

THE MUSE



-----For JULY 2024-----

The newsletter of the MUSICK POINT RADIO GROUP (INC.) NZART BRANCH 86
Incorporating The Society for the Preservation of Amplitude Modulation (SPAM)
and **Green Radios On The Air (GROTA) News.**

Musick Point Memorial Radio Station, Bucklands Beach, Auckland. Call Sign-ZL1ZLD.

BRANCH 86 NZART NET- TUESDAYS, 7.30PM, 145.775 MHz, Musick Point Repeater. All welcome!

GROTA A.M. Calling Frequency- 7.158MHz

SPAM Remote Receiver - <http://spamnz.zapto.org:8901/>

Website- <https://musickpointradio.org> Webmaster-Neil ZL1NZ.

SPAM A.M. (ZL6AM or ZL1ZLD) Nets- Fridays 8.30PM, on 3.850MHz, and

Wednesdays at 11.30 Hrs, **7.125MHz. NOTE the CHANGE to 40 METERS**

Editor- Martyn, ZL3CK.

Meeting- Second Sunday of the Month (Except May-Third Sunday, to avoid Mothers' Day)

NEXT MEETING- **Sunday July 14th at 1pm. Coffee and tea provided!**



Is it straight?? Aerial pole trials at Musick Point. **Rob ZL4ROB** demonstrating his new portable aerial to **John ZL1OJ** and **Dave ZL1DL** on a recent Sunday. Roll on summer!

From the Chair-

Another month flies by and we seem to be accelerating towards the Matariki holiday weekend at a high rate of knots. Pleiades, the “Seven Sisters” becomes visible in the early morning sky to the North East, rising above the horizon at about 6:30, located inside the constellation of Taurus (the Bull). Slightly more to the East you will see the constellation: Orion. Not that it matters, but most of the popular constellations in the Southern skies are upside down to us, having been ‘named’ in the Northern hemisphere. The Seven Sisters were said to be the daughters of the titan Atlas and the sea nymph Pleione. These two stars are also to be found in the group but are slightly less significant. A useful sky map that I found is at this URL: <https://www.timeanddate.com/astronomy/night/new-zealand/auckland>

What’s the difference between Iron Man and Aluminium Man? Iron Man stops the bad guys; Aluminium Man only foils their plans.

Having been away from the station last Sunday, I am looking forward to being there this week to catch up with everyone and see the progress made with the big clear out. I see, on the website, that quite a bit has happened and there’s a photograph showing a few people sitting on the edge of a very large skip which has had a fairly amount of redundant stuff added to it. I expect that the skip will have been filled and removed by the weekend. Next to go will be the garage and nearby DG bunker. Just when we were thinking of renting them out as quality accommodation – as if!

When the inventor of the USB stick dies, they’ll gently lower the coffin, then pull it back up, turn it around, and lower it again.

It has been a bit quiet for me on the radio front as I have been the main support at work, for a few weeks while my partner in the “Systems Admin Section” has been on leave. Sometimes it can be quite easy going with work to be done and no fires to fight, while at other times, all hell breaks loose and it is all fires with little time to do any productivity improvement developments. The last week has been really rough while a new client is to be brought on board and all sorts of testing has been required. As usual, things are running quite late while one of the new client’s main customers insisted on whole strings of totally ridiculous tests to ensure that our system got the product pricing correct. I say ridiculous because we only store the products and send them where the order tells us. It is the client’s system that has always handled pricing information, and always will. Anyway, a couple of late evenings have been the result, with me unable to do anything from home, so sitting at work waiting for test orders to pass through three separate systems, in Australia, before showing up in our system. Completing each order in our test system only took about three minutes, then I had to wait for another. I am glad that it’s over.

Last week, I did manage to tidy up an ongoing issue with my dual band J-pole. The outer braid of the RG58 coax keeps breaking away from the feedpoint at the aerial. I pulled it apart and, with the help of a copious dollup of hot glue and a well-placed zip-tie, managed to satisfy myself that it should last “forever”, just as I had thought the last two times. Oh well.

A priest, a rabbit and a minister walk into a bar. The bartender asks the rabbit: “What’ll ya have?” The rabbit says: “I dunno. I’m only here because of bloody Autocorrect.”

I’M SO OLD THAT

I have dialled a rotary phone (that doesn’t have an answering machine), recorded a song that I love off a transistor radio onto a tape recorder, watched a black and white TV (with less than two channels) that had foil on the rabbit ear antenna, taken a long walk without counting the steps, and eaten food of which I did not take pictures.

That’s it for this month. Take care, stay warm and safe.

Until next month:

73, and call CQ

David, ZL1DRV

MPRG News- In the Bin!



John ZL10J, Graham ZL1TOF, and Harry ZL1BK In the bin at Musick Point.



It's a big bright orange one fellas, and there's room for a lot more junk!

The recent flurry of Club activity with new members joining has continued apace! We are delighted to welcome new members **Andrew ZL1WJQ, Rosscoe ZL1AFF, Keith ZL1BQE, Brian ZL3BHS** (GROTA , Chrischurch) and **Murray ZL1MBZ** this month. We will need an enlarged tea room at this rate!

Those of you who intend staying as members, it would be appreciated, if you have not yet done so, send in your completed Sub form and the Sub. ASAP so you can vote at the next meeting! Thank you.

The **Big Cleanup** has finally commenced! Not before time you might well say. Much derelict equipment which 'might come in useful sometime,' but hasn't in the last 30 years, is now resting in the "skip". When last seen, the huge bin was actually full to overflowing. The garage and 'dangerous goods' sheds are to be demolished, so a monumental cleanout of those has also happened. A 300Kg trailer load of recyclable metal of various types was taken through very busy traffic by **Maurice ZL1MPU** and **Martyn ZL3CK** on Monday last. A gratifyingly decent stack of cash (remember that?) was returned for the club. There are another two or three trailer loads yet to follow, but as we were all rather 'beggared' after all the heavy lifting, we will allow some recovery time before another load...the trailer also needs a WoF..off to the tea room for a cuppa!

Rob ZL4ROB continues to amaze with his multiple ham- related activities. Not only is he now leading the charge to form a Branch 86 AREC group, but he's building up a portable HF setup, which will be a POTA/emergency station. **Dave ZL1DL** has constructed a compact interface (see June 'Muse') that will connect your "Windows" computer to any radio, so emails can be exchanged without the internet. Ideal in an emergency! (We just hope we never need to use it in earnest).

Last Month's quiz-

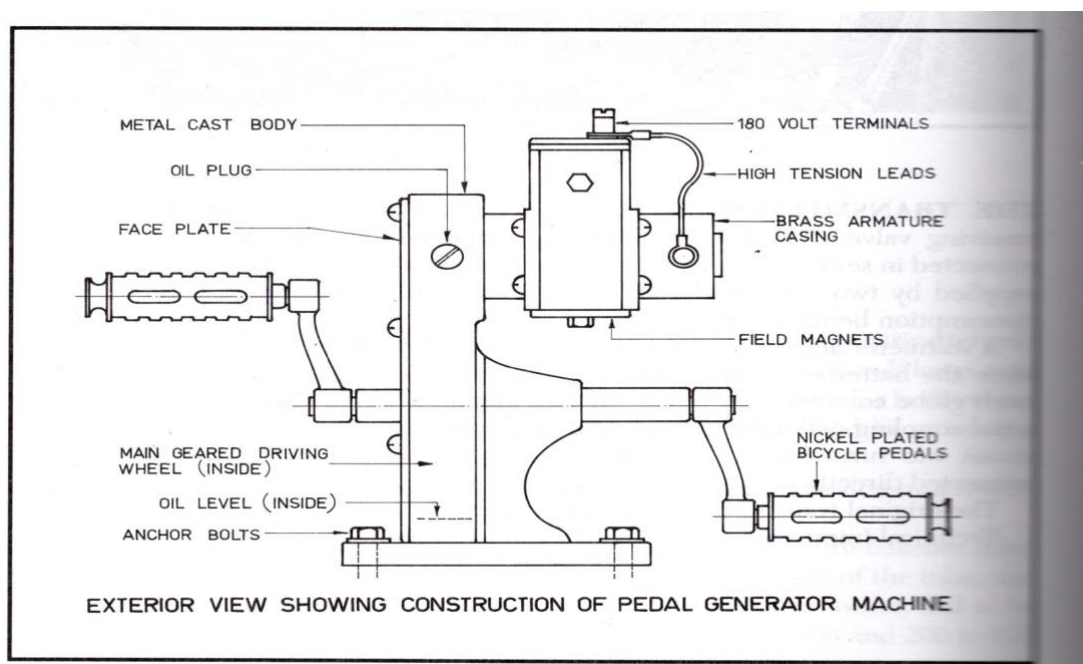
The answer to the Question on page 7/9 is: Alfred Hermann Traeger OBE

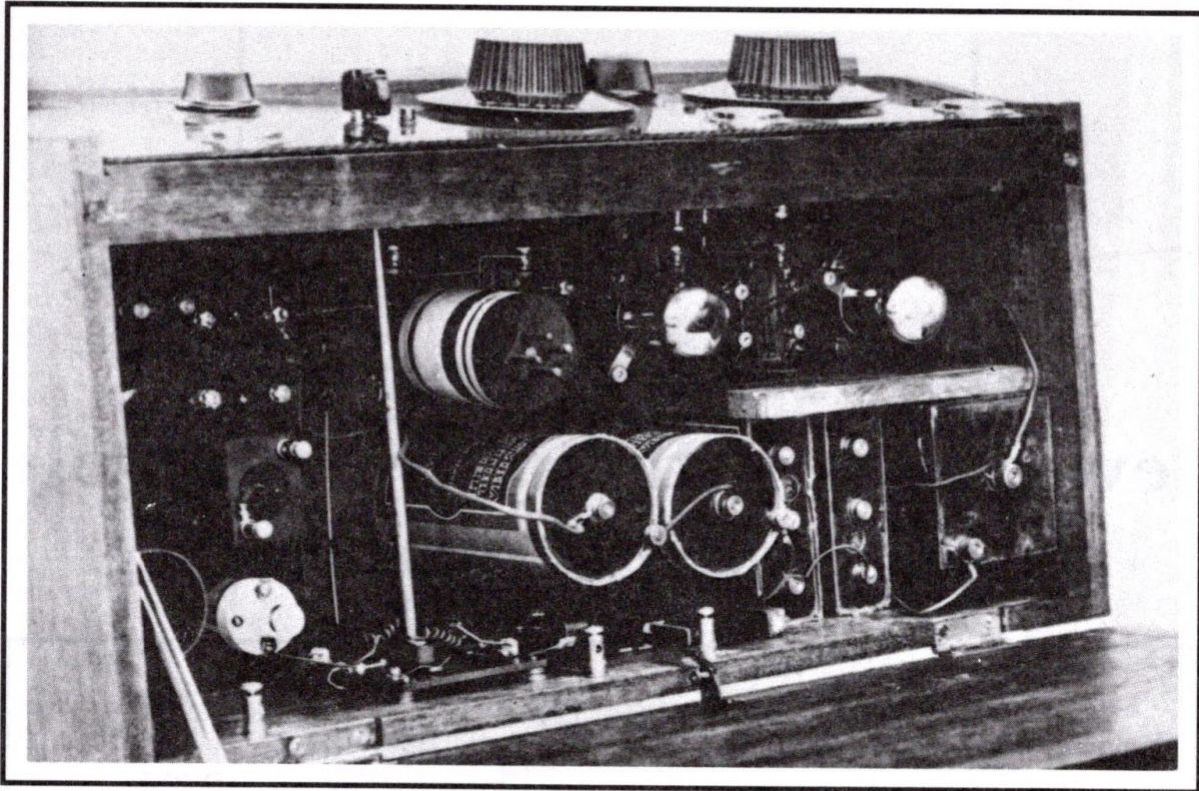
Mr. Alf Traeger transmitting by a pedal-powered wireless. Where are his headphones? (Good question Graham). From 1926 Traeger worked for Flynn to develop radio equipment for outback families to get medical attention. Radio experiments and the first official flight for the Flying Doctor service took place in 1928.

How did I find out? I used Google (one of very few times) image search.

73's

Graham Baker





Interior view of original pedal wireless set.

THE TRANSMITTER was crystal controlled using a Philips Type B 205 receiving valve. Bias for the grid was obtained by a choke and resistance, connected in series across the grid and negative of the filament. The filament was supplied by two 1.5-volt dry cells connected in series through a rheostat, the consumption being about .15 amps.

A voltmeter across the filament, in series with a push-button switch indicated when the batteries required renewal, and the aerial current was indicated by a torch globe connected in series with the aerial. The plate coil together with the aerial coupling coil were wound on a five-centimetre bakelite tube, and the tank circuit was turned on by a small midge condenser. A two mf condenser was connected directly across the generator terminals.

The original transmitting frequency was 88 metres (3.4 MHz).

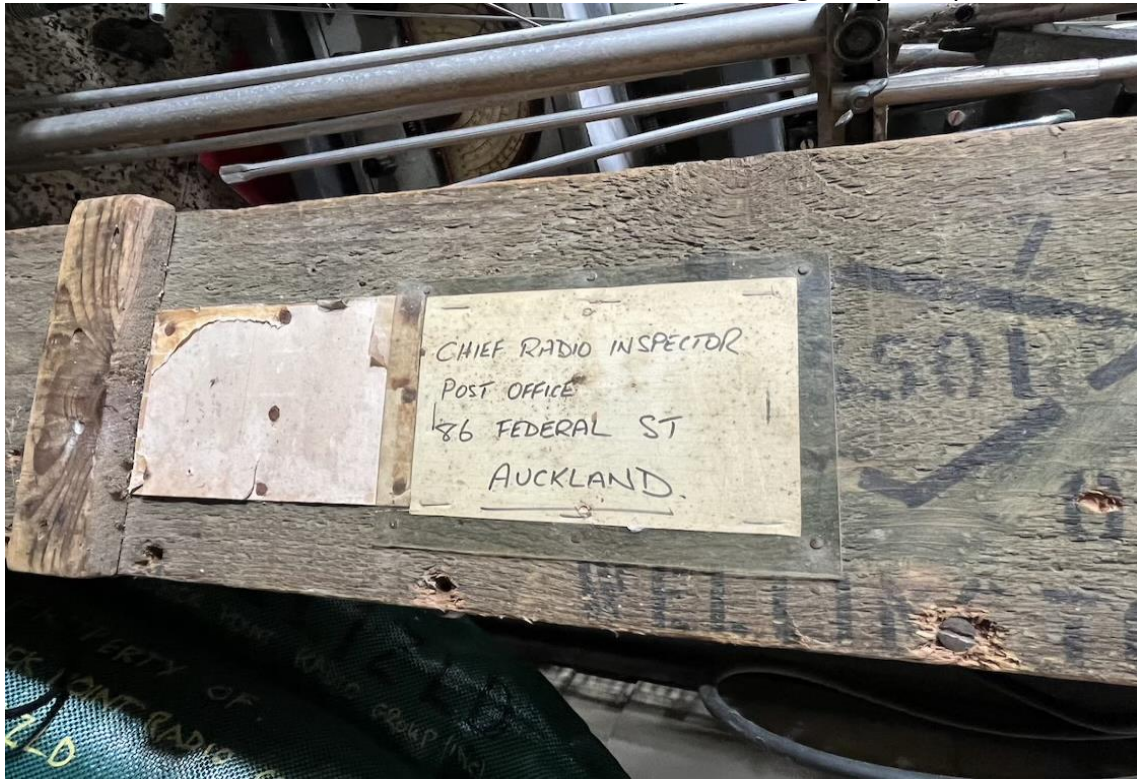
Technical improvements were effected in 1930 and succeeding years.

The above page is from the book "Traeger- The Pedal Radio Man" By Rev. Fred McKay, 1996. Fred was a Presbyterian Minister of Religion who served with the Australian Inland Mission. Rev. John Flynn of the AIM developed the original idea of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, founded in 1928, and Alf Traeger developed the pedal radios which made it finally possible to call for help across the enormous distances of the Australian outback. (We have little concept here in tiny New Zealand of the distances-unless you have been there and felt the isolation and lonlieness).

So, the No.48 pedal generator was not a new thing in 1942.

A Mysterious Green Box at Musick Point-This Month's Quiz-

This had been sitting quietly in the 'Generator Room' for 'some time' and was recently opened up-like Tutankahmun's tomb, we held our breaths lest something nasty escaped...

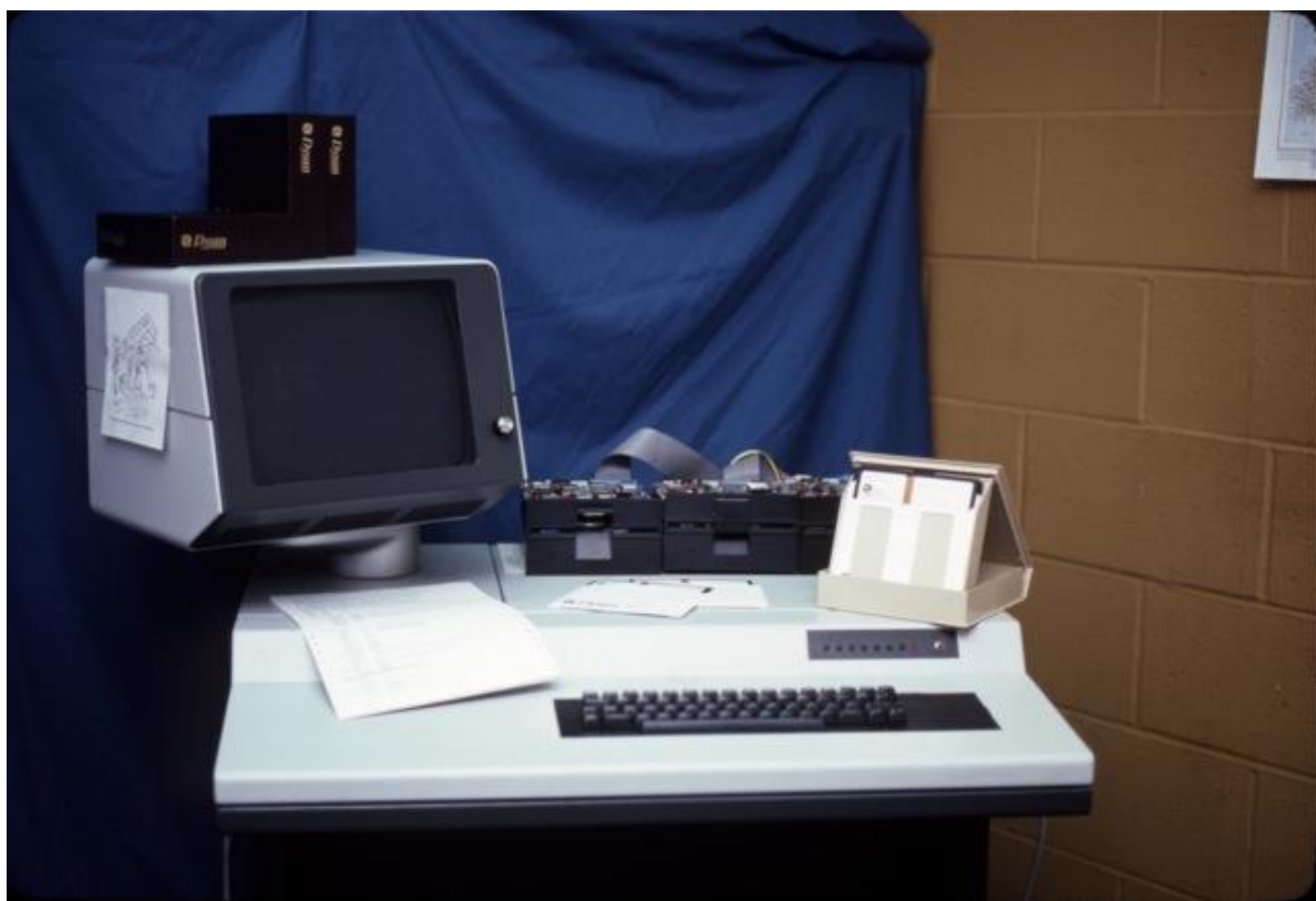


We had hoped for some ZC1 parts, but clearly something more to do with the Chief Radio Inspector. (Inspector Morse perhaps?)Read On.....

From **Mark, ZL1MRT**- Recent activities at Musick Point have been about clearing out old junk. Amongst the accumulated equipment was an interesting old portable dipole antenna encased in a wooden box and labelled as belonging to the P.O. radio inspectorate.

It vaguely reminded me of a personal encounter I'd had with the Post Office Radio Inspectors some 40 years earlier ...

In the 1980's after returning to NZ I brought with me a home-assembled computer which had become an essential tool in my academic work. The machine, based on a Central Data Computer board with 32kBytes of RAM and clocked at just 2MHz, was assembled into a surplus Siemens console and equipped with three 80kByte Shugart floppy drives as well as a Diablo daisy-wheel printer. This was especially useful as I was writing up my PhD thesis at the time.



However, operating this in the top room of my parents' home, it was ultimately identified as causing interference with a neighbour's television reception. P.O. Radio Inspectors arrived out of the blue sometime late in 1983? to identify the unusual source of VHF interference.

After setting up equipment in the front 'garden' the source was ultimately identified to be the computer! It would be interesting now if **anyone could identify either of the two people operating the equipment** pictured below. **(Dear Readers, this is this month's quiz)**



Ahah! There is that green box! And those short aerial sections are now assembled. That test gear looks a bit precarious....



To resolve the interference problem it was agreed the computer should be removed from its residential location to the UoA Engineering School, and to my knowledge no further complaints were ever received?
(PS the computer may be at MOTAT by now-if it has been lucky..)

The Wednesday ZL1ZLD AM net now only on 40 meters has been a great success, with much better signals at least 4 S-points better with minimal QRM. The 80 meter ZL6AM Friday net hasn't been so good, The usual net controller has been overseas for the last few weeks so they had to cope without him! ZL3CK is feeling the pressure...

A Kiwi SDR for SPAM-

Contact has been made with the local producer of the latest version, and an order has been placed. We are told they may be available in July. The plan is to purchase it with the SPAM money, as discussed at two of the last SPAM conference meetings. It will probably be installed (initially at least) at the Musick Point Radio Station using a spare dual band dipole, but other options are possible. A South Island location would be desirable..

It will be your SDR, other locations can be considered. You will be updated as things progress.

From **Chris, ZL4AV-**

I have moved home to Springvale, Whanganui 4501.

I have just done some testing with a friend up in New Plymouth - **Colin, ZL2EA**
He was running around 600w AM into a plain 40m wire dipole on lower 40m band.
The signal quality down here in Whanganui from him was amazing!!

Colin did express some interest in AM net. He is fortunate to have a very nice linear amp of commercial quality .. I've forgotten actual details, but it was in use on Campbell? Island..(Now there's story to be told- Editor)

I still am running my ICOM 756 Pro3 and at present just "barefoot".

It is taking me a while to really settle into my new abode, but I have a handy little office out front .. a bit similar to my (previous) New Plymouth home really.

OK will call a halt and wait for response.

Big 73 from me!

Chris, ZL4AV

Chris was good copy at Musick Point a couple of Wednesdays ago, so the end fed is working ok.

Looking to buy, or sell a Radio Bargain or Treasure?

Then you should check out the ZLHam free amateur radio advertisement website!

<https://ZLham.net.nz>

There are some rare and valuable items for sale, have a browse- you may be surprised!

GROTA NEWS with Kelvin ZL3KB-

NZART ANNUAL CONFERENCE- As this year's NZART conference was to be held in a military museum, the GROTA team were asked to setup a display of our Green Radio equipment for viewing by the general public. Better than just a display, we embarked on some Green Radio activities to engage the punters.

Firstly, "Tune It Up", was a chance to try tuning a WS21 transmitter, with prizes for the most accurate frequency.

Next was "Walk and Talk It Up" where the public could try wearing a WW2 manpack radio and even receive messages. Lastly "Crank It Up" gave the kids a chance to use a hand crank generator to power a 50Watt bulb and radio; and yes, all the parents said "we must get one of these at home"!

Most encouragingly, the only "youngsters" (under thirty) at the conference seemed to be manning the GROTA desk! Certainly, the public visitors had a large majority under 10 years old. During the weekend we "signed up" three more young members who were fascinated by this 1940's technology. One starts to wonder if we seeing some kind of digital technology burn-out?!



Mason ZL3NOTYET



Aiden ZL3APB and Braden ZL3BRK with customers!

The radios we had on display were the typical sets used in GROTA trials, namely a ZC1 (a MK1 because of its rarity), WS21 because Bryan's set is so beautiful, two WS48 sets for the public to try, a WS38 and a SR A13 backpack from the 1960s. We setup all the radios with information panels giving their history and technical details.

Everything worked well, even the hand-crank generator lasted the thrashing it got from the kids; after all it was only designed for use by soldiers 😊. Many thanks to the Hams that came to say hello, also to the GROTA team for doing such a great job on the desks over the weekend: **Des ZL3AK, Bryan ZL3BHS, Aidan ZL3APB, Braden ZL3BRK, Leo ZL4LEO and James ZL3KDOT.**



Bryan ZL3BHS, Des ZL3AK and Kelvin ZL3KB at the display desk.



ZL3ABYK (A Bright Young Kid) has a go!

GROTA activities-

Both May and June scheduled trials were cancelled due to weather, in fact in June we just met in the pub with a couple of WS38 sets on the tables. (A GRIP event, perhaps.)

We finally got back into the field last weekend, albeit cold and windy, with a WS48/WS38 station on Cooper's Knob, a WS48/ZC1 station in Motukarara (5miles), and a WS48/WS38 in Lincoln (6miles). No contacts on the 38sets (no surprise there) but otherwise good comms all round.



From the GROTA workbench-

Mason, Grandson of ZL3TFM, now has a working WS48 set ready for him once he gets his license, so we hope to see him on the air sometime.

We have been coming across many WS48 sets with dud mic and headphone transformers, so we are in the process of rewinding a few for spares. Not a pleasant job as the core has to be rescued from being potted in horrible black pitch. A new batch of WS48 set batteries have been made, and are available for sale. We also have some more GROTette crystal calibrator kits for sale. These give 3579kHz and 7158kHz reference signals for getting green radios "on frequency"

Let us hope for better GROTAble weather soon.

Musick Point Radio Group Inc. General Meeting held at Musick Memorial Radio Station on 09/06/24 at 13:02

Visitors: Alex ZL1TAX Apologies: ZL3CK, ZL1LMB, ZL1AAF. Quorum present as per attendance book.

Minutes of previous meeting were accepted as published: ZL1DRV / ZL1TOF

Financial (as at end of May 2024): There were no unexpected expenditures and annual subscriptions continue to arrive resulting in a gain in bank balances, now at \$11,844

Correspondence

Inwards: Jean Stumbles on recognition of the MP building in receiving the **2024 Auckland Architecture Award** / Enduring Architecture category, requesting MPRG's presence, along with Spark, to receive the award certificate.

General

ZL1DL: We need to have a substantial sort out of unwanted items in the building. There is a 9CuM bin arriving next week to help with the clutter reduction.

ZL4ROB: Would like an email sent to members inviting them to participate in the new AREC br86 group.

Meeting closed at 13:17

ZL1DL acting Secretary.

Final final

MPRG Subscriptions for 2024/2025 are now due!

There is a writeable pdf/ downloadable form available at:

https://mprg.zlham.net.nz/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/MPRG_Subform_24.pdf

Printable versions are attached to previous newsletters.