



December 2002

# NERG NEWS

Incorporated 1985 in Victoria  
Reg No A0006776V - <http://nerg.asn.au>

**NERG Inc.**  
PO Box 270  
Greensborough  
Victoria 3088

This month:  
6.30 pm onwards  
Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2002

**NERG Christmas BBQ**  
at the home of Greg VK3VT  
1 Noorabil Court, Greensborough  
– all inclusive cost around \$7 per head.

### What's on this month?

Not a meeting but a good excuse to get together to celebrate the end of another year!

The NERG Christmas party will be held on Thursday night at the home of Greg VK3VT – 1 Noorabil Court Greensborough from 6:30 PM onwards – all inclusive cost around \$7 per head.

If possible send Greg an RSVP on 9432 0563 or [VK3VT@nerg.asn.au](mailto:VK3VT@nerg.asn.au) so he can get the catering numbers about right.

### November Report:

The November meeting saw Greg Williams, VK3VT, run a session on the fine art of radio contesting. This included a mock contest within the meeting room with Greg being the rare DX station and the audience shouting out callsigns and QSLs. After a slow start Greg was soon in the middle of a dogpile – all good experience for upcoming club contests!

Jim Linton, president of the WIA Victorian division was a surprise guest. Jim has been out and about recently visiting several Victorian clubs and is no doubt getting lots of feedback from WIA members and non-members alike.

### VT inducted as "Elmer"

The WIA Vic. Div. recently started its "Hall of Fame" to acknowledge the outstanding efforts of local amateurs that have assisted others in the hobby. The term "Elmer" describes experienced and knowledgeable individuals who are a mentor or teacher that encourages prospective radio amateurs, or the less experienced operator.

Many of today's radio amateurs can attribute their involvement and enjoyment in the hobby to an Elmer. WIA Victoria encourages Elmering and through its Hall of Fame, pays tribute Elmers, both past and present.

One such "Elmer" is our NERG president Greg Williams, VK3VT, who was inducted into the hall recently. Greg has been running Novice classes for longer than I can remember, helping hundreds hone their skills and knowledge to get their license and get on



**Merry Christmas and  
a Safe New Year  
to all from the NERG!**

the air. Perhaps less well known but equally important is Greg's work with the WIA education team developing the exam procedures and Question Banks used throughout VK land.

Greg was nominated by Dave VK3JMB – here is what he had to say:  
"Over his many years in amateur radio Greg has instructed many new hams, including myself, in our hobby. He is sought out by many of us for advice and practical assistance with the projects we undertake.

Greg is actively involved in Fox Hunting and ARDF, aiding newcomers in this facet of the hobby."

Congratulations Greg!

### Progress reports:

#### VK3RMH IRLP

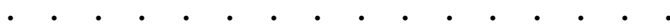
IRLP on VK3RMH was disabled on a few occasions last month while a few networking issues were resolved. Thanks to the efforts of Mark VK3XXX and Tony VK3JED it's all back in action once again.

#### VK3CNE Packet BBS

Off the air while sorting out a new PC – should be back on air before Christmas.

#### VK3RMH 6m Beacon

No Comment! (Murphy's Law has been working overtime on this project – not so much with the beacon itself but external demands on time and bench space)



## Jamboree on the air

By Mark, VK3XXX - JOTA 2002

My first experience with JOTA was that of a cub or a scout, being so long ago I can't really recall and the hazy memory doesn't help. Having fond memories from way back then (ok it wasn't that long ago but hey it was the 80's, that's long enough for me!)

I always hoped I would get the chance to give something back to scouts sometime in the future. That opportunity came with the kind offer from Mark (VK3LI) to help him out with what has become kind of traditional NERG JOTA territory over the past few years. So I picked all my gear in the car and headed up to the Black Spur Riding School near Narbethong.

It wasn't a bad drive except for the brief interlude chatting to the local constabulary (mental note: watch out for those cars with the lights on the roof they cost you money) and I had a few chats on 70cm on the trip.

On arrival at the venue we set about setting up the station, the scouts always being prepared and all had obtained the use of a telescopic mast for our use which we mounted the feed point for our multi-band dipole. With a bit of tree climbing and rope throwing before we knew it we had a fully functioning multi-band HF station on the air.

The station was well equipped with two HF boxes, one was VK3LI's trusty old TS-830 and the other was a TS2000, to supplement the station we had a nice little room heater which just happened to make our signal a little stronger.

By the time we had finished setting up we had erected the multi-band dipole and a supplementary 80m and 40m trap dipole. This is when the fun started. While checking out the station and making sure everything worked some young clown (which might have been me) somehow managed to make smoke come out of one of the traps on the trapped dipole, with some quick handiwork we soon had the antenna functioning again on one band.

Most of the kids arrived on Saturday and we soon set about getting them active on the radios, with a mix of kids from ages 5 to about 16 it was interesting to see the different reactions. Interesting enough the two older kids were the ones that were the hardest to convince to talk on air, I found this a bit strange given that one of the guys fathers is a ham and I was trying to convince the guys to talk to some girls that were giving out their email address (another mental note: have a word to those boys!)

The scouts cubs and joeys had plenty to do over the weekend; there was a constant stream of entertainment for them (and us) with activities like Billy cart riding, treasure hunts and the now famous fireworks display.

The amount of activity on HF was actually a little disappointing; I think conditions must have been against us that day. Good QSOs

were had with many stations around Australia but the lack of international activity was disappointing. One interesting QSO was had with a ham in Japan who gave us a signal report of 20 over at one point but then decided he couldn't read us when it was mentioned that we were a JOTA station.

The famous fireworks display went off with a bang and led to some interesting new fireworks effects designed by our very own Mark (VK3LI), the audience was suitably impressed with the "firework aimed at the firework expert's butt" trick and I can tell you it looked even better from close up!

Overall the event was a success with around 20-30 scouting participants attending and getting a taste for radio as well as having a great time. I enjoyed the weekend as well and if invited again I would jump at the chance of participating (and Mark I promise not to make smoke come out of the traps again!)

## A simple Dual Band 2 m 5/8 + 6 m 1/4 Wave Antenna

by Peter, VK3DU

I first heard of this dual-band antenna one day when having a conversation with the late Ian Nally, creator of the Nally Tower. He used it and no doubt other fellow "bon vivants" did in the now disbanded Northern Suburbs Radio Club. I made a home-brew 2 metre 5/8 aerial, based around a UHF PL259 connector and a fibre-glass rod and some wire. I then set this up with four radials cut for 6 metres, in a ground-plane configuration - just like Ian had suggested. I used this antenna for many years, looking back through the log I can see contacts made all over Australia on 6 Metres and as far away as Japan - when conditions were good. Eventually the weather got the better of the PL259 and the radiating element disintegrated.

At a recent hamfest a Dick Smith retailer was selling the Mobile One Model D4207 2 Metre 5/8 at a marked down price - I bought one. I had a 5 element Yagi for 6 Metres but needed something for all-round general coverage - FM repeaters etc. I then remembered the previous antenna.

This was a popular antenna, years ago, when converted commercial equipment was valve - the only transistors were in the power supply (a low voltage to high voltage DC to DC converter). The finals in those sets were fairly SWR tolerant so I wondered how the antenna arrangement would suit a present day solid-state set. Only one way to find out - I still had the diecast box the original antenna was built around. It was drilled through one side to attach horizontally to a vertical pipe with a TV aerial U-bolt and clamps.

The radiating vertical element was originally attached to the base of the box via a UHF SO239 socket. I now attached a 5/16" threaded base to suit the Mobile One aerial. I made four horizontal radials, cut to 1.49

metres each from some scrap aluminium tube salvaged from old TV aerials abandoned in local "hard-rubbish" collections. One poked through holes drilled in each side of the box and were attached with suitable nuts and bolts. The coax also goes through a hole in the side so when the lid is screwed down everything is reasonably protected from the weather.

On top of a 6 metre length of water pipe, fed through an 8 metre length of RG-213, the antenna produced the following SWR figures on the NERG VHF SWR Meter:

50	51	52	53	54
1.2	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.5
144	145	146	147	148
1:1	1:1	1:1	1.2	1.3

The SWR is a little high in the middle of 6 Metres but the antenna has been fine for contacts in both the SSB and FM repeater segments. It also works well on 2 Metres. A homebrew 5/8 would allow some experimentation with the loading coil.

One could be built around a PL259 or a re-worked 27Mhz CB whip.

Give it a try - 73, Peter Cosway VK3DU

## Radio Gear for tender

The NERG have been asked to pass on notice of amateur radio shack sale by tender from the deceased estate of Mr John Smethurst (VK3TJ) formerly of Daylesford.

There are 46 items including mobile and fixed amateur HF, VHF & UHF transceivers (~10-20 years old), mobile antennas, ATU, power supplies, frequency counter, SWR meters, packet radio TNCs, P-II computer system, 35mm cameras, & phone/fax/copier.

For the full list of items contact me, [vk3byy@nerg.asn.au](mailto:vk3byy@nerg.asn.au), or contact the executives directly for further information. Inspection of the items can be arranged by telephoning David Vemer (a friend of the deceased) on 0428 510 404. The items are stored in Maldon, Victoria.

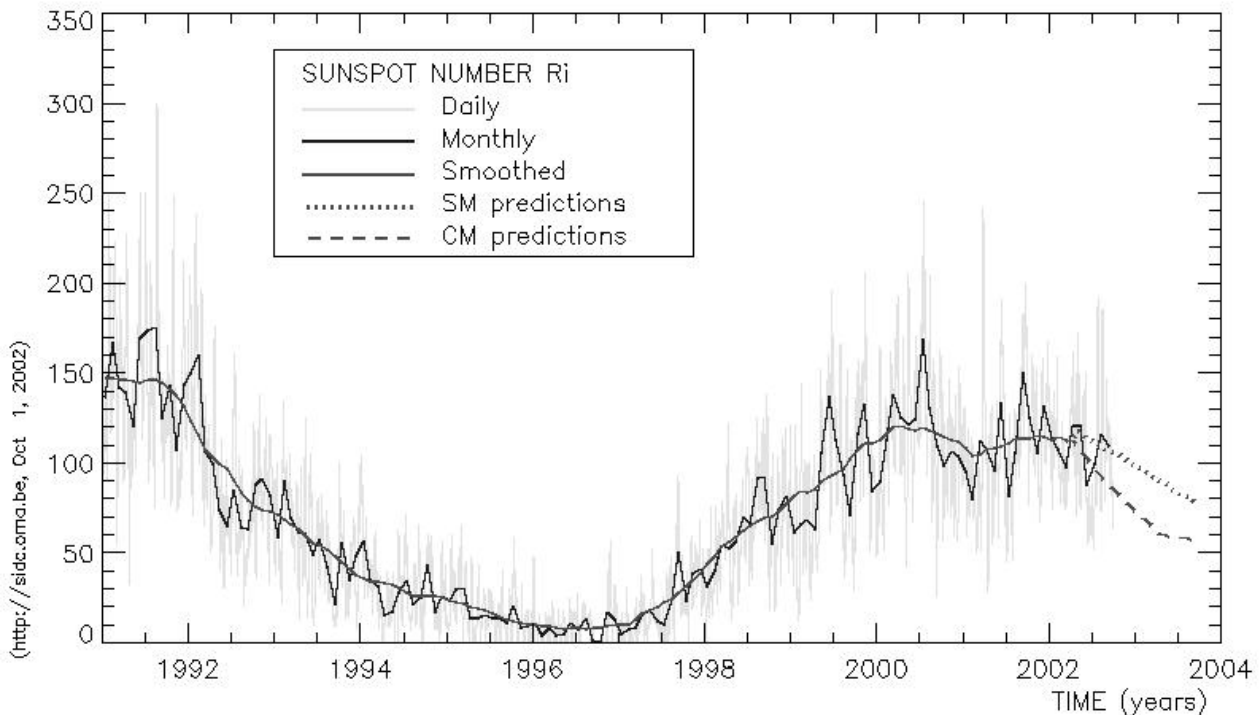
Tenders should be sent to Ms Tennille Rodd of the State Trustees, Melbourne via email [tlr@statetrustees.com.au](mailto:tlr@statetrustees.com.au) Tenders close Friday December 20, 2002.

## WICEN at the Red Cross Murray Marathon

It's not too late to join the marathon as an amateur radio volunteer! Several NERGs are heading North this year for the marathon - watch out for a Red VW van and a green 4-wheel drive on the loose!

Enquiries ph:5962 6098, or email [gpt@celestial.com.au](mailto:gpt@celestial.com.au).

You do not have to be a member of WICEN to participate, but you will be covered by WICEN insurance by signing on as a Casual member.



## Sunspots - How long can the peak last?

Normally the sunspot cycle peaks once every 11 years, but the graph above shows we have been through two peaks this time round. The peak isn't as high as the one back in 1991 but it has lasted a lot longer. From the predictions it looks like we can expect interesting radio propagation well into 2003 !

Historical data courtesy WM7D  
<http://www.wm7d.net/hamradio/solar/historical.shtml>

## How would you like your Volts?

From the WIA Federal Historian, John VK3AFU

What is Australia's mains voltage?

240 volts?

In one state until several years ago the potential difference between active and neutral was officially 254 volts!

Check out the ACA consumer information paper on bringing communications equipment into Australia - quote "Australia's mains power supply is nominally 230 volts and 50 Hz".

So 230 volts it is.

Not 240 volts as it used to be.

Naturally it may vary, so sometimes you might measure 225 or 235 volts. We remember reading about a change to 230 in EA magazine a few years back to bring us closer to the Europeans (who use 220 volts),

but were unaware that the change had been made.

It was not until comparatively recently that all states of Australia had a uniform mains voltage. Before then there were also frequency differences. And even earlier some areas had DC mains.

John VK6JY says the Eastern States went for 240/415 Vac 50 cycles while Western Australia starting off with second hand generators from South Africa gave 40 cycles.

Pressure to go to 50 cycles was strong and in 1951 pulleys were changed on washing machines and up they went.

In the 1980s WA also changed from 250 to 240 volt AC to fall in with eastern states.

Many outback country towns and individual properties in VK-land used the cheaper DC mains supplies for years. It started to die out in the 1950s with better statewide AC grids where transformers were essential. Towns used about 240 volts and farms were typically on 32 V DC.

(Collected over a period of time from 'hundreds' of ax25 bulletins)

See the ACA Consumer Fact Sheet at <http://www.aca.gov.au/consumer/fsheets/consumer/fsc18.htm>

(Received via APCnews and 'Q' news).

## Errata - 4-digit IRLP codes

Last month I said our IRLP node was 3650 – it should be 6350. Thanks to all those that noticed the typo – it's encouraging that people actually read these words ☺

## Event Calendar

(compiled with the help of WIA news, and WANSARC and RAAF Williams newsletters.)

### 2002

**Nov to Jan 31 JARL**, Japan Amateur Radio League celebrates 75th anniversary with a DXPedition 8N1OGA on Ogasawara Island

**Dec 26 - Jan 12, 2003 Ross Hull Memorial VHF Contest CW/SSB**

**Dec 16th - Maggie Iaquinto VK3CFI** speech to the Space Association of Australia on communications with the MIR space station. Meeting room, Richmond Library, 415 Church Street, Richmond (near Church and Swan Streets), 6.30pm for 7pm start.

### 2003

**Jan 11/12 Summer VHF Field Day CW/SSB**

**Jan 11/13 Hunting Lions in the Air**

The 32nd Hunting Lions in the Air contest commemorates the birth of Melvin Jones founder of Lionism, or the Lions - a worldwide service organisation.

**Feb 23 Central Coast Amateur Radio Club Field Day**

- large hamfest event attracting 2,000 at Wyong Racecourse. Info: (02) 4340 2500 or [www.ccarc.org.au](http://www.ccarc.org.au)

**Mar 8- 9 2003 Commonwealth Contest**

**Mar 15/16 John Moyle Field Day CW/SSB** – NERG at Mt Macedon

**May 24 VK/trans-Tasman Contest SSB contest**

**May 31 QRP Day CW**

**The NERG Inc.** Reg No A0006776V <http://nerg.asn.au>

The North Eastern Radio Group, Inc. is an amateur radio club devoted to encouraging members and others to enjoy the hobby of amateur radio. It tries not to hang on ceremony and endless reporting but rather participate in the fun aspects of this fascinating hobby.

**Membership Fees (due each August):**

**Full: \$30 Family: \$40 Concession: \$20**

**Send to: NERG Treasurer, PO box 270, Greensborough, Vic., 3088**

**Committee**

President	Greg Williams VK3VT	9432 0563
Secretary	Mark Beacham VK3XXX	0417-597399
Treasurer	Marg Baxter VK3VOJ	9467 1253
Committee	Dave Pricor VK3JMB	9465 9708
	Peter Cosway VK3DU	9379 3626
Social Sec.	Don Haslam VK3KDT	9439 1102
Repeaters	Mark Harrison VK3BYY	9435 3043

**Meetings**

2nd Thursday of each month at 7.45 PM (excepting Dec. & Jan.)  
Greenhills Community House, Yandell Reserve, off St. Helena Road,  
Greensborough. (Melway map ref 21-B1)

**Classes**

NERG occasionally runs classes and exams for Amateur license candidates.

**Callsigns and Repeaters (25km North East of Melbourne)**

Club call - VK3CNE <http://www.qsl.net/vk3cne>

6m rpt VK3RMH FM 52.550 MHz in 53.550 MHz out

70cm rpt VK3RMH FM 433.325 MHz in 438.325 MHz out

IRLP node 635

6m beacon VK3RMH CW 10 Watts 50.295 MHz – Soon!

10m bec'n VK3RMH CW 20Watts 28.2565 MHz

Occasionally home to the Scout Radio & Electronics Group repeater:

2m VK3RSR FM 146.375 MHz in 146.975 MHz out

**NETS**

NERG NETS run on 146.575 MHz FM Simplex (8.30 – 9.30 pm Thursdays).

Please join the discussions. NERGs often monitor this frequency and the 70cm VK3RMH repeater.

**WEB Sites:** <http://nerg.asn.au> and <http://www.qsl.net/vk3rmh>

**NERG NEWS submissions and comments invited:**

editor: Mark Harrison VK3BYY

ph: 9435-3043 hm (btwn. 7.30-9.30 p.m. please)

post: 266 Nell Street West, Watsonia, 3087

email: [vk3byy@nerg.asn.au](mailto:vk3byy@nerg.asn.au)



**NERG**

North-East Radio Group VK3CNE  
Incorporated 1985  
BOX 270 GREENSBOROUGH VIC 3088

---

## MEETING this week::

**+6:20 PM Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December :**

**This Month – NERG BBQ at 3VT's place– see below**

---

### CALENDAR 2002/2003

**Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>**

**NERG Christmas BBQ at Greg's Place. Bring a seat.**

Held on Thursday night at the home of Greg VK3VT – 1 Noorabil Court Greensborough  
from 6:30 PM onwards – all inclusive cost around \$7 per head.

Dec 26 to Jan 12

Ross Hull Memorial VHF Contest, CW/SSB

Jan 11/12

Summer VHF Field Day, CW/SSB

Jan

NO NERG meeting!

**Feb 13<sup>th</sup>**

**NERG Meeting – TBA**

**March 15/16<sup>th</sup>**

**John Moyle Field Day – Annual NERG expedition to Mount Macedon**