



AWA Newsletter

Issue 35

November 2008

Antique Wireless Association of Southern Africa

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What a Year :

Well this year has been a fairly busy and successful year for the AWA with two successful QSO parties being held and a very successful AWA open day at Rand Airport being some of the highlights. We can only thank all of you for the support and interest that has taken us even further along the line in Amateur Radio in South Africa.

Our membership, all be it non official and recognised by numbers calling in and those on the mailing lists for the newsletter, has continued to grow this year and we now stand at just under 100.

I think we can be classified as one of the "bigger" radio interest groups around. We won't make any claims to be the biggest, because someone

might just challenge us on that point and we are not in the business of embarrassing others.

That being said, we are looking forward to meeting as many of you as possible at Harrismith at the farm of William ZS4L, and his family. We hope to make this an annual time of meeting somewhere so as to end off the year as well as make new appointments to the committee and sort out any minor hiccups which may present themselves.

This year we will of course, take a short time to discuss the proposed Rules of Association which were sent out by email and are included in the snail mail newsletter for those interested parties.

For those of you wanting



to make a weekend of it, I believe there are some arrangements being made, so contact William if you want to stay over the Saturday night. His contact number is 083-309-7692 or you can email him.

All that is left to be said is, looking forward to meeting with many of you on the 8th November.

May your antenna's always be resonant and may the Frequency be with you

Andy ZS6ADY

AWA Committee:

- * President—Rad ZS6RAD
- * Treasurer—Willie ZS5WI
- * Technical—Don ZS5DR
- * Net Controller—Willem ZS6ALL
- * Newsletter/PRO—Andy ZS6ADY

LATSKY MUSEUM



Richard, ZS6TF visited the Latsky Museum in Van Rhynsdorp and sent me a whole lot of Photo's which we will be publishing in the next few newsletters.

An absolute "must visit" Richard says and well worth the time and effort to get there

CW Net:

A quiet month on CW, with one or two new stations calling in on the CW net. Welcome to Munro ZS5IN who made us all sit up straight when he called in to the net.

Conditions to Div 1 continue to be difficult and even though, on the odd occasion, we hear the distant dit's and dah's and can sometimes make out the call sign, we haven't had any good contacts for a long time.

Don't give up in the bottom corner of the country, we keep saying this and one day it will happen and the bands will improve.

As far as membership to the "Fists Club" are concerned, very little response to that and Pierre ZS6BQS, was telling me he has become one of 5 SA members.

It's on the cards to have a CW activity day

hosted by ZS0AWA early in the new year. We need to finalise a few points before the 15th of November, for submission to the Contest Blue Book and then we will see what kind of response we have to our call.

It has been suggested that the activity take place from a Saturday midday to a Sunday midday so as to encourage activity on all bands and we are quite in favour of this. It will not be a contest as such, but there will be points, more for QRP, and recognition by means of certificates for those obtaining the highest points. This could prove to be quite a fun day and hopefully will attract a lot more guys to take up the key (or paddle) again.

It's very interesting to read some of the threads on the SARL website around CW and a few guys wanting to get their teeth



into it.

An interesting comment made by Quartus ZS6QDW was, "How could I become a Silent Key if I had never used one ?", which brought a smile to my face.

Dust off those old keys and paddles and get yourself going on some CW again and come and join us. It is a lot of fun, even if you make mistakes.

73

De ZS0AWA/CW—SK

SSB activity:

The long awaited change in the bands still seems to elude us and every week we come up on frequency hoping for some change. Although the last Saturday in October, there were a few Div5 stations head on 40m, which we have not had for quite a long time.

Unfortunately 80m is not so good for the longer distance stations any more, but does still remain the best option for those who are skip on 40m, within the Gauteng region. We will of course continue with the 80m relay until we don't

need it any more.

The second leg of the QSO party was held in October and although there were quite a few stations on the bands, very few logs were received. If you would like to still submit a log for the QSO Party, then we will extend the closing date for a week to enable those who want to send one in, to do so.

Div 1 was the most well represented in the contest, both on AM and SSB, with Div 6 running a close second. The problem for the Div 6 stations of course were

the skip conditions on 40m. Unfortunately the only log entry from Div 6 is that of ZS0AWA, operated by yours truly. A total of 81 stations were logged.



Latsky Museum—Van Rhynsdorp

AM:

The noisy conditions have really taken their toll on the AM net as thunder storms have been swept in across the country and made listening extremely difficult. Yet still there are a few old stalwarts (who are half deaf anyway) that come up on the net and make a good few attempts at making contacts.

The AM side of the QSO party was really well represented by stations from all over the country with a total of 77 stations being logged. This is 10 more than in the first leg. Div 1 again came

out tops with the most stations being represented.

A few comments made were that the duration of the QSO party was too long, but the reason for extending it was because of the band conditions with 40 normally going out quite early and 80m being rather unpredictable.

Lets hope that by next year there is some definite improvement in the bands and there will be even more stations out there looking for contacts or just giving

away points. Lets not forget the aim of the QSO party is to stimulate activity on the bands and having a good QSO with your contact.



Hallicrafters HT37

AWA Open Day Saturday 08 November 2008

The event will be on the Farm of William ZS4L, just outside Harrismith and will start from when you get there, to when you leave.

For the guys coming from Natal, take the N3 bypass around Harrismith, go past the Engen One stop and Up the hill. Just after the rise of the hill, there is a turn to the right (that's the drivers side), "R772 Verkykerskop". Williams farm 2km down the road on the Left, (that's the passenger side).

For those coming from Gauteng, the turn is just before Harrismith as you get to the crest of the hill to go down towards Harrismith. Obviously here you turn left (that's the passenger side) to Verkykerskop.

Bring along your old rigs and spare parts for a flea market, pack a picnic basket with all your favourite goodies, just not too much of the liquid RF, load the wife and kids in the car and come and enjoy a day of eyeball QSO's and great friendship with the guys you hear on frequency.



The Collins KWM2-A is going to be raffled country wide and the draw will take place towards the end of the year, but you can make swop of some coupons for a ticket to stand a chance to win this superb valve rig. Even if you live in the Western Cape, you can send us a swop and we will put your name down for the draw at R50 per ticket.

The HRO 500 will be raffled on the day at R50 per ticket. If we do not get enough tickets taken, then we will carry this over and try to get more tickets done country wide.



There will be an assortment of things raffled off at the open day, like a few bottles of wine donated to the AWA etc. The whole idea is to raise funds to pay for the overheads that we experience, without having to ask for subs. We look forward to your support. Do come along and join us.

ZS0AWA Committee.

SURVIVAL RADIO

Of the many styles of radio devices used, perhaps the one least known about and even less often thought about would have to be Survival Radio. With the exception of “Major Tom” talking to Ground Control, few people could be in a more desperate situation than those having to abandon ship and trust to a small lifeboat and possibly the small and clumsy survival radio which may be available on board. Up until the ‘60’s such radios were heavy, clumsy, low powered, difficult to operate and not that reliable. They used chain driven generators operated by two folding steel handles and valves!!! The casing was similar in size to an ammunition case for Lee-Enfield ammunition and they were painted bright yellow. It was therefore a rather special day for those in peril on the sea when the age of the transistor enabled more effective and potentially reliable survival radios to be designed, produced and issued to the British Navy for use in survival craft.

When my friend and colleague, Joe Pattinson retired from the Survival Radio section I was privileged to be appointed in his place and to get to know the various radio devices upon which the lives of those at sea might depend. The new SOLAS 2 (Safety Of Life At Sea) survival radios were a huge step forward in technology, utilising not only transistors in the radio but fibreglass as the casing, giving lower weight, higher power output and with a direct drive generator needing less effort to operate them. Operating on the 2182kHz emergency frequency they had an output of 5 watts and could send either a continuous tone, a mechanised SOS or use could be made of the built in Morse key. There were however a few design glitches and it was regrettably my duty only to test the units as delivered, not criticise the design. Indeed to do so would have been to question the wisdom of the designers and there was quite strangely no procedure in place for criticism or suggestion making. I did some experiments with the radio and put my boss in a very difficult position by giving my list of criticisms and suggestions to him to do with as he wished. You be the judge.

Picture yourself soaked through, going up and down on two metre waves somewhere in the North Atlantic in winter. Problem 1 The SOLAS2 came with a waterproof lid attached to the body of the transmitter by four screws fitted with 25mm toggles. These toggles are impossible to undo with either gloved hands or hands half-frozen in the sea. Suggestion 1, lengthen the toggles to 50mm, they would still slide through the bolts and simplify the removal of the lid. Problem 2. The antenna, earth lead and cranking handles are contained in the lid, all neatly clipped in. But the lid is not attached to the body of the radio so the wave to wash into the boat will carry the whole lot into the sea where it will instantly sink. Suggestion 2, attach the lid to the radio with a short chain. Problem 3. Having got the antenna up, the ground lead into the sea and now sitting comfortably, our would-be survivor is to prepare himself to get on the air. Notwithstanding that it is probably dark, Jack Tar may not have his reading glasses and that the tuning directions are engraved on the radio in letters 4mm high, he is directed thus:

“Crank the handles, depress the Morse key and adjust the TUNE knob for maximum brightness of the OUTPUT lamp”

No problem if you have a friend with you but alone you don’t have enough arms!! But it can be done, perhaps not in a raging sea but in a nice warm test room, certainly. All you have to do is find a chair and a box to put your feet on that is high enough to make your knees higher than your lap, thus preventing the radio from sliding off your lap when cranking with one hand. The other little problem, that of pressing the key and tuning with one hand can be overcome if you are cranking with your right hand because by leaning to the left one can press the key with the left elbow and tune out of the back of your left hand. This procedure may be a little further complicated by being half-drowned, wearing gloves or a thick jacket and Mae-West, such garments not being conducive to making Houdini-like movements. Suggestion 3, add a key-shorting switch, it is then quite manageable.

I don’t know if such changes were ever implemented, for it was a pity that the dawning of the age of the transistor in survival radio should be accompanied with simple design flaws. I would love to know if they were ever actually used.

SOME TRIVIA

73

The traditional expression "73" goes right back to the beginning of the landline telegraph days. It is found in some of the earliest editions of the numerical codes, each with a different definition, but each with the same idea in mind--it indicated that the end, or signature, was coming up. But there are no data to prove that any of these were used.

The first authentic use of 73 is in the publication *The National Telegraph Review and Operators' Guide*, first published in April 1857. At that time, 73 meant "My love to you!" Succeeding issues of this publication continued to use this definition of the term. Curiously enough, some of the other numerals then used have the same definition now that they had then, but within a short time, the use of 73 began to change.

In the National Telegraph Convention, the numeral was changed from the Valentine-type sentiment to a vague sign of fraternalism. Here, 73 was a greeting, a friendly "word" between operators and it was so used on all wires.

In 1859, the Western Union Company set up the standard "92 Code". A list of numerals from one to 92 was compiled to indicate a series of prepared phrases for use by the operators on the wires. Here, in the 92 Code, 73 changes from a fraternal sign to a very flowery "accept my compliments," which was in keeping with the florid language of that era.

Over the years from 1859 to 1900, the many manuals of telegraphy show variations of this meaning. Dodge's *The Telegraph Instructor* shows it merely as "compliments." The *Twentieth Century Manual of Railway and Commercial Telegraphy* defines it two ways, one listing as "my compliments to you;" but in the glossary of abbreviations it is merely "compliments." Theodore A. Edison's *Telegraphy Self-Taught* shows a return to "accept my compliments." By 1908, however, a later edition of the Dodge Manual gives us today's definition of "best regards" with a backward look at the older meaning in another part of the work where it also lists it as "compliments."

"Best regards" has remained ever since as the "put-it-down-in-black-and-white" meaning of 73 but it has acquired overtones of much warmer meaning. Today, amateurs use it more in the manner that James Reid had intended that it be used --a "friendly word between operators."

Morse Code

Although Samuel F. B. Morse's code achieved nearly universal use on the landline telegraph systems of America, the Europeans never did like it. They felt that the "space" characters were likely to cause errors in receiving. (The letter "O," for example, was sent "dit dit" and the "I" was sent as in the now familiar International Code: "didit.") The Europeans developed a number of binary dot-dash codes to suit their own needs. The code in use on the wires of the Prussian Empire in 1852 bore a strong resemblance to the present International Code, but it used the American Morse numerals. Seven years later the "European Code" was formulated, using the Austro-Prussian alphabet and adapting the numerals we now use. This was adopted for use by all European countries and the name was changed in 1912 to "International Code," although it is also known, even today, as the "Continental Code."

The numerals themselves are interesting. No known code of the European continent shows anything which resembles them. They just showed up in the European Code. However, the Bain Code, used on many lines in the U.S. circa 1846, had numerals which closely match those of the International Code. From one through five, Bain and International are identical. Reversing the Bain Code numerals six through zero produces the International numerals. There is nothing to prove that the Bain Code was the basis for the International numerals, but the conclusion is almost inescapable that someone at the Vienna conference at which International was adopted, was familiar with Bain's numerals. Bain's code was a modification of the Davy code of 1839, so it is possible that the numerals we now use are older than any of the alphabets.

"Ham: a poor operator. A 'plug.'"

That's the definition of the word given in G. M. Dodge's *The Telegraph Instructor* even before radio.

The definition has never changed in wire telegraphy. The first wireless operators were landline telegraphers who left their offices to go to sea or to man the coastal stations. They brought with them their language and much of the tradition of their older profession. In those early days, spark was king and every station occupied the same wavelength - or, more accurately perhaps, every station occupied the whole spectrum with its broad spark signal. Government stations, ships, coastal stations and the increasingly numerous amateur operators all competed for time and signal supremacy in each other's receivers. Many of the amateur stations were very powerful. Two amateurs, working each other across town, could effectively jam all the other operations in the area. When this happened, frustrated commercial operators would call the ship whose weaker signals had been blotted out by amateurs and say "SRI OM THOSE #&\$!@ HAMS ARE JAMMING YOU." Amateurs, possibly unfamiliar with the real meaning of the term, picked it up and applied it to themselves in true "Yankee Doodle" fashion and wore it with pride. As the years advanced, the original meaning has completely disappeared.

-Louise Ramsey Moreau W3WRE/WB6BBO

P.O. Box 12320
Benoryn
1504
South Africa

Phone: 27 11 969 5619
Fax: 27 86 620 3291
Mobile: 082 448 4368
Email: andy.cairns@xsinet.co.za

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**Antique Wireless Association
of Southern Africa**

Mission Statement

Our aim is to facilitate, generate and maintain an interest in the location, acquisition, repair and use of yester-days radio transmitters and receivers. To encourage all like minded amateurs to do the same thus ensuring the maintenance and preservation of our amateur heritage.

Membership of this group is free and by association.

Notices:

For a Film Tour of the Mullard Valve factory in the early 1960's. It's about 30 mins long.
http://www.techtubevalves.com/about_us/film_reels.php (Don't try this without broadband ADSL)

This came a bit late for me last month, but maybe there is still some equipment available to interested parties:

HAM GEAR for sale SEPTEMBER 2008

2 Pairs of Yaesu FL/FR 101 Transmitter and Receiver.
1 Yaesu YP150 150W dummy Load
1 Yaesu YC601 Digital Display 160M thro to 10M Incl WWV
1 Eddystone EC10 Receiver.
1 TH3 triband beam
1 18 AVQ Vertical antenna
1 Tono morse code RTTY and Ascii decoder and sender.
1 Home brew HF transceiver Valve job built in 1940
1 Cossor double beam oscilloscope (It's a model 339!)
2 Grid dip oscillators
Assortment of Antenna Tuners and SWR bridges.
1 Morse code oscillator
2 Major 29 MHz transceivers
1 pair 27 MHz Walkie talkies
7 Power supplies 12Volt between 5 and 7.5A
1 Large 100A workshop Battery charger.
Assortment of Mobile antennas and loading coils for UHF, VHF and HF.

Rolls and various Lengths of Brand NEW Coax RG213 and RG214, RG215
PL-259 and BNC coax connectors
NEW never used Radio spares: "BandW" variable Capacitors and resistors also ww resistors
Honey comb capacitors, Radio and Transmitter Valves, heat sinks etc.
Then many other Items that are associated with Ham shacks.. worth a phone call.
Military antenna tuners cables and microphones.
Contact Vincent ZS6RU Tel:011 442-8614