

BRANCH 22 HISTORY

- From reminiscences of Wally Dance, ZL2LK (SK)

In 1932, Harry Simonsen and Wally (ZL2LK) convened a meeting of those interested in ham radio, the result being another meeting to install officers for the new Marlborough Radio Society and a branch of NZART. Those elected were:

Patron: Squadron Leader N. E. Chandler
President: W. E. Dance
Vice-President: T. H. Eckford
Hon. Secretary-Treasurer: H. D. Simonsen
Committee: Jack Furness, E. North, E. Golding, D. Best,
L. Fowler, Les Copp, Jim Broadmore

AREC was formed, with the following as officers:

Section Leader: J. Furness, ZL2KS
Deputy Leader: W. E. Dance, ZL2LK
Equipment Supervisor: J. Cuddon
Operators: E. Golding, E. North, ZL2NN, ZL2DO, ZL2KL
and A. McKenzie ZL2GZ at Rainbow Reserve outpost.

Note that Jack Furness was the first holder of the callsign ZL2KS, which is currently the Branch 22 callsign. ZL2KS was the first station that Wally had a QSO with, using 3 watts on crystal-controlled CW employing two 112A valves on 80m.

The Marlborough Radio Society callsign allocated in 1933 was ZL2PH.

Other members of the club at that time included Len Coker (ZL2PT),

Pat (?) Wiffen (ZL2DO), Roy Sharland (ZL2LH, Nelson).

A report in the March 1933 "Break-In", written by ZL2KS, stated that "the Blenheim branch is now a really live institution, and, as a result of its member's enthusiasm, a dance is to be held on March 2nd. The best available dance hall has been engaged, and the orchestra, which broke up some years ago, has pulled together just for the occasion.....All arrangements have been completed and, during the evening, a receiver installed in the hall will be tuned to ZL2LI, Nelson, at a pre-arranged time and Clary (sic) will come in via the ether. "

The Marlborough Society also featured in the February issue of "Break-In" as

“On New Years Day Messrs. W. E. Dance (ZL2LK) and John Cuddon, two members of the Branch put over a very unique stunt so far as this province is concerned. They installed a portable fone (sic) transmitter on one of the official boats at the rowing regatta at Picton. The rowing club president acted as announcer and he gave a running description of each race. This was picked up at the rowing club rooms and passed through a public address system of about 5 watts output. By this means, the many thousands of people in attendance heard every word of the description by means of the several dynamic speakers placed at intervals along the foreshore.”

Wally’s recall was that the operation was from the “S.S. Tuatea”, the mother ship from the whaling station. The PA (housed in a little hole under the memorial steps) used two 46 valves in push-pull Class B. A problem was that the Picton power supply was 230V dc so John had to hire a dc-to-ac converter for the occasion. John’s turntable for 78 rpm records used to almost seize up the unit, particularly on deep bassy passages! Wally’s transmitter used a 230 valve as crystal oscillator, another 230 as a Class C amplifier with a 233 modulator. Although considered as “experimental” the transmission was heard as far afield as Bruce Bay in south Westland!

Apparently, in the 1920’s, many parts, such as coils and capacitors were made by the enthusiasts themselves. Variable capacitors were available, at a price, and valves were Australian Radiotrons.

By 1933, contacts with VK and VP (Fiji) were becoming quite common.