



# OUT AND ABOUT IN VK5

Issue 4

February 2015

SOTA, VK5 PARKS AWARD, WWFF, PORTABLE, QRP, PEDESTRIAN MOBILE

Welcome to the fourth edition of '***Out and about in VK5***', a newsletter dedicated to SOTA, the VK5 Parks Award, WWFF, portable operation, QRP, & pedestrian mobile operation.

The summer period is with us, which means we need to be careful when activating a park or a summit. Not that I believe amateurs are going to start a fire. But we may get caught up in one. I myself, have been trying to time my activations on days when the weather has been moderate or later in the evenings. Sadly, as a result of the Sampson Flat fire, the Cudlee Creek Conservation Park has been totally destroyed. And as you will read in this issue, the Mount Gawler summit, VK5/ SE-013 also took a big hit.

Just a reminder that this newsletter is released at the start of each month and emailed as a PDF file. It can also be found online at the Adelaide Hills Amateur Radio (AHARS) website at:

<http://www.ahars.com.au>

I welcome any news and photographs relating to the subject material. There are a lot of SOTA activators/chasers and Park activators/hunters out there, who have been very silent with regards to submitting material. So come on. Surely, there is something you'd like to share. An activation maybe, an antenna project, a review of a transceiver, etc.

**Remember, the content, and ultimately the survival of this newsletter is entirely up to your contributions.**

You can email me stories and photos to:

[vk5pas@wia.org.au](mailto:vk5pas@wia.org.au)

73 & have fun,

Paul, VK5PAS

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# How to fill up your log

By Paul VK5PAS



If you are a park activator, here are some tips on how you can attract more park hunters, and fill up your log.....



## 1. The secret is in the antenna

We have all heard this, but it is true. It has been said that antennas compose one third of your QRP station. The other two thirds are your operating equipment and your operating skills.

## 2. Try different bands

Propagation is not always kind on 40m for the longer hauls around VK, and certainly not for DX if you are running QRP. So, if possible, try operating on a selection of bands. This may not always be possible due to restrictions with licences and lack of

appropriate antennas. But to the give amateurs further afield a chance to get in the action as well consider using 15 or 20 metres for example. The vast majority of portable activity here in Australia seems to be on 40m SSB, which often excludes those in Western Australia (VK6) & Queensland (VK4). The 20m band can also exclude Foundation calls. So, please give the other bands a try.

## 3. Place your intentions on as many forums as possible

The more people who know you are out there the better. They will know to listen out for you. e.g. Yahoo groups

## 4. Consider the time of day & know when the bands are open

Who is your targeted audience?

There is no point going out at midday if you want to work Europeans on 20m long path. So try to time your activations for those who you would like to get in the log.

## 5. Look at the solar figures & propagation conditions

Propagation conditions are extremely important with any QRP operation. If the solar figures are suggesting poor conditions then maybe consider putting off an activation until another day.

## 6. Ask someone to place you on the DX cluster and/or parksnparks.com.

Remember, the DX Code of Conduct for the cluster.....It is impolite to self-spot.

## 7. Consider setting up an SMS group on your mobile telephone.

## 8. Try a group e-mail to all your amateur friends.

## 9. Use the local repeater to let people know that you/the activator are there.



Nigel VK5NIG in the Cleland CP.



## Jolly season park & SOTA activations

By John VK5BJE



Each year for the last five years we have travelled to Sydney.

Of course, the purpose of the trip was to see our family, including our Grand-children, but we have always made a point of travelling different ways on our trip, especially the homeward leg. We arrived home on Thursday 8th January. We left to travel to Sydney on Saturday 20th December. We were away from home one day short of three weeks.



John enjoying a Maccas salad before the action. Photo courtesy of Jenny Dawes.

For the last two years this has provided us with an opportunity to pursue our passions of amateur radio, especially portable and QRP work, and bird-watching. But prior to that I have always operated HF portable and had a few contacts on the local repeaters. But QRP from Parks and Peaks has added new dimensions to amateur radio for me. We have been to some great places and had a lot of fun.

Here is a table of my activations.

20/12/2014 **Little Desert National Park**, VKFF-291, 31 contacts



Horeshoe Bend, Little Desert NP.

Photo courtesy of Jenny Dawes.

21/12/2014 **Mt Moliagul**, VK3/VN-024, 16 contacts

21/12/2014 **Greater Bendigo National Park**, VKFF-623, 17 contacts

27/12/2014 **Scheyville National Park**, VKFF-444, 2 contacts

27/12/2014 **Cattai National Park**, VKFF-092, 11 contacts

30/12/2014 **Livingstone National Park**, VKFF-292, 12 contacts

31/12/2014 **Brisbane Ranges National Park**, VKFF-055, 29 contacts (two activations)



View from One Tree Hill, Greater Bendigo NP.

Photo courtesy of Jenny Dawes.

1/1/2015 **Mt Warrenheip**, VK3/VC-019, 22 contacts

2/1/2015 **Port Campbell National Park**, VKFF-420, 12 contacts

3/1/2015 **Great Otway National Park**, VKFF-405, 14 contacts (two activations)

5/1/2015 **Canunda National Park**, VKFF-075, 20 contacts (two activations)

6/1/2015 **Lake Frome Conservation Park**, 6 contacts

7/1/2015 **Coorong National Park**, VKFF-115, 13 contacts (two activations).



Coorong Lagoon, Coorong NP.

Photo courtesy of Jenny Dawes.

Additionally, there were a few other contacts along the way, but 204 parks and peaks contacts was a reasonable score, only made possible by those who gave me a call.

I was pleased to be able to activate **Port Campbell** and **Great Otway National Parks** (these two parks remain for me to complete the 45 needed for the KRMNPA Worked All Parks Award). It is always great fun to hear the core of familiar voices and call signs of those who like this activity as well as welcoming newcomers to this facet of amateur radio.

Highlights were contacts with VK3FOWL/P, Julie and VK3YSP/P, Joe from a number of parks, but especially **Burrowa-Mt Pine NP** and **Alfred**

NP and a contact while mobile in Bendigo with WIAW/KH6 on 20 metres. Another dimension to the trip was meeting VK5HCF, Col and VK5EE, Tom from Mount Gambier and later catching up again with VK5ZAI, Tony at Kingston.

John Dawes

VK5BJE

## Twilight activation event

By Paul VK5PAS

On Friday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2015, we held the unaugural twilight activation event.

A total of 8 activators ventured out to activate parks. Here's a list of the activators and the parks.....

- Chris VK4FR/5
  - Ferguson CP
- Col VK5HCF
  - Penambol CP
- Tom VK5EE
  - Penambol CP
- David VK5NQP
  - Hale CP

- Nigel VK5NIG
  - Pt Gawler CP
- Arno VK5ZAR
  - Angove CP
- Greg VK5ZGY
  - Telford Scrub
- Paul VK5PAS
  - Mt Boothby CP



Tom VK5EE in Penambol CP. Photos courtesy of Col VK5HCF

All up there were 7 unique parks activated.







Greg VK5ZGY in the Telford Scrub CP. Photos courtesy of Greg VK5ZGY

Well done to Greg & Gabbi, and Tom & Col, who went out to activate, despite the fact that they had a club meeting on that night.

Chris VK4FR/5 worked a total of 12 stations, including 5 park to park contacts.

David VK5NQP worked 19 stations and 5 park to park contacts, using an IC718 & 15 watts.

Greg & Gabbi worked a total of 29 stations.

Tom & Col worked a total of 22 stations from Penambol CP. Col has put together a video of their activation. It can be viewed at.....

<http://youtu.be/ixZ8lpeCa8>

And Col also has some more info at his WordPress site at.....

<https://vk5hcf.wordpress.com/>

Yours truly, managed a total of 51 contacts including 3 Park to Park QSOs (more on Page ).

Nigel made a total of 21 contacts at Port Gawler CP into VK2, VK3, VK5, & VK7. This included two park to park contacts & one SOTA contact.

Thanks to Chris VK4FR for suggesting such an evening. It was a lot of fun.

The next twilight event will be held on **FRIDAY 30<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2015.**

Consider going out a little later if you can (4.30 p.m. onwards). The 40m band comes alive late in the afternoon & evening, with pretty much guaranteed propagation all around Australia & even DX.



Operating spot in the Mt Boothby Conservation Park



Paul VK5PAS in the Mt Boothby Conservation Park, near Culburra

## An afternoon in Angove CP

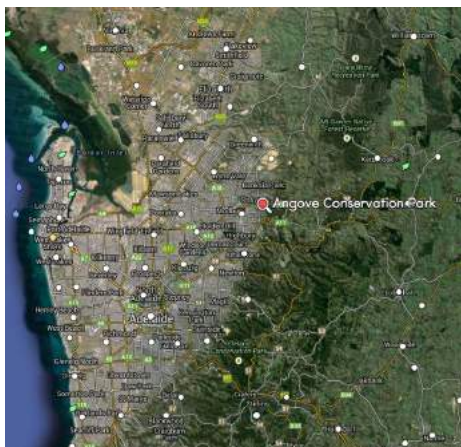
By Arno VK5ZAR



*Here's some info from Arno VK5ZAR re his activation at the Angove Conservation Park, for the twilight activation evening.*

On Friday arvo I planned to get to the Angove CP early to do some tests before the 0600 UTC start time but got caught up in the late Friday afternoon traffic along North East Road that added more than 20 minutes to my trip time. I did not plan for peak traffic around 3.00 p.m.



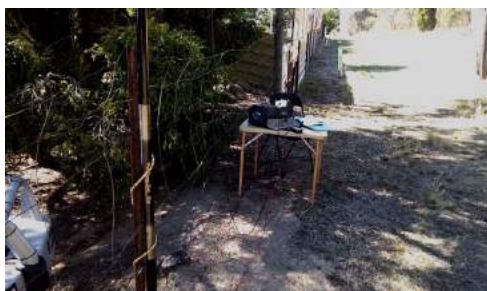


Map showing the location of the Angove CP, north east of Adelaide. Photo courtesy of mapcarta.com



The Angove CP sign. Photo courtesy of Arno VK5ZAR

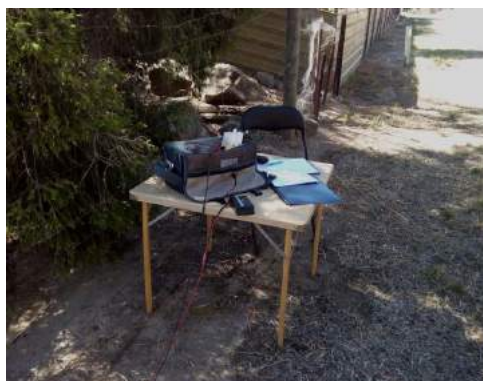
I arrived at my planned location at about 4.00 p.m. local time, found a shady spot to set up the operating table and then erected the linked dipole on to the 9m squid pole which was 'okky' strapped to a star dropper fence pole.



Squid pole attached to star dropper. Photo courtesy of Arno VK5ZAR

By about 4.20 p.m. local time I had connected up

the radio equipment bag with the FT817, etc and was on air. I instantly heard a number of Parks stations on air and calling CQ but I had left the log book and pens still in the car so there was a scramble back to the car to collect them. Finally, all set up and on air.



Set up and ready to go. Photo courtesy of Arno VK5ZAR

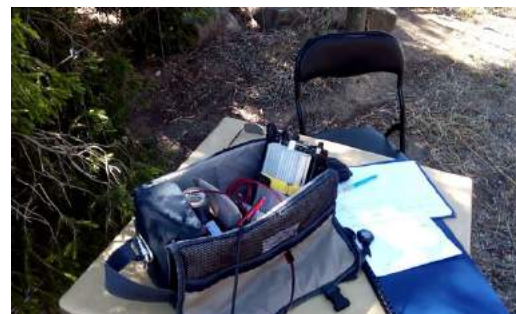
In the first 20 minutes I worked five park to park stations by tuning up and down around 7.100. A good start!

Over the next two hours I made 24 contacts which included 6 park to park contacts, and seven VK3 stations.

But by 0750 UTC all was quiet on the band and after a number of 'CQ parks' calls, with no results, I decided to pull the plug after a busy day.

The equipment I used was my Yaesu FT817nd with a 40-50 watt amp (MX-P50m) attached to the

linked dipole, all running off a 7Ah SLA battery which was being topped up by a 30 watt solar panel.



The equipment. Photo courtesy of Arno VK5ZAR

This was the first time I used the HF amp and the solar panel and they gave very good results as a portable station.

The one problem with the solar panel setup was normally the voltage was around 12.9 volts on tx and 13.2 on rx, and all worked well, but when the solar controller went to flat mode at 14.1 volts during longer rx times, the general noise floor increased by 2 S pints. This was until it went back to charge mode. I actually unplugged the controller feed sometimes to partly discharge the SLA during band searching for contacts.

Cheers Arno, VK5ZAR.

## Trig points and private property

By Paul VK5PAS



The trig point at Mount Gawler, VK5/ SE-013. Photo courtesy of Arno VK5ZAR

I recently stumbled across the fact that there were 'virtual' geocaches for the Geocaching program at Black Bullock Hill, VK5/ SE-016 & Mt Gawler VK5/ SE-013.

And I saw on the chat groups for Geocaching, people referring to 'jumping fences', etc. It prompted me to revisit the issue of accessing private property.

Please, forget any of the RUMOURS you may have

heard. You CANNOT access private land without the expressed permission of the land owner. Even if there is a trig point at the location.

If you do enter private property, you COULD be subject to legal action, and your actions may directly impact on future intentions by other SOTA & Park activators.

For more information, please have a read of my post on my WordPress site at.....

<https://vk5pas.wordpress.com/2015/01/19/trig-points-and-private-property/>

## 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary weekend

By Paul VK5PAS


Just a reminder that the 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the VK5 Parks award will be celebrated by a special activation weekend on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

I already have a total of 13 activators and a total of 38 unique parks all across South Australia.

If you do intend to activate a park, please send me an email so that I can include your intended activation/s on the master spreadsheet.

The spreadsheet can be found in the Files Section of the VK5 Parks Yahoo group at.....

<https://au.groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/sanpcpa/info>



**2nd year anniversary of the...**

**VK5 National & Conservation Parks Award**



**Special Activation weekend.....**

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2015.**

SATURDAY 28<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2015 SUNDAY 29<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2015

*This is your opportunity to join in the celebrations, and activate portable from one of South Australia's*

**21 National Parks, and/or 269 Conservation Parks.**

**More information:-**

<http://www.vk5parks.com>

<http://www.ahars.com.au>



## ZL SOTA

By Paul VK5PAS



Aoraki/Mount Cook in New Zealand. Photo courtesy of Wikipedia.org

I received an email during the week from Warren ZL2AJ, who had come across my website and my SOTA page. Warren was interested in prominence.

And I then saw that Warren had posted on the SOTA Yahoo group that a *'concerted effort is being made in the land of ZL to get SOTA registered here'*.

This is exciting news, as 'the land of the long white cloud' has some fantastic summits.

But this will not be an overnight process, as Ian VK5CZ knows only too well. To map summits and ensure they have the required prominence is a big job.

## QSO with Spanish SOTA station

By Paul VK5PAS

I recently made contact with Pablo EA1QL who was sitting on the top of a summit in Spain (EA1/AT-204 Monxagre).

I have spoken with a number of European SOTA activators over the years, but what was unique about this contact was the propagation path/time of the day. It was late evening and contact was on the 20m band via the long path.

The band is not normally open long path into Europe at this time. Propagation is normally short path at this time of the evening.

Pablo sent me an email with a number of photographs from his activation, so I thought I would share them here with you.



Pablo was running a Kenwood TS480, powered by a 12v 18 ah battery, and a Delta loop monoband antenna for 20m.



End fed antenna for 40m. Photo courtesy of Pablo, EA1QL

Pablo's antenna was home brew, and he was running about 50 watts.



Pablo working the 'pile up'. Photo courtesy of Pablo, EA1QL



work them whilst they are sitting on the top of a summit. But it is a lot of fun, and very exciting when you get the Europeans in the log.

#### RECENT VK5 SOTA ACTIVATIONS / ACTIVATORS

6. VK5/ SE-013 Mt Gawler, Bob VK5FO (25/1/2015)
7. VK5/ SE-016 Black Bullock Hill, Paul AX5PAS (26/1/2015)
8. VK5/ SE-013 Mt Gawler, Nigel AX5NIG (26/1/2015)



Delta loop for 20m. Photo courtesy of Pablo, EA1QL



For a second period in a row, not many VK5 SOTA activations at all for this period. Summertime is a factor. The distance required to get to VK5 summits is another.

1. VK5/ NE-058 Mt Ngadjuri, Ian VK5CZ (1/1/2015)
2. VK5/ SE-001 Mount Bryan, Paul VK5PAS (1/1/2015)
3. VK3/ VC-019 Mt Warrenheip, John VK5BJE/3 (1/1/2015)
4. VK5/ SE-013 Mt Gawler, Bob VK5FO (1/1/2015)
5. VK5/ SE-005 Mt Lofty, Paul VK5PAS (14/1/2015)



Some of the European SOTA activators listen out for DX. Many others don't. It is a challenge to

## An afternoon in Hale CP

By David VK5NQP



*David VK5NQP has also kindly provided a report of his activation of Hale CP for the 1<sup>st</sup> twilight activation event held on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2015.*

I ventured a couple of km up the road from Williamstown to the Hale CP for the Friday afternoon twilight activation.





Hale Conservation Park. Photo courtesy of David VK5NQP

I set up the antenna & radio then went to the car for the battery booster pack & found I had left the power lead at home so had to resort to the 4200 LiFe battery.

I tested out the antenna with my new analyser & found it was resonant at about 7.200, so I will need to add a bit more wire to bring it closer to about 7.100

I then tuned around the band hearing just static. Putting out a call or 2 before realising I hadn't plugged the coax back to the radio after the analysing. Oops! fingers crossed no damage, plug in & big signals.



Hale Conservation Park. Photo courtesy of David VK5NQP

Worked Greg 5ZGY in Telford Scrub, then QSY to my own frequency & worked 2 or 3 more when, Crash!! the squid pole slides halfway down in the middle of a QSO. The antenna wire had snagged on a piece of bark on a tree so the pole hadn't fallen all the way down. Signals still 59 & straight away, another caller, work him then re-erect the squid pole & work a few more.

It was very pleasant with the afternoon sunshine & a little shade, but the traffic noise from Mt Crawford Road only about 40metres away was very loud, especially when a truck went by drowning out the radio.



Hale Conservation Park. Photo courtesy of David VK5NQP

After about an hour the LiFe battery running the IC718 at about 15 watts had had it, so I grabbed

the big power pack & found a couple of my charger leads with crocodile clips & connected onto the clips on the battery booster & worked 1 more station.

An eventful twilight activation!

I worked 19 stations, 13 VK5 & 6 VK3 with 5 park to park contacts.

I thought I may have killed the LiFe battery as it wouldn't get into a charge cycle when I put the charger on before driving home. Looking at it that night, I realised I had the balance plug in the wrong connector, Doh!!

A very pleasant summer evening for a short activation.

David  
VK5NQP

# John Moyle Field Day

By Paul VK5PAS

A reminder that the John Moyle Field Day is to be held on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> and Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2015.

This is a great opportunity for you to venture out into the field and try out your portable equipment.



More information can be found at.....

<http://www.wia.org.au/members/contests/johnmoyle/>

## RECENT VK5 PARK ACTIVATIONS

Some excellent park activations for this period, including the twilight activation afternoon/evening & Australia Day.

- Montacute CP, Bob AX5FO (26/1/2015)
- Cox Scrub CP, Gordon VK5GY (26/1/2015)
- Belair NP, VK5TCM??? (26/1/2015)
- Mt George CP, Paul AX5PAS (26/1/2015)
- Belair NP, John VK5BJE (26/1/2015)
- Talisker CP, Paul AX5PAS (26/1/2015)
- Piccaninnie Ponds CP, Tom AX5EE, (26/1/2015)
- Piccaninnie Ponds CP, Col VK5EE (26/1/2015)
- Ewens Ponds CP, Tom AX5EE (26/1/2015)
- Ewens Ponds CP, Col VK5HCF (26/1/2015)
- Dingley Dell CP, Tom AX5EE (26/1/2015)
- Dingley Dell CP, Col VK5HCF (26/1/2015)
- Kenneth Stirling CP, Paul VK5PAS (23/1/2015)
- Bullock Hill CP, Paul VK5PAS (19/1/2014)
- Point Davenport CP, Richard VK5ZRY (18/1/2015)
- Ferguson CP, Chris VK4FR/5 (16/1/2015)
- Angove CP, Arno VK5ZAR (16/1/2015)
- Pt Gawler CP, Nigel VK5NIG (16/1/2015)
- Mount Boothby CP, Paul VK5PAS (16/1/2015)
- Hale CP, David VK5NQP (16/1/2015)
- Penambol CP, Col VK5HCF (16/1/2015)
- Penambol CP, Tom VK5EE (16/1/2015)
- Telford Scrub CP, Greg VK5ZGY (16/1/2015)
- Cleland CP, Paul VK5PAS (14/1/2015)
- Charleston CP, Paul VK5PAS (11/1/2015)
- Ferries McDonald CP, Paul VK5PAS (7/1/2015)
- Canunda NP, John VK5BJE (5/1/2015)
- Lake Frome CP, John VK5BJE (5/1/2015)

## Insulators

By Col VK5HCF



An excellent source for Inline insulators for dipoles or even linked dipoles is used cable ties.

The larger ones can be cut into short segments, holes drilled in the ends and you have an great lightweight insulator.



Photo courtesy of Col VK5HCF

## NERC talk

By Paul VK5PAS



On Friday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2015, I delivered a presentation to the North East Radio Club,

on the VK5 National & Conservation Parks Award, and the World Wide Flora Fauna program. There were about 30 keen amateurs in attendance.



Photo courtesy of Stuart VK5STU

Other than delivering a powerpoint presentation on the subject material, I brought along a variety of equipment to show, including: Yaesu FT817nd, Yaesu FT857d, SLAB battery, LiFePo batteries, squid pole, 44 amp hour power pack, & a linked dipole.

## Some interesting websites.

By Paul VK5PAS

Here is a list of some interesting websites:

Mapcarta

<http://mapcarta.com/>

DEWNR

<http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/Home>

Adelaide Bushwalkers.

<http://www.adelaidebushwalkers.org/>

Birdlife Australia.

<http://birdlife.org.au/>

## Park closures.

By Paul VK5PAS

The following is from the DEWNR website.....

Cudlee Creek Conservation Park, Full closure from 4/1/2015 until further notice.

Flinders Ranges National Park, Full closure from 23/2/2015 – 28/2/2015 & 19/3/2015-22/3/2015 for Pest/animal control

Telowie Gorge Conservation Park, Full closure from 16/1/2014 until further notice.

For a full list please see.....

[http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/parks/Safety/Park\\_closures](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/parks/Safety/Park_closures)



# Sampson Flat fire

By Paul VK5PAS

No doubt everyone is aware of the serious fire that swept through the northern part of the 'Adelaide Hills' Mount Lofty Ranges a few weeks ago.

The fire burnt out an area of more than 12,500 hectares, and was approximately 20km long and 15 km wide.

Sadly, about 30 homes, a number of businesses, and numerous sheds were destroyed. Fortunately, there was no loss of life.



Map courtesy of Country Fire Service

As a result of the fire, the beautiful Cudlee Creek Conservation Park has been totally destroyed. I tried getting in there last week to have a look, but the Gorge

Road is still totally closed to traffic.

And the Mount Gawler summit, VK5/ SE-013 was also severely impacted by the fire. Noel and his lovely wife Anne, who own the property that the summit is located on, were very fortunate, in that their home was spared by the fire.

Nigel VK5NIG has been to visit Noel & Anne, as have I. We have offered our assistance in cleaning up around their property, should they need our assistance. They are both very grateful for our (the amateurs) support.

Noel & Anne have provided the photographs below, which show the fire as it was developing. Shortly after these photographs were taken, they were warned by a police officer to evacuate as a 'fireball' was rapidly approaching their home. They took his advice and left their home. One can only image what that decision must have been like.

But fortunately, their house was saved. It did take a considerable amount of time though, before it was

safe to re enter the area and confirm that their house was still standing.



Both Nigel VK5NIG & Bob VK5FO have since activated the Mt Gawler summit. More info & photos can be found on Bob's wordpress site at.....

<http://vk5fo.com/>

On Page 17 are some photographs I took of the area whilst there the other week. It is total devastation in some areas.





## Bushfire safety

By Paul VK5PAS



As a follow on to the story above. The following is from the CFS website.....

If your travel or activities take you into high risk areas, can you postpone your trip, plan a different route, swap to an activity that is safer or not banned on Total Fire Ban days?

If camping or staying in a caravan park, ask them where the nearest Bushfire Safer Place is. Find out if they have a Bushfire Survival Plan or safe refuge area. A brick toilet building or shower block may be the best option.

Be careful using generators and make sure you understand the restrictions on fires and barbeques. This also applies to houseboat users when lighting fires along riverbanks. The CFS website and fact sheets have more information.

If visiting a National Park, ask the Rangers about the local fire and barbecue

regulations, as they can vary.

Some Parks are closed on fire danger days - you may need to leave your campsite.



Photo courtesy of visualphotos.com

And the following is from the Tasmanian Fire Service and is specific as to what to do if trapped while on foot.....

Avoid entering the bush on days of severe, extreme or catastrophic fire danger, or if there is smoke or fire in the area. If you do find yourself trapped by a bushfire while on foot, there are steps you can take to increase your chances of survival.

- Never attempt to run through a bushfire unless the flames are lower than waist height and you can see a safe area beyond the flames (this should only be done as a last resort).
- Never run uphill to escape a fire unless you can clearly see a safe area nearby. The fire can move much faster uphill than you can. If possible, move across the slope, away from the fire front, then down the slope towards the rear of the fire. The fire will be less intense here and travelling slower.
- Look for an area where you can shelter from radiant heat, or where there is less vegetation to burn as the fire will be less intense here.
- Seek shelter in nearby buildings or a vehicle, or a large body of water such as a farm dam, stream or lake.

Don't shelter in elevated water tanks.

- If these options aren't available, try to find an open space such as a previously burnt area or rocky ground. Clear as much fuel away from you as possible and shelter from radiant heat behind your backpack or a fallen log, or lie face-down under a bank, rock, loose earth, or in a hollow.
- Stay low to the ground for fresh air and cover up exposed skin to protect yourself from radiant heat.
- When possible, move quickly to burnt ground.
- If you have a mobile phone, call for help if you need it.

For more information please have a look at the CFS website at.....

<http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/site/home.jsp>

## Squid pole holder

By Col VK5HCF

Over some time I have refined my squid pole support into what it is now and find it works very well for me.

It would be too much for S.O.T.A. activations, (Heavy) but for Parks where you can set up

almost alongside the car it is ideal.

Made from a star dropper with a heavy shaped piece welded to the top to stop it from splaying over due to repeated bashing with a 4 lb. hammer and with slots cut out along the length to take tie straps it is very easy to use and deploy.

I always put the squid pole on the downwind side to allow it a bit more flex as a few operators have found that with the squid pole on the windward side the top of the dropper can act as a fulcrum for the wind to bend the squid pole over and break it.



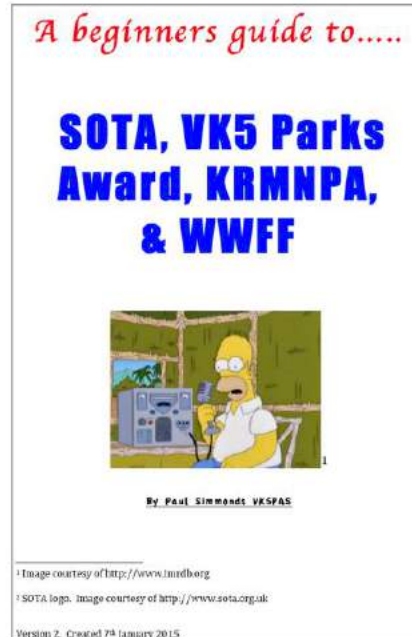
Photo courtesy of Col VK5HCF

## A beginners guide

By Paul VK5PAS

I have placed an updated version of the 'Beginners

guide to SOTA, VK5 Parks.....' on the VK5 Parks website, and in the Files section of the VK5 Parks Yahoo group, the WWFF Australia Yahoo group, and the SOTA Australia Yahoo group.



The document discusses all aspects of SOTA, the VK5 Parks Award, KRMNPA, & WWFF.

Please feel free to distribute this document to whoever you think may be interested.

Should you have any suggestions or ideas for the next version, please drop me an email at.....

[Vk5pas@wia.org.au](mailto:Vk5pas@wia.org.au)

## Do it all again in 2015

By Paul VK5PAS



Just a reminder that as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015, you will be able to claim points for reactivating summits you ascended in the last calendar year. Time to get your boots on again!

The same applies with the VK5 National & Conservation Parks Award for activators. Plenty of point up for grabs!

## Behaviour on air

By Paul VK5PAS

Most amateurs are well behaved and follow all the appropriate etiquette and

operating practices. There are a few that don't sadly.

I have noticed of late, a tendency for one or two amateurs to call in between overs...not waiting for the QSO to be complete. And not waiting their turn to call at the end of the QSO, along with all the other SOTA chasers or park hunters.

These amateurs are really just 'queue jumpers'. And I am sure they annoy the hell out of the other chasers and hunters who do the right thing and wait for a QSO to finish and the activator calls QRZ.



Image courtesy of pixfood.com

I for one, will NOT acknowledge these stations who 'break in'.

Please, if you are one of these 'queue jumpers', please desist. It is an annoying habit that will undoubtedly bring

unwanted attention to you.

## Online park payments

By Paul VK5PAS

Just a reminder that online payment now applies for a number of South Australian National Parks including Mount Remarkable National Park & Innes National Park.

Marija and I recently paid online for Mt Remarkable. Surprisingly you don't need to display a receipt. You just need to produce one if challenged.

As we entered the park there was a couple there from interstate who were rather disappointed that they could not place money in the locked container, and had to pay on-line. They left, without entering the park.

Not sure this is a great idea by DEWNR. Another cost cutting exercise I suspect?



## Kite winder

By Col VK5HCF

Another useful accessory is the kite winder.

It allows me to run out the chord on the ends of my inverted V to whatever length I wish and either stake them down or throw them over a bush. Usually just throwing them over is enough to hold the antenna



Image courtesy of Col VK5HCF

## Database & phone app

By Paul VK5PAS

It is very 'early days', but Sue VK5AYL is working with me to develop a database for the VK5 Parks Award. Sue is also working on the development of a phone app, similar to SOTAGoat

& Rucksack radio, that will emit an audible alert when park activators are 'spotted' on Allen VK3HRA's parksnparks site.

I will keep you updated of its progress. There is a lot of work involved. But I am sure you will agree, that if we can get these 2 issues up off the ground, they will be an enormously beneficial additional to the parks programs.

## Thankyou for logs

By Paul VK5PAS



I wanted to thank the following VK5's for their continued support of the WWFF parks program by providing their logs.

Numerous interstate hams are sending me their logs. But here are the South Australian amateurs who I would like to thank.....

- John VK5BJE
- Col VK5HCF
- Greg VK5ZGY

Please remember, that even if you do not reach the 10 QSO threshold, still submit your log to me, so that I can upload it to WWFF LogSearch.

<http://logsearch.wwff.co/index.php>

Even though you may not have reached the 10 QSO mark and qualified the park, the hunters that did work you, will get credit for the park IF your log is UPLOADED to WWFF LogSearch.

I have recently finished putting together the 2<sup>nd</sup> version of 'What is WWFF LogSearch?'

You can find the document on the WWFF Australia website at.....

<http://www.wwffaustralia.com/>

Or on the WWFF Australia Yahoo group at.....

<https://au.groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/wwffaustralia/info>



## Norfolk Island, VKFF-392

By Paul VK5PAS

On the 10<sup>th</sup> January, Hans VK9/SM3TLG was very active on 15m from Norfolk Island, VKFF-, and worked a lot of VK stations.



Image courtesy of Hans SM3TLG

Many of the WWFF/VKFF Hunters were able to work Hans because other park hunters, placed info about his activities on the DX Cluster, the VKFF Yahoo Group, and parksnparks.



Image courtesy of Wikipedia

I have mentioned it before, but PLEASE, if you work a park activator, don't keep them to

yourself. Help your mates out, and try to alert as many other keen park hunters as possible, to their activity. See the article below.

## Let other people know PLEASE!!

By Paul VK5PAS

There seems to be a trend amongst some SOTA / park hunters, to work the park & SOTA activator, and then go back to what they were doing, without alerting others to the fact that activator is there.

This is a lazy practice, and not very considerate for either the activator or your fellow SOTA chasers and/or park hunters.

Many of the park activators are trying to chase the elusive 44 QSO's required, to qualify the park for the WWFF 'global' awards, so all contacts are precious.

So what can you as a chaser and/or hunter do?

### SOTA.....

- SOTAWatch
- SOTA Australia Yahoo group

### PARKS

- parksnparks
- DX Cluster
- VK5 Parks Yahoo group
- WWFF Australia Yahoo group
- WWFF Forum

You may also want to think about sending out an SMS message to your mates, alerting them to the presence of an activator. Personally, this is a practice that I adopt, and it seems to work extremely well.

So, PLEASE, place a spot on one of the alerting facilities.

## For a laugh



Cartoon courtesy of  
<http://pixshark.com/ham-radio-cartoon.htm>

# Insurance for parks and peaks activators

By Col VK5HCF

It is an unfortunate fact of life that there are people out there who “get off” on making life miserable for others.

As park and summit activators we are exposed to the public, the majority of who know nothing about amateur radio. Except for what they have heard about the interference that we supposedly cause to peoples TV sets etc. Then there is the terrorist threat of course.

It has been known for over officious park rangers and police to move amateur radio operators on from parks and peaks or, at least, query what they are doing there.

To this end I feel that it is highly desirable to carry a copy of your amateur apparatus licence with you whenever you are out and about.

I also carry a copy of the letter that Paul, VK5PAS, received back from Mr. Allan Holmes, (who at the time was the Chief Executive of the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources) granting his Departments blessing to the idea of us activating from parks in South Australia.



Both of these documents will go a long way to putting to rest any concerns that an official might have about our legitimacy.

In this day and age nearly all of us carry a mobile phone and it is not difficult to put copies of these two documents onto same, either as a jpeg or a pdf and so it is no extra burden to carry them with you.

*Editors note....I must say Col, that in the hundreds of activations I've done, fortunately I have never encountered any problems with DEWNR staff or police. In fact, the DEWNR staff have been very helpful & interested in my activities. What I do carry with me though, is the VK5 Parks promotional brochure, and the 'Calling CQ' brochure printed by the WIA. I have handed these out so some DEWNR staff and interested members of the public who have come over to see what I was up to.*

*Should anyone need either of these 2 brochures, I have plenty & I am happy to provide if you drop me a line in the mail. But please, send me sufficient postage so that I can mail back the brochures to you.*



## parksnpeaks

By Allen VK3HRA



Hi all,

Finally completed the help system for the parksnparks website.

Yes its been a while and you have worked it out anyway, but its finally done.

Also a general tidy up...Buttons now not links.

Blog list checks every night for activity and only displays sites with activity in last month.

RSS feed cleaned up and documented how to send SMS spots.

Have not added sounds when new spots arrive but all good things will come to those that wait.

Have a look and let me know of any concerns.

Allen VK3HRA

## Recent Award recipients (from VK5)

Just from looking at my own log, there are a lot of park hunters out there, who have qualified for many VK5 Parks Award & WWFF Award certificates, but have never applied for them.

Remember, the certificates are FREE (sent as a PDF) or I can print them out on high quality A4 size photo paper and mail them to you at a small cost.

So, come on. Get online to the WWFF LogSearch and apply online. Or if it's the VK5 Parks award, send me the excel spreadsheet which you can download from either the VK5 Parks website or the VK5 Parks Yahoo group.

### WWFF

John VK5BJE

- Bronze VKFF Hunter
- Silver VKFF Hunter
- Gold VKFF Hunter

- Platinum VKFF Hunter
- Bronze VKFF Activator



Adrian VK5FANA

- Bronze Hunter



Paul VK5PAS

- ONFF Single Activator award





## Paul VK5PAS

- 176 references Hunter  
– Global award



## Les VK5KLV

- Bronze Hunter
- Silver Hunter
- Gold Hunter
- Bronze Uniques CP
- Bronze Uniques NP



## SOTA

NIL known

## VK5 Parks Award

### Mick VK3FAFK

- Bronze Hunter
- Silver Hunter



### Peter VK5NAQ

- Bronze Hunter
- Silver Hunter

& WWFF let me know, so I can add it to the list.

VK5 Parks & WWFF is not so important, due to the fact I am the Awards Manager.

But please send me any info on your global WWFF awards, and also info on your SOTA Awards. These are harder for me to track down.

As such, a quick email would be appreciated.

## Welcome to some new park hunters

By Paul VK5PAS

Welcome to the following new members to the VK5 Parks Yahoo group.....

1. Mick VK3FAFK
2. Adrian VK5FANA
3. Dave VK3VCE
4. VK5LAM

### Peter VK3TKK

- Silver NP Uniques Hunter

## KRMNPA

### Hans VK5YX

- Basic Hunter

PLEASE, if you have qualified for an award for SOTA, the VK5Parks Award



# You might be a Ham operator if.....

By Roger VK5NWE



## You Might be a Ham Operator if....

1. When you look at a full moon and wonder how much antenna gain you would need.
2. When a friend gets a ride from you and remarks that you have a lot of CBs in your vehicle, it turns in to an hour long rant on how ham radio is not CB radio.
3. When someone asks for directions, you pause, wondering if long or short path would be best.
4. When you can look at a globe and be able to point to your antipode (and you know what an antipode is).
5. Your cell phone ring tone is a Morse code message of some kind.
6. You have accidentally said your Amateur Radio call sign at the end of a telephone conversation.
7. Your favorite vacation spots are always on mountain tops.
8. You notice more antennas than road signs while driving your car.
9. You have driven onto the shoulder of the road while looking at an antenna.
10. Porcupines appear to be fascinated with your car.
11. If you ever tried to figure out the operating frequency of your microwave oven.
12. When you look around your bedroom of wall to wall ham gear and ask: Why am I still single?
13. The local city council doesn't like you.
14. You actually think towers look pretty.
15. Your family doesn't have a clue what to get you for Christmas, even after you tell them.
16. Your HF amplifier puts out more power than the local AM radio station.
17. The wife and kids are away and the first thing that goes through your head is that no one will bother you while you call "CQ DX" a few hundred times.
18. You refer to your children as your "Harmonics".
19. Your girlfriend or wife asks: "You're going to spend \$XXXX on what???"
20. Every family vacation includes a stop at a Ham radio store.
21. You actually believe you got a good deal on eBay.
22. You have pictures of your radio equipment as wallpaper on your computer's desktop.
23. You look for unused 30 A circuits in a new car's fuse panel.
24. Removing snow from the roof of your car requires working around the antenna and wires.
25. The first question you ask the new car dealer is: "What is the alternator's current output"?

26. You buy a brand new car based on the radio mounting locations and antenna mounting possibilities.

27. You have tapped out Morse code on your car's horn.

28. When you pull into a donut shop and the cops there on their coffee break ask if they can see your radio setup.

29. You always park on the top floor of the deck, just in case you might have to wait in the car later.

30. Your wife has had to ride in the back seat because you had radio equipment in the front seat.

31. Your wife has delivered meals to your Ham shack.

32. Your wife threatens you with divorce when you tell her that you are going on a "fox" hunt.

33. Your next door neighbor thinks that your wife is a widow.

34. Your neighbors thought you were nuts when you ripped up your lawn to bury chicken wire.

35. Your flagpole has ground radials.

36. You walk carefully in your back yard to avoid being close-lined.

37. When house hunting, you look for the best room for a radio shack, scan the property for possible tower placement and check the CCR's for antenna restrictions.

38. The real estate agent scratches his head when you ask if the soil conductivity is high, medium, or low.

39. You sell a house and have to explain the grounding points and independent 30 Amp AC circuit in the spare bedroom.

40. When house hunting, you give your realtor topographical maps showing local elevations.

41. When you see a house with a metal roof, and your only thought is what a great ground plane that would be.

42. A lightning storm takes out a new Laptop, Plasma TV, and DVD Recorder, but all you care about is if your radios are okay.

43. You have Ham radio magazines in the bathroom.

44. When your doorbell rings, you immediately shut down the amplifier.

45. Fermentation never enters your mind when "homebrew" is mentioned.

46. Instead of just saying no, you have said "negative".

47. You have used a person's name to indicate acknowledgement.

48. You become impatient waiting for the latest AES or HRO catalog to arrive.

49. You have found yourself whistling "CQ" using Morse code.

50. You always schedule the last full weekend in June for vacation.

51. Your exercise machine is a Morse code keyer.

52. You walk through the plumbing section at the hardware store and see antenna parts.

53. If you sold all your Ham radio equipment, you could pay off your mortgage.

## Operating skills and practice

By Paul VK5PAS



*From the 'Beginners guide.....'*

With the popularity of SOTA & Parks activities increasing in Australia, as a SOTA or park activator you may end up with a 'pile up' following calling CQ.



Ian VK5CZ on Maurice Hill, VK5/ NE-049.  
Image courtesy of Ian VK5CZ

Here is a 'recommended' operating practice.....

- call for any SOTA/parks activators
- then call for QRP stations
- then call for portable or mobile

stations

- then call for any DX (you might be surprised who calls you!)
- then call for stations who can hear you, but with difficulty (there is nothing worse as a Chaser/Hunter listening to an activator who is weak, but then disappears down below the noise floor due to a change in the band.)
- And finally call for anybody else (now the fun starts).

And for SOTA chasers or park hunters, please:

- Do NOT jump the queue (in other words call in between overs, before the QSO is complete)
- Do NOT call CQ on a frequency until you have asked if the frequency is in use.

## Recent videos

By Paul VK5PAS

Penambol CP activation  
by Col VK5HCF

<http://youtu.be/ixZ8lpeCaa8>

Bullock Hill CP activation  
by VK5PAS

<http://youtu.be/ZKOjL44kk-s>

Mount Bryan activation  
by Paul VK5PAS

<http://youtu.be/xrM6GAJwbpc>

The Battery activation by  
Paul VK5PAS

<http://youtu.be/IBG9hXAkT8o>

## Blog roll

By Paul VK5PAS

Here is a list of the VK5 SOTA & park activators/hunters, that I am aware of, who have Wordpress sites or similar.

Please have a look. I am sure you will find them interesting.

If you know of any more, please drop me an email.

**John VK5BJE**

<http://vk5bje.com/>

**Bob VK5FO**



<http://vk5fo.com/>

**Col VK5HCF**

<https://vk5hcf.wordpress.com/>

**Paul VK5PAS**

<https://vk5pas.wordpress.com/>

## A rare bird sighted

By Paul VK5PAS

During my recent activation of the Mt Boothby Conservation Park in the South East, I was lucky enough to sight, not one, but six of the endangered Mallee Fowl (or Lowan).

They are a large ground dwelling bird, which are just a bit bigger than a domestic hen. They were once common, however their numbers have seriously declined over the last 100 years.



One of the Mallee Fowl I sighted at Mt Boothby CP. Image courtesy of Paul VK5PAS

Malleefowl are generally shy, wary, and solitary birds. Although they are very active, they are seldom seen as they freeze if disturbed, relying on their plumage to render them invisible. Or else they disappear rapidly and silently into the undergrowth. I have only ever seen one of these birds previously, and that was in the Ferries McDonald Conservation Park.

I reported my sighting to the Malleefowl Preservation Group.

<http://www.malleefowl.com.au/>

## Australia Day activations

By Paul VK5PAS

On Monday 26<sup>th</sup> January, myself, Tom (VK5EE) AX5AA, Col VK5HCF, John VK5BJE, Bob AX5FO, & Nigel VK5NIG, headed out to activate some summits and parks for AUSTRALIA DAY. This was also an opportunity to use the unique AX prefix, which we as Australian amateurs can only use 3 times a

year.



Here is a list of who activated and where.....

- Piccaninnie Ponds CP, Tom AX5AA
- Piccaninnie Ponds CP, Col VK5HCF
- Ewens Ponds CP, AX5AA
- Ewens Ponds CP, Col VK5HCF
- Dingley Dell CP, Tom AX5AA
- Dingley Dell CP, Col VK5HCF
- Black Bullock Hill VK5/ SE-016, Paul AX5PAS
- Talisker CP, Paul AX5PAS
- Mt George CP, Paul AX5PAS
- Mt Gawler VK5/ SE-013, Nigel VK5NIG

John VK5BJE made 23 contacts from Belair NP. This included 2 VK5 park contacts, one Tasmanian National Park, one Victorian National Park, and 4 SOTA contacts. More information on John's activation, can be found on his Wordpress

site at....

<http://vk5bje.com/2015/01/26/belair-national-park-vkff-022-australia-day/>

Bob AX5FO activated the Montacute Conservation Park and after walking up the Heysen trail for 2 km, made a number of contacts, including 1 SOTA QSO, 1 Tasmanian National Park, one SA Conservation Park, one SA National Park, and one Victorian National Park.

I activated Black Bullock Hill VK5/ SE-013 first up and got a total of 74 contacts, including a few Summit to Summit contacts, and National & Conservation Parks in SA, Tasmania, & Victoria.



Paul AX5PAS on air at VK5/ SE-016. Image courtesy of Paul VK5PAS

I then activated Talisker CP & managed 43 QSO's.



The operating spot of AX5PAS at Talisker CP. Image courtesy of Paul VK5PAS



Some of the old mining ruins at Talisker CP. Image courtesy of Paul VK5PAS

Later that day I activated the Mt George CP and got 45 contacts.



The operating spot at Mt George CP. Image courtesy of Paul VK5PAS

More information on my

activations can be found on my Wordpress site at....

<https://vk5pas.wordpress.com/>

Tom AX5AA (VK5EE) & Col VK5HCF racked up a total of 44 contacts from Piccaninnie Ponds CP (including 1 VK5 National Park, 1 x SOTA, 1 VK7 National Park, & 1 Victorian National Park), 26 contacts from Ewens Ponds (including 3 SOTA contacts), and 19 contacts from Dingley Dell CP (including 1 VK5 Conservation Park).

A great effort fellas.



Tom AX5AA in the Dingley Dell CP. Image courtesy of Col VK5HCF



Another photo of Tom AX5AA in the Dingley Dell CP. Image courtesy of Col VK5HCF





The dynamic duo, Tom AX5AA & Col VK5HCF in the Ewens Ponds CP. Image courtesy of Col VK5HCF

More information on Tom & Col's adventures can be found on Col's Wordpress site at.....

<https://vk5hcf.wordpress.com/>

Nigel had a total of 8 QSOs from Mount Gawler, including a summit to summit contact with Greg VK8GM on VK8/ AL-153 in the Northern Territory.

## Belair National Park on Australia Day

By John VK5BJE



I thought I would celebrate Australia Day activating the Belair

National Park as VK5BJE. This was my fourth visit to the Park and I wanted to obtain sufficient contacts to take me over 44, this making the activation meet the WWFF requirements.



The location of Belair NP. Image courtesy of mapcarta.com

I decided to activate at a spot near Waverley Lodge. This was where Paul and I (with our colleagues) went for the special beginners' day held on the first day on Winter (1st June) last year. Unfortunately, I was met with terrible noise and it was a waste of time to try and make a success of the activation. So I moved to the Long Gully site I activated last Australia Day (2014). I had to wait until the Park opened for vehicles at 08:00, but by the time I packed up my gear and

made two trips back to the car (outside of the Park) and then drive to the main entry I simply was able to drive in. I made my way to Long Gully picnic ground and kept my fingers crossed I would not find a 'reserved' sign in place.



Old Government House in Belair NP. Image courtesy of wikipedia.org

I was met with an unbooked spot and set up and was on the air a few minutes later. While it was raining lightly at Waverley Lodge, it was fine, but still threatening, at Long Gully.

Propagation to the Eastern States was good and I thought for a while I might not be able to have a contact with a VK5 amateur. I knew (VK5PAS) Paul was out and about and (VK5HCF) Col and Tom (VK5EE and VK5AA) were out and about but I could not copy them well enough to make



successful contacts.

Patience was, however, rewarded and both are in my log book as well as 21 other contacts. I was able to have contacts with AX5PAS/P5, AX5HCF/P5, AX5EE (also AX5AA) and interstate SOTA and Parks stations in the ACT, Victoria and Tasmania.

John,  
VK5BJE



Belair NP. Image courtesy of wikipedia.org

## Interested in EFHW antennas?

By Larry VK5LY

Hi all,

The following is cross-posted from the 'Cross Country Wireless user group' in the interests of spreading info on new

products available. These units may be of interest to those EFHW aficionados for SOTA and Parks activations.

Disclaimer: I have no interest financial or otherwise in the product- purely an interested observer!

73 Larry VK5LY

We've just released a new range of antenna matching units for end fed half wave (EFHW) antennas and baluns.

Development work on our earlier units has resulted in a new design of a bandpass antenna matching unit. This is ideal for use on multi-transmitter sites and has excellent medium wave rejection for operating close to broadcast stations.

There are also two wideband units for end fed half wave (EFHW) antennas matching half wave wire antenna for 160 to 30m or 80m to 10m.

We are also making a 9:1 balun for general work, a off centre fed dipole transformer and balun and a 1:1 current balun inline isolator.

The units are built in a polycarbonate box measuring 65 x 60 x 40mm. Amphenol BNC connectors are used. The box is rated to IP65 but it is also potted in epoxy resin for additional weather sealing and mechanical protection.



*Editors comment. Here is a link to a very good video on these.....*

[http://www.crosscountrywireless.net/end\\_fed\\_antenna.htm](http://www.crosscountrywireless.net/end_fed_antenna.htm)