

September 2026



MONTHLY BULLETIN

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

THE CALENDAR

General Meeting:.... 10 Sept 7.30pm, EOC, Wither Rd

Social Group; 17 Sept Dodson St Beer Garden

Committee Meeting; 24 Sept 7.30pm, via Zoom

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

BRANCH NOTICES



1. CONSTRUCTORS' AWARD 10 Sept
2. TOPFEST 19/20 Sept
3. 10 Pin Bowling..... 8 Oct
4. JOTA (Jamboree Of The Air) @ EOC..... 16 - 18 Oct

HF Net Tuesdays
1930 hrs 3876kHz
*Reverts to 2030 when
Daylight Saving starts.*

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www.zl2ks.org.nz

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September has Māori Language Week, Talk Like A Pirate Day and the start of spring so this month's headings incorporate all three, with Piringa meaning connections and links in Māori. Did anyone notice the name change?



Date: September 19/ 20

Venue: Vintage Car Club, Brayshaw Park,
26 Arthur Baker Place, Blenheim



The programme details, including topics and speakers, will be released shortly.
In the meantime, we can advise there will be presentations on topics such as:

- Amateur Broadcast Radio
- Tail Scale
- Remote Station Control
- SDR/RBN/Winlink
- WSPR
- Rapid Prototyping
- Low Power FM Broadcasting
- Life as a Radio Activist
- Antenna Racing World Champs 2026
- Club HF Remote Station
- Jock White Automated Logging & Entry Digital Solution
- The Ham Radio Life Cycle

Registration:

- **Time;** From 8.30am Saturday
- **Cost;** \$20 cash only

Event is expected to begin **9am Saturday**
& conclude approximately **2.30pm Sunday.**

If you plan to attend, please email Nick Nick@zl2neb.nz with 'Topfest' in the subject line.

We look forward to seeing you there!

SHACK CRAWL - Oct 10TH

So far, Herrie has 4 or 5 shacks on his visit list but nobody has indicated an interest to do so!
Anyone wanting to go on this shack crawl to see other Ham set-ups, please contact Herrie;
0212380516 or grens360@gmail.com

BRAYSHAW PARK REMOTE HF REPAIR UPDATE

Here, possibly, is the story behind the problems at Brayshaw Park...

The primary problem was the old batteries were failing. They were at the stage where, during the day, the solar would keep things running and, if a sunny day, would put enough charge into the batteries that they might last overnight. A cloudy day and some evening use of the system and the batteries would fall to well under 12 volts and the inverter (used to convert the 12v DC to 230v for the wifi, computer, rotator etc) would shut down and have to be manually restarted once the solar had put some charge back into the batteries next day. The old batteries had a date of 10 February 2010 written on them so had done pretty well!

The old batteries were replaced with the couple more from the Simpson garage (probably a similar age to the other batteries - the replacement batteries that is, not the garage) and the power system at Brayshaw has worked well since.

There's a bit more to the story though. Sometime during the incident, when the inverter was switching off with low battery, the wifi that supports the rest of Brayshaw Heritage Park stopped working. This had no effect on our Remote HF system. It was eventually found that a wifi unit up the mast had failed and that was the reason the mast was lowered to allow that unit to be replaced. No-one, to my knowledge, has identified if the wifi failure was connected to the battery failure or just coincidental – the unit that was replaced was an older type with a limited lifespan.

How much of the above is correct I don't know but most of it should be reasonably accurate.

PARKS ON THE AIR

The Parks on the AIR (POTA) awards programme currently has 5 official events each year. The main purpose of these events is to get people out in the parks and to have as much fun as possible. NZ currently has over 800 POTA parks and there will likely be a POTA park close to you. And there are more than 75,000 POTA parks overseas for you to chase! Events start at 00:00:00 UTC and end 23:59:59 UTC on the days listed.

The dates for the official events are -

Autumn (spring)	third full weekend of October.
New Year	first 7 days of 2027
Winter (summer)	third full week of January
Spring (autumn)	third full weekend of April

THANKS TO CLUB MEMBERS

Last month I donated to the club the 3 discone antennas on my roof. In return, I asked if they might remove all the other aerials while they were up there. One at the end of the garage had been used to send signals between the computer here and Brayshaw Park, via another antenna on the Go-Kart Club's roof, so was no longer required. I had no idea what the one at the end of the lounge did but discovered quickly, once they removed it and had gone home, that it gave me FM signal at that end of the house! I lost my favourite radio station either by coincidence or that was what the antenna was for.

The antenna was initially said to be faulty as it had corroded, which explained why the past couple of weeks the FM signal had kept dropping out, but when I asked if there was a connection between the antenna removal and my losing FM, John Elvy fished it out of his rubbish and cleaned off the corrosion then he and Gary Lodge came back with Gary's extra long ladder and John put the antenna back up. And lo, there was FM in the lounge, Caryl rejoiced and was happiness filled! John and Gary loaded up their ladder and headed off, each with a bag of mandarins as thanks.



CONSTRUCTORS AWARD - 10th September

This is held every September on the General Meeting night and is open to all club members. Now is the time to start thinking about your entry, with plenty of time to build and refine it. The idea is to show other members what can be done and to perhaps start them thinking what else they could do. Amateur radio opens up a whole world of possibilities!

CONSTRUCTORS AWARD RULES

You must have made your construction yourself. It can be anything you like, either from scratch or from a kit.

Most construct something amateur radio related but we also get a few electronic devices or computer related constructs. We've even had sculptures made from electronic/radio parts!

If you are unsure, contact a committee member and ask.

On the night, everyone brings their entries which are lined up on a table. After the meeting, each entrant is asked to briefly describe their entry. The judges (sucked into it on the night and, as a result, are open to bribery - choccy biscuits might work) then judge the entries whilst everyone else enjoys a cuppa.

The winner is then announced and presented with the trophy (pictured right), which they get to keep proudly on prominent display in their home, or radio shack, until next year.



GPS

David Rothwell, ZL2WDR, operates an NTRIP cluster. He makes the data stream available to members free of charge. If you need really accurate (cm level) GPS, you need this. If you would like access, please email the secretary, Don, marcbranch22@gmail.com. He will arrange for you to receive access details and credentials.

In case you are wondering, an NTRIP cluster streams GPS correction data. The cluster is a group of reference stations whose real-time correction data is made available through NTRIP (Networked Transport of RTCM via Internet Protocol). An NTRIP cluster allows a roving receiver to use correction data from a nearby station or a network-derived correction service.

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Interest Groups

A member has made the following suggestion to committee that I think is a really good idea. A range of amateur radio activities of interest to our members would be identified and ask for members to act as representatives to those activities.

Some suggested activities might be:

- HF operating activity - weekly HF net, Brayshaw Park, SDR, recent propagation, etc
- V/UHF operating activity - weekly VHF net, repeater usage
- Satellites - equipment, antennas, operating
- Digital modes - FT8, Winlink, etc
- POTA operating and activity
- Contests and events
- General operating - Morse, SKCC, FISTS, other activities
- Facilities management and maintenance - repeaters, Brayshaw, SDR, RBN, etc
- Any other relevant topic you might think of.

The proposal would be to identify relevant subjects/activities which can be raised at monthly meetings, identifying and appointing representatives to oversee and report (3-5 minutes), and providing a point of focus within the club, and between other clubs, for development and continuance of these ham radio activities to the membership's satisfaction. The subject activities may be raised for a report, and the response may be nothing-to-report, and that is OK. Think this one over and tell us what you think at the next meeting.

POTA (etc) Day in November

How about a POTA day in November? The idea is that our club fields a number of stations in parks around the area. Newer members can team up with more experienced operators. SOTA peaks are a possibility as well as lakes. This also fits in with the 'calling NZ' activity over the whole month of November to contact as many towns as possible with prizes from the Ham Shack shop, anyone activating a park in Blenheim would be popular for this.

The proposed date is Sunday November 9, and if wet Sunday November 29. If there is interest we could run it on both days. Watch this space.

Loss of the Wine festival income

You will have heard that the Marlborough Wine and Food Festival is not to be held in 2027. Since this event began the club has been involved with providing communications assistance and chiller security in return for a donation. With other events falling by the way this was our only remaining regular fundraiser, more recently bringing in over \$2,000 p.a. Although our club is in a strong financial position with good reserves, we don't want to see these fall much as it provides an excellent rainy day fund. We have regular annual costs, mainly insurance and repeater and beacon licenses, and licenses have just gone up by about 10% so if we do nothing our reserves will inevitably decline.

At some stage we are going to have to look at new ways to raise funds for the club. The alternative is to increase subscriptions. Grants from charities are only available for new projects, not business as usual costs.

Suggestions are welcome!

- Stuart ZL2TW



- What happens if someone slaps you at high frequency?
- It Hertz



FOR THOSE WHO DIDN'T READ THE EMAIL...

Hello,

I am Kostas, SV3ORA, from Greece and the designer of the NR-1 Antenna Noise Blanker.

The NR-1 is a noise blanker that operates directly on the antenna signal. It can significantly reduce strong impulse noise, such as power-line interference, without requiring the separate noise antenna typically used by QRM eliminators.

You can find the project here: <http://grp.gr/nr1/>

Since many radio amateurs suffer from impulse-type interference, I wonder if the NR-1 might be of interest to your members. Would you be willing to mention it to them, include a short announcement in your club newsletter, or suggest another appropriate way of letting your members know about it?

There are several demonstrations and reports from radio amateurs around the world who are already using the NR-1:

YouTube demonstrations: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0KwxikZqJ1TzQpscf3voh5CR1c30WLD>

NR-1 manual: http://grp.gr/nr1/sv3ora_NR-1_Antenna_Noise_Blanker_manual_EN.pdf

The main NR-1 page also contains user reviews, magazine publications and additional technical information.

For those interested in purchasing a unit, the NR-1 is available from Elisys in Greece, with worldwide shipping:

<https://shop.elisys.gr/products/nr1/>

Thank you for your time, and I would be very pleased if you could share the NR-1 with your members.

73,

Kostas, SV3ORA

..... 
The Marlborough Wine & Food Festival ran uninterrupted for 36 years, 33 of them at Brancott Vineyard, until Covid stopped it in 2021 and 2022. It returned in 2023, moving to a new location at the Renwick Domain when Brancott Vineyard was no longer available.

The Marlborough Amateur Radio Club was involved from the beginning, their role basically the same but evolving over the years. I believe Grant ZL2BK, attended every one, usually directing proceedings from the comms base, up until ill health forced him out in 2023, the year before he died. Stuart ZL2TW and Helen ZL2HH were often on duty at base as well. The majority of our volunteers had the hard job of sitting in the sun, watching revellers go by in various stages of inebriation and undress, while guarding the chillers - not so much from attendees, but other vendors! They quickly learned to take a large sun umbrella, along with a comfy seat, as the festival was known for it always being sunny, and very hot, on the day with rain only occurring briefly, two or three times over the years. Generally, temperatures were in the low to mid 30's. Those lucky enough to be guarding chillers for some of the food vendors were often offered plates of whatever delicacy was being served the paying masses. Those in blue gums corner had trees for shade and the amusement of watching the inebriated trying, sometimes unsuccessfully, to get in and out of the Portaloos stationed in that area.

In the early years, Bernie ZL2AZK had his comms van set up to announce who was performing on which stage and to make other announcements, as necessary. Many ended up being to announce lost people trying to find their group.

Entertainers have varied widely over the years from a group of uni students with a tea chest base and ukeles to international artists, with everything in between. I think my favourites were that uni group, who sang their own compositions like "I Gave My Love A Banana, Now She's Slipping Away From Me" and the NZ Army Band who got everyone up and dancing, as did The Beat Girls who were repeat performers due to their popularity. Indeed, it was always hard to get everyone to go home as they were enjoying themselves too much, or had passed out somewhere.

For something different, in 2009 the Kārearea Falcon Trust attended with a couple of their birds, which attracted a lot of attention, not to mention contributions towards the Trust. The vintage planes, Nanchangs and Yaks primarily I think, always did a few circuits overhead, to the delight of the crowds.

Some other artists featured over the years have been Troy Kingi, Kaylee Bell, Drax Project, Sons of Zion, Mitch James, Ladyhawke, Hello Sailor, Sweet Mix Kids, Phoenix Foundation, Jaydin Shingleton, Tim & Neil Finn, Gin Wigmore, Supergroove, Hollie Smith, Tiki Taane, Boh Runga, Salmonella Dub, Opensouls and Avalanche City.

I either didn't get involved until 2007, or I lost photos earlier than that to a hard drive failure, so I have no photos from before then. Looking through the years, I was saddened to see how many of our regular club wine and food volunteers are no longer with us. From 2007 (apologies if I get any callsigns incorrect/unknown, or have missed some Silent Keys) we lost Harry Stephens ZL2HES, Ron Harris ZL2BDD, Grant Simpson ZL2BK, Gerard Van Antwerpen ZL2GVA, Chris Grant ZL2CHG, Ken Hynds ZL2KHZ, Ross Holdaway ZL2ROS, Phil Conza ZL2U, Roger Lawson ZL2BHG, Colleen Lawson ZL2LY, Michael Hope ZL2BOO and Henk Bouwknegt ZL2HGB.

Although it was a lot of hard work behind the scenes, getting volunteers and co-ordinating with officials, those involved always looked forward to the festival and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. It is a big loss, not only to our club funds, but to the whole community as it drew thousands of visitors into the region. A great loss.



Colleen



Harry



Ross



Gerard



Michael



Beat Girls



Chris



Flyover



Many came wearing the costume of their people, for ease of finding each other in the crowd



The lady in pink was popular, mainly because it was just body paint, not a costume she was wearing (or not wearing)

NZ Army Band zombies performing Michael Jackson's Thriller



Ian



Roger



Ken



John N



Paul



Helen



Tony



Grant



Ron

Many thanks to all our volunteers, and their families, over the years. There are too many of you to fit on the page!

We now need ideas for fund raising as this was the only one we had left and it was a good one!



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Kind Regards,

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— OLD HAM RADIO ADAGE

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