

March 2024



This Newsletter is published by the Port Elizabeth Amateur
Radio Society

P.O. Box 10402, LINTON GRANGE, 6015

Editing by Ashley Goosen ZS2AG

**QSX-PE - Newsletter for the discerning
Radio Ham**

Next PEARS Monthly Meeting will be on Tuesday,
19th March at the Scout Hall in Walmer.



From the Chair

After a disaster of not having a venue for our February meeting it has been decided to officially part ways with the Italian Club and for the month of March have our meeting at the Walmer Scout hall.

Jimmy has booked the hall and we are once again in business. It seems the Italian Club can simply not get their act together for more than a month at a time.

Something which PEARS cannot accept. Anyway we will do the best we can with what we have to work with.

The RAE classes are up and running and we have 5 candidates attending now. I have been joined by Shaun ZS2SG so my evenings are not too lonely. However I have indicated that after 16 years I am wanting to hand over this responsibility to someone new. I, like Jurgen Klopp need to take a sabbatical and rest from the responsibility this task carries with it. I am more than willing to assist the new person until they have found their feet so they will not be thrown in the deep end so to speak. Anyone who has been through the classes know exactly what it will entail.

Then this past month saw the very sad news of Quintus Moolman, ZS2KU becoming Silent key. To his family and friends I

wish to extend my and that of PEARS deepest condolences.
May his Soul rest in peace.

Make the most of every day and let that include your hobby.
Get involved with the club. Get on the air.

Most importantly remember to “Say Hello”!

See you all on the 18th March at the Scout hall. Our Guest
speaker will be Johann Harmse from MTN.

PEARS, WE LIKE BEING YOUR CLUB

73,

Donovan, ZS2DL

FROM THE EDITOR

It is with sadness I learnt of Quintus Moolman's passing on Friday the 8th March. My heartfelt condolences to his wife, Dubennette and children and to friends and family.

Here's hoping you enjoy reading this edition of QSX. If you have an article or two that you would like published in future copies of QSX, please let me have your contribution by email to qsx.zs2ag@gmail.com. Please do not send me QSX material on WhatsApp as I am inundated with WhatsApp messages and I will miss your material.

Thank you for your continued support of QSX and the articles you have submitted for this issue.

73,

Ashley ZS2AG

THE SILENT KEY OF QUINTUS MOOLMAN ZS2KU



From Vaughan ZS2VR.

Those that knew him as a friend will tell you that he was a quiet man with a big heart. He threw himself into everything that he did with the utmost enthusiasm - he loved his motorcycles, RC modelling and amateur radio -

Quintus chose his fathers callsign in tribute to him. Everybody that met him came away feeling that they had made a new friend. He leaves behind his wife, Dubennette and children Brittney and Tristan.

Work Progress on the Jamtin



UPCOMING EVENTS – VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Addo Elephant Trail Run 22-24 March

Nanaga MTB 24 March

We need you! The Addo Elephant Trail Run is a big deployment into areas the Addo Elephant National Park that is not open to the general public. These events bring considerable donations into the club's finances and are not possible without you.

Please let Tony, ZR2TX know if you are available to assist.

THE SARL NATIONAL CONVENTION

The Cape Town Amateur Radio Centre (CTARC) will be hosting the 2024 SARL National Convention at the Garden Court Nelson Mandela Boulevard, corner of Melbourne and Coronation Roads in Cape Town. The accommodation at the Hotel costs R1 500 per room per night and includes breakfast - it is a double room. Bookings must be made by contacting Miranda at Reservations on 021 448 4123 and tell her you are booking a room for the SARL Conference. This will ensure you pay the special conference price. There will be a welcoming cheese and wine function, hosted by CTARC in the hotel pub area from 17:00 to 19:00 on Friday evening 19 April. From 09:00 to 13:00 CAT on Saturday 20 April, the Annual General Meeting will be held in the conference room at the hotel. Tea and coffee will be served. The Annual General Meeting will be a face-to-face meeting with streaming. Lunch will be for your own arrangements. Saturday afternoon will be at leisure and a shuttle bus has been arranged to take delegates and partners, significant others, etc., to the V&A Waterfront. There will be a small charge for this. The CTARC Clubhouse will be open that afternoon from 14:00 until 16:00 for any delegates who wish to visit the CTARC clubhouse in Rondebosch. ZS1TK's 'RF Café' will be open for refreshments. Transport can be arranged if necessary. Saturday evening is the Gala Awards Dinner. Arrival at 18:30 for 19:00. This year it will be a three-course buffet dinner with tea and coffee included. The dress is smart casual. The cost for the Awards Dinner is R300 per person and bookings must be made with Kelley at the NARC at admin@sarl.org.za. Pay your Dinner fee into the SARL Bank Account and include the proof of payment with your booking.

Register for the SARL National Convention at <https://forms.gle/iFMfeRUESfwx8y3N9>. See you in Cape Town in April!

America's Last Morse-Code Station

By [Saahil Desai](#) Photographs by Ann Hermes

Calling all. This is our last cry before our eternal silence.” With that, in January 1997, the French coast guard transmitted its final message in Morse code. Ships in distress had radioed out dits and dahs from the era of the *Titanic* to the era of *Titanic*. In near-instant time, the beeps could be deciphered by Morse-code stations thousands of miles away. First used to [send messages over land in 1844](#), Morse code outlived [the telegraph age](#) by becoming the lingua franca of the sea. But by the late 20th century, satellite radio was turning it



into a dying language. In February 1999, it [officially ceased](#) being the standard for maritime communication.

Nestled within the Point Reyes National Seashore, north of San Francisco, [KPH Maritime Radio](#) is the last operational Morse-code radio station in North America. The station—which consists of two buildings some 25 miles apart—once watched over the waters of the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Both KPH sites shut down in 1997, but a few years later, a couple of radio enthusiasts brought them back to life. The crew has gotten slightly larger over the years. Its members call themselves the “radio squirrels.” Every Saturday, they beep out maritime news and weather reports, and receive any stray messages. Much of their communication is with [the SS Jeremiah O'Brien](#), a World War II-era ship permanently parked at a San Francisco pier.

Last July, the photographer Ann Hermes visited the radio squirrels and stepped into their time machine. To send a message, they

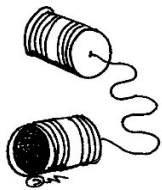


tapped each Morse-code letter into a gadget called a “bug,” generating a loud, staticky noise that reverberated throughout the whole building. “It’s almost like jazz,” Hermes told me—a music of rhythm and timing that can sound slightly different depending on who is doing the tapping.

Some of the hulking machines date back to World War II. The squirrels do their own repairs, and scrounge

eBay for replacement parts on the newer units. To honor the station’s past, the volunteers start each Saturday morning with “services” for “The Church of the Continuous Wave,” in which they eat breakfast off vintage plates branded with the Radio Corporation of America’s old logo.

Morse code is not quite extinct: The U.S. Navy still teaches it to a few sailors, and in 2017, a British man who had broken his leg on a beach [used it to signal for help](#) in the dark with a flashlight. Many of the radio squirrels are retired or nearing retirement. But when Hermes visited over the summer, she spotted one 17-year-old hovering around the squirrels in action. Born after the effective end of Morse code, he was nonetheless eager to help keep the jazz going.



From the JAMTIN.....

March has brought us the SARL VHF/UHF contest which included HF and field stations.

PEARs members stepped up to the plate with some doing the bush thing in the Kouga area and a field station on the Scout Hall grounds at the Jamtin.

The Kouga excursion was instigated by ZR2BK and a crew of intrepid hams who braved what sounds like a scary road trip up a mountain to set up the required equipment.

ZS2G and ZS2OD setup the field station under a tree at the Jamtin with the necessary radios, antenna, battery and solar panel. ZS2JIM decided to take the easy route and set up a General station in the Jamtin monitoring VHF/UHF and HF.

ZS2JIM managed to reach the Kouga crew on VHF and HF. Also spoke to the usual local suspects. While in the Jamtin I scrolled through 15m and picked up a ham from Germany who was calling CQ DAG with little success. I decided to answer and learnt that DAG was a German contest of some sort. I apologised because I was obviously not part of that contest but he said it was ok, if I gave him a signal report he could get the points.

Further scrolling picked up another German, this one was in Namibia on a visit and using a friends radio doing a bit of DX. After a bit of a chat, I mentioned our friend Uli who also operated in Namibia whilst preparing for the World contest. Turns out my contact, Felix, has known Uli for 30 years.

This is a wonderful hobby that continues to amaze with what it reveals. And I am a newbie who hasn't even scratched the surface .

ZS2JIM is in the Jamtin most Fridays and will also be there before the members meeting on the 19th March.

SARL members are reminded to sign a proxy form for the SARL meeting on 19th April. ZS2DH and ZR2BK will attend the meeting and act on your behalf for any items requiring a vote.

Remember

Jamtin is there for you..... Just say HELLO

73

ZS2JIM

2m Antenna that Works Better than it Should

My 2m vertical sleeve type dipole, homebrewed as far as possible from materials on hand, returned an swr reading over 2:1 from below 2m to 70cm where it gave a dip in reading as measured with a Comet analyser.. Yet after 18 months it has performed quite well pulling in the Garden Route repeater



on 145.750 more than occasionally as well as PE repeater a few times.

I've built a couple of sleeve dipoles and must admit they are better half wave verticals e.g. the J pole or Slim Jim. On the other hand the sleeve type lends itself to simple and low cost encapsulation in a weatherproof housing. The shack is only around 300m LOS from the ocean so there's plenty of salty moisture around.

Low Cost to Build

As mentioned I wanted to use materials on hand hence the top $\frac{1}{4}$ wave (*sorry, no lambda sign*) element is a length of very old copper gas pipe, the pvc pipe sections are various offcuts I had on site, some heavy aluminium foil and RG58C/U coax, as well as a piece of epoxy putty, insulation tape (not very good quality), cable ties, and Tangit pvc cement.

All I had to buy new were the pvc adapters and an end cap. Total spent under R70.00. Not having a suitable RF connector I connected the coax directly.

If built with new materials it would likely cost in region of R200.00 - R300.00 or a bit more if you include a SO-238 or other.

The top vertical element of copper pipe had a length of copper wired soldered to it, using a gas torch, to form a solderable connection to the coax centre conductor.

The sleeve part of the dipole is a length of pvc conduit with $\frac{1}{4}$ wave length of aluminium foil wrapped around it and taped up with cable ties ensuring things stay together. The coax braid received a solder ring lug which was secured with a brass bolt, nut and washer from the 'screw bin' to the aluminium the same way I would to Al tubing.



I won't go into a step by step build of how the whole thing is put together, but I feel the photo of the antenna without the weather covers is self explanatory. Note that the pvc sleeve extends through the 50-20 mm grey pvc coupling (the ridge inside the coupling needs removal to allow the conduit to pass through - or 2 sections could be cemented into place).

A current mode choke is wound around this lower section of pipe. The top weather cover has a cap and a 50-50 mm coupler. 3 stainless steel self tappers hold the cover in place. Another length of pvc pipe both provides an insulated $\frac{1}{2}$ wave separation mounting section and weather cover. Normally 50 mm would be the choice however the smaller 40ish size was more suited to the support mast. I did not cement this in place. It fits very tightly. But bear that fact in mind a bit further down.

Wind, Wind, Sea air, Rain. More Wind

One thing there's no shortage of here is wind. The antenna has experienced

winds in excess of 50 knots and days of strong to gale force. It got shaken around somewhat too. I would say it got a good workout from the weather.

Salt corrosion and rain. Well a picture says a thousand words. 18 months in the air and after taking down to check things out, as part of a full antenna overhaul, there's a bit of thin white salt corrosion visible but otherwise not bad, in my humble opinion.

Well, when I started this build I wanted to achieve an antenna that was able to withstand the wind, withstand the problems of salt corrosion, cost as little as possible, and put out a signal good enough to access the Longmore repeater and work local coms.

I would say the project was a complete success as it achieved these targets.

As far as the wide flattish 2:1+ swr and the dip at uhf goes - well swr is not everything. OM Rory ZS2BL came round with a Comet analyzer to get those figures.

Another time maybe with instruments on hand I may look further into it. Theoretically being a centre fed dipole with 75 ohm impedance the swr at resonance should be 1.5:1 anyway. In fact when I reinstall the aerial I will use 75R coax with a $\frac{1}{4}$ wave 50R impedance transformer.

I think we as radio amateurs can become obsessed with swr readings. "If it's not 1:1 or under 1.2:1 its a train smash".

Hide it Away

This type of antenna is very suitable for hams staying in one of the aerial restriction complexes. It can easily appear as part of the plumbing e.g. a raised breather pipe. Hi.

Whats next?

Presently I'm working on a 15m magnetic slot vertical. In the pipeline I plan a 2m vertical with some gain, maybe a $\frac{5}{8}$ or coax collinear. Then something for 70cm. So look out for future contributions from my ham shack.

73, Mike Otgaar ZS2AQ

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays

March

21 Andrew Gray ZS2G
26 Mark Duppa-Whyte ZS2DW
29 Allan Whitehead ZS2R

April

03 Theunis Potgieter ZS2EC
05 Hugo Ras ZS2HR
12 Andre Potgieter ZS2ZA
13 Graham Butcher ZS2GIB
16 Danie Steyn ZS2DRS
16 Hans Rohwer ZR2AX

Spouse Birthdays

March

22 Dubennette Moolman Quintus ZS2KU
25 Petra Schoeman Paul ZS2PS

April

01 Rosalie van Loggerenberg ZS2DN
Donovan ZS2DL
03 Danè Steenkamp Michael ZS2MIC
05 Rey Martin Saney ZR1S
11 Adele Baumeister Shaun ZS2L
13 Michelle Duppa-Whyte Mark ZS2DW
13 Lizette Oelofse Nico ZS4N

Anniversaries

March

29 Shawn Wendy Gilbert ZS2SG

April

03 Hugo Juan Ras ZS2HR
04 Glen Vanessa Cummings ZS2GV
05 Michael Chantel Nolan ZS2MHN
06 Michael Danè Steenkamp ZS2MIC
06 Wolf Cathy Gerstle ZS2WG

DISCLAIMER

Please note:

The Editor, nor any PEARS club member shall be held liable for errors and/or omissions in any article and/or drawing contained in this newsletter. Furthermore, any view expressed is not necessarily that of the Editor, any committee member or other members of the Club. The material contained in this newsletter is not meant to defame, purge, humiliate and/or hurt someone's person or feelings. If copy is unintentionally infringed, we apologise. The newsletter is published as a free service to Amateur Radio Operators and friends.

SUNDAY SARL AND MONDAY
EVENING PEARs
BULLETINS

PEARs provides a local reading of the SARL bulletin every Sunday morning at 8:15 in Afrikaans read by Kevern ZR2BK and 8:30 in English read by Rory ZS2BL, transmitted through the Town 2M Repeater on 145.650MHz.

PEARs bulletins are transmitted on Monday evenings at 20h00 on the Lady's Slipper repeater, 145.700 MHz, 88.5Hz, Narrow and 438.700 MHz, no CTCSS Wide. (Standby option is 145.650MHz Town repeater 88.5Hz, Narrow)

Bulletin Roster

18th Mar	Dave	ZS2DH
25th Mar	Ashley	ZS2AG
1st Apr	Jimmy	ZS2JIM
8th Apr	Paul	ZS2PS
15th Apr	Rory	ZS2BL
22nd Apr	Donovan	ZS2DL
29th Apr	Kevern	ZR2BK
6th May	Chris	ZS2AAW
13th May	Mike	ZS2MIC

<http://www.zs2pe.co.za/bulletins.html>

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Our 2023/2024 PEARS Committee

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PEARS' VHF/UHF, Packet & Other Services

Local Repeaters: These repeaters form a separate sub-net in the PE - Uitenhage - Despatch area.

Town VHF 145.050/650 88.5Hz, Narrow 12.5k	Longmore 145.025/625 88.5Hz, Narrow 12.5k	Uitenhage 145.075/675 Wide 25k	Town UHF 431.050/438.650 Wide 25k	<----- IRLP available on this subnet
Cockscomb 431.000/438.600 Add 88.5Hz for squ tail	Viewlands 431.075/438.675 Add 88.5Hz for squ tail	<----- These form linking hubs for events, hence no tail	DMR 430.675/438.275 QTH: ZS2VA	D-Star 145.175/775 QTH: ZS2N

Cape Linked System Repeaters:

These form the PEARS long-range 2-metre repeater system, in conjunction with the Border, Southern Cape and WCRWG systems. See www.zs2pe.co.za/Repeaters/repeaters.htm for more details.

Lady's Slipper 145,100/700 88.5Hz, Narrow 12.5k	Grahamstown 145,150/750 Wide 25k	Cradock 145,050/650 Wide 25k	Noupoort (link only) 438,750 / 438,675 Wide 25k
Colesberg 431,075/438,675 Wide 25k	Kareedouw 145,125/725	Plett 145,175/775	Brenton 145,075/675

APRS/Packet network:

ZS0NTP Node Lady's Slipper 434,800 1200bd 439.850 9600 bd	ZS0KDK APRS Digi Mount Road 434,800 1200bd	ZS0KDB APRS Digi Longmore 434,800 1200bd	
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VHF Beacon: 50,007 MHz FSK – ZS2X, 25 Watts into 2 element Yagi beaming north.

Banking details (for subs & donations): NEDBANK SAVINGS ACCOUNT No. 221 252 7594, Bank code 121217, A/C name: Port Elizabeth Amateur Radio Society. **Please use call signs as a reference.**