

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

While no events are currently planned at VK2WI Dural, and the site remains closed to visitors; you can still make contact via email, to office@arnsw.org.au, or by phone message to 02 9651 1490.

The first training weekend for ARNSW Education, will take place on the 10th and 11th of April. We would like to thank the members of the Waverley Amateur Radio Society education group for stepping in to assist in running this weekend. Enquires about training and assessments can be sent to our education team by email, to education@arnsw.org.au.

Later in this bulletin, we have a summary of on-air activities from Sydney and across the state. You can let us know what is happening in your area by email; to news@arnsw.org.au – we don't need full items, just the details of the activity and contacts. We would also welcome reports on the outcome of recent group activities, which we can report to our listeners.

We also wish to remind our listeners of some telephone services that are available, if you currently have any health concerns – the National COVID hotline is 1800 020 080, providing general advice; if you are feeling unwell, Healthdirect is on 1800 022 222. Both services are available 24 hours a day; and are a free call from most telephone services.

Once again this week, we welcome listeners on the EchoLink “HAM” conference, and the Australian & New Zealand EchoLink Network. Callbacks will also be taken tonight on the network after the bulletin. Our thanks to John VK3HJQ and the Australian & New Zealand EchoLink Network team, for making this relay available to VK2WI News.

[Play File: 14-E-ID1.wav]

Weekly Solar and Geophysical Report

For the period of the 19th to the 25th of March.

First, the summary;

| Dates across the columns are | 19 th | 20 th | 21 st | 22 nd | 23 rd | 24 th | 25 th |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 10cm Flux | 74 | 80 | 77 | 80 | 79 | 84 | 79 |
| Fredericksburg Index (Afr) | 6 | 20 | 17 | 6 | 9 | 11 | 16 estimated |
| Australian Index (Aaus) | 1 | 17 | 12 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 6 estimated |
| T index | 14 | 17 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 8 | 17 |

Solar activity was very low all week.

Geomagnetic activity started out quiet on the 19th before becoming quiet to active with isolated minor storm periods on both the 20th and 21st. Quiet conditions returned from the 22nd to the 24th, with quiet to unsettled conditions observed on the 25th.

F2 critical frequencies in the southern Australian region, remained mostly near predicted monthly values, but with some periods of depressions. Depression of 20% was observed on the 21st; 20% during the day and 35% on the night of the 22nd; 25% during local night of the 23rd; and depression of 15% during the local daylight hours, of the 24th.

Now, the forecast for the 26th of March to the 1st of April;

Solar activity is expected to be very low to low.

Geomagnetic activity may reach active levels on the 28th and 29th, with quiet to unsettled conditions expected otherwise.

Maximum Usable Frequencies are likely to be briefly depressed after local dawn on the 28th, otherwise near predicted monthly values.

Data courtesy of Space Weather Services.

Solar Flux Index update

Here are the updated Solar Flux Index (SFI) figures for this week.

Having finished February, we saw a;

Minimum of 70, Average of 74, and a Maximum of 81
With peak dates from the 21st to the 28th.

So far for March, we are expecting a;

Minimum of 70, Average of 75 and a Maximum of 84
With peak dates from the 5th to the 15th; and the 28th to the 30th.

And looking ahead to April, we are expecting a;

Minimum of 70, Average of 75, and a Maximum of 81
With peak dates from the 3rd to the 7th; and the 18th to the 24th.

Update with thanks to Noel, VK2FUL.

[using daily data updates from:

<http://www.swpc.noaa.gov/products/usaf-45-day-ap-and-f107cm-flux-forecast>]

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: 15-FCAL108.wav]

Duration 2m43s

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

Several stations are on air this weekend especially for the CQ World Wide WPX SSB Contest;

BONAIRE; Martin, W1MD plans to be active as PJ4G.

ITALY; Raffaele, IH9YMC plans to be active from Pantelleria Island, IOTA AF-018, as a Single Op entry.

PUERTO RICO; Yuri, N2TTA will be active as WP3C in the contest as a Single Op entry.

TAIWAN; Members of Amateur Radio Taipei will be active as BP0P from Taoyuan City as a Multi/2 entry.

THAILAND; Operators E24OYI, E25KAE, E29TGW, E20NKB and E21EIC will be active as E2A in the contest as a Multi/Single entry.

TURKEY; Members of the GITRAD Contest Team will be active as TC7G, as a Multi Op/Low Power entry.

... and in other DX activity this week;

BAHAMAS; Operators AA7JV, KN4EEI, W6IZT and W8HC are active as C6AGU from Water Cay, IOTA NA-001, until March 30. Activity is on the HF bands and includes activity as a Multi Op entry in the contest.

GUADELOUPE; Philippe, F1DUZ is active as FG4KH until April 1, including an entry in the contest.

GREECE; Savas, SV2AEL is active with special call J42A until March 31. Activity is on 160 to 6 metres using CW, SSB, RTTY, FT8 and FT4, and includes a Single Op entry in the contest.

MALDIVES; Mats, RM2D will be active as 8Q7MS from Ukulhas Island, Alifu Alifu Atoll, IOTA AS-013, until April 10. Activity will be on 40 to 15 metres using CW and some SSB.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA; Lee, HL1IWD will be active as HL1IWD/5 from Koje Island, IOTA AS-081, from April 2 to 4. Activity will be on 40 to 20 metres using CW and some FT8.

BULGARIA; Special event station LZ200GSR will be active from Sofia from April 1 to 30 to celebrate the birth 200 years ago of Georgia Sava Rakovski, a historian, and activist for the independence of Bulgaria.

TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS; Operators Jim, K4QPL and Eric, NR4O are active as VP5/home calls from Providenciales. They will be active as VP5M as a Multi Single/Low Power entry in the CQ World Wide WPX SSB contest.

INDONESIA; Operators YB5QZ, YB5WIR, YB5OB, YC5TEB and YD5NDR are active as 7D5RI from Rupert Island, IOTA OC-245, until March 28. Activity is on 80 to 10 metres using CW, SSB and FT8.

NICARAGUA; Myron, KN6GHM is active as H7/KN6GHM from Guanacastillo until March 30. Activity is holiday style on 80 to 10 metres using SSB. He and Trevis, YN7ZTR will be active as YN1YN in the CQ World Wide WPX SSB contest with two stations.

ASCENSION ISLAND; Tev, TA1HZ is active as ZD8HZ throughout 2021, and plans to be active in the CQ World Wide WPX SSB contest as well.

THIS WEEKEND ON THE RADIO. The CQ World Wide WPX SSB Contest, QRP 80-Metre CW Fox Hunt, NCCC RTTY Sprint, NCCC CW Sprint, K1USN Slow Speed CW Test, FOC CW QSO Party and UBA Spring 6-Metre Contest will certainly keep contesters busy this weekend.

The OK1WC CW Memorial, K1USN Slow Speed CW Test and QCX CW Challenge are scheduled for March 29.

The RTTYOPS Weeksprint, QCX CW Challenge and Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest are scheduled for March 30.

The UKEICC 80-Metre CW Contest, CWops Mini-CWT Test, Phone Fray and QRP 40-Metre CW Fox Hunt are scheduled for March 31.

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WICEN News

Coming WICEN activities include Dementia Australia's Memory Walk and Jog events; in Penrith on the 9th of May and at Leichhardt Oval, Lilyfield, on the 23rd of May. Volunteers are still needed for both events, which are an ideal training ground in emergency communications for WICEN members.

The Glow Worm Tunnel Marathon is held in and around Newnes and the Wolgon Valley area in the Blue Mountains, on the weekend of the 18th to the 20th of June.

Training for this event will be held in the Newnes area, on the 11th of April, in the form of an on-site radio survey. This is ideal training for members who are looking for a more technically challenging exercise.

WICEN weekly voice nets are on Sunday evenings, starting at 6pm, on either the Chatswood 2 metre repeater, or the Kurrajong 70cm repeater. Please check the WICEN website for details.

Please note, the Berowra 70 cm repeater is temporarily off-air.

Digital messaging sessions continue Monday evenings from 8pm, using WINLINK and JS8CALL.

WICEN NSW, is a communications support squad of the NSW Volunteer Rescue Association. The website is at nsw.wicen.org.au.

WICEN ACT is part of the Canberra Region Amateur Radio Club. Their website includes WICEN and general Club information; its at www.crarc.org.au.

WICEN Victoria has a weekly net is on each Tuesday at 8:30pm, on 3.6MHz. More details on the website at vic.wicen.org.au.

[Messaging software at: <http://js8call.com/> and <http://winlink.org/>]

Club News

We start this week, with news from the HARAOA radio club.

The club is planning a DXpedition for early November 2021, to Willis Island, VK9W, for about 11 days.

Situated about 450km east of Cairns in the Coral Sea, Willis Island is in the top most-wanted DXpedition sites in the world.

If you're interested in this exciting adventure and enjoy working with experienced DX operators; you can send an expression of interest and a request for further information, to Tommy VK2IR via email; vk2ir@vk2ir.com.

Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club

The April general meeting of the Club is planned for 2pm on Saturday the 10th, at the SES Building in Port Macquarie. Note that this is the second Saturday of the month, as the first weekend is Easter. The meeting will be held in accordance with the club's COVID-19 Safety Plan.

The Friday night get together that had been planned for Friday the 19th March was cancelled as the SES and the Emergency Operations Centre were activated in response to the major storm and flooding events in Port Macquarie and surrounding areas. The response has continued throughout the week, with the SES and the Emergency Operations Centre still operational, 24 hours a day.

The club's 2021 50th Anniversary calendar has proven to be very popular, and a few copies are still available.

Now is the time to plan to attend the Club's 2021 annual Field Day. It is on Saturday and Sunday the 12th and 13th of June, during the Queen's Birthday long weekend. Please plan and book accommodation early, as the Port Macquarie area is certain to be even more popular than usual this year.

There are two club nets each week; the mid-week net starts at 7:30pm on Thursday nights, and the weekend net starts at 9am Sunday mornings. Both nets are on the VK2RPM 2 metre repeater on 146.7MHz, which requires a 91.5Hz sub-audible tone for access. VK2RPM is also available via EchoLink, for those outside the coverage area of the repeater.

For more information about the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club, visit the website at orarc.org. The site contains a wealth of Amateur Radio items in addition to the club information. The newly published March 2021 web edition of the club's bimonthly newsletter "Oxtales" is now online, and past issues can be viewed on the website as well. 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

A reminder about “Mayham”, on Sunday the 30th of May 2021 at Wyong Race Course. If you are looking to attend, be a trader or exhibitor, email the team at mayham@ccarc.org.au. For the latest news and information regarding this event, you can check the website www.mayham.org.au, as well as updates in future VK2WI bulletins.

Yesterday saw a Foundation Licence training session at the clubrooms, with examinations conducted today. Good luck to all the candidates, and thanks to club Education Facilitator, Karen VK2AKB. The next education event is planned to take place during Mayham, on the last weekend of May; if you are interested in obtaining your licence or upgrading, contact the club’s education facilitator Karen VK2AKB, at education@ccarc.org.au.

Yesterday Steve VK2SKC, Henrick VK2FTDR and Brad VK2NMZ attended the Westlakes Amateur Radio Club car boot sale, with a van load of items. The day was a success with lots of bargains to be found, a fantastic BBQ and some great coffee. The grounds were packed with lots of people running around with their hands full of goodies. The club thanks Westlakes ARC team for hosting the event and will be sure to attend again next time.

Afterwards, Brad VK2NMZ and Henrick VK2FTDR headed out to the Newcastle coastline and operated Portable from up near Fort Scratchley, a former defence installation built in 1882. What a great way to see the afternoon out. Several members of the public were in awe over how clear some European and USA stations were coming through on 20 metres.

Adrian VK2ABS hosted the SSTV net last Friday, on the VK2RAG WICEN 2 metre repeater 147.125MHz. Check-ins included Chris VK2CJB, Dan VK2GG and Alan VK2MG. It’s fantastic to see many operators sharing the same enjoyment from SSTV as Adrian does. The next SSTV net is scheduled for Friday the 9th of April, and feedback on this net is welcome; you can reach the club directly via email to; ccarc@ccarc.org.au.

This week the Club’s Thursday evening net this week was hosted by Jaye VK2FOMG with a discussion on what other hobbies do you enjoy? As it turns out, several stations share very similar passions. Thank you to Jaye for facilitating the net.

Bob VK2AOR and Dave VK2KFU continue the clubs daily Morning Tea net; whilst check-ins are lightening up a little as many return to the workplace, the net is still well attended. A huge thanks to Bob and Dave for running these nets, it sure brightens up everyone's day. Did you know the net has been running for over 12 months now?

Both nets are on the VK2RAG 2 Metre repeater, 146.725MHz with a 91.5Hz sub audible tone. EchoLink access is via the CCARCNSW conference server, and IRLP on node 9509.

The club is looking for more operators to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the RAAF. This is a great opportunity to get out on the bands and share in celebrating this momentous occasion, operating portable or otherwise. If you are interested in participating, please contact the Club directly.

You can find out more about the CCARC on the web at ccarc.org.au; or on social media by searching for Central Coast Amateur Radio Club. Remember to give the club a "like" to follow for updates.

Brad VK2NMZ

Vice-President and Publicity, Central Coast Amateur Radio Club.

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Blue Mountains Amateur Radio Club

The next Foundation Licence training weekend will be on the weekend of the 10th and 11th of April. For more information or to book, you can contact the education team via email to education@bmarc.org.

Standard and Advanced licence upgrade courses have moved to Wednesday evenings, still at 7:30pm, at the clubhouse. Foundation or Standard Licence holders are encouraged to come these very informative courses. A gold coin donation is requested, to go towards the tea and coffee served during the night. An exam will be scheduled toward the end of the school year.

The clubhouse is now open every first and third Saturday from 10am, providing an opportunity for visitors to seek assistance with personal projects, take part in maintenance of clubhouse facilities or just to say hello over a cup of tea and biscuits.

On air nets continue weekly; on 80 metres from 8pm Tuesday evenings, on 3543 kHz, on Wednesday night from 8pm, on the club's 2 metre repeater on 147.050MHz with a 123Hz tone for access, and on the 6 metre repeater, 53.875MHz.

More information about the club can be found on the website, at www.bmarc.org.

*73 from James VK2GOH
Publicity Officer, Blue Mountains Amateur Radio Club.*

Fisher's Ghost Amateur Radio Club

The next meeting of the Club is coming up this Wednesday the 31st of March, in Block M at the Campbelltown School of Performing Arts, Beverley Rd. Campbelltown, commencing at 7:30pm.

Visitors wishing to learn more about the hobby of amateur radio are most welcome to attend.

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.

The Club's Facebook page can be found by searching for VK2FG, or to find out more about the Club's activities, 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 Society continues with virtual gatherings; the next is planned for Wednesday the 7th of April. Login details will be on the society's website shortly.

Greg VK2GSB has been looking into small form factor SDRs and stumbled across the HackRF One, an open source transceiver project designed for experimentation. Although not a dongle, the HackRF One is a reasonably small form factor radio that connects to a computer via USB. It doesn't come with any software as one of the project's aims is for it to help experimenters learn about radio. Greg thought that sounded like a perfect Amateur Radio project and dived in.

At the April gathering, Greg will provide an overview of the HackRF One SDR and how to get it up and running. In addition to this, Greg will also provide some results of his experiments using the powerful Raspberry Pi 4 in place of a PC. Spoiler alert - some assembly was required.

Further information about The St George Amateur Radio Society can be found on the website, at sgars.org, or follow us on Facebook.

Peter VK2EMU

Publicity Officer for the St George Amateur Radio Society.

Hornsby and Districts Amateur Radio Club

The next mid-meeting of the club will be an informal dinner on Tuesday the 13th of April, at Magpies' Club, opposite Waitara Station.

The next general meeting, on April 27th will be back at Mt Colah Community Centre, starting at 8pm.

International Marconi Day this year is on the UTC day of the 24th of April, and on the 24th and 25th HADARC will activate the only Australian station, VK2IMD. This station marks the reception of the first direct message from the UK to Australia, sent from north-west Wales, to Fisk's home in Wahroonga, by Marconi.

The Club's website has up to date details on club activities, plus contact information and the Covid Safety plan; it's at www.hadarc.org.au. The club has a group on Facebook, which can be found by searching for VK2MA, and on twitter, @VK2MA.

The Club's 2 metre repeater, VK2RNS on 147.250 MHz, is connected to Allstarlink and is available on EchoLink.

The Club's three regular nets continue each week. Monday's net starts at 8pm on the VK2RNS 2 metre repeater. The 80-metre net is on Wednesday evenings on 3608.5 kHz, also from 8pm, and Morning Tea with HADARC is on or near 7106 kHz from 9am on Fridays.

*Submitted by Julian VK2YJS
HADARC Publicity Officer.*

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Activities on the air

Oxley Region ARC nets 7:30pm Thursday, 9am Sunday. VK2RPM repeater, 146.7Mhz with 91.5Hz tone.

Great Lakes Radio Club weekly net 7pm Monday on VK2RGL, 147.1MHz.

Westlakes nets Monday, Wednesday and Friday; 9:30am on 3565kHz.

Hunter Radio Group VK2AWX News 7:30pm Monday, on 146.9Mhz and 438.025MHz. Meeting net Wednesday 7:30pm on 146.9MHz.

Central Coast ARC net Thursday night on VK2RAG 146.725Mhz, 91.5Hz; also Echolink *CCARCNSW*.

Amateur Radio Central West Group afternoon tea net 4pm daily; Monday and Friday night net at 8pm, on VK2RCW. HF net 8pm Wednesday 3653kHz.

Illawarra ARS Nets - Tuesday at 8:30pm on 80m, 3666kHz. Saturday 9:30am on VK2RMP 146.850 and VK2RUW on 146.675.

Blue Mountains ARC nets 8pm Tuesday on 3543kHz, 8pm Wednesday on VK2RBM, 147.050MHz with 123Hz tone and 53.875MHz.

WICEN nets on Sunday evenings from 6pm.

Waverley ARS net 8pm Monday on VK2RBV, 438.1125MHz. Activities online and in person, see website for details.

Fishers Ghost ARC net 7:30pm Thursdays on VK2RFG, 438.65MHz with - 7MHz offset and 91.5Hz tone required, also on Echolink.

St George ARS net 8pm Thursday, on VK2RLE 146.8MHz.

HADARC Monday night 8pm on VK2RNS, 147.25MHz, Wednesday from 8pm on 3608.5kHz, Friday 9am on 7106kHz.

Manly-Warringah Meetings return every Wednesday from 7:30pm.