

January 2026



ZL1REG Radio Nets

Here is a list of Radio nets that the Club runs weekly.
I have also added nets that are located near us for your information.

VHF Net Sundays 7.30pm on the ZL1REG Repeater 147.125Mhz No tone

6 Mtr SSB Net Thursdays 1900hrs 53.000 Mhz We are using USB. NC ZL1SE

2 Mtr SSB net Thursdays 7.30pm 144.220 USB NC ZL2CJ

HF Net Thursdays 8 pm 7133Khz LSB NC ZL1PO

Sunday Night 1900. 432.220 USB from 14th December. !!!

NON Branch related nets

Every day except Sunday 9am on 147.125 Local 2 Mtr net. Net Controller ZL2BAT Brian (2) We call this the "Welfare" net

Every Sunday 9am Waitomo Net on 147.375 Net Controller ZL1HZ Mick -ZL1IZ Sunday 0830 ZL1VK Papakura Radio Club net 146.625

Feel free to contact me if you think other nets of interest could be added here.

Next Club meeting Saturday 10 January 1300 at the Glenview Club rooms.
Topic- Show and tell

Editors Note:

Well the new year has come and gone already. I hope Santa was nice to everyone and they got all the gear they requested. Weather has been a bit all over the place. Good to catch up with a few club members at our "Have a Go day" on the 1st January. A few photos in this edition.

I have put out an email to all club members for help with articles for the newsletter. Good to see several come in pretty quickly. This is an ongoing issue. !!

The email tool that Thomas made available to committee members has been very useful.

Please send Thomas feedback too on the Club website which is mentioned in the newsletter.

Jock White is rapidly coming up in February as well so time to think about participation. Club is still looking for an organiser for this as well.

Good to see good participation on all our nets and I would say that our club would have the most varied nets available throughout the country in one week. After reviewing the Google Net Calendar that I maintain. The main idea is to try different modes and try out something different.

Its good to see some of the newbies on air as well. Some even climbing hills/mountains to get their contacts in.

Thanks to Brett ZL1BRT for his interesting article in this newsletter on VARAC. Im going to continue on this vain in the next newsletter with digital voice modes. Now as you get older and need to move to an HOA type situation this can be your lifesaver as Ive heard from some of the older Hams elsewhere.

Im going to start several new Columns in an effort to stimulate more club member participation in the production of this newsletter, and im sure you will find it interesting. The titles will be "**Member Profile**" if you like a brief profile for one of our club members. Photos of their shack, how they got into the hobby and Interests in the hobby, "**Mailbag**" Members send in their activities and DX ,

Chris Hattan ZL2CJ

Club Website under Construction:

Please check out our new Club website which is still under construction by Thomas ZL4ST. He would be grateful for any feedback. Click on the link below.

[Radio Electronics Group \(REG\) - ZL1REG | Amateur Radio Club Hamilton, New Zealand](#)

Ham Radio Vlogs-Use full AmateurRadio.com • Ham Radio Blog

[Ham Radio Resources: The Top Blogs and Websites \(hamradioprepper.com\)](#)

[My Amateur Radio Story & My Advice for New Hams \(youtube.com\)](#)

[KM1NDY – A Secret Little Adventure Ham Radio Blog](#)

[\(2\) Radio Electronic Group \(Inc\) | Facebook](#) this is our own Club Facebook Page

[The Best Ham Radio Cartoons PART TWO \(youtube.com\)](#)

[Ham Humor | NewHams.info](#)

<https://www.voacap.com/hf/> Propagation predictions and long/short path calculations

<https://www.arnewsline.org/> Amateur Radio Newsline this is what is broadcast on the NZART national broadcast BTW.

Hamradio Blogs best: <https://hamradioplanet.com/top-10-ham-radio-blogs-and-websites-to-follow/>

<https://hamweekly.com/>

[SWS – Global HF – Ionospheric Map The Australian Bureau of meteorology. Australian Space Weather Forecasting Centre](#)

[DXNews.com DX Calendar December 2025](#) This site changes monthly and lists the DX stations and their details

Informal Meet up

Every 2 weeks there is an informal catch-up of Hams at the Workingmen's club on a Tuesday at 1730 hrs. January 13/27th meet-ups are good to catch up have a chat, drink and a feed. Add it to your calendar.

REG Equipment Library : For some time now REG have had an equipment library, made up of items generously donated by our members and others outside the club. This is made up of a handheld UHF/VHF FM dual-bander, dual band FM mobile,

various power supplies and a range of test equipment. We have a book as the central equipment register, where members can book out equipment items for up to 3 months at a time.

We don't have any HF rigs at present, so if you have one gathering dust, and would like to donate them, that would be fantastic. Our club 'Equipment Librarian' is Kevin ZL2TKH (021-441999) who can answer any questions, and book out equipment.

Club UHF Repeater: Is now operational. Rx 433.875, Tx 438.875 No tone.

Net Controllers required.

The Club needs Radio Operators that can operate on 40 and 80 Mtrs on our Club nets. 7133Khz and 3615 KHz

This is every Thursday at 2000hrs.

We need several to make up a roster as back up to run our Club nets.

Its certainly a good way to learn radio protocols.

Instruction and assistance would be given to prospective candidates.

Feel free to contact:

ZL1PO and ZL2CJ if you have any questions as to what the role requires.

Jock White Field days Co Ordinator

We need a new person to co-ordinate this event in our Calendar next year. Its a very good exercise to get the club working together in Setting up a Field day station, Running 2 stations, coordinate over the weekend and collate and send in our results to NZART. Instructions will be given to volunteer.

NZART Contest calendar-January

Please check the NZART Contest Calendar for details.

<https://nzart.org.nz/activities/contests/>

1st NZART Portable Activity Day

●26th WIA Australia Day Contest

Google Gmail HF Net Calendar

If you want a link to the Gmail HF net calendar then please contact myself. It has all the known HF nets throughout ZL. This list is monitored to ensure accuracy. You have the ability to turn it off/on which is a bonus. The link below should work as well

[https://calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?
src=myzl1cjh%40gmail.com&ctz=Pacific%2FAuckland](https://calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?src=myzl1cjh%40gmail.com&ctz=Pacific%2FAuckland)

New Zealand and Australia Amateur Radio Magazine download:

There are Five issues to download now. They are a good read. I have a small article in issue 3 on the Google HF net Calendar. Have a look around the website as well where they sell antennas, radios, and accessories. [New Zealand and Australian Amateur New Zealand Radio Magazine – The Ham Shack](#)

YL Net Sunday nights 146.625 MHz 1900 hrs

Reminder for our new “Young Ladies” who have recently joined our Club.

Another net for the YLs is now on the National System. Monday 1900 hrs. Hamilton repeater for this is 439.975 -ve split 5 mhz.

YL HF net Thursday 2000 hrs also on 3685khz.

Net Report:

Goodness me the club runs a few nets per week. Hard to keep up at times. Thanks to Google Calendar !!

Honestly I would say the most nets per week for any club in NZ !!

Sunday night we have a net 1900 Hrs 432.220 USB we have had a few in attendance. Then 1930 usual Club repeater 147.125 Mhz we have been getting 7-10 in attendance.

Thursday is our main net night. 1900 hrs we start off at 53.000 USB where we attract 4-5 on average.

1930 on 144.220 USB we attract 7-9

2000hrs on currently our HF freq 7133 Khz we seem to attract 12-15 from throughout the country. Winter time we would revert to 80 mtrs on 3615 Mhz.

VNA and Antenna Practical at our last club meeting 13/12/25

At the REG club meeting a demonstration of a NANO VNA (Vector Network Analyser), an EFWH antenna (with traps) covering the 20m, 30m and 40m bands and an EFWH antenna tuner.

Attached to the VNA was a computer running VNA saver to provide a better view of the VNA output.

Testing focused on SWR measurements only

Adding to the fun two "flowerpot" VHF and UHF antennas were tested.

Documentation and links:

EFHW tuner

manual, https://qrpguys.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/efhw_40m_tuner_assy_021422.pdf

Antenna

traps, https://qrpguys.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/wire_antenna_trap_guide_080222.pdf

Antenna Wire, <https://thehamshack.co.nz/>

VNA is a nano VNA available from Aliexpress.

Flowerpot antennas, <https://vk2zoi.com/articles/half-wave-flower-pot/>

Thanks to Chris Herd ZL2TCH for this report

Fred Gilbert ZL1FG Club Patrons birthday

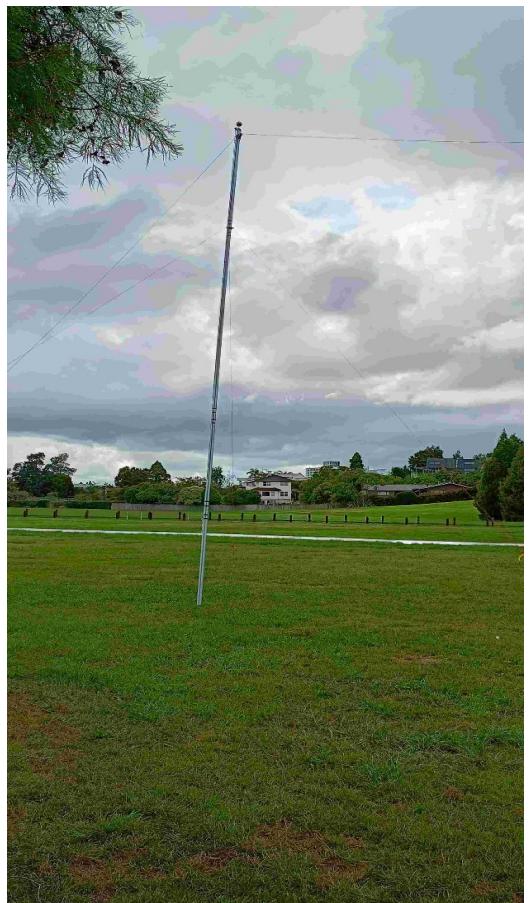
Our Patron Fred celebrated his 99th Birthday on the 28th December. By all accounts he had an excellent day. Fred still delivers meals on wheels around the Raglan area. He attends the morning welfare net on our club repeater and also attends our Club HF net every

Thursday night.





Have Go Day -Hamilton
Lake ZLL/0684



Participants and visitors were :

ZL1PO, ZL1CNM, ZL2CJ, ZL1TKG, ZL1SB, ZL1DY, ZL2ACK, ZL1GAA,
ZL1BMS, ZL1KM

There were no visitors enquiring what we were doing unfortunately.

Varac

Digital Modes

VarAC

For the last few months I have been playing with VarAC on HF, mainly 40 meters.

This is a very brief overview of varac.

It may get confusing as there is varac this and varac that.

Varac HF is the modem

VarAC is the chat program that uses the Varac HF modem

There is also Varac FM and Varac SAT but I wont be mentioning them again here.

First of a bit about VarAC, it is available free of charge to amateur radio operators, it runs on windows, linux and Rpi. Windows setup is the easiest.

VarAC is a modern HF peer to peer real time chatting and emergency communications program that uses the varac HF modem.

Varac HF is a sound card modem that can be run in demo mode with a few limitations, it is also used for winlink (email over HF program). Varac HF automatically adjusts the speed level based on conditions which makes it very easy to use, no guessing what speed you might need and have to change like a lot of the older digital protocols.

The trial version restrictions are;

1- net rate is limited to 174 bps

2- compression is disabled

3- time limitation in winlink sessions

VarAC Main Features

Can act as an email gateway (send emails over HF like winlink)

Automatic QSY (automatically moves you off the calling frequency so that stays clear).

Can Ping (request signal report from station you are calling)

Message Queue, type as quick as you want, the message go into the queue to be sent

Pull data from your qso partner like station info

auto QSO logging

Beacons, let others know you are there

Vmail, send and receive VarAC mails like email but station to station, they automatically get sent next time you connect to that station. And you will get notified if you have mail waiting.

AI mode, chat to AI over HF (rather cool feature and just new)

Supports CAT, RTS/DTS, OmniRig FLrig and Hamlib (Hamlib is the best option in my opinion)

plus lots more that I wont mention here, if you would like to investigate further see link below.

Hardware, you will need an HF rig of some sort and a way to get data and audio into the radio

I have a QMX+ so I just plug in the USB cable and job done.

most likely though you will need a digital interface for your radio. If you are doing winlink already you will be all set to go.

What I really like with this program is that you can ping a station to see what the link is like before you connect. Once you connect it will auto QSY off the main calling frequency to keep it clear for others. The beacons are really good to see who is about and the vmail is really handy, you can type that up and take you time getting it ready for when you connect. Once connected to the recipient station then it will automatically send.

Being a digital mode it works in poor HF conditions SNR -18 or so

From an operation point of view it is very easy to use. It is very feature rich of which you can use or not as you please.

And another biggy for me, predefined calling freq per band selected from a pull down menu

Be brave give it a go

[if you want to dive deeper into this, <https://www.varac-hamradio.com/>]

(if you want linux help let me know, I have done a setup process for Linux Mint which should work for Ubuntu as well).

73 ZL1BRT Brett

AREC Report

A new year has arrived, I wonder what it is going to bring for AREC Waikato?

The end of the year finished with 2 searches being carried out in our area.

I had a call late in the afternoon that a rescue was underway for an injured mountain biker on a track in Pureora forest. A team went in to bring him out and needed a radio overwatch as a safe guard. The team didn't quite get to him as a helicopter was able to affect a winch rescue and the team turned around and went back to their start point arriving just on dusk.

Later that night I had another phone call, another search was getting underway in the Thames area. An elderly gentleman was in trouble on a track up behind Te Puru. In conjunction with Thames LandSar I was able to setup an overwatch and monitor the search from home here in Tokoroa. This turned out to be a very long night. It wasn't until 4.30am that the team reached the hut where the chap was. The weather in the area was atrocious, storm conditions, rain and wind. (This rescue was widely reported in the media).

Other teams were sent out along with police early in the morning to meet up with the

initial team to bring the patient out from the hut. It is worth noting that during the recovery 2 helicopters had been dispatched at different times to bring the patient out but had to turn back due to the weather.

This rescue would be the most challenging that the teams have ever faced in recent times. The weather was shocking, the terrain steep and rugged in places. An amazing effort.

I have a meeting later this month with our regional manager to put together a program for this year. When we get it finalised, it will be sent out to all our membership.

Take care out there, enjoy the holidays and be safe out there.

John Taylor ZL1ECG
Group Leader Waikato AREC

Stephen Cope Volunteer Work (ZL1HFT)

I'm a volunteer with Predator Free Matamata and each month we help check the traplines setup on the Kaimai Plateau. The trapping area is just over 1,000 hectares. Wairere Mahi and the local iwi Ngāti Hinerangi are in charge of the project and it's a pleasure to help them.

On our volunteer weekends each pair of volunteers is equipped and trained with a Garmin GPS with InReach, a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB), and a waterproof Tait radio to talk to the other volunteers. We stay in regular contact through half-hourly check ins, reporting our positions and progress.

The terrain is, shall we say, challenging. The traplines were laid on a grid, 100 metres between each trap. That makes for very interesting adventures when one trap is at the top of a very steep hill and you need to descend 25 metres to the next trap.

Monday 10 November I went to check some traps and place a trail cam. As it wasn't a regular volunteer weekend I was on my own and chose as my companion the Baofeng UV-5R. Previously I've taken the Yaesu FT2DR.

From the carpark at the end of Te Tuhi Road it's a pretty steep walk up through the farm and into the bush. As I set off I put a call out on the ZL1IS '695 Te Weraiti repeater and heard back from John ZL1PO pretty promptly. He quickly and efficiently jotted down my trip intentions and arranged to check back in hourly. It felt good to have people listening out for my welfare in the bush.

The track up through the farm faces west. There's an unimpeded view out over the Waikato towards Te Miro, with Hamilton behind it, Te Tapui, and you can see all the way to Te Aroha mountain.

We tried Klondike as well as the ZL1REG 147.125 repeater. As I didn't have them all

programmed in I had to quickly navigate through the menu and switch from negative to positive offsets depending on which repeater was in use.

On the way up the mountain I was able to listen to the morning welfare net on the 147.125 repeater. Sometimes the track would dip and reception would be a little fuzzy but otherwise it was clear. By the time the net came to its conclusion and the controller asked if anyone else would like to say a few words I had just walked over the lip of the plateau and I couldn't reach the repeater.

From there I made hourly check ins on the '695 repeater. Thank you ZL2CJ and ZL1TFX for your contacts. On the way back I also spoke to ZL1RJY on the Hamilton repeater. A successful day, and even more successful when we returned the following weekend and reset the traps.

What did I learn:

John (ZL1PO) has a very efficient questionnaire for collecting trip intentions. Baofeng UV-5R needs a few more adjustments as the squelch was too aggressive even on the lowest setting.

I need to program in all the repeaters I'm going to use to avoid going into the menu each time.

My son kindly added some bright pink tape to the radio so I can find it again if I ever drop its camouflage black and green case in the bush.

ZL1HFT (/P)

Stephen





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Club member Profile

Im a retired Nurse of 48 yrs mostly in mental health in Sep 2022. Last at Henry Bennett Centre, Waikato Hospital. A lot of time also in middle management as Afternoon Duty Manager with liase with the MH Crisis team. Managing MH units in the HBC on the Afternoon Shift. 1500 hrs to 2330.

Been into Radio most of my life. When I was a student nurse at Christchurch Polytech after I left school, (Shirley Boys High) I joined up with the NZ Radio DX Association which was at the time the oldest Shortwave radio Club in the Southern Hemisphere, and I think the World. Then later the NZDX League which Im still a member of today. The DXRA went into recess some years ago now.

Roughly about this time (late 70's) I got into CB radio with a Tait CB4 as CH1119. Now all this was a bit of a distraction to my Nursing Studies and It took me another year than it should have to pass my exams. So Registered in Nov 77

Auckland Hospital in Feb 78 as AK 5129 ("The Flying Dr" was my CB nickname) I was living at the Nurses home at the time and would you believe I had a full Ground plane sitting on top of the roof. Boy it would get out. Lots of "skip" to in those days. Was a volunteer for St John Ambulance whilst i was in Auckland as the Section "Nursing Officer" and used to attend many a concert at Western Springs, sports events around the region. Id be managing the First Aide Tent at these venues. When I transferred to Tokanui Hosp I carried on with St John In Te Awamutu for some years. The "Nursing Officer" position disappeared over this time.

1982 transferred to Carrington Hospital in Pt Chevalier and continued with the CB. Transferred to Tokanui Hospital thren in 1997 moved to the Henry Bennett Centre when it opened.

Jumping forward to August 2022 I spoted an advert in the Local news paper that Br 89 was running about Amatuer Radio put in by John ZL1PO. I rang him up and attended my 1st meeting in August. Sat the Hamcram in the Nov and yay I completed with the callsign ZL1CJH my initials. In fact in hindsight Id always wanted to get my ticket but just "never got around to it" and I thought Id be retiring soon and this was my best opportunity.

1st radio was the Baofeng UV5R initially just with the small portable antenna, then the magmount on the rough. The occassional wander up Till Lookout in Dinsdale say if I wanted to get to the waitomo net on a sunday morning. Then got a Yaesu 897 D as my 1st base Tranceiver which I liked as it was a "Shack in the box" Solution. Sold that when I got the Icon 7100 again another Shack in a box and got into the Digital Voice side of things. Got a small Raspberry Pi hotspot to connect the 7100 with the internet and the world. SharkRF a company based in Estonia make the OpenSpot 4 Pro which I then ordered as my hotspot which meant I could cross mode the variouys digital voice modes. Next Kit was the SharkRF M1KE thje little VOIP Tranceiver that gets me into sall the digital voice mode and all I need is a wifi connection either

at Homebase of via Cellphone with the profile easily transferrable if I step out of the house.

Antenna wise have a Techoman X510 High gain VHF/UHF antenna up around 8 mtrs up. Near the top of that is mounted a Fan Dipole for 40,20,10 mtr which works quite well. I find the X510 gets me into most of the repeaters in the waikato and up towards Thames, Taupo, Waitomo, Taumarunui, and others.

I follow the POTA and SOTA activations so am mostly found on 40 mtrs it seems.

I saw a need for a HF net calendar so with a bit of research I created a Gmail calendar with all the nets I could find on HF. The link to this is located elsewhere in the newsletter. These are checked regularly to check they are still active.

Was until last year Secretary for Br 89 and have done the newsletter since end of 2022.

Apart from Amateur Radio im an active Geocacher and go out and about looking for plastic boxes that people hid using GPS technology. I endeavour to be the First to Find" these containers. <http://www.geocaching.com> I know I got Rod ZL1TFX into it as it fits in with his walking and tramping.

I have been riding a BRP Can Am Spyder Since 2010. These are 3 wheelers with a Rotax engine. My 1st was a 990 cc and now I have a red 2016 1330 CC model.

I also volunteer with Community Patrols of New Zealand around x2 a month. West hamilton area [Home - Community Patrols of New Zealand](#) . Basically we are the Eyes and Ears of NZ Police. We have a marked Patrol car fitted with Police radio. Ok Guys thats enough waffle from me All the best everyone for 2026 and hope to see you on the air soon

Chris Hattan ZL2CJ

