life-long interest that started with a run-in with the Radio Inspector when he was 12 years old. More recently, he was looking for a local club and joined HADARC in July 2006. At the time George was retired but kept himself busy as a volunteer bus driver for a local retirement village – a job he only recently gave up when he decided it was time to surrender his bus driving licence; however, driving the bus was obviously something he enjoyed and we often listened to many entertaining bus-driving stories on our nets. His other interests included vintage radio and restoring old valve radio sets.

George was very active on our weekly 2m, 80m and 40m nets; always a bright, cheery voice but unfortunately, after suffering a stroke and heart attack earlier this year, his health quickly deteriorated over the past few months and he had to enter care.

We will miss his voice on air.

Please pause with us, while we remember George.

[pause 5 seconds]

Vale[va-LAY] George Archibald VK2BGU.

*Advised by John VK2ZOI
on behalf of the Hornsby and Districts Amateur Radio Club.*

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In the news from Amateur Radio New South Wales for this week;

The Board of Amateur Radio New South Wales has decided to cancel the March Trash & Treasure and Radio experimenter's Group meeting here at VK2WI Dural, which were scheduled for next Sunday the 29th March. While these are popular events, the decision to cancel these was taken with regard to the current public health directives. The AGM of ARNSW is scheduled for Saturday the 18th of April, and the Board is currently investigating means for electronic attendance or possible rescheduling of the meeting.

Many other Amateur Radio activities have been cancelled both in Australia and overseas in light of the current Covid-19 pandemic. The WIA Conference and AGM scheduled for May has been cancelled, and overseas the NZART mid-year conference and the Dayton Hamvention in the US.

In the past week, cancellations of events has included the Westlakes car boot sale, April HRSA April, and Last Wednesdays Waverley AO5 lecture.

*Tonight's bulletin contains many items from groups that are cancelling their events and activities. However, VK2WI News is planning to continue news bulletins for the present time. So while in-person events are being restricted, the great thing about Amateur Radio is that, we can still continue to be active on the air; and we want to hear from you about it.

Through our news bulletins, VK2WI News is planning to provide information to connect our listeners with activities and contacts that are still happening throughout the Amateur Radio community. So, if you or your club has a net or other on the air activity, let us know about it through the coming week.

You can email us at news@arnsw.org.au – we don't need formatted news items, just the details of the activity and contacts. With your help, we will start to produce activity reports from next week here on VK2WI News, to keep everyone in contact, on the air.

Just a note for anybody wishing to leave a message on the office telephone, 02 9651 1490 – in your message, please include a brief description of the nature of your enquiry, so that we can have the right person return your call.

In an update for ARNSW Members, Secretary Eric VK2VE sent out membership renewal notices; but these notices did not indicate the current membership fees. Fortunately, they remain unchanged; at \$20 for 2 years, or \$50 for 5 years. Our thanks to those members who have already renewed.

Last weekend, several candidates took part in foundation training and licence upgrades here at VK2WI Dural. Future training activities are currently suspended, so please direct enquiries to education@arnsw.org.au.

The John Moyle Contest continues this weekend, though with reduced participation of group operations.

The VK2WI News Team roster for the next quarter, will be drawn up soon. If you want to take part, please let us know of your availability by email to news@arnsw.org.au.

We have just passed through Equinox of equal day and night. On the first Sunday next month, Australia's South eastern states return back to Standard Time. VK2WI News maintains the same local times of 10am and 7.30pm, so HF propagation may change. If you have difficulties, news bulletins can be streamed live or downloaded from our website, at arnsw.org.au/audio. The server has recently had a software upgrade, which we hope will fix the connection issues that some listeners had reported to us.

Tonight's news bulletin is also being relayed via EchoLink, on the "HAM" conference server. Our thanks to John VK3HJQ, and the Australian and New Zealand EchoLink team; for making the service available to VK2WI News.

A reminder that the March ARNSW Trash and Treasure event - scheduled for Sunday the 29th has been cancelled.

ARNSW HF Operating Group

The recently established HF Operations group have been making use of Club radio facilities at the Dural site. Last Sunday, the HF Bushcomm dipole was reconfigured from an inverted Vee to a horizontal dipole at 18 metres. This was done with a very nice launching gun - powered by a ramset charge. Even the lightest charge could reach or exceed some of the Dural trees, which are in excess of 20 metres tall. The Bushcomm is now giving CW contacts to Japan and the US and sideband QSOs around VK and ZL.

Halyards have also been installed to allow for relocation of the 30 metre dipole, and restoration of the antenna for the VKE580 News relay service.

The ARNSW HF Operating Group activates VK2AWI every Monday - Public Holidays excepted - from 3pm until about 8:30pm, here at Dural. All ARNSW members interested in operating on HF, are invited to join in.

For more information, or to let us know if you are planning to attend, you can contact the group by email to HFgroup@arnsw.org.au.

Please note that the HF Operating Group, along with the ARNSW Library Management Team, are still active on Monday afternoon and evening. However, ongoing operations are subject to review as the Covid-19 public health situation develops. If there is a change to the activities, we will have updates here on VK2WI News.

Urunga Radio Convention

The Urunga Radio Convention Committee advises that this year's convention, planned for the 11th and 12 of April, has been cancelled. The cancellation is due to the restrictions and conditions placed upon the Convention by the various government authorities in the light of COVID-19 pandemic.

It is the first Urunga Convention that has failed in 72 years and it is a personal blow to the organising committee. The committee wishes to thank all our supporters and we will return at Easter in 2021.

*Ken VK2DGT
President, Urunga Radio Convention.*

Weekly Solar and Geophysical Report

For the period of the 13th to the 19th of March.

First, the summary;

Dates across the columns are	13 th	14 th	15 th	16 th	17 th	18 th	19 th
10cm flux	69	68	70	70	72	72	72
Fredericksburg Index (Afr)	6	2	3	3	4	4	10 estimated
Australian Index (Aaus)	5	1	3	3	4	6	9 estimated
T index	1	1	0	9	7	4	11

Solar activity was very low all week. Geomagnetic activity was quiet to unsettled on the 13th, quiet from the 14th to the 17th, quiet to unsettled again on the 18th, and quiet to active on the 19th.

F2 critical frequencies in the southern Australian region, remained mostly near predicted monthly values all week, with some periods of enhanced conditions observed; 25% after local dawn on the 15th, 25% after dawn and 30% during local night on the 16th, 20% after dawn and 30% during local night on the 17th, 20% after dawn and 25% during local night on the 18th, and 40% enhancement during local night on the 19th.

Now, the forecast for the 20th to the 26th of March;

Solar activity is expected to be very low.

Geomagnetic activity is expected to be at quiet to unsettled levels.

Maximum Usable Frequencies should remain mostly near predicted monthly values.

Data courtesy of Space Weather Services.

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What use is an F-call?

Tonight we continue with this series, written and produced by Onno VK6FLAB. Each episode looks at different aspects of the diverse hobby of Amateur Radio.

[Play File: E-FCAL095.wav]

Duration:2m13s

In: "What use is an F-call?"

Out: "I'm Onno VK6FLAB"

For more information about this series, including transcripts and useful resources for F-calls, Onno's website is; vk6flab.com, or follow him on Twitter, @VK6FLAB.

ARRL DX news

While travel restrictions have required the cancellation of some DXpeditions and other planned activities, there is still quite a bit of contesting and DX activity this week;

GERMANY; Special event station DM30RSV will be active from March 24 to October 30.

CAPE VERDE; Max, IZ4DPV is active as D4F from Sao Vicente until March 31. He will be active in the Russian DX contest and the upcoming CQ World Wide WPX SSB contest.

MARTINIQUE; Miguel, EA1BP will be active as FM/EA1BP from March 24 to 31. Activity will be on 160 to 6 metres using CW and SSB. This includes being an in the upcoming CQ World Wide WPX SSB contest.

CZECH REPUBLIC; , Special event stations OL700DKA, OL700CO and OL700LTV are active during 2020 to commemorate 700 years since the first written mention of the town of Dobruska. Activity is on the HF bands.

SEYCHELLES; Nick, G7EQM is active as S79EQM from Praslin Island, IOTA AF-024, until March 29. Activity is on 20 metres using SSB and FT8.

EGYPT; Tom, DL2RMC is active as SU9TH. Activity is currently on 40, 20, 15 and 10 metres using CW, SSB and FT8.

TURKEY; Special event call TC18GL is active until March 22 to commemorate the March 18th anniversary of the Gallipoli naval battle. In addition, look for clubs YM1KTR, YM1KE and YM1KAD to also be active. Activity is on the HF bands.

NAMIBIA; Pat, KI4SVM is active as V5/KI4SVM until March 28. Activity is holiday style on the HF bands using CW and SSB. This may include being active from SOTA references as well.

MEXICO, XE. Special event station 6E3MAYA is active until March 23 for the Equinoccio Maya from the Mexican states of Tabasco, Yucatan, Campeche and Quintana Roo.

VANUATU; Chris, VK2YUS will be active as YJ0CA from Efate, IOTA OC-035, until April 1. Activity will be on 40, 20, 15 and 10 metres. This includes an entry in the upcoming CQ World Wide WPX SSB contest.

THIS WEEKEND ON THE RADIO. The BARTG HF RTTY Contest, Russian DX Contest, NCCC RTTY Sprint, QRP 80-Metre CW Fox Hunt, NCCC CW Sprint, AGCW VHF/UHF Contest, Virginia QSO Party, Feld Hell Sprint, UBA Spring SSB Contest and NSARA Contest are all on this weekend.

The SKCC CW Sprint, CWops Mini-CWT Test, UKEICC 80-Metre CW Contest, Phone Fray and QRP 40-Metre CW Fox Hunt are scheduled for March 25.

WICEN News

WICEN NSW is a communications support squad of the NSW Volunteer Rescue Association. All WICEN Members encouraged to take advantage of the free courses offered by the Office of Emergency Management.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, WICEN is cancelling participation in all but emergency activations, and moving training and meetings to its amateur DMR and non-amateur radio resources.

Members are also encouraged to take advantage of the free courses offered by the Office of Emergency Management.

The Glow Worm Tunnel Marathon Weekend at Newnes is on June 13th and 14th. BSAR's Navshield is a bush navigation competition, which WICEN is eligible to compete in; it is on June 27th and 28th.

WICEN's website is at nsw.wicen.org.au. Facebook users will find an official WICEN NSW page, and an informal national WICEN group.

WICEN ACT is part of the Canberra Region Amateur Radio Club, supporting events in the ACT and Capital Country, and on the South Coast of NSW. The BMSC "NatCap" has been postponed, and the Canberra Two Day Walk is continuing in a modified format, without WICEN support. For more information, see the WICEN and Events pages on www.crarc.ampr.org.

WICEN Victoria is scheduled to support Memory Walk and Jog events, but these are subject to confirmation. The Duncan's Run 100 has been moved to October 10th, and the Kenda Motorbike Rally is on May 3rd at Eildon. The Mallee Rally has been cancelled, but for non Covid-19 related reasons. WICEN Victoria's weekly net is on each Tuesday at 8:30pm, on 3.6MHz and the website is at vic.wicen.org.au.

[OEM link; <https://www.emtraining.nsw.gov.au/>]

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Club News

We start this week with news from the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club.

The Club has cancelled Monthly General Meetings and Monthly Friday Night Get-Togethers until further notice, along with the weekly Wednesday morning working bees.

The planned VK2BOR participation in the John Moyle Memorial Field Day from the Camden Haven Airfield this weekend was cancelled.

The planned ORARC annual Field Day at the Wauchope Showground Hall on the Saturday and Sunday of the Queen's Birthday Long Weekend on the 6th & 7th of June, is being actively reviewed in the light of the rapidly evolving pandemic situation, but at this stage it is still planned to go ahead.

Last weekend the club conducted training for the Foundation licence and assessments for all grades of licence, but further Training and assessments are on hold.

In the absence of meetings, members and visitors are encouraged to participate in the club on air nets as often as possible. Access to VK2RPM is available via EchoLink for those outside the coverage area of the repeater. The club's mid-week net starts at 7:30pm on Thursday nights, and the weekend net starts at 9am on Sunday mornings. Both nets are on the VK2RPM 2 metre repeater on 146.7MHz, which requires a 91.5Hz sub-audible tone for access.

For more information about the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club, visit the website at orarc.org. The January 2020 issue of the club's bimonthly newsletter, Oxtales, is now available, and past issues are available on the website as well. Look for the March 2020 issue, which will be published soon. The club is also on Facebook; just search for Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club.

*Submitted by Henry VK2ZHE
For the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club.*

Central Coast Amateur Radio Club

The Club's executive team have decided to temporarily ceased public club operations and restrict access to the club rooms. All upcoming general meetings, Saturday gatherings and project days are on hold until further notice.

This decision has not been taken lightly, however, this is in line with other Amateur Radio clubs across Australia taking similar action including the cancellation of Amateur Radio associated events such as the WIA AGM in Tasmania and Gippstech in Victoria. The club gives their support to those impacted by these closures

All other lines of communications such as phone, email, radio and mind control are still open as normal and club admin duties will continue. On the bright side, this is a good time to be an amateur radio operator and we expect to see the bands a bit busier with more people staying home.

The Club is still planning for an MMDVM build day at a later date; while the club is currently closed, work can still proceed on ordering parts. The estimated cost including a Raspberry Pi computer is approximately \$150 AUD, which at current exchange rates is about 4 rolls of 3 ply toilet paper.

Club members and guests who may be interested in taking part are encouraged to contact our projects coordinator Tom via email at projects@ccarc.org.au; expressions of interest close on the 31st March.

The planned Foundation Training & Assessment weekend has also been cancelled; If you are interested in obtaining or upgrading your current licence, please contact Karen, our Education Coordinator, at education@ccarc.org.au.

Did you attend the 2020 Wyong Field Day? The club would love to see some of your photos taken to add to our collection. Please reach out to us at ccarc@ccarc.org.au.

The club's Thursday evening net hot topic for this week was "Building an effective dipole antenna and "what is your latest project kit." Bob VK2AOR described his new toy of a Spectrum Analyser that was built recently on a project day with the Blue Mountains ARC.

Do you have a suggestion for the clubs next weekly net topic or a burning question? Feel free to leave a comment on the club's page or reach out to the club via email.

Remember, you can watch the live stream from Facebook or join in via EchoLink using the *CCARCNSW* conference server.

You can find out more about the CCARC on the web, at ccarc.org.au.

Brad VK2NMZ

Vice-President, Central Coast Amateur Radio Club.

Westlakes Amateur Radio Club

Westlakes has a net every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 09:30am Local time; Its currently on 80metres, on 3565kHz.

Hunter Radio Group

Monthly meetings are currently cancelled, however the Group's Monday Night Broadcast continues.

The Group's Monday night broadcast starts at 7:30pm, on the 2 metre repeater 146.9MHz, and the 70cm repeater on 438.025MHz. Callbacks are taken after the broadcast.

*Regards from Rodney VK2CN
Secretary, Hunter Radio Group.*

Sydney ATV Group

The Sydney ATV repeater VK2RTS located at Lawson in the Blue Mountains, has recently been upgraded to High Definition. The output frequency has also been lowered by 1MHz, to 445.5MHz, to comply with ACMA national requirements when upgrading.

The repeater is active on Monday and Thursday nights from 7pm to around 8:45pm with liaison on the 147.325 plus offset repeater. All are welcome to call in with reports or help with receiving ATV.

Video is also streamed via the British Amateur TV Club web site; Just click on the members VK2 call sign at the above local times.

*Advised by John VK2ATU
on behalf of the Sydney ATV Group.*

Fisher's Ghost Amateur Radio Club

The next meeting of the Club has been cancelled.

The Club's weekly net, on Thursday evenings, starts at 7:30pm on the Club repeater, VK2RFG. The repeater frequency is 438.650MHz. It has a negative 7MHz input and a 91.5Hz tone is required for FM access. This repeater is mixed mode, supporting FM and Fusion, and is WIRES-X and Echolink enabled.

The Club's Facebook page can be found by searching for VK2FG, or to find out more about the Club, visit the website at fgarc.org.au.

*Submitted by Peter VK2PR
on behalf of the Fisher's Ghost Amateur Radio Club.*

St George Amateur Radio Society

The committee of the Society will be meeting electronically this evening, to discuss the impact to its immediate activities as a result of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Official correspondence will be issued to members shortly thereafter.

The Society took the decision earlier this week, not to field a team in this weekend's John Moyle Memorial Field Day contest. Also, the society will not be conducting its planned Foundation Licence course scheduled for May.

Both the Engadine VK2RLE and Mt Bindo VK2RDX repeaters remain in service, including the VK2RLE EchoLink node and we welcome members and guests to stay in contact using these services.

In addition, the SGARS 2m voice net continues every Thursday night commencing at 8pm on the VK2RLE 2m FM repeater where all are welcome.

*73 and Stay Safe
from the Committee of the St George Amateur Radio Society.*

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Summary of coming events

With the current public health situation, many events and meetings have been suspended.

The ARNSW Trash and Treasure and Radio Experimenter's Group Meeting, scheduled for next Sunday, has been cancelled.

The ARNSW AGM is still scheduled for April the 18th, and the ARNSW board is investigating the possibility of electronic attendance for members.

At the present time, ARNSW Library and HF Operations Group activity continues, subject to review as the public health situation develops.

Now more than ever, is the time for individual operators, club and groups, to get active on the air. If you have an activity or are trying to organise one, let us know here at VK2WI News and we will publicise it.

Send an email to news@arnsw.org.au with the details, or if you can't email, leave a message with the office on 02 9651 1490.

In April, Anzac Day is the 25th, and all Australian amateurs can use the AX prefix.