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# VHF/UHF – An Expanding World

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David Smith VK3HZ

## Weak Signal

David Smith - VK3HZ

Things are certainly picking up as summer approaches.

Another opening occurred to ZL over the period from October 20<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>. Many contacts were made on 2 m with Ross VK2DVZ featuring heavily for “our” team, while Nick ZL1IU ably represented the All Blacks! Other participants included VK2ZT, VK2MER, VK2AMS, VK2QO and VK4JMC with ZL1TPH, ZL1AKW, ZL1SWW, ZL1BCJ, ZL2WHO and ZL2TAL. Several 70 cm contacts were also achieved between VK2DVZ, VK2ZT and VK2AMS to ZL1IU and ZL2TAL. Ross VK2DVZ attempted a contact on 23 cm with Ray ZL2TAL in which voices were heard each way but they were unable to complete on SSB due to QSB.

On the 21<sup>st</sup>, Steve ZL1TPH operated portable from Moirs Hill in RF73HM at 350 metres ASL with nice coastal views towards VK. He reports that the Sydney VK2RSY beacon on 144.420 MHz was S2. He worked on 2 m VK2QO, VK2BHO, VK2DVZ, VK2ARA, VK2FE, VK2EI, VK2ZT, VK2AH, VK2MER, VK2ZCV, and VK4JMC. All signals from VK2 were exceptionally strong. The path to VK4 was marginal but there.

At the end of October, the weather charts were showing a high pressure cell nestled nicely in the Bight – normally a good indicator of enhanced tropo conditions. However, the weather was a bit unsettled which tends to disrupt things somewhat. The morning of November 1<sup>st</sup> saw the first contact across the Bight on 2 m from VK5 to VK6. At 2305Z, Brian VK5BC worked Derek VK6DZ over a distance of 1920 km. The VK6REP 2 m beacon in Esperance was also being heard in the east, in VK5, VK3 and on the morning of November 2<sup>nd</sup> as far as Leigh VK2KRR’s QTH - a distance of 2314 km.

As the high moved east, conditions between Melbourne and Adelaide were lifted and 5x9 contacts were had between the locations.

Also during this period, Mark VK2EMA successfully worked into the Adelaide area on 2 m to VK5GF, VK5BC, VK5AKK and VK5ZK and on 70 cm to VK5BC.

## MAD Report

Michael VK3KH reports on the recent Microwave Activity Day in the south – this time focussing on 23 cm to encourage both Field and Home operation and also to encourage people to explore a band on their rigs that perhaps doesn’t get as much use as it should.

*The VK3 and VK5 Microwave Activity Day was held on Sunday 16th October.*

*The weather was definitely against us, for although no rain eventuated, the winds were so strong that portable operations were, in the main part, impractical. My own plans for portable operation had to be aborted as the winds were between 30 and 40 knots straight up the side of Arthur’s Seat.*

*So I, like most others chose to operate from home. The focus was on 1296 MHz and I must admit to being very happy at the number of contacts I made.*

*I managed 11 contacts on 23cm, including VK3AXH and VK3IDL in Ballarat, VK3MY, VK3YFL/P, VK3XPD, VK3RU and VK3TPR/P all around Melbourne, VK3QM, VK3PY and VK3BA in Geelong, and finally VK5DK/P (a group of Mt Gambier amateurs) at*

*"The Bluff", a distance of 402 km. A great result for 1.5 hours of operating between 8,30am and 10am local time on a Sunday morning. VK3MCW made contact with Ian VK3AXH, but was not heard in Melbourne.*

*I received the following report from Colin VK5DK about their portable operation:*

*"Worked on 23 cm: VK3AXH, VK3QM, VK3KH, VK3XPD, VK3PY. Worked on 2.4GHz: VK3AXH and VK3QM. VK5DK/p on "The Bluff" QF02GG, very windy but no rain."*

*Thanks for making the effort to everyone who came on air despite the conditions.*

*Microwaves continue to flourish in the South East!*

### **VK4 Microwave Day Report**

One week after the southern Microwave Activity Day, on October 23rd, the VK4's had the second of their Microwave days with, by all reports, an excellent turnout.

Adam VK4GHZ reports:

*What a perfect day to be out and about, and playing radio in the field. Blue sky, and mid 20's - take note Mexicans!*

*VK4GHZ/P consisted of Alan VK4WR, Graeme VK4FI and Adam VK4GHZ, and we were concentrating on 2.4GHz activity, from Northern NSW.*

*Contacts on 13 cm were made using VK3XDK transverter boards with a Spectrian 30 W PA, and 21 dBi grid pack antenna as follows:*

*VK4OX (247.7km), VK4KZR (186.0km), VK4OE/P (194km), VK4TJ/P (148.4km), VK4JMC (145.5km), VK4OX (271.9km), VK4JMC (166.6km), VK4KZR (213.8km)*

*The "operation" actually started on Saturday, doing a recce for another potential field day site, and then visiting some wineries in the Stanthorpe region.*

*Conveniently, our accommodation for Saturday night was within crawling distance of the Ballendean Tavern. Knocking the top off a few coldies before dinner, and checking in with VK Logger, it was this time I discovered that the vklogger.com domain was totally down. Damn service provider. Again. After a 15 minute call to support from the mobile, and it was back on line.*

*Out on Sunday morning, and up to Mt Richmond, QG61db, just east of Tenterfield in NSW, for activity commencing at 10am.*

*Equipment consisted of the 2.4 GHz transverter with a Yaesu FT-817 as the IF rig. An IC-910H was used for 2m and 23cm. A B&D Workmate makes a very handy collapsible table. Due to the activity only running for a few hours, power was provided by a car battery, so no need to muck around with a generator.*



**Adam VK4GHZ in the operating position**

*We then relocated to Mt MacKenzie, QG50, on the western side of Tenterfield. Our brief operation from here was minimal – 2.4 GHz only and VK Logger Microwave iChat for liaison.*

*The best distance today was from Mt MacKenzie with Adrian VK4OX, (in Maleny QG63KF) over a path of 271.9 km. Very pleased with that, and we were delighted to provide Adrian with a new square on 13 cm.*

*Some comments and thoughts from today. It was fun!, and provided a great shakedown of gear, and field day related procedures.*

*Trying to liaise on 2m SSB using a yagi was a little awkward, and a bit clumsy, especially when you cannot hear everybody, and have to rotate the yagi regularly. (It would be a different situation during a field day, where there is more time available, and operation isn't so concentrated)*

*Using the VK Logger iChat as well as 2m FM (with omni antenna) was quite efficient. When trying to peak on a weak signal on 2403 to begin with, it helps not having a second SSB receiver going, and the iChat was a nice silent way of liaison... not having to constantly wrestle with multiple volume controls. It was easy to have the notebook computer connected to the Internet using (3G) mobile phone as the modem.*

Doug VK4OE was also out in the field, and he reports:

*I was very pleased with the number of microwave stations who were on-air on the day, or trying to be so. Weather wise, it was a beautiful day on 'Straddie' and, apart from bruising my fingertips when the driver's door closed on them, everything went very enjoyably.*



**Doug VK4OE, Van and Antennas**

*Stations worked on 1296 MHz were VK4NE/4, VK4WA, VK4KSY, VK4GHZ/2, VK4MJF and VK4ZQ/4. Sorry to Frank VK4FLR that I wasn't aware at the time that he was on 1296 during the morning but the propagation wasn't favouring us on the day.*

*On 2403 MHz I had QSOs with VK4GHZ/2, VK4OX, VK4WA, VK4KZR and VK4JMC, and on 10368 MHz I worked VK4EA, VK4MJF, VK4IIO and VK4UH. Despite being some distance from each other (in other words not close where normal leakage takes place), VK4IIO, VK4UH and I enjoyed a rare 'three-way' QSO on 10.3 GHz.*

Rod VK4KZR participated as a home station:

*Thanks to Doug VK4OE and the rest of the SE Queensland microwave operators for such a good turn out last Sunday. I participated as a home station but unfortunately operation was restricted to operation on 2403 MHz only.*

*Two-way SSB contacts were made with the following stations: VK4OX, VK4OE/4 VK4GHZ/2 (Mt Richmond) and VK4GHZ/2 (Mt Mackenzie) - best DX at 213 km and a new grid square.*

*My home station for this band consists of a homebrew transverter (Minikits) + GaAsFET PA (4 watts) and 900mm grid-pack at 15 m.*

*Other comments - this was a great shakedown test for the forthcoming field day contest.*

*Reference locked PLL oscillators are certainly a great advantage because you know exactly where the transverter is. Ironically it's my 2 m IF radio that needs a calibration.*

*iChat on the VKLOGGER is a very useful facility - even as an adjunct to using talkback frequency since there is a history log. It's not always possible to be in front of the radios, so it allows you to quickly see what is happening or has been*

*happening.*

*It was very encouraging to see some new callsigns listed as having been active, particularly on the higher microwave bands.*

### **New Microwave Band Records - 135 GHz, 243 GHz and 324 GHz**

Alan VK3XPD has been continuing his experiments at the extreme end of the microwave spectrum. He reports on his latest efforts:

*On Friday 21/10/2011, we activated the 135 GHz, 243 GHz and 324 GHz Microwave Bands in VK3.*

*Despite the most unfavourable weather conditions, Michael VK3KH and I went out to Casey Sports arena in Cranbourne, east of Melbourne to test a pair of new Transverters that I had just finished building.*

*Our initial on-site testing over a 10 metre path was to check the functionality of the gear.*

*We started with 324.48 GHz. Signal Reports for our SSB signals were 5x9 both ways. At this time, I'm unsure if we in VK have any allocations in this Band segment. There have been recorded Amateur QSO's on 322 GHz in the USA and Europe.*

*(Ed: Frequencies above 250 GHz are not assigned to any service by ACMA, so technically there is no 324 GHz band in VK. However amateurs may operate on these frequencies because they are not assigned to any other service).*

*The next frequency we activated was 243.36 GHz. Signal Reports were 5x9 +10 both ways. Our final frequency was 135.20 GHz, again with 5x9 +10 both ways.*

*Having seen such big signals over our 10 metre path, we decided to try our luck with an optimistic 400 metre path.*

*We failed to hear anything on 135 GHz. This was not surprising with all the recent wet overcast weather, water sitting in puddles in the nice green grass and the very high Relative Humidity at the time.*

*Tests over a 200 metre path yielded much the same results. Nothing heard. Clearly we had too much atmospheric attenuation.*

*A 100 metre path yielded mixed results. We heard our 135 GHz Ident signals but they were so very weak that SSB was going to be impossible. Despite much effort to optimise our Dish pointing and the gear sensitivity, the signals finally disappeared as the afternoon passed.*

*On each series of Tests using non Amateur Band Frequencies, we noticed that conditions (propagation) for these upper Microwave frequencies were changing very fast - even over these relatively short paths.*

*As the afternoon progressed towards 1600 hours local, it became somewhat chilly. With time running out, we decided to run our last tests over a 25 metre path.*

*Our 135 GHz QSO was 5x9 both ways. The 243 GHz QSO was also 5x9 both ways. Our final QSO on 324 GHz was 5x5 from Michael to my 5x2 report.*

*All in all it was a very successful day despite the obvious poor weather. Amazingly, the QSO's we achieved on these 3 widely spaced band segments were achieved by this single pair of Transverters.*

*At this time, we have not decided whether to claim Australian Distance Records for these 25 metre QSO's. Clearly with some better weather and accompanying low humidity, these distances will certainly be improved on.*

*A full write-up on the equipment used will be published shortly. Suffice to say that the hardware is very similar to the 78/122 GHz transverters I built previously. This time the "pump" source is 27.04 GHz. So, the 5th harmonic is 135.2 GHz, 9th harmonic is 243.46 GHz etc.*

*Our VK9NA Website at [www.vk9na.com](http://www.vk9na.com) has more information on the techniques used. Related articles will also appear in DUBUS 4/2011.*

Subsequent to this report, Alan and Michael have claimed, and been awarded, new distance records for these three bands. Several days later, on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, Alan and Russell VK3ZQB extended the records for 135 GHz and 243 GHz to 50 metres.

### **New EME Digital Records**

After much discussion, the WIA has decided to accept distance record applications for Digital Mode contacts via EME. These will be classed separately to contacts in other non-digital modes such as CW and SSB.

The first of these records have been awarded as follows:

12/01/11 - 2 metres - VK9NA to EA2AGZ - 18306.4 km

01/10/11 – 23 cm - VK2AMS to VK2JDS - 325.3 km

### **ARRL EME Contest 22/23 October 2011**

Doug VK3UM reports on his efforts during the recent ARRL EME Contest:

*It's like going to the dentist .. I know it will hurt .. and I will take the rest of the week to recover, and as usual it did!. The Declination is now playing a factor for many given its decline due to the current Moon's cycle. The siting of many antennae nowadays is posing a problem and it will get worse! Some stations I can no longer work as we no longer have common visual windows. Many guys now require a higher elevation which results in a lower elevation for me. This does not worry me given my low horizon, but concentrates activity into an even tighter time frame.*

*Conditions ... Wildly swinging on 70 cm, really quite amazing. It made for hard work at times because of deep fading and rapid polarisation changes that were evident over the space of a minute. I have not seen that for a while and reflects the rise in Solar activity. 23 cm was subject to deep fading at times, but, in general, it was very good. Libration was at a minimum that weekend but Faraday caused the problems. The stand out signal from Gerald K5GW on 70 cm was clear evidence of the advantage of circular polarisation on that band. Polarisation offset to NA and Eu was theoretically aligned for most of the time which is an advantage to me at such declinations. However Faraday messed that right up!. Finished with 21 QSO's on 70 cm and 47 on 23 cm which is about average for contacts/time over the years. I did not spend too much time on 70 and will concentrate there in November. On Sunday's Moon Set I left with 3 stations calling me at 0.2 degrees so there are many more to work.*

*The following were worked on 23cm: JA8ERE, OK2DL, OZ6OL, VK4CDI, G4CCH, IK1MTZ, I5MPK, SP6JLW, ES5PC, JF3HUCRD3DA, AL7RT, K1JT, N2UO, NA4N, K5AZU, WA6PY, VA7MM, NR5M, W9IIX, JR4AEP, K5GW, RA3AUB, SP7DCS, OH2DG, SM3JQU, DF3RU, SV1BTR, SM4IVE, OE5JFL, 9A5AA, LZ1DX, PA3FXB, DL4DTU, OK2ULQ, G3LTF, F2TU, IK3COJ, F5KUG, I1NDP, DL3EBJ, S59DCD, IZ1BPN, W5LUA, VE6TA*

*and the following were worked on 70cm: DL1YMK, SM4IVE, DG1KJG, SD3F, F6DRO, OZ5MM, OH2PO, SV1BTR, JA9BOH, SP6JLW, F2TU, SP7DCS, N4GJV,*

*K5GW, VE6TA, VK4EME, W8TXT, ES5PC, JA0TJU, KORZ, K1JT*

Please send any Weak Signal reports to David VK3HZ

## Digital DX Modes

Rex Moncur – VK7MO

### **144 MHz FSK441**

Welcome to Simon ZL4PLM who is putting out an excellent signal from Christchurch New Zealand and had his first Meteor Scatter QSO with Rex VK7MO on 29 October. For this first QSO, Simon was under instruction from veteran Meteor Scatter operator Starr ZL3CU. 48 readable pings were received from Simon in an hour which compares to typically 5 to 10 from Starr whose QTH is also in Christchurch – it will be interesting to see if this large number of pings is typical.

### **144 MHz JT65**

Welcome to Rob VK3XQ near Yea who has an excellent signal on JT65 working a number of stations EME and has good and consistent signals down to Hobart via tropo-scatter.

### **Sending Single Tones on JT65 to check for propagation**

It is possible to send a single tone on JT65 by inserting “@1270” without the quotes in any message box and then ticking that box. As a single tone puts all the energy into a single bin and runs for the full 60 second TX period (cf 48 seconds for JT65 text messages) the signal strength is improved by 3 to 4 dB and it becomes possible to identify the presence of a weak signal on the waterfall down to around -33 dB on the WSJT scale. This approach can be very useful for testing for the presence of a weak signal when you are waiting for a marginal path to open. The signal tone “@1270” gives a tone of 1270 Hz which is the same as the reference tone when transmitting text on JT65 and thus identifies where you should see the signal when the station moves to text. It is, however, possible to send other tones if one wishes such as “@1000” to provide a 1000 Hz tone.

### **10 GHz DXpedition to Rare Grid Square QF40 Flinders Island**

Rex VK7MO, Eric VK7NFI (the pilot and owner of the light aircraft used to visit the Island) and Peter VK7KPB (who provided on-site transport and accommodation) activated the rare grid square QF40 on Flinders Island on 22 October on 10 GHz. While Flinders Island is at the intersection of four grid squares, the other three can be covered from the mainland of either Tasmania or Victoria but QF40 is the rare one that requires a visit to Flinders Island. In order to fit the equipment into the minimal space behind the seats in Eric’s small two-seater aircraft, it was necessary to design a compact cut-down 10 GHz system. Following a request on the VK-Microwave reflector, Scott N0EDV recommended a small 47 cm ABS plastic dish which can be removed with a single bolt to readily fit down behind the seats of the aircraft and is available at:

[http://www.sadoun.com/Sat/Products/Eagle-Aspen/Travel\\_Dish-20-inch-Antenna.htm](http://www.sadoun.com/Sat/Products/Eagle-Aspen/Travel_Dish-20-inch-Antenna.htm)

The 10 GHz station was reduced to 2 watts to allow operation from a small Gell Cell as a back-up, although in this case Peter VK7KPB kindly provided a charged up tractor battery. It was also necessary to find a small wooden tripod that could be disassembled to fit into the aircraft. Joe VK7JG and Alan VK7AN had visited the island and recommended a suitable site in QF40. Rex and Eric started off from

Wynyard airport but soon ran into low cloud and had to return and wait for the WX to improve. Later a second attempt was made with reasonably clear conditions up to the North East coast of Tasmania when the aircraft turned towards Flinders Island. On approaching Flinders Island from the South West, low cloud blocked access to the Lady Barron airstrip. An approach from the South East was also blocked by cloud and it was necessary to approach the airstrip from the North with low cloud covering the hills. Fortunately, it was possible to track along a road to the gravel airstrip.

Next morning Peter VK7KPB transported us to Middle Patriarch Mountain. To get a clear take-off, the dish was mounted on the tray of Peter's ute



**Rex setting up the plastic dish on Peters ute**

Contacts completed were:

VK3HZ R-10, -13 JT65c Johns Hill lookout in the Dandenong ranges 313 km  
VK3HY 4-1, 4-1 SSB Johns Hill lookout in the Dandenong ranges 313 km  
VK3HZ 5-1, 4-1 SSB Johns Hill lookout in the Dandenong ranges 313 km  
VK3TPR R-13, -16 JT65c Johns Hill lookout in the Dandenong ranges 313 km

Conditions at John's Hill were poor with rain but clear at Flinders Island

VK3QM 4-1, 3-1 SSB Bayview near Geelong 399 km  
VK3PY 3-1, 3-1 SSB Bayview near Geelong 399 km  
VK3NX 3-1, 3-1 SSB Bayview near Geelong 399 km  
VK3ALB 3-1, 3-1 SSB Bayview near Geelong 399 km  
VK3ZQB -22, R-23 JT65c Portland 543 km

Russell VK3ZQB's signal was spread considerably, at least 20 Hz, which suggests that forward rain scatter was involved and might explain getting over a relatively long distance for non-enhanced tropo scatter.

The following stations were in Gippsland at relatively short distances:

VK3WRE/PF/ZYC at Currajong 220 km  
VK3BQJ at Swan Reach 244 km

Nothing at all was received even with single tones and despite the fact that this was a much shorter distance than the other contacts and the fact VK3WRE and VK3BQJ could copy each other at well over S9. Ralph VK3WRE reports there was poor WX

to the south and a possible inversion below them, which might be the explanation.

Nothing was copied of VK5DK at 686 km but that is not unexpected in what was poor conditions.

The WX was much better for our safe return to Wynyard



**Eric VK7NFI with his aircraft at the Lady Barron air-strip**

While there were some unexplained failures at the shorter distances, the trip was a success and proved the viability of the equipment for our next project - three more rare Bass Strait Island grid squares on King Island.

Please send any Digital DX Modes reports to Rex VK7MO

## **The Magic Band – 6 m DX**

Brian Cleland – VK5BC

During October 6 m really came to life with international openings occurring on most days during the month particularly in northern VK and on many days these openings extended south to VK3, 5, 6 and 7. Most days JA's could be worked or indicators from the north heard. Highlight for the month was a great opening from VK4 to America, Canada and Mexico.

The opening to North America occurred on the 26th October with stations as far south as Hervey Bay and north to John VK4FNQ in Charters Towers working several stations. Paul VK4MA near Hervey Bay reported working 15 North American stations including 3 x VE7's. Wayne VK4WTN in Hervey Bay worked VE7SL, K7CW, K6MYC all on CW and KE7V on SSB at 5/5. Further north in Mackay Kevin VK4BKP reported the band open for about 40 minutes and working N8DEZ, K7JA, N6RMJ, W6FL, K6GXO, N6ED, KE7V, AE6ZV, K7CW, N7NW as well as XE2D Roman in Northern Mexico with signals ranging from 5x1 to 5x9. Later the same day to complete a great day on 6m Kevin also worked KH6SX, KH6RH and KH7Y. John VK4FNQ in Charters Towers also worked several stations including K7RWT, N7DB, AD6WL, KE7V, K7CW and K7JA.

Some of the other significant openings/contacts during the month as follows;

The 4th October Art KH6SX worked Mark VK8MS 5/9 and John VK8JM 5/5 in Darwin. Mark also worked Fred KH7Y. The DX expedition of 3D2R on Rotuma Is

also worked many JA's as well as several KH6's as did 5W1SA from Somoa. Great to see activity from the Pacific areas.

Early evening on the 5th October Gary VK8AW in Darwin worked Fred KH7Y and later that night Dale VK4SIX in Atherton worked several JA's as well as Willem DU7/PA0HIP, Li BA4SI and HL3IUA.

The first evening TEP opening this cycle to southern VK occurred on the 11th October. Andrew VK3OE reported that the Chinese TV on 49.750 was strong and Brian VK5BC noted the same. Brian found the JA2IGY beacon on 50.010 was audible and at 0943 UTC worked JA3EGE SSB at 5/5. Then at 1143 UTC worked Charlie VR2XMT in Hong Kong SSB at 5/5, Charlie was audible for over 1/2 hour was also heard working Dale VK4SIX, VK6KP and VK8.

Next morning 12th October at 0050 UTC the band again opened to JA from VK5 with Brian VK5BC working JA2MBF, JA3EGE and JA3JRA all SSB. This was followed by another opening on the 13th with John VK5PO and Garry VK5ZK working several JA's in CW.

Good openings from JA to VK5 followed on several days including 17th, 21st, 22nd, 26th and 28th with VR2XMT in again on the 26th.

17th October a good opening from JA to VK5 which extended down to VK7 with Frank VK7DX and Joe VK7JG working several JA's as well as Li BA4SI.

Big opening to KH6 from VK2 and VK3 on 27th October. Roger VK5NY/2 in northern NSW 1st reported Art KH6SX and then conditions moved further south with several vk2's including Brad VK2QO, Mike VK2ZQ, John VK2FAD and Philip VK2HN working several KH's including KH6SX, KH6HI, KH6U, KH6RH and KH7Y. Conditions continued to move south with eventually Andrew VK3OE and Norm VK3DUT working several of the KH6's. Later in the opening Remi FK8CP was heard by some stations and worked by VK3OE.

At around 0600 UTC on the 29th October the VK4RTL beacon was reported in VK5 and Brian VK5BC could as well being able to hear Wade VK4WM in Hervey Bay working KH6HI in CW he could also hear KH6HI. Brian called Albert KH6HI and completed a contact in CW 599 and then followed a further SSB contact at 5/3.

Rick VK6XLR in Geraldton WA has had a great October. Mainly contacts from JA, especially an opening on the 29th where he worked 22 stations. Rick has added four new countries his list with, Charlie VR2XMT in Hong Kong, Roger 9W6RT in East Malaysia, Li BA4SI in China and Lee DS4EOI in South Korea all being worked during October and has heard Dave A92IO in Bahrain just in the noise, although not enough to copy.

From Darwin Gary VK8AW reports the following;

*A short opening to JA on the 3 Oct with Hide JR6EXN appearing around 1330z at 5/1. On the 5 Oct we had Hawaii with Fred KH7Y coming in at 0725z 5/3 followed by JF2WMH at 1030z. The 6 Oct Fred KH7Y was 5/9 at 0650z and then the conditions went west with 9W6RT at 1335z at 5/8. The 8 Oct we had Willem DU7/PA0HIP 5/7, 9W6RT 5/5 and then conditions went west again with A92IO making the log 5/3 on ssb. Signals then fell short back into West Malay with 9W2TS 5/3 and then back west with A71EM 5/5 on cw at 1345z. I also had A61Q 5/2 (he was mobile) but he could not hear me at 1350z. 9 Oct we had Charlie VR2XMT bashing the needle 30 over 9 from 1248z and then DU1GM joined in around 1250z followed by 9W6RT at 1320z.*

*On the 10 Oct I quickly worked 9M2IDJ 5/9 on 50110 whilst waiting for the band to shift west but nothing further eventuated. 11th Oct conditions kept changing long/short with ST2AR around 1100z calling for hours with no takers. Then VR2XMT*

5/9 at 1140z, BA8AT 5/9 at 1155z then it shifted to A45XR 5/2 at 1315z then short again with Satu 9N1AA in Nepal 5/6. Then it went long again with Dave A92IO 5/2 at 1400z then short again with 9M2ESM 5/9 at 1410z.

The 12 Oct was a good opening with ST2AR from Sudan on cw from 1130z till 1250z. Then it fell short with 9W2MSO 5/9 at 1255z, 9N1AA 5/6 at 1300z, VR2HF 5/9 at 1310z followed by A45XR 5/5 at 1315z, Andrew 9V1TT 5/9 at 1323z, BA8AT 5/9 at 1333z, 9W6RT 5/5 at 1338z.

The 15th Oct we had all the usual JA, DU, BV and VR beacons in again with just Eddie DU1EV 5/9 at 1225z and Charlie VR2XMT 5/9 at 1232z making the log. The 16th Oct we had very strong E's into Indonesia with YB0AKM 40 over 9 at 1230z for hours then Andrew 9V1TT appeared around 1235z 5/9 who worked many VR's and JA's.

17th Oct we had VR2XMT at 1324z then 9V1TT at 1332z, BV100 at 1333z, 9W2ODT at 1334z and YB0AKM at 1337z and 9W6RT at 1344z followed by Dave A92IO who rounded the night out at 1412z 5/3 for an hour looking for VK's/pacific.

The 24th Oct again we had 9W6RT 5/9 at 1350z who is a regular appearance most nights followed by Eddy XV1X from Vietnam 20 over 9 on ssb at 1400z.

28th Oct Dave A92IO appeared early at 0600z 5/5 and called for hours with not many takers on 110. 29th Oct Art KH6SX was 5/5 around 0512z and then it went west with the A6 TV roaring in 30 over 9 but I could not raise anyone that way.

The A6 tv from the middle east on 48.250 MHz appears most nights anywhere from 0600z through to 1500z, usually peaking twice during the evening but not coinciding with the 49ers.

Certainly exciting times in Darwin on 6m with the contacts with Mark VK8MS and Gary VK8AW working Rob ST2AR in Sudan a big highlight

For those interested in grid squares Richard VK5UK reports that he will be operational from Elliston on the west coast of South Australia PF76 from the 20th of December until at least the end of January and that he may also be able to take a trip to neighboring grid PF77 if there is enough demand. He will be "working" during this time and not available on demand but that there should be plenty of time for radio. He also intends to be running WSPR on 6m and could be alerted to openings by text message, contact details on VKLOGGER.

VKLOGGER now has a new version of iChat which includes colours and the ability to run it in a separate window as well as overlaying it on the logger screen. The combination of this with VKLOGGER is a great tool for VK DXers and provides many features including beacon details, operator information etc as well as a history of postings on the logger. If all operators post details of contacts it also provides a means of following propagation trends assisting other VK's in working that special DX. It can be found at <http://www.vklogger.com/>

Please send any 6 m information to Brian VK5BC