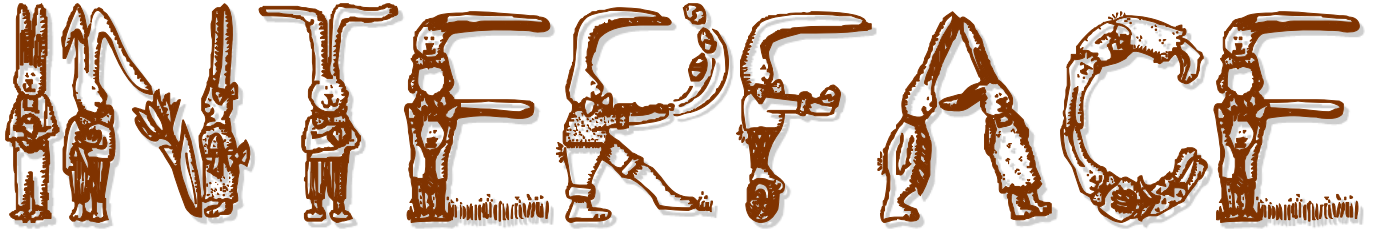


April 2026



MONTHLY BULLETIN

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

CLUB CALENDAR

General Meeting:.... 9 April 7.30pm, EOC, Wither Rd
Social Group; 16 April Dodson St Beer Garden
Committee Meeting; 22 April 7.30pm, via Zoom



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

BRANCH 22 NOTICES

1. Inter-island HVDC Link (Cook Strait cable) Stuart ZL2TW....9 April
2. Star Party. TBC 14 May
3. SAREX Dip Flat, volunteers needed for set-up 15-22 May
4. HamCram.....23/24 May

HF Net Tuesdays
2030 hrs 3876kHz

Website
www.zl2ks.org.nz

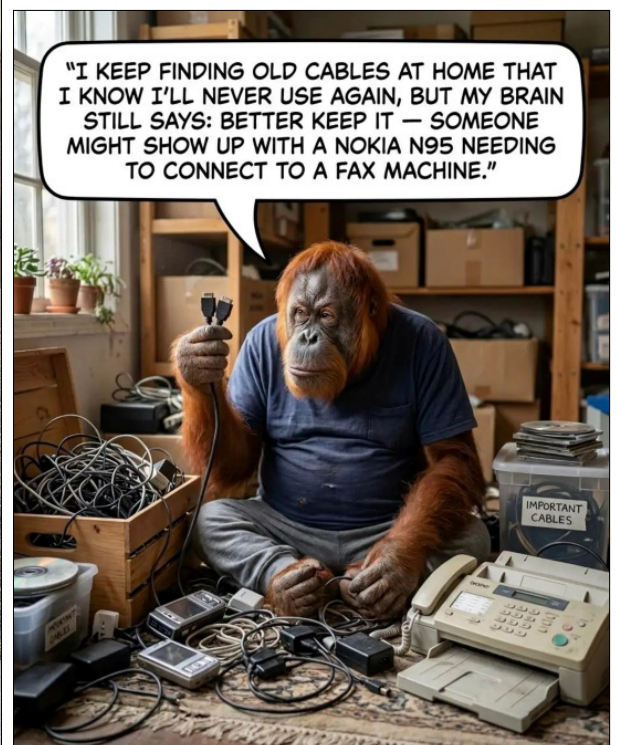
Editor: Caryl Simpson caryl.grant@gmail.com **MARC Contact:** marcbranch22@gmail.com

Our April heading gives a nod to Easter celebrations. Happy Easter!



I think this was the closest challenge ever! The joke of the day was that we could just use last year's photo as it was the same two fellas with the trophy, except last year Greg ZL2GBX was congratulating Jim ZL2BHF but this year it was the other way around as Marlborough won back the Interclub Challenge Trophy by a very narrow margin!

(They were wrong, it was Greg presenting the trophy to Stewart ZL2STR last year)



HELEN ZL2HH & RON ZL2BDD 100 YEARS AREC

At the AGM, a Long Service Award presentation was given to Ron & Helen, thanking them for their 80+ years combined service to AREC. A slideshow was shown of them 'on the job' and at other radio related events over the years. They have now retired to concentrate on their health.



South Island Regional Manager, Lindsey Ross ZL4KS, was on hand to do the honours, thanking them for their hard work and presenting them both with Long Service certificates and an appreciation gift from the Gift Box Boutique.



Paul Rennie ZL2RE, Group Leader Marlborough AREC, also gave a speech honouring Ron & Helen's long years of dedication.

Thanks to John ZL2BH and Herrie ZL2HTO for the photos

Hi all radio lovers,

Just a small story about our experience with the stand at the A & P Show in Rai Valley. It was the Show's 90th anniversary and I had never been but when I had a drive by last week I thought, wouldn't it be a good idea to have a Ham stand and do a bit of promotion for the upcoming Hamcram!?



I was on my way to Blenheim anyway so on my way I called Justin, who is the organiser of the Show. He told me that he was fully booked up. I reminded him that we always have an annual BBQ on the grounds so he said "If you like I can put you by the hay barn". "No problem," I said. "Any place is good for us!"



So here we go, I call Greg to see if he had some promo stuff and he did. That was great, many thanks Greg. Next on the list was Paul for a table and other promotion gear. Paul was great as well to help, no problem at all.

When the email went out, Jed and Lewis were very keen to help out and Linc said he was coming too. Thank you so much for helping out on short notice!

Rob was texting me to see if he could help but we had most areas covered. Caryl did a great job sending out an email to get other Hams involved too.

We had a lot of interest and managed to get 4 people giving their details so hopefully they will do the Hamcram in May. Stuart came by as well which was nice and Peter, from the Nelson Branch had a nosy too.

So, I would like to thank you all for getting it done in a short time. It told me that we have some awesome people in our club!!

A BIG THANK YOU!!

Kind regards

Herrie, ZL2HTO



L-R in both photos:

Linc ZL2CLT,

Jed ZL2BTN,

Herrie ZL2HTO,

Lewis ZL2RAI

WOMEN ARE ANGELS
And when someone breaks our wings, we simply continue to fly...
on a broomstick. We are flexible like that!

2026 AUCKLAND QRP WEEKEND

Each year, IARU's Region 3 holds a QRP day on June 17, UTC. This day is an NZART initiative. To celebrate the day in 2026 and to promote QRP operations, there will be an Auckland QRP weekend on June 20 & 21.

The event is open to all radio amateurs and is not a contest. It is an opportunity to have fun with QRP operations. The two days of the event have markedly different formats.

The aim for Saturday is to score points.

The aim for Sunday is to achieve goals such as having QSOs on three bands, activating outdoor features, or having SSB QSOs with stations in four different Maidenhead fields.

The event runs 9am - 7pm NZST both days. (Sunset in NZ on June 20 & 21 is around 5pm NZST). All bands from 630m to 3cm including WARC bands can be used. The permitted codes are CW, digital, EME, satellite and voice.

A more detailed article on the weekend has been submitted to the editor of Break-In.

- Philip Sharp, ZL1PSH



I went to the radio shop and I said, "Can someone sell me a radio?"



"Kenwood?" the bloke said.



"Well can you fetch him please?"

CARLUKE NELSON/MARLBOROUGH COMBINED BBQ

(photo © John Elvy)

A great time was had by all with lots of laughter, joking and camaraderie. Three camped there overnight Friday. Nelson fronted up with 10 members while Marlborough out-numbered them slightly with 13 (plus my mum, who had a fabulous day). George only managed to stay around 10 minutes but did his bit towards answering quiz questions before he headed off to another event. We also had Stuart answer as many quiz questions as he could the day before, as he was unable to attend because he was working. This did give us a slight advantage but Rob and Kay joined the Nelson team, who would have got more points if they had listened to Kay's answer to one of the questions but, instead, chose the alternative, wrong, one. Indeed, they too would have got full marks but another question, for which they had two suggested answers, again chose the wrong one. The quiz, if I remember, will be attached (with answers) to the Interface email.



The actual day started with general chatting while Chris Scott fired up the BBQ and kitchen workers (mainly Topsy) got the rest of the food organised. As usual, we had an interesting array of salads, stuffed eggs, hot spuds and freshly caught snapper, to have with the club supplied steak, sausages, patties, bread and onions. There was a bit of a panic when we realised, after most had finished their main course, that we had forgotten the steaks warming in the oven! No worries, they were added to the feast and devoured. Dessert followed mains with grapes, watermelon, several different slices, cupcakes, chocolate (white, plus dark orange) and cakes. We never starve at these events!



We ate in the hall as it was still a bit cool and misty outside but it cleared while we were eating so, we headed out for the first challenge - the Grant Simpson Memorial Fox Hunt (so named last year by the Nelson club). This is very funny for the non-competitors to watch as they start all together then, as the Fox starts sending out its signal, they scatter in all directions trying to be first to track it down. It took them some time this year but finally the first to find it was Nelson's Norman Gray, followed by another Nelson member, Connor Brennan. Third successful finder was Julie Crengle, Herrie's partner, who did so without a radio! The game came to a halt when Herrie found the Fox and proudly shouted it to everyone then started taking it with him when he was supposed to keep quiet and leave it for others to,



hopefully, find. Not that it mattered, we only needed to know who was first and I think the rest, by this time, were about to give up anyway!



The participants all made their way back to the top field by the hall so we could Toss The Tait. Despite Nelson trying to cheat by moving the measuring line, Marlborough proved to be the biggest tossers this year but only by 2.8 meters. This made us 1 all so everything was riding on the quiz.

The March Quiz, as it was called, was made up of 31 questions (for the 31 days in March) which were all about people, or events, connected to the month of March. The two clubs went to opposite ends of the hall, so as not to be overheard discussing the answers, and went about filling in their sheets. As I had confirmed some answers to Marlborough, I did the same for Nelson. One question I thought they would all get wrong, but it was the one my mum actually knew, was the James Bond question. In the end, Marlborough won by 2 points.

By now some were having to head off so we cleaned up the hall and put it back to rights then said our goodbyes before going our separate ways. Before splitting up, the question was asked if everyone thought we should continue with these combined events and the overwhelming reply was a very loud YES DEFINITELY! So, even if only a few members attend, they have a great time getting together and look forward to the next year.



Marlborough (above) & Nelson (left) during, or after, the quiz. Some of our lot had left at this point so fewer in the photo.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| FOX HUNT WINNER: Nelson | TOSS THE TAIT WINNER: Marlborough | MARCH QUIZ WINNER: Marlborough |
| 1st: Norman Gray | Marlborough - total of 83.2m | Marlborough - 31 |
| 2nd: Connor Brennan | Nelson - total of 80.4m | Nelson - 29 |
| 3rd: Julie Crengle | BEST THROW: Nick Batt - 19.9m | |



Apologies if I get some names wrong. Rather than look up callsigns, I will list names only.

L-R Back Row: Rob Carter, Nick Batt, Chris Scott, Scott Figenshow, John Elvy, Anthony Winter (hiding behind), Topsy Scott, Norman Gray (holding dog), Greg Barton, Julie Crengle

L-R Front Row: Tony Daken, Malcolm, Susan & Connor (yes he does have an antenna on his head) Brennan, Herrie Ten Oever, Jim Meachen, Andrew Mackie, Tony Whitaker



Fox Hunters in Action
Finally most ended up in the same, correct, rough area



Tossing the Tait. Look at the concentration on those faces! They gave it their all!



Quiz teams getting the correct answers (photo © John Elvy)

CARLUKE COMBINED BBQ HISTORY

Towards the end of the day, the question was asked "How long have these combined BBQ's been running here?" After a lot of thought, it was decided it had to be 12 - 15 years. Once home, I started researching through past newsletters and came up with the following information;

The first combined BBQ & Junk Sale between Nelson and Marlborough was held in 2007 at the old Tinline School up the Maungatapu Rd. at Pelorus Bridge. The only challenge then was a Tug O' War. It was best out of 3 for the men then the ladies had a separate try. The March newsletter had a glitch so I don't know who won.



L-R: Harry Stephens, Ian McKercher, Phil Conza (Les Rice behind him), Ross Holdaway? Gerard Van Antwerpen, Grant Simpson (Ken Menzies behind), Tony Allen (Tony Whitaker behind). The judge, with his back to the camera, is a Nelson member.

The next combined BBQ and Junk Sale was also at Tinline in 2009. Again, the only challenge was Tug O' War. The man taking the photo is Andrew Mackie, from Nelson. Tony Allen at the front, Sam Tennent, unknown?, Grant Simpson, Ian McKercher? Ken Menzies at the far end. Marlborough won.



There was no mention of a combined event in 2010 but I note we had a display tent at both the Rai and Ward A&P Shows that year.

The next combined BBQ was the first at Carluke in 2013. We had a trading table and, again, Tug O' War only. This is also the first year we competed for the trophy we use today. Marlborough won, despite having two girls on their team to make up the numbers (one of them being Nelson's Topsy) but Nelson won the women's because they had Caryl on their side making up their numbers.

In 2014, 40 people attended, roughly half and half from each club. We often have half that number these days. Carluke is mentioned with the annual interclub challenge having several challenges to be completed and the club which won the most would win the trophy. They had a Fox Hunt, Transceiver Toss (to be re-named Toss The Tait, and a Tug O' War. Nelson won this year.

By 2015, Marlborough had won back the trophy after a Fox Hunt, Toss The Tait, some BBQ Puns and a couple of quizzes. It was noted everyone was thankful there would be no more Tug O' Wars due to the aging of many members and the increasing fragility of their hips and other joints.

From then on the format has remained the same with a Fox Hunt, Toss The Tait and a Quiz. There have been occasional changes when it has been wet and we had to stay indoors so a Fox Hunt and Tait Toss were not possible but we've played the corn hole game and quoits, throwing rings of wire over aials. I seem to remember a Pin The Aerial On The Vehicle once, using paper drawings, not real vehicles.

Winners by year;

2016 - Marlborough	2017 - Marlborough	2018 - Nelson	2019 - Marlborough
2020 - Nelson	2021 - Marlborough	2022 - Covid lockdown	2023 - Marlborough
2024 - Nelson	2025 - Nelson	2026 - Marlborough	



Look at this brilliant sculpture on the side of SH6 at Okaramio. Apparently it used to be up Maungatapu Rd for many years before moving here.

I thought they were real at first, until I got closer and I am not the only one who thought the same. I have no idea who made it but they did a brilliant job.

Herrie has had two express interest in a Shack Crawl but would like some more. Interested? They have been done in the past and a great way to see others' set-ups and get ideas to improve your own.

Contact Herrie grens360@gmail.com



PICTON 7225 MT FREETH VISIT

At the March meeting, Greg mentioned that the Picton 7225 repeater was off the air and asked for interested persons to visit the site. Herrie, Tony and I went to the site on 25/3 to investigate with Ron and Rob monitoring us on the air.

There is a history of the repeater controller at the site locking up and needing a hard reset. The controller there is an arcom RC-210, in the photo it is the unit with all the LEDs and you can see the lock up state it gets into with the PTT line on port three permanently on. This is attached to the local repeater which then transmits continuously but is set to time out when that happens, and remains off until reset. Grant had installed a hardware reset device: it drops the supply to the controller with the correct DTMF command. I had tried using this command the day before from Picton, with no luck, on the local repeater input. Having been to the site we now know how to do a reset next time: the correct tones via the Ned repeater output frequency ie. The link input frequency. We tested this capability before leaving and all was OK.



It was impressive how much native bush has regenerated around our site. There was some gorse in front of the door and the manuka had grown quite high around the site getting near antennas and potentially shadowing the solar panels. Herrie used his chainsaw to sort the vegetation out for some time to come!

The flooded lead acid batteries needed a small water top up. Other than that, everything inside was OK. The antennas were tested and are unchanged from last test.

Checking the diary on site, the last time the building was painted was a bit over 20 years ago so that will need doing in the next year or two.

- Stuart ZL2TW



Thanks to Stuart ZL2TW
&
Herrie ZL2HTO
for the photos





"Electricity originates inside clouds. There, it forms into lightning, which is attracted to the Earth by golfers. After entering the ground, the electricity hardens into coal, which, when dug up by power companies and burned in big ovens called 'generators,' turns back into electricity...where it is transformed by TV sets into commercials for beer, which passes through the consumers and back into the ground, thus completing what is known as a circuit."

- Dave Barry

EMERGENCY COMMS (MARC, AREC & CDEM)

More volunteers, plus a Deputy Leader, need to be recruited.

SAREX EXERCISE DIP FLAT - 15 - 22 May 2026

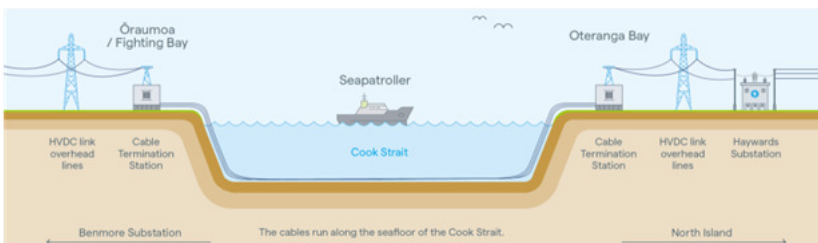
MARC volunteers are needed to assist with set-up 15th May. Visitors are welcome to experience the exercise.

If you can help with either the Emergency Comms or setting up the SAREX exercise, please contact Paul Rennie paul_sharon@xtra.co.nz



Inter-Island HVDC link ('Cook Strait Cable') Mini Talk Next Meeting;

Stuart will talk about its bleeding edge of technology 1960s past, to the present and its future.



Hi from your new president

I want to acknowledge the considerable contribution made by my predecessor, John Errington, over many years. Graeme, Gary and Nick have stepped off the committee and thanks to them too. Anthony ZL1VBX and myself have joined.

For newer members, I've been a ham since about 5th form (year 11) in 1980. I joined the club about 1999 at the persuasion of our then secretary Helen, ZL2HH. I have been on and off committee a few times since then and this is my third term as president (I think!) My activities in ham radio at the moment are mainly a bit of HF on 40 metres and doing some POTA activations. I have a lot of home brew projects planned as I am approaching retirement.

How did I end up back on committee? I was told we didn't have nearly enough nominees so I put my name forward. "I can't be the president though" I said.... at the first committee meeting when it came to who was going to be the president, I think everyone looked at me. I know a set up when I see one: in the words of the Daleks "resistance is useless" so here I am!

Please be aware that my time is limited, I work full time and have two teenage children at home, and a couple of grandchildren. I will do my best at chairing meetings and overseeing things but there is a limit to what I can do.

Secretary and Treasurer

Don and Greg have been doing a great job in these roles for quite a few years. They deserve a break and are ready to hand over to interested members at the next AGM. They will, of course, be available to help their replacements settle in. If you are thinking "If there is no one wanting to do it, then I'll do it" then its probably for you and please get in touch. March 2027 will be here in no time....

What do you want from your club?

A bit over a year ago the last committee, at the suggestion of members, organised a number of club activities but the participation in these was not that great. This begs the question: what do you want from your club? What do you think the club should be doing? Please feel free to email me, my address is below.

The Ned 695

The last committee looked at moving our Ned repeater to somewhere more accessible. Why? The current site is not easy to get to. After a 4WD drive another steep half hour walk is needed, Our members are getting less able to get to this site. Worse still, the set of 500 AH 2 volt cells at the site were replaced in 2011. That required the hire of a helicopter to get the new batteries in and the old ones out, and quite a few club members. These batteries are now 15 years old and could fail at any time. Finding an accessible site in a location that has line of site to Ward 560 and Picton 7225 was not possible.

We will have another go at finding a suitable site, which may be made easier by looking at a different way to link the repeaters. Feel free to let us know your thoughts.

Repeaters in general

The club has spent tens of thousands of dollars on these and a large number of person-hours keeping the network running. A reliable source has told me there is about one QSO per day on the network along with the weekly net. I'm going to be deliberately provocative here and ask is this money and effort worth it? Why bother? Any ideas? An occasional 2 metre activity night or day? Let us know.

Rigexpert Match 230 MHz Antenna Analyser

Your committee has purchased the above for loan to club members. This is finishing an idea that the last committee had started. We can upgrade this to UHF if there is interest. The device has the hardware to do this, you pay the fee and they send you an upgrade code. Rigexpert makes great gear, really nice to use. We will get a suitable protective case and it will be made available to loan to members with an agreed return date. Gear can get lost if care is not taken.

That's a bit about me and what is going on, there is more stuff happening too, look at the committee minutes when they come out and in Interface (Thanks Caryl).

Please feel free to email me, my address is below, with your ideas or thoughts regarding any of the above, and the first sensible e mail received earns a chocolate fish.

Stuart Watchman ZL2TW
clareandstuart@xtra.co.nz



Crabby Road

4-24-11

