

This is a Copy of the History of the Marlborough Amateur Radio
Club as presented to the Branch on the occasion of its 50th Anniversary
in 1982. by Club member Mick Spiers ZL2KQ.

This is a record of the 50th Anniversary of Branch 22 NZART Marlborough, still very active and going stronger than ever.

On November 16 1932 a few keen Hams and some enthusiastic radio listeners got together and formed the Marlborough branch of NZART.

Wally Dance ZL2LK was elected President, Tom Eckford Vice President, H D Simonsen as Secretary-Treasurer and the Patron was N E Chandler. The committee comprised Jack Furness, Ed North, L Golding, Les Cox, D W Best, L Fowler, and J Broadmore.

It was resolved that local subs be set at 2/6 per annum, and it was resolved that a general meeting be called for Wednesday 30th November at 7.30pm to adopt a constitution. The general meeting was held at Griffith's Brothers rooms.

Those present were Morrie Dix, W Stent, A T Dunckley, I R Wintringham, R Wilkinson, N Chandler, T S Eckford, L Fowler, W E Dance, H D Simonsen, E North, E Golding, S Tucker, J Furness, R Wildash, D W Best and J Broadmore.

At a meeting in March 1933 the following also were present: L Coker, E Coker, H Bush, J Dermody, and apologies were received from Alex Riley, Colin Knight, T Warner, J Cuddon, T Clouston, V Ward, J Garrick and K Satherley. They met regularly each month, and it is interesting to compare these prices for food and entertainment with today's prices. Club stationery 2/6, advertising 6/-, hire of dance hall 4 pounds ten shillings, 2 pounds allocated for the dance supper, and ten shillings for the club's antennas- two masts.

I Wintringham donated the use of a room in High Street for the clubrooms, a club transmitter was built and used under the callsign ZL2BH. The prewar years passed by, with continued activity and many new members coming and going. Keen radio listeners sat their ham tickets and became keen radio amateurs to further strengthen the club. Came the war, and a lot of our club members joined up in the services, and some served with great distinction.

There was a great deal of competition and rivalry and discussion on the various methods of modulating an AM phone rig during the 1930's.

Some hams favoured Telefunken modulation, and others swore by the Heising method of plate modulation, and others favoured the simple method of grid modulation. It must also be remembered that at this time our transmitters consisted mostly of oscillators with no following amplifier, and the old faithful 210 valve was the favourite, usually running with the plate pretty well red-hot. Antennas used were: Zepps, Windoms and long wires and coaxial cable was unheard of in those days. Tank coils were wound with quarter inch copper pipe, tank condensers had about three sixteenths or quarter inch spacing, and most ham gear was mounted on top of a wooden board called breadboard construction.

Standing waves were things we didn't know much about, and we reckoned they should be used to row your boat on. Every night on 80 metres was a real entertainment as hams either had a rag chew or played records. But through it all hams observed the golden amateur codes above all courtesy, good manners, and no four letter words or swearing were tolerated, or was indeed noticed. Today I am sorry to say, language used on phone on amateur bands leaves a lot to be desired, as does manners and courtesy by operators.

modern times. We don't have to build any gear these days. You can practically buy all the ham gear you want from a supermarket-you don't have to even be an operator -just switch on, push the appropriate button and start talking. One does not even have to think, just push a memory button switch, and it's all done for you. We have satellites, repeaters, recorders, cassettes, television, microprocessors, linear amplifiers with 2 kilowatts of output, so that the bloke down the road can hear us better, and hi-fi equipment with more output than we are allowed to put on the ham bands, CW, video recorders that spell out the morse code in plain language on a screen. In fact we have got it all done for us except taking us back to the fundamentals, such as good manners, courtesy, and the will to help others less fortunate than ourselves.

After peace was declared, there was an influx of new members and the club got under way again.

The club was stuck with no place to hold meetings, and a solution was found in a strange way. ZL2KQ had purchased a property in Springlands about this time and had several large fowl sheds, and a concrete store shed for grain and fowl food. We had a working bee, cleaned out the store shed and installed 2KQ's ham gear, put in the electric light and power and remote controlled his transmitter from the house about 50 metres away. Then we used the shed for our club meetings for some time. Later on, a small building was bought and installed in Manson Street for Club Headquarters. Later again the Club HQ was moved again to the Police Station in Main Street which was also our Search and Rescue Headquarters. Later again the club rooms were moved to the Civil Defence Headquarters in John Street, where we worked in close cooperation with Civil Defence, undertaking to look after all their communications in the event of an emergency or disaster. Here we had a good lockup equipment and transmitting room, a club room and kitchen and toilet facilities, plus 2 steel 60 feet high towers and other antenna poles. Civil Defence acquired a mobile van which was equipped with facilities for cooking and sleeping, good operating facilities on all bands with telescopic antennas and all mod-cons.

It was made available for Search and Rescue and to the Branch, and made our work much more comfortable. Marlborough is a large area to police with Search and Rescue as we have a long coastline, two large rivers, and remote lakes and mountainous country to cover. Also with the large area of Marlborough Sounds and river flooding to cope with, plus the fact that Blenheim sits right on top of a fairly active earthquake fault, we never know when it may start to play rough and it's comforting to know that the Branch, Branch 22, with its keen and efficient members with 50 years of experience behind them, feel reasonably sure they can cope with most situations if they should come our way - communication-wise.

It is impossible to mention everyone past and present in the club, and here are some of the past and post war members I can recall: please forgive me if I have not mentioned your name as memory, time and space are working against me: H Hester, Don McKay, Jim Blaikie, Don Ballantine, Bill Bate, M Drummond, Doug Heffer, D McNicol, Don Oddie, Bill Richards, Cliff Voss, Cliff Dixon, Bernie Lankshear, T Goodare, Frank Stretch, M Brown, J Heffer, J Neal, J Dyer, G Fergus, F Ferguson, J Cuddon, C Neville-Green, John Beavon, Graham Struthers, Bob Dixon, Lloyd Thwaites, Don Jamieson, D Baker, Doug Sandford, D Donachie, A James, Les James, Paul Rennie, D Giles, Tom Gray, N White, T Wilkie, W Jackson, Harry Fittis, Lister Hadfield, S Kingston, David Duthie, T Seater, K Browning, Bill Brunton, H Wortendyke, G Simpson

I Scott, K McKenzie, Gordon Buckton, D Daniels, A Wallace, Bill Parker, R York.

J Gilbert and J Elvy.

The present club, as at this date consists of the President/ Treasurer:R York.
Vice President L Pickering . Secretary W Pearce. AREC Section Leader Frank Stretch
and Committee and members. Our new Clubrooms are at the Wither Road extension at
CD Headquarters. To all members of Branch 22 Marlborough, I would like to say
congratulations for a job well done by all past and present members, and I know that a lot
of other oldtimers will join me in wishing you well for the next 50 years to come

Yours sincerely

Mick Spiers ZL2KQ.