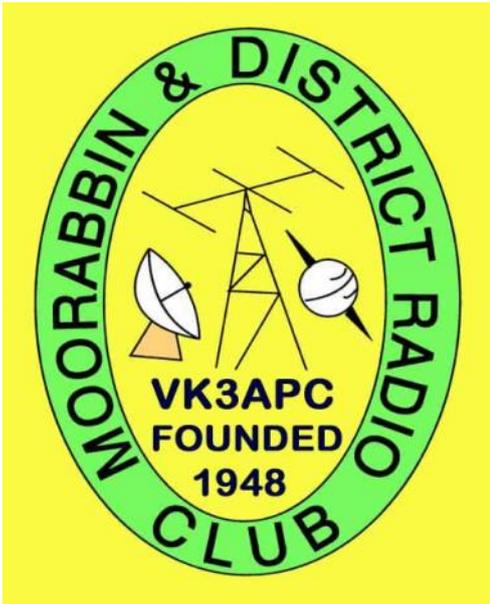


APC NEWS



Tony VK3CAT's set up on Mt Loch Feb 2021 with Nan enjoying the view.

IN THIS ISSUE

The 5th Annual Hotham SOTA Summit Market Place Members activities

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QTC

Welcome to the first issue of 2021. January 2021 is significant for me as I have just ticked off 60 years as a licenced radio amateur. I'm not sure how many issues of APC News I have edited but it's a fair number. Its been fun. Time for a new younger editor? Yes. A fresh approach? Yes.

I plan on one issue after this. Then the Committee needs to decide who should be the new editor or indeed if we need an editor.

They need to ask if the magazine has its day? Do we have adequate email, community postings and personal blogs instead? Tell them what you think.

TRADE DISCOUNT:

All Club members can get what is effectively a trade discount card by emailing me a passport type photo and you will get a card for use at Altronics and Jaycar. Also if you are a member of the WIA you can now download a discount card from the WIA website..

73.
Ron
VK3AFW

The 5th Annual Hotham SOTA Summit

Brian VK3BCM

The 5th Annual Hotham SOTA Summit was attended by 3 members of MDRC this year, Tony VK3CAT, Ken VK3KIM and Brian VK3BCM. No event was held in 2020 because of the fires. In all 15 attended from SA, NSW, Vic and ACT despite concerns over COVID 19. On the Friday Mt Hotham had 120mm of rain and we were very concerned that the 4wd tracks would be impassable over the weekend. We were proven wrong with all tracks in good condition and very minor water damage.

Some of the loops planned had roads closed because of fires/maintenance or trees down. The areas covered included around the Harrietville area, Mt Blue Rag, Omeo area, around Dargo and East of Benambra.

VK1DA activated Mt Hotham on Sunday morning and managed a 23cm contact to Mt Ginini in the ACT and had several other major contacts.

Band conditions were fair on Saturday and generally improved over the weekend. There were no contacts into Melbourne unfortunately. Many however were made into NZ.

Most participants managed 90/100 points for the weekend.

The 5th Annual Hotham SOTA Summit cont.



Left. Tony VK3CAT and Allen VK3ARH on Mt Blue Rag, Photo Glenn VK3YY,

The 5th Annual Hotham SOTA Summit cont.

It was John VK5HAA s first experience at Hotham. He was overwhelmed with the potential number of summits that were available and certainly picked up some ideas on equipment and activation protocols. He stayed on for a further couple of days. At last count his activator score has doubled.

The general consensus was most will attend next year. There was much discussion about a possible Parks (and SOTA) get together in the Grampians later in the year. Watch this space and AR for further updates.

A fantastic weekend with good company and majestic scenery.

Brian
VK3BCM

M&DRC REGULAR EVENTS

Every Tuesday 9:30 AM Club Meeting at the Club Rooms (Lock downs excepted)

EVERY week day evening. 4:45 PM on. Drive Time. 146.550 MHz

EVERY Wednesday night, 8:00 PM. Club Net.

VK3RMC 147.325 MHz or 146.550 MHz and on Digital Voice.

Updated 14 February 2021

CLUB MEETINGS

Three Tuesday Morning meetings were held before another lock down was imposed. Watch your email box for notification of the next one.

On Tuesdays when a lockdown is on the Club Meeting will be the Club repeater on 147.325

THE CAT SOTA REPORT

The annual Mt. Hotham SOTA expedition was hosted at the Anton Huetten lodge by Brian VK3BCM. The official dates were Friday 5th to Sunday 7th of February although this could be extended somewhat either way.

13 amateurs plus Nan (*xyi cat*) & Chantel (*daughter kim*) attended.. Nan & I undertook our own expedition to the Mt. Buffalo National Park during the week prior to the SOTA weekend and extended our stay on Mt. Hotham by one night, departing on Tuesday 9th of February.

Approaching Bright along the “Snow Road”, both Nan & I were wondering what we were in for! The normally quite visible Mt. Buffalo Plateau was buried in cloud; the rain commenced at Myrtleford and it was warm & humid in Bright where we stopped for lunch & supplies.

The aftermath of 127mm of rain a couple of days prior to our visit meant the waterfalls were all running well so we took time on the way up the mountain to visit the lower & upper Eurobin and Ladies Bath falls. A possible benefit of both the inclement weather and perhaps being a Monday was that there was no bicycle traffic to contend with!

THE CAT SOTA REPORT contd



The Horn from the Hump Mt Buffalo. Pic VK3CAT

THE CAT SOTA REPORT contd

The plateau itself was sporadically covered in low cloud and mist but the WX was not cold. Not long after setting up the tent and exploring the Lake Catani campsite & surrounds, we were greeted by intermittent showers in the late afternoon so we did not bother heading out to a planned activation of the Horn. (SOTA VK3/VE-014 1723m & 10 points)

Awakening to clear skies on Tuesday we headed out first to The Hump (VK3/VE-019 1695m & 10 points). Access to this summit is pretty straight forward, requiring an energetic 30 to 40 minute walk amongst granite boulders past The Cathedral & looping around to the south side of The Hump, an elevation gain of about 150 metres in about 1.5 km. Having set up the doublet antenna to a 7 metre Haverford's squid pole attached to a snow gum the KX3 was soon on air albeit propagation was not great. Contacts in the log on 80 through 20 metres. Of these I worked VK2IO 4 times on different bands & modes. 20m presented the ever present John ZL1BYZ. We also took time out to scramble up the rocks to the near highest point and partake the magnificent views.

Next to The Horn with lunch at the popular picnic area (*no toilets*) at the start of the walking trail to the summit. I would normally recommend activating this summit earlier in the day as it is a most popular spot. There can be congestion on the trail and at the viewing platform which is also the highest point. I thought I would be a bit cheeky and try to simply qualify the summit on 2 metres with the VX7R and Flower Pot antenna strapped to the hand rail but great plans came to

THE CAT SOTA REPORT contd



Mt McLeod as the sun sinks in the sky. Pic VK3CAT

THE CAT SOTA REPORT contd

naught, being able to hear Peter VK3PF and Frank VK3OP but my mere 5 watts not making it back; should have brought the amplifier!.

Now set up at the beginning of the steps and hand rail with the KX3 (*this being just inside the activation zone – 25m below the summit*) I managed 7 HF contacts on 80 through 20 metres with very similar results as from the Hump.

For Wednesday I had initially thought of attempting Ulrich Peak, probably the most difficult SOTA summit on the plateau. However, being mid-week & low volume of chasers, the state of propagation & this also being a holiday rather than an ordeal, I opted out of Ulrich and did some touristy things. Instead, we walked out from Lake Catani to the Chalet & Gorge, visited a couple of the Galleries (rock type) walked around the lake.

Our campsite at Lake Catani had been booked for 3 nights. For Thursday we trekked out to Mt. McLeod (*VK3/VE-034 1528m & 10 points*) This is the most remote SOTA summit on the Plateau, the return journey to the Reservoir car park being 17 km at 1370m but lots of ups and downs en-route. The forecast was for rain and possible thunderstorms in the afternoon.

After an early lunch, we took the short cut track out and the 4x4 track on our return (*don't think the short cut is any great advantage over the 4x4 track*)

THE CAT SOTA REPORT contd



Trig Point on Mt McLeod. Tony's pack at the operating position. Pic VK3CAT

THE CAT SOTA REPORT contd

The weather looked a bit ominous once finally at the camp site but set up the tent where Nan stayed & I headed up to the summit, following the series of cairns to the trig point. Signage warned of the route to the Summit being difficult in poor weather. Commencing at 05:44 UTC, I worked 80, 40, 20m & 70cm scoring ZL, VK4 & YC on 20m before heading down due to rain showing on the northern horizon. An activation time of just over 30 minutes.

Back at camp & time to set up dinner. I had brought 4 litres of additional water to the 3 litres in the pack plus water bottle but the creek just south of the campsite was running reasonably well with clear water from the 90mm water pipe so this was not required. Moroccan Lamb with rice for dinner followed by a stroll amongst the rocks and over the snow plain then an early night.

Very windy over night with light showers in the morning. I was glad I had secured a protected tent site. Packed up mostly dry but the really heavy rain hit us as we passed the end of the short cut track & gained altitude on the 4x4 track.

A shower & change at Lake Catani then lunch in Bright where it was hot and humid then finally to the Mt. Hotham lodge; meeting up with most of the other participants, Friday night WX was extremely windy & very wet but had settled somewhat by the morning.

THE CAT SOTA REPORT contd



Tony VK3CAT using the Alex Loop on Mt Hotham.

THE CAT SOTA REPORT contd

Saturday: With Allen VK3ARH & Glenn VK3YY, I activated VK3/VE-024 (1646m & 10 points), Blue Rag (VK3/VE-021-1679m & 10 points) & Blue Rag Range (VK3/VE-015 – 1717m & 10 points) plus Basalt Knob (VK3/VE-039 – 1512m & 10 points). Only had to drive over 1 tree & the 2 river crossings were not an issue. The first summit is all off track, requiring a crossing over Mt. Freeze Out then descending into a pretty saddle then a final ascent. Not too difficult and probably taking little more than an hour. The remainder were drive up summits but requiring the use of low range 4WD, particularly the iconic and steep Blue Rag Range track.

Contacts for Saturday were heavy on 2m with Summit to Summit contacts with other activators. I still managed to qualify all summits on HF CW with 20m providing reliable propagation to ZL, nothing on 80m & 40m being pretty poor.

Dinner at the Mt. Hotham General Store was enjoyed by all.

Sunday: A bit of a rest day. Cleaned up all the now dry camping gear. Nan & I got picked up en-route to Mt. Loch (VK3/VE-005 – 1865m & 10 points) by Allen & Glenn & we all lunched on the summit whilst activating in perfect weather. Note that construction works at the Mt. Loch carpark means very limited parking spaces; don't think the Cruiser would have fitted!

Contacts were predominantly logged on 2m FM, some on 70cm FM and others on HF CW using 20 & 40m.

THE CAT SOTA REPORT contd

Sunday Evening on Hotham (*VK3/VE-006 – 1861m & 10 points*), the typical late cloud & fog came over causing us to retreat to the Pub but not after some enjoyable drinks, snacks and radio activity. This time I kept things simple, setting up the Magnetic Loop and KX3 with 10 watts close to the drinks table. From here I obtained a string of 20m CW contacts with VK6, VK4, ZL, JA, YC & OK2.

Later, EU came in thick and fast with Gerard VK2IO on the key also working into France & other EU countries.

Monday: Nan & I took a scenic drive via Omeo to the Knocker – a simple drive up for lunch (*VK3/VG-016- 1506m & 10 points*) then trekked up to Mt Wills (*VK3/VG-003 – 1750m & 10 points*) which is a solid climb of 300 metres but in 3kms. Packed up when the mountain clouded over. Contacts today were mixed from 80 through 20m, the latter being the best working band and open to VK4, 5, 7 plus ZL.

Tuesday: We had earlier decided we were not quite "match fit" for the 22km return trek to Mt. Feathertop so instead commenced a leisurely journey home - Another time.

Cheers, Tony & Nan

THE CAT SOTA REPORT contd

Post Script:

How fortunate was the timing of this trip! With VK3 going into lockdown the following Friday? Both John VK5HAA and Gerard VK2IO shortening their VK3 expeditions and hot footing it back to their home states.

Propagation to Melbourne was all but non-existent. I did manage a 40m cross mode contact with Frank VK3OP located in the northern suburbs that also required a few text messages to coordinate. I could hear Frank on 2m FM at 5x5 from the Horn.

80m CW contacts were with Peter VK3PF / KAI plus John VK2YW. My RST was mostly at low levels & the probability of the ever increasing noise floor in the suburbs negating the possibility of any low band local contacts & with 40m going too long.

Nan & I managed around 50km of trekking over the week; much fitter now on return.

For further information, refer to AR SOTA & Parks commentary by Allen VK3ARH.

THE MARKET PLACE



The Market Place. Items the Club has for sale. The list shows the price and following are photos of the items.

If you are interested in something listed please contact Ken VK3KIM the Club Secretary

THE MARKET PLACE CONT'D

Image#	Description	Price
9803	2m Ground Plane	\$30
9805	Superflex and Heliac Cable assemblies various lengths	POA
9808	Roof Mount Bracket	\$15
9809	MDRC Slim Jim 2m with 2m cable	\$45
9810	MDRC J-Pole 2m/70cm	\$65
9817	Belcom S-868 27Mhz AM/SSB	\$75
9818	Mizuho DC -7X CW QRP Kit 40m	\$100
9819	Hansen SWR 6 Power Meter HF 10w/100w	\$40
9820	Palomar R-X Noise Bridge	\$25
9821	Icom IC 2AT 2m H/H	\$50
9822	Puxing PX777 VHF/UHF Hand Held with two chargers 4 W UHF 128 channels	\$50
9823	BHI NES10-2 Noise Cancelling Speaker	\$40
9824	AR7 with speaker and power supply. Tuning Boxes	\$160

THE MARKET PLACE CONT'D



9803



9805

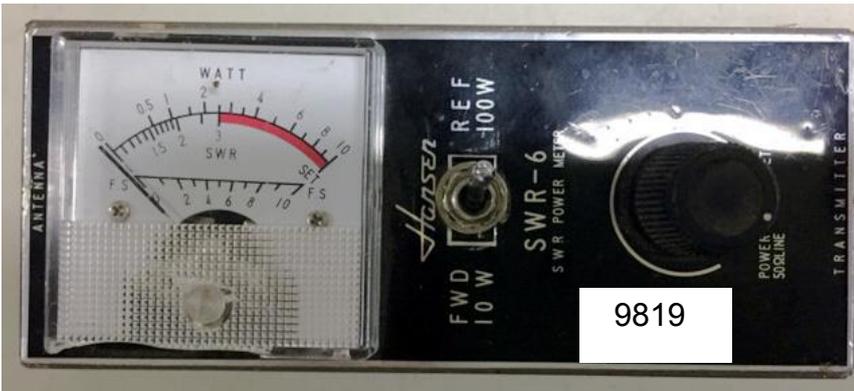


9808

THE MARKET PLACE CONT'D



THE MARKET PLACE CONT'D



THE MARKET PLACE CONT'D



9820



9821



9822

THE MARKET PLACE CONT'D



9823



9824

THE MARKET PLACE CONT'D



40 m dipole with
winder, balun and
bag.

\$40 plus postage

THE MARKET PLACE CONT'D



Hook up wire. Offers? Contact Ken
VK3KIM

White Wabbit Winders \$5 each or 5 for
\$20 plus postage.

Coming soon, 9:1 balun \$40 plus postage



THE MARKET PLACE CONT'D

FOR ITEMS IN THE MARKET PLACE

Contact: Ken: millisk@hotmail.com or

Brian: adsljmv0@tpg.com.au

TRADE DISCOUNTS

FOR CLUB MEMBERS at ALTRONICS and JAYCAR.

Moorabbin and District Radio Club Inc. members can now buy over the counter at **Trade prices** from both **Altronics and Jaycar**. When making a purchase ask for **Trade Discount** and for **Altronics** quote the Club's Trade account number **32323** and your **call sign** or for **Jaycar** quote Customer Number **45400209**. **This is NOT a charge account so you use your money.**

Note: Minimum purchase of \$20 may apply.

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