

December 2025

INTERFACE

MONTHLY BULLETIN

MARLBOROUGH AMATEUR RADIO CLUB INC. P.O. BOX 432 BLENHEIM NZ

CLUB CALENDAR

General Meeting;.... 11 Dec. 7.30pm, Landsdowne Park

Social Group; 18 Dec. Dodson St Beer Garden

Committee Meeting; 22 Jan. 7.30pm, via Zoom

VHF Mondays 1930 hrs

146.950MHz,

145.600MHz, 147.225MHz

Net Controller;

Rob Carter, ZL2IW

BRANCH 22 NOTICES

1. AREC Presentation & Xmas catch-up 11 Dec
2. Onamalutu BBQ 11 Jan
3. 10 Pin Bowling.....21 Jan
4. Carluke Combined BBQ with Nelson 14 Mar



HF Net Tuesdays
2030 hrs 3876kHz

Website

www.zl2ks.org.nz

Editor: Caryl Simpson caryl.grant@gmail.com **MARC Contact:** marcbranch22@gmail.com

SUBS ARE DUE BY END OF DECEMBER

\$30.00 Single Member \$40.00 for Family Membership

Internet Payment only please.

Kiwi Bank Acc. N°: 38 9002 0114897 00

Please Quote Call Sign and "Subs" as reference

Payment before December 31st would be appreciated.

Don't make us send the boys around!

Treasurer Greg sent subs emails to all members earlier in the week.



If you did not get an email earlier this week telling you subscriptions were due, please contact the treasurer, Greg gjbarton@gmail.com



**WINE & FOOD
FESTIVAL**
14th Feb 2026

Have you volunteered yet?
Those who help on the day always
enjoy themselves, and the sights.

Contact Stuart; 027 687 7764
clareandstuart@xtra.co.nz

**Volunteers
Needed!**



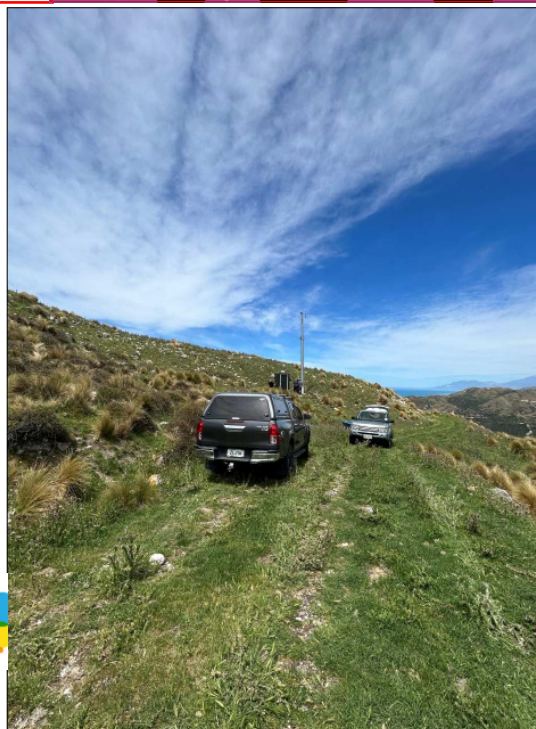
Scenic shot from Weld
Cone looking south back
down the access road, our
site being near the mast.

o come
let
us
adore
ham.*

* bloody autocorrect

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

Ken & Dianne Menzies
53 years!



Anthony Winter, Ken Menzies

BRANCH 22 PARTICIPATION IN AREC COMMEX2025

On Sunday 23 November AREC held a nationwide emergency communications exercise, Commex, which we participated in as Branch 22.

The exercise was designed to test emergency radio communications in a civil defence scenario and focussed mainly on "local" communications within each region.

We set up the Marlborough Civil Defence EOC using the radio room and the comms truck with Paul ZL2RE, Helen ZL2HH and Greg ZL2GBX operating.



EOC radio room with (L-R) Winlink/VarAC HF, VHF720, DMR, VHF Simplex, VHF695



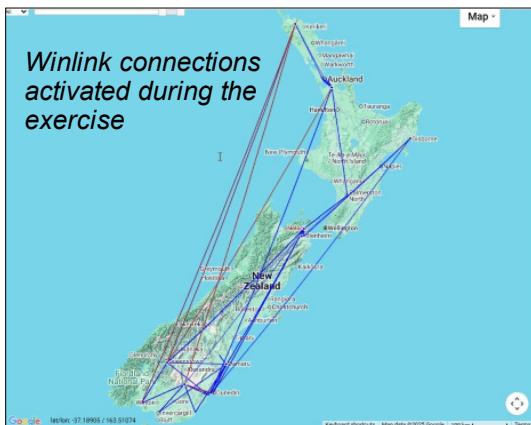
Helen operating in EOC

In the field we had ICPs (Incident Control Points) operated by Herrie ZL2HTO at Penzance Bay, Ron ZL2BDD in Blenheim, John ZL3TIL in Fairhall, Gary ZL1GA in Blenheim and Stewart ZL2STR and Chris ZL4CS in Nelson. Each ICP was given a file of messages to transfer to EOC and vice-versa, some quite simple and some very complex with lots of numbers, abbreviations and foreign names. The operators could use whatever means of transmission they had available so we had a mixture of VHF (simplex and via repeaters), DMR and HF voice, and digital HF using Winlink and VarAC – all on amateur frequencies. VHF proved quite reliable for voice communication with all our ICPs using this for some parts of the exercise. HF for voice was a challenge as the calling frequency was being used by all ICPs and EOCs around the country with some operators seemingly unaware of the need to QSY to traffic channels to transfer messages.

Winlink on HF was very effective for transferring complex messages as the text could just be copy-and-pasted and sent including attachments like sketches and maps. Our RMS ZL2KS was heavily used by ICPs and EOCs around the country and we were able to use it and other RMSs to transfer our messages which showed the resilience of the system. We also used VarAC to a lesser extent, partly as it uses a calling frequency to establish a link then should transfer to a working frequency. Unfortunately some operators were unaware, or unable, to transfer to traffic frequencies so the calling frequency was often tied up with long transfers. These were some of the "learnings" of the exercise! VarAC has an advantage over Winlink of giving immediate confirmation that the message has been received. Winlink is a "store-and-forward" system so the sender does not know if the message has been received until they receive a separate acknowledgement message back from the recipient. Both Winlink and VarAC allow messages to be sent by recipient gateways into internet-based email systems like gmail so are very useful in re-establishing communications when there is a major local outage and HF is the only medium available.



Paul setting up comms truck



We operated from 9am to around midday and transferred and logged a total of nearly 200 messages. It is hoped that this sort of exercise can become a regular event to familiarise operators with best emergency comms techniques and to experience and learn new systems. We would like to see it extended to include transfer of messages between regions, including relaying. Thanks to all the operators who took part.

- Greg ZL2BGX

WANTED: Good power supply, 20A or so.

Please contact Eric Sears ZL2BMI sears@xtra.co.nz

COMMITTEE MEMBERS WANTED!!

At next year's AGM in March, John will be stepping down as President and from the committee. There may be others also stepping down.

If you are interested in standing for committee next year, please let a current committee member know ASAP. Secretary's email is on the front page.

A club is only as good as its members and this is your chance to help ensure membership, and participation, continues to grow.



WESTFEST HOSTING

We hope to host WESTFEST next year.

Stuart will be calling for assistance with this. If you are keen to help, let him know.

clareandstuart@xtra.co.nz or 027 687 7764

DON'T FORGET THE 24HR 100 CONTACTS CHALLENGE

1st Jan 2026

See Break-In for details

WELD CONE HUT RETRIEVAL - Rob ZL2IW

I organised a team to recover the hut on 23 May 2025. At this stage we hoped the hut could be reused, but time would tell. We used my Hilux, and Paul C's trailer to recover the hut.

Photo shows team inspecting the damage, with Paul R's vehicle in the background. View is to the north north east, showing old Telecom microwave tower. Note the solar array on the ground to the left of the hut. Various items were scattered around and the battery box had been thrown/blown further along the track. The 695 link filter was recovered from a nearby cow pat.

Note that the floor of the hut (not shown here) has failed at the point where it was secured to the walls, hence the reason why the battery box escaped. The two batteries were left dangling, suspended only by their leads stretched over the door frame of the hut.



We recovered most of the battery and duplexer boxes, but one box had disappeared over the bank to the NW. Various items of failed guy wire components were scattered around in the tussock. We recovered some turnbuckles and wire, but some items were not recovered.

The equipment bench had failed, and was jammed in the hut. The cavity filters and duplexer were still inside, but had had a pretty wild ride. The solar regulator had been pulled off the wall due to strain on the leads. This was lying in a pool of rainwater in the hut. Later I would partially dismantle this solar reg, and dry it out over several days gentle warmth. The construction of the regulator was such good quality, that it responded to the TLC and was later able to be returned to service.

WARD REPEATER UPDATE - Rob ZL2IW

The Ward Repeater was off the air during a winter storm. We received an email that showed our repeater hut was, in fact, blown down the bank. The repeater hut was duly rescued, and evaluated. A decision was made to refurbish the hut. Paul Carter (my brother, master builder and all round useful guy) had it dropped off in his driveway, and promptly went to work, in order to effect repairs (and, of course, regain the space in his drive).

Repairs being complete, it was now time to return the hut to Weld Cone. Paul fabricated a sort of platform, which upon being temporarily attached to the hut, would enable us to slide the hut around. The initial plan was to either slide the hut in from above the site, or winch it in place from below. The hut/sledge combination was delicately loaded on to Paul's trailer the evening before our adventure.



Saturday 29 November 2025

Today a team of enthusiastic people took the hut to site, and commenced the restoration process. The hut was secured to the trailer and, having checked we had everything we might require, we left town just after 0800, arriving at Weld Cone around 0945. Surprisingly the weather was, and remained, benign during our visit. Very little wind, with mostly clear skies.

The initial plan involved using the old road, which branched off just prior to our site, and led to the actual top of Weld Cone proper. This was never a road for the faint hearted, but we only needed the first 100 metres to be passable. Upon a brief examination it was clear that this road was now in a very bad state, even for four-wheel drive vehicles. So, no sliding the hut down, or suitable winch point could be attained. Thus, being unwilling to risk our tails on a shonky venture, it was now time for a new plan.



Paul was able to back the trailer up the slope below our plateau – just enough to slide the hut partially off the trailer, and rest on the bank. By moving the trailer further up, this levelled the sledge/hut combo enough for us to judiciously slide the hut along the planks, and then raise it on to its feet. Then it was simply a matter of moving the hut around, to place it on the prepared ground. Ross (farmer/entrepreneur, mate of Paul Carter), Gary, and Greg had removed thistles, and scraped the dirt like enthusiastic terriers.

Once in the designated place, the hut 'foundations' only required a few tweaks to pronounce it level. The next steps were to add the ground fixings in order to secure the base. Once our new base was secure, it was time to reinstate the guy wires, and waratahs. We were able to position the waratahs where needed and the team took turns at the task of ramming them in. Each corner stake was carefully aligned and rammed to the correct level. Well done everyone – nice work! Thanks Ross for your advice, and use of specialist installation tool to get the stakes in the ground.

The guy wire kits were installed and after some discussion, and an idea courtesy of Tony, the wires were installed according to everyone's satisfaction.

Batteries and DC equipment were installed today, as part of the initial plan. The solar array and radio equipment will be added in a weeks time.



*Gary & Tony
feeling strong enough to
drag the hut up the bank*



*Backing up to get the hut
in position and upright
once more*



Grateful thanks to the installation team and special thanks to Paul for his most excellent work on the hut, and also for getting the building back on site.

Thanks to: Paul Carter, Ross Kerr, Gary Lodge ZL1GA, Tony Whitaker ZL2RKL, Greg Barton ZL2GBX.

Really appreciate your most excellent work. Thank you for spending your time and effort on this project. Thanks also for your enthusiasm, and encouragement for the re-establishment of this Ward repeater. Hope you enjoyed the day, and your part in creating Branch 22 folklore.

73

KAIKOURA POTA RADIO WEEKEND 29 30 NOVEMBER 2025 - Gary Lodge ZL1GA

This was an excellent weekend organised by Greg ZL1GUD (Hamshack.) It was a terrific learning experience and we had the opportunity to try out other operator's set ups and equipment. Great camaraderie over the two days.

Saturday morning involved POTA activations from Keane Point and an antenna setting up competition. We went out for dinner Saturday evening followed by a QPR activation on the Esplanade. There is a QPR night on the last Saturday night of each month on 40 and 80 metres for both phone and CW. Unfortunately I was unable to attend the Saturday session as I was part of the crew installing the repeater hut at Ward.



The Sunday DX Competition session was held at Kahutara Reserve ZLP/CB -0493 beside the Kowhai River. Operators using a PMR171 Guchetec radio operated in 25 minute shifts. The most contacts were made by our very own Nick Batt who scored a Spiderbeam pole. Club attendees were Nick Batt, Grahame McKay and Gary Lodge.

*POTA photos this page supplied by Gary & Carol Lodge
See next page for more photos.*

An article about the weekend, and more pics, can be found at www.thehamshack.co.nz. Once there, click on 'NZ Amateur Radio Magazine' then the December magazine, specifically pages P33 - 35.





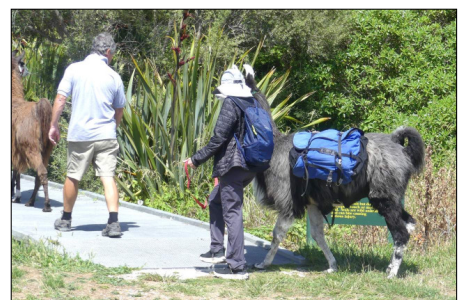
ZL2NEB won the competition with the most contacts and points, taking home an impressive Spiderbeam pole as his prize.

Stewart ZL2STR won the POTA setup competition (setting up a mast with antenna and ready to make the first contact). The prize was a lightweight 40m dipole.



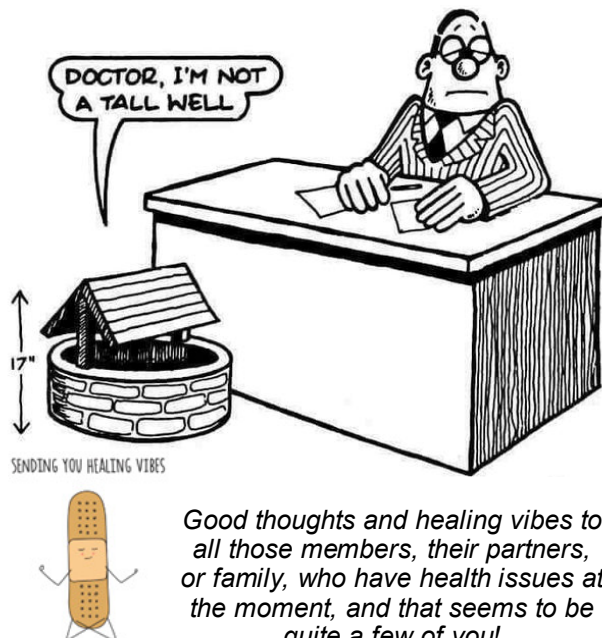
Some random llamas, and their carers, passed by while we were waiting for lunch to arrive.

We know they were llamas and not alpacas because llamas are larger, have long banana-shaped ears, a longer face, and are typically used for packing and guarding, while alpacas are smaller, have short, spear-shaped ears, a blunt face, and are bred for their soft, fine fleece.





L-R: Greg ZL1GUD, Phil ZL3PAE, Nick ZL2NEB, Malcolm ZL4MWB, Stewart ZL2STR, Gary ZL1GA, Jim ZL2BHF, Graeme ZL2BDS



ONAMALUTU BBQ - SUNDAY 11 JANUARY

Our usual New Year BBQ will again be at the Onamalutu Domain. 11am start but turn up as early as you like, some overnight in tents or campervans. See below if you plan to overnight. Day trippers are free. Families, grandchildren etc all welcome.

Lunch will be served around 12 noon.

Whoever gets there first, try and reserve us a spot somewhere on the left under the trees, behind the bollards. It is the best place for shade on a hot day.

Everyone is asked to bring a salad and/or dessert *with appropriate serving utensils please* to share and the club supplies the BBQ, meat, bread, onions and sauce.

Make sure you bring chairs, plates, cutlery, mugs, drinks, hot water if you want a cuppa, and milk if you require it in your drink. A gazebo or two are always welcome, if you have one, with weights to stop them blowing away if the wind comes up.

Sunscreen, insect repellent and a sunhat are strongly advised.

RSVP to caryl.grant@gmail.com before 7 January so we know how much meat to order.

A reminder will be sent out (if I remember the reminder) early January.

The Onamalutu Domain is a DOC campsite so those thinking of camping overnight, check their website for details regarding booking.

While you are getting into BBQ mode, don't forget we have the **combined Carluke BBQ 14 March** with Nelson, who currently hold the Interclub Trophy. A poor turnout from our club last year (we were outnumbered almost 2:1) meant certain defeat. This is a great chance to socialise, not only with your own club members but with the Nelson lot as well and most of them aren't too bad. Some are even quite friendly! 🤗

We have fun games and competitions, emphasis on "fun", to decide the winner of the trophy but participation is not mandatory. Non-participants cheer (or jeer) loudly from the sidelines. Apart from the Fox Hunt, the games or quizzes are not radio related, or X-rated, so suitable for the whole family.



NZ STRAIGHT KEY NIGHT



New Zealand Straight Key Night (Summer Edition) will be held on Sunday 7 Dec from 9pm to 10pm NZT (0800 to 0900 UTC) on 80 metres.

SKN honours the original amateur radio mode in an easy-going style. Operators send signal report, name, location, type of key, type of transmitter and power output. Stations are limited to 100W output power.

SKN is not a contest - but the operator who gets the most votes for the quality of their sending will win the Bruce Scahill Best Fist Award. Please email your award nomination to ZL1NZ within one week following the event.

SKN uses the QSY Rule. Any station that calls CQ must QSY after making a contact.

Full details available at <https://zl1.nz/skn> or email neil@zl1.nz or call ZL1NZ during or after the NZ Net.

SKN welcomes all straight key operators, regardless of skill level or speed.

73, Neil ZL1NZ, SKN Manager



Nikola Tesla had a plan to provide free wireless electricity to the whole world

He insisted that it was a simple feat of scientific engineering but unfortunately his invention never saw the light of day. Nikola Tesla's ideas were way ahead of his time and often misunderstood by the public.

One of his more public projects was the Wardenclyffe Tower, a wireless telecommunication system that would be able to transmit power freely across the world. J.P. Morgan invested \$15,000, (the equivalent of \$4 million today) on the construction of the tower which was erected in 1902. Morgan carried on until 1905 when he ran out of funds and the tower was demolished in 1917. Despite this, Tesla never ceased to believe in his vision.

