

MARLBOROUGH BRANCH AREC

1932 -1982

by P. RENNIE and F. STRETCH ZL2AZE

The Marlborough Branch of AREC was formed after the Napier earthquake of 1931, but went into recess a few years later. Late in 1946 meetings were again held, starting in homes of club members until an old shed (ex fowl house) was bought and fitted out as club rooms, firstly at the residence of Mick Spiers (ZL2KQ) and later in Manson Street. These premises lasted a few years until the lack of finance forced the club to move to the local police station. This proved an excellent location and meetings continued here until the meeting of July 1969.

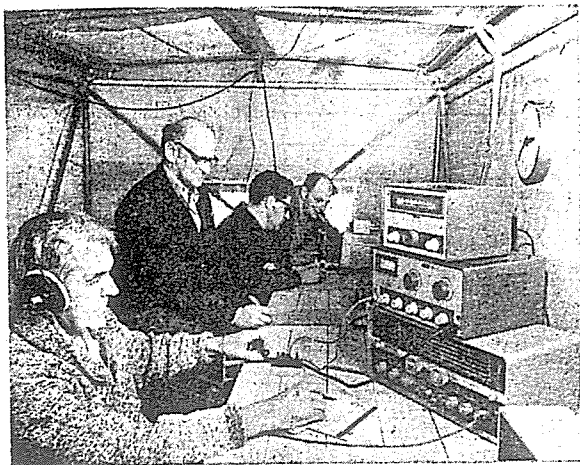
Some early AREC equipment used by this branch consisted of "208s" (CW only, of which some were later converted to phone), the old faithful "ZC1s" (used mainly for forward base and base).

Many portable sets were tried with little success. The "TR3" was produced about 1959 with 3 being allocated to Marlborough. About this time the Marlborough SAR undertook fund raising by various means. The results of this purchased 4 dual-channel "TR3s" plus a "DX60" and a Halicrafters' Receiver. Also a "Tiny Tim"

arrived through the generosity of AREC. At this date (approx 1970) the "ZC1s" were still being used (with operators) as forward bases. Civil Defence was given about 6 "STC" Kar-phones which were put on 147.25MHz for CD use. To be used as a base for these rigs the branch purchased a large, cumbersome 50 watt VHF rig which proved very temperamental. To reinforce these sets, Civil Defence distributed "ZC1s" on the CD frequency. Also the club purchased an "AWA 60" and converted this to CD and AREC frequencies.

An amusing story concerning a converted marine set occurred on an SAREX of which Frank Stretch and myself went through the Rainbow Valley to Hanmer Springs. We were to stop at Dip Flat to load the trailer up with firewood and proceeded to our lunch time sked atop "Island Pass". We started to look for the radios under half a cord of firewood. After we set everything up we couldn't ascertain whether the set was transmitting or receiving or both, but while standing in 2 feet of snow we soon found out it was transmitting. Well the SAREX ended that day with us cooped up in Fowks Creek Hut about 10 miles from Hanmer Springs.

A couple of years later the club sold the AWA 60 and the VHF transmitter to aid in buying the club's first FT101, funded by SAR and the club. This was then sold to CD which enabled the club to obtain 6 Wellington Walkie Kitsets. These were built up and sold along with an FT2FB and a Honda generator to CD, plus 2 CB sets and a second FT101. As well as this equipment, most of the finance for the club's VHF repeater came from these transactions. Through the generosity of the local council CD also received a number of Cambridges, Galaxies and miniphones and they financed the work on the CD van. Further fund raising produced 10 FT202s (to supercede the Wellington Walkies) and an FT223 for use in the field as a forward base. Basically the only set the club owns is a FT221R of which funds were raised by SAR, apart from a large SSB TX which has been donated. In addition the SAR hold 3 "TR105s". During 1974 Civil Defence was given the chance of purchasing a vehicle to be used for communications within the club's



Inside the truck on Field Day 1970. Operating the Club's DX60 and Hammerland SX110. Operators: Don Oddie ZL2AZO, Frank Stretch ZL2AZE, Mike Duncan and Trevor Wilkey ZL2AHA.



The Marlborough Civil Defence Communications Vehicle.

network. This vehicle has been fitted out with hazard lights, spot lights, HF, UHF, VHF equipment, as well as the "E800U" Honda generator, gas stove and awning on one side, capable of accommodating 4 persons. The vehicle is now used for CD exercises and as forward base for most SAREXs and searches. AREC in Marlborough is very active with approximately 3 SAREX's being held each year consisting of 2 one day exercises and a weekend exercise. We participate in various paper exercises and of course in AREC Field Day every year.



BRANCH 22 REPEATER NEWS

by R. W. F. YORK (ZL2BGD)

Wednesday April 28, marked the beginning of a new era for the Marlborough Branch Repeater. At 7 p.m. the Repeater that had reliably served the area for many years finally had its "big switch" pulled. By 9 p.m. a new repeater had been installed in its place and was in service.

This is the third repeater that has been operating in the area since 2m repeaters came into being. The first one, constructed by Alan Wallace (now ZL1TTQ) and Keith Browning (ZL2TPO) was made from modified Landmobile sets and was soon superseded. The second one, the one that has just been taken out of service, was a far improved version. It was a modified "Waikato Branch" kitset repeater and has, apart from its idiosyncracies, given very reliable service during its many years of operation.

Our new commercial model came out of the blue one night when Terry Knofflock (ZL2AHK) dropped a bombshell by donating the money for the purchase of the radio equipment. Naturally we could not turn down his kind offer. With a rush and a flurry the equipment was ordered and installed, with very satisfying results. Coverage was immediately increased. Christchurch and Wellington stations could get into it once again. It will be improved even further when low loss helical coaxial cable, a diplexer and a high gain antenna are installed.

The diplexer and helical cable are going to be big jobs to do, but there should not be any trouble forming a working bee to get them done. The next few months should see the repeater installation modifications finally done, so keep trying "Blenheim 695". You might be surprised where you can talk to.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Frank Stretch and Don McKay for their assistance and cooperation in this project. They have supplied advice and the printed material.

In 1982 an issue of Break-In was in October devoted to several items from Branch 22 members. They were from Mick Spiers, Don Jamieson, Bill Pierce, Grant Simpson (3) Ken Menzies,, Paul Rennie and Frank Stretch, and Robin York. Paul, Robin And Frank's items only are included in this collection.

John E Hyndman Archivist.