

March 2026

# INTERFACE

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

## CLUB CALENDAR

**AGM:**..... 12 Mar. 7.30pm, EOC, Wither Rd  
**Social Group;** ..... 19 Mar. Dodson St Beer Garden  
**Committee Meeting;** 26 Mar. 7.30pm, via Zoom



**VHF Mondays 1930 hrs**  
146.950MHz,  
145.600MHz, 147.225MHz  
**Net Controller;**  
Rob Carter, ZL2IW

## BRANCH 22 NOTICES

1. **AGM, EOC. AREC presentation.** Lindsey Ross attending .. 12 Mar
2. Carluke Combined BBQ with Nelson..... 14 Mar
3. HamCram.....23/24 May
4. Topfest (Westfest) ..... 19/20 Sep

**HF Net Tuesdays**  
2030 hrs 3876kHz

**Website**  
[www.zl2ks.org.nz](http://www.zl2ks.org.nz)

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*Our March heading acknowledges St Patrick's Day with both colour and shamrocks. Top o' the Mornin' to ya!*



### SAVE THE DATE!

Westfest is being hosted by Branch 22 this year.  
To get the geography (or topography) correct this year, it will be called Topfest.  
**Save the date:** September 19 and 20 at the Vintage Car Club rooms.

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/2059891588167204/?fs=e&fs=e> an added zing to someone's day (and aerial)



**WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL BASE CREW L - R;** Greg ZL2GBX, Jed ZL2BTN, Wayne ZL2AIE, Helen ZL2HH

Report and more pics P.2

**WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL 2026**  
**Report & pics kindly provided by Stuart ZL2TW**



Another festival is over and the club is \$2500 richer, our donation from this event, the 41<sup>st</sup>.

This was the third event since the shift from Brancott Rd, may we never go back. The Renwick domain is so much easier getting in and out of, it has a lot more room, and best of all we have our own radio room with power and a toilet! This year's festival was the best organized yet, with hardly any issues and very few messages for us to pass as a result.

Those of you who have helped before know what a problem the ice supply can be, this was not an issue, a first.

One of our jobs is to provide the festival staff (15 of them) with communications and we do this with PRS hand helds and earpiece-mic sets. A couple of small glitches this year, a first, forgetting to lock the channel of one: the user came in "I can't talk to anyone" that tends to happen when you are 2 channels off!

Another glitch out of our control was a first: an earpiece-mic jammed on transmit.

Apologies for no photos of the morning crew, I didn't think of Interface until after the shift change at 1315.

Thanks to all the helpers and to Tony for helping me set up on Friday: Helen, Don, Linda, Wayne, Paul, Linc, Graeme, Tony, Herrie, Gary, Anthony, Greg and Jed.

**- Stuart ZL2TW**



Herrie  
ZL2HTO



Gary  
ZL1GA



Tony  
ZL2RKL



Anthony  
ZL1VBX



Stuart  
ZL2TW

Once upon a time there was a king who was only 12" tall.  
 He was a terrible king but he made a great ruler!

As a ham radio operator, one thing I enjoy is seeing other hams' shacks, getting ideas and sharing knowledge. So, I have been thinking of organizing a ham shack crawl – the idea being to visit a number of ham shacks in one day, with a lunch somewhere along the way.

If you interested in being part of the ham shack crawl (either as one of the ham shacks we visit, or just a participant) please let me know [grens360@gmail.com](mailto:grens360@gmail.com). Once we have an idea of numbers, I will try to find a date that suits the majority.

73

**Herrie ZL2HTO**



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Q:</b> Why should you never iron a 4 leaf clover? | <b>Q:</b> How old are leprechauns?                              |
| <b>A:</b> You don't want to press your luck!         | <b>A:</b> So old they remember when rainbows were black & white |
| <b>Q:</b> What do you call an Irish spider?          | <b>Q:</b> Why do leprechauns love to garden?                    |
| <b>A:</b> Paddy Long Legs                            | <b>A:</b> Because they have green thumbs                        |
| <b>Q:</b> When does a leprechaun cross the road?     | <b>Q:</b> Why do leprechauns make good secretaries?             |
| <b>A:</b> When the light is green                    | <b>A:</b> They know shorthand                                   |

February's meeting welcomed two guests, Rob Ward and Pete Simlock. Those present were given 3 mini talks after the main business was concluded.

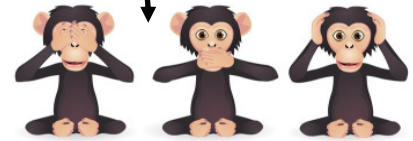
First was Bill ZL2AYZ, who spoke on Propagation Sources and showed two webpage links he uses; [www.voacap.com/hf](http://www.voacap.com/hf) and [www.dxsummit.fi](http://www.dxsummit.fi).

Further to Bill's talk, Don ZL3DN sent two links he uses adding;

The BOM is actual present Australasia conditions from radar signal and with the second you can click on a map location and it will give prediction for that location eg RE68 [www.sws.bom.gov.au/HF\\_Systems/1/4](http://www.sws.bom.gov.au/HF_Systems/1/4) and [www.hf.dxview.org/perspective/RE68MM](http://www.hf.dxview.org/perspective/RE68MM)



Greg, John & Don run meeting. ↑  
Don't know why I thought of these ↓



Next to speak was Stuart, ZL2TW, who gave a step through guide to selling stuff on Trademe, noting what to say about your item when listing and what to watch out for from prospective buyers. He went through the process from how to decide which category to choose in which to list your item, ending with how to package and send your item once payment has been received.

As he has sold over 270 items on my behalf, he now has 100% positive feedback from over 397 trades. Many, in the last 12 months, have commented on how well the item was packed and how quickly it was couriered! We have a good system going where he looks about the computer room and garage for things to list next. He then tests them (if necessary) and takes photos (or sometimes I do that) then I package them, sending the box weight and measurements to him so he can list them on Trademe. Once the sale has been completed, he sends me the Trademe generated courier label which I stick on the box and put out for the courier to collect.

As an aside, I am extremely grateful to Stuart for all the work he has put into dealing with all the stuff Grant had accumulated in the garage and computer room over the almost 50 years we have lived in this house. We have both been, at times, overwhelmed then amazed, or shocked, at what people will pay for old equipment - most no longer working and missing most of their innards! Thanks also to Adam, ZL2AXK, who was young and agile enough to climb up into the garage rafters to haul down many old valve radios and, much to his delight, an old gramophone. He informed me he had never seen a real gramophone before, only pictures, which made me feel really old as we used to play records on that particular machine when I was a child.

Another interesting 'side effect' of selling Grant's stuff on Trademe was that many seemed to know it was Grant's, even though Stuart only ever said 'from a deceased estate' and a few took the trouble to contact me to say they had bought a particular item and remembered Grant from working with him, or him repairing their radio or whatever, and to assure me the item had gone to a good home and, in one case, said they would remember Grant whenever they used it, so his legacy lives on. It is good to know many of the old valve radios will finally be restored, which is what Grant always planned to do with them.

Our final speaker was John, ZL3TIL, who spoke about the Marlborough Amateur Radio Club RMS developments - the ZL2KS Winklink Radio Mail Server with photos of, and from, the site high up on a hill on Dave, ZL2WDR's ranch.



At the start of his talk he informed us the whole presentation had been written entirely by AI and, apart from one sentence under one of the photos, didn't need correcting. It even included some flow charts!

Perhaps, in a future meeting, one of the mini talks can be about using AI and how to get the best results from it. Once, I messaged my son for help with a mobile problem. He replied "ChatGP says to try..." and listed 3 suggestions, one of which did the trick.

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## MARLBOROUGH / NELSON AMATEUR RADIO CLUBS' COMBINED BBQ AND FOX HUNT

**WHEN:** Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2025 **TIME:** 11am onwards **WHERE:** Carluke Hall, Rai Valley

**Bring:** Salad and/or dessert to share, drink, plates & eating utensils, chair, sun hat, sun screen, handheld for Fox Hunt (and a spare if you have one to lend to someone who hasn't), Mystery Object (if you have one), something for the sales table (if you have some radio gear you wish to sell).

Both clubs will be providing meats, bread, onions, sauce.

Hall kitchen has an oven, hot water, plus cups, plates and cutlery if you forget yours.

**If the weather is inclement we can use the hall, it is huge with plenty of space.**



**RSVP to [caryl.grant@gmail.com](mailto:caryl.grant@gmail.com) ASAP, if you haven't already, for catering purposes please!**

**GUESS THIS MESS:** Members are being asked to bring items, not necessarily radio related, for members to guess what it is. Remember not everyone is a radio Ham so will not recognise radio parts, be they obscure or more common!

**SALES/FREE TABLE:** Bring items you think might interest others and gain space in your shack/garage/house! All remaining items, not sold or given away, must be taken back home by the person who brought them.

**CORN HOLE GAME:** The aim is to throw beanbags through a hole in a board.

## JOCK WHITE FIELD DAY REPORT 2026

I think this may be the 25<sup>th</sup> year that we have operated from the Dillons Point Rd site. A bit of history about that; we first contacted a nearby landowner who suggested we contact Willy, who had the property at the very end of the road. He let us operate from a strip of land over the stop bank. This worked well for a year or three then one year it poured down during set up and the site started to flood! The ground water was just below the surface. Willy came to the rescue and suggested we move to his paddock, which was at the north end from where we currently operate. We have stayed on that block of land ever since and with two further land owners.



This year, set up started at the truck shed to load Paul's trailer with gear and then at Caryl's house to load Neville's ute with batteries and the generator. The weather was great for set up, which made putting the tent up a lot easier. I am sure that tent changes its configuration quietly during the year, it's never that straightforward! The 40 metre dipole was up about 10 metres on the NATO pole set and 80 metres a few metres higher on the irrigation pole set, a creation of Ian ZL2BGL.



This year we had, for the first time on both 80 and 40 metres, the club's Icom two 7300s which worked well. These were powered off 12 volt lead acid batteries that are floated by 230v power supplies run off the generator. The 12v batteries supply the radios via MFJ voltage boosters which keep the radios at a constant 13.8v. The lowest battery voltage read under load was 12.2v. Showing the batteries have good capacity and we only had to run the generator from time to time. We used about 7 litres of fuel.

This year we used band pass filters for the first time in line with the antennas. On 40m there was no sign at all that the 80m station was transmitting. On 80m, for some reason, there was some low level break through when the 40m station was transmitting. This caused no trouble but its cause is a bit of a mystery!

For phone operation we had plenty of operators but we were a bit short on CW this year. Bill, a CW regular, got itchy feet this year and fulfilled a long time ambition to go single operator. He used the Kaikoura branch number and operated from his motorhome in Parnassus using his contest callsign ZL3VZ. That left Graeme and I to do the bulk of the CW, we managed to have a presence on nearly every hour on each band.

Two new amateurs had a go this year: Herrie and Jed and they did really well and look like they have the killer instinct for this sort of operation. I am sure they will be part of the team next year.

Left over BBQ meat from the Christmas BBQ (it had been frozen) was cooked up for dinner on Saturday, thanks to Gary's wee gas cooker that parks neatly on the side of his caravan. Three operators stayed overnight on-site in 2 caravans and a motorhome.



Propagation was probably all round the best we have had for a while. 80 metres was in better shape than the last 2 years and 40 metres was pretty good. Our entry to the JWFD manager has the following stats: 80 phone 260 contacts, 80 CW 103, 40 phone 292, 40 CW 127, total multipliers 84. Note that these numbers will change as some multipliers will turn out to be invalid.

Next year we need to have a session prior to the event to sort our IC7300 settings out. One important thing is getting the waterfall display running in a way that suits us. Also, if you get 4 owners of these together there will be 16 ideas about how to have them set up!

Thanks to the operators: Gary, Graeme, Greg, Wayne, Rob, Neville, Anthony, Herrie, Jed, Don J and Stuart and helpers/encouragers/enablers: John E, Paul, Tony, and Don L who performed the vital task of getting the mobile toilet to and from the site.

- **Stuart ZL2TW**

*More Field Day pics on next page*

Thanks to Greg & Stuart for the photos!



That is not a masked Yoda in the background behind Stuart (top right) it is Ron ZL2BDD wearing a hat!



Anthony ZL1VBX (below)



Stuart ZL2TW (left) & Herrie ZL2HTO (below)



Graeme ZL1BDS operating, with Herrie ZL2HTO & Gary ZL1GA behind



Neville ZL2BNE (left) & Gary ZL1GA (right)



Neville ZL2BNE (left) & Wayne ZL2AIE



Herrie ZL2HTO operating, with Rob ZL2IW back left & Jed ZL2BTN back right



The above pic reminds me of a nativity scene off a Christmas card!

2KS		Branch #: 22		Page:	
Operator Name: me				CW contacts	
				PH contacts	
Mode	Band	Exch Sent		Exch Recd	
		RS(T)	S/N	Branch	RS(T)
558	80		312	22	37
			313	22	21
			314	22	28
			315	22	34
			316	22	16
			317	22	56
			318	22	2
			319	22	1
			320	22	3
			321	22	2

Gary's ZL1GA very droll entry under 'operator Name' - me



Lt - Rt; Gary ZL1GA, David-Michael Buckman (Jed's mate), Jed ZL2BTN



Poor Rav 4 loaded with 3 very heavy batteries

Trailer loaded but I'm unsure if it is coming or going



Getting all the air out of the tent so it could be rolled tightly and compactly required a huge effort from Greg ZL2GBX, Graeme ZL1BDS & especially John ZL2BH who had to roll from one end to the other expelling air (from the tent that is)



**February 10, 2026 Joe Pater W8GEX  
SPECIAL NOTICE (sent in by John Elvy ZL2BH)**

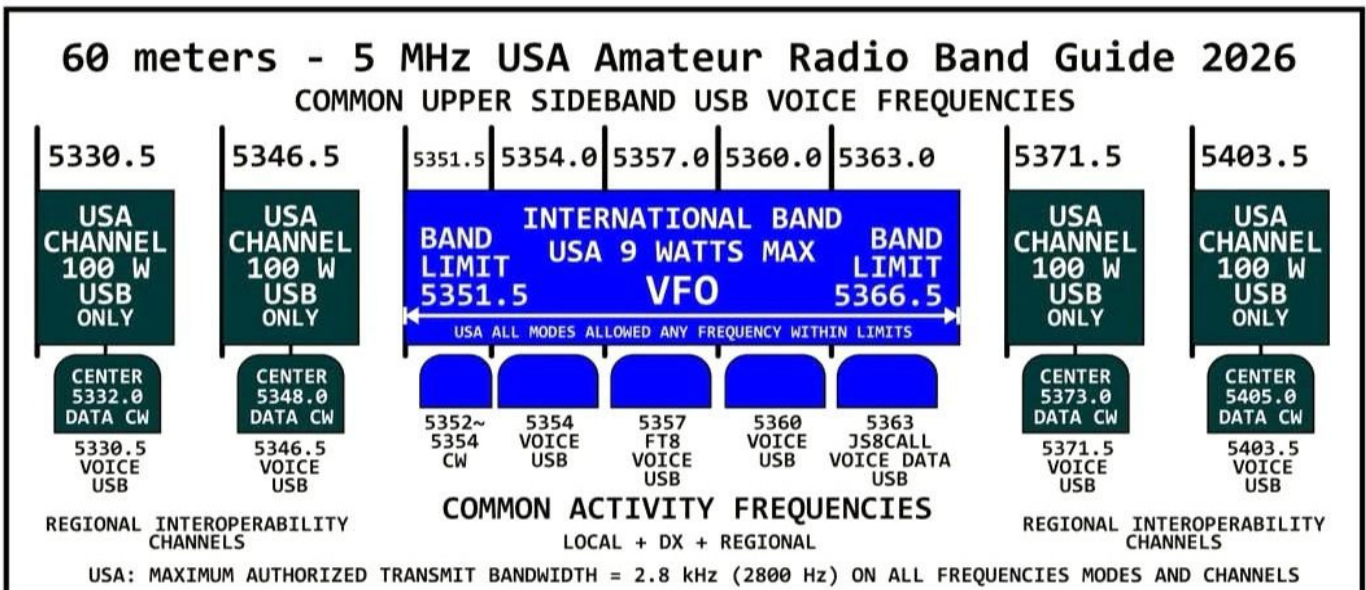
Starting February 13, the FCC will restrict U.S. amateur radio stations from operating at 100 watts on 5.357 MHz, limiting power to just 9.5 watts on that frequency. To continue operating at 100 watts, many U.S. DXers will move their FT8 activity to a new frequency: 5.371.5 MHz, effective the same date.

Operators are encouraged to inform friends, club members, and relevant news outlets about this change to ensure a smooth transition.

While many other countries will continue using the original frequency, it is important to notify anyone planning DXpeditions of the U.S. shift to 5.371.5 MHz.

John Elvy adds; *With the USA shifting freq (on High Power) to 5.371, stations will be outside the ZL 60m allocation.*

*ZL has been in this situation in the past, our solution was for each party to work split. Dx Summit was very useful in this situation, as it provides spotting with comments. ZL Hams can, of course, work USA stations on 5.537 (which is the common worldwide 60m Digi allocation) if no greater than 9.5watts eirp is used. ZL operators were limited to 10watts eirp for the first 2 to 3 years 60m was available, the subsequent increase of power to 15watts eirp did not result in huge gains. The Grayline is the Hams best friend when it comes to working DX especially QRP.*



**FCC Amateur Radio Service Regulations - Selected excerpts for reference purposes - Effective 13 February 2026.**

§ 97.303 Frequency sharing requirements. (h) Amateur stations transmitting on frequencies in the 60 m band must not cause harmful interference to, and must accept interference from, stations authorized by:

- (1) The United States (NTIA and FCC) and other nations in the fixed service; and
- (2) Other nations in the mobile except aeronautical mobile service. (3) In the 5330.5-5406.4 kHz band (60 m band), amateur stations may transmit only in the 5351.5-5366.5 kHz band and on the four center frequencies specified in the table below. For the discrete channels, control operators of stations transmitting phone, data, and RTTY emissions (emission designators 2K80J3E, 2K80J2D, and 60H0J2B, respectively) may set the carrier frequency 1.5 kHz below the center frequency as specified in the table below. For CW emissions (emission designator 150HA1A), the carrier frequency is set to the center frequency. For all 60 m spectrum, Amateur operators shall ensure that their emissions do not occupy more than 2.8 kHz.

§ 97.313 Transmitter power standards. (i) 60 m band power requirements: No station may transmit on the frequencies 5.332, 5.348, 5.373, and 5.405 MHz in the 60 m band with a radiated power exceeding 100 W ERP. No station may transmit in the 5.3515-5.3665 MHz band with a radiated power exceeding 9.15 W ERP. For the purpose of computing ERP, the transmitter PEP will be multiplied by the antenna gain relative to a half-wave dipole antenna. A half-wave dipole antenna will be presumed to have a gain of 1 (0 dBd). Licensees using other antennas must maintain in their station records either the antenna manufacturer's data on the antenna gain or calculations of the antenna gain.

Footnote (23) US23 The band 5351.5-5366.5 kHz (60 m band) is allocated to the amateur service on a secondary basis. In the band 5330.5-5406.4 kHz, the assigned frequencies 5332, 5348, 5373, and 5405 kHz are allocated to the amateur service on a secondary basis. Amateur service use of these four frequencies is restricted to a maximum effective radiated power of 100 W PEP and to the following emission types and designators: phone (2K80J3E), data (2K80J2D), RTTY (60H0J2B), and CW (150HA1A). Amateur service use of the 60m band frequencies must meet the requirements in part 97 of these rules. Amateur operators using the data and RTTY emissions must exercise care to limit the length of transmissions so as to avoid causing harmful interference to Federal stations.

SOURCE: 2026 HFLINK CC-BY. VERSION 2026B

## REMINDER NOTICE

The AGM will include a slide show and special presentation to Ron ZL2BDD and Helen ZL2HH Harris on their retirement from AREC, thanking them for their combined service of almost 100 years.

A reminder that Ron's health is very fragile (it was great to see him manage some time at the Field Day) so we ask you to stay away if you have any sniffles or are otherwise unwell.

**Feb 28:** Meanwhile, in Longview, Texas, a hot air balloon got up close and personal with a cell phone tower. The two occupants hit at about 290 metres and it took firefighters 3 hours to get them to the ground.

Climbing operations began around 8:50am using multiple rope systems due to the extreme height and complexity of the incident.

The rescuers reached the balloon occupants around 10am and both were brought safely to the ground. Neither were hurt in the incident but were taken to hospital as a precautionary measure.

The words underneath the photo was one of the many comments made about the photo.



*Think this might affect my SWR a little*



*This report from the USA is a timely reminder for those who love their POTA activities...*

**A TRAGIC REMINDER: SAFETY MUST COME FIRST IN THE FIELD – from [qrper.com](http://qrper.com)**

**July 5, 2025 Thomas Witherspoon**

It's with a heavy heart that I share news of a tragic accident that took the life of fellow ham radio operator and POTA enthusiast, Tripp Owens (N4NTO).

According to CBS 17 and WRAL, Tripp died after being electrocuted at a cemetery in Harnett County, North Carolina - most likely at Averasboro Battlefield Historic Site (US-11375).

Reports indicate that his vertical antenna came into contact with overhead power lines. News of the incident was shared within the community by Dave (W4JL), via a message passed along by Perry (N5JP).

It appears the incident may not have occurred during setup, but rather while taking the antenna down, as Dave noted that Tripp had signalled he was QRT on the POTA spots page. Based on Reverse Beacon Network activity, Tripp was on the air at least between 12:02 and 12:13 UTC yesterday morning.

This is heartbreaking news for those of us in the Parks on the Air and WWFF communities. Tripp was a well-known and well-loved North Carolina POTA operator - a dedicated hunter and activator whose callsign appears in my logs many times over the years. He'll be deeply missed.

### **Prioritizing Safety**

You've probably heard me mention this in past activation videos and field reports: scanning for power lines should become second nature - just like looking for trees to hang antennas. This tragedy is a powerful reminder of why that habit matters.

When public parks and recreation areas were designed, they were never meant for conductive vertical antennas or wire antennas strung through trees. Power lines across park properties follow their own logic - typically routed for infrastructure needs like lighting, water facilities, or visitor centres. Our antennas and setups are the unknown factor in those environments. This is why you should always carefully survey your surroundings before setting up:

### **Before You Deploy an Antenna:**

- **Scan the area for power lines.**
- **Trace their path** - power lines often lead to buildings, pavilions, or utility poles deeper in the park.
- **Think beyond your setup moment.** Could a gust of wind, a falling limb, or an unstable mast cause your antenna to swing or fall into a live wire?
- **Never assume a wire is insulated or safe.** Even low-hanging lines can be deadly.

In some parks, overhead lines are surprisingly well hidden in the canopy or not immediately visible from popular operating areas. Take your time. Walk your operating site. Think it through before deploying a mast or tossing a wire into a tree.