
VHF/UHF – An Expanding World

David Smith VK3HZ

Weak Signal

David Smith - VK3HZ

Over the weekend of May 26th to 27th, a slow-moving high-pressure cell once again produced some good tropospheric enhancement over the southeastern part of the country.

Chas VK3PY reports that he had some notable contacts:

I saw the opening coming on the Hepburn map earlier in the week and had the foresight to arrange a sked with Mark VK2EMA in Tottenham (central VK2) for Saturday morning. I particularly wanted his grid (QF37) on 1296 MHz. We started on 2 m with reasonable signals, up to 5x5 at times. Moving to 70 cm improved things with signals consistently hovering around S9. Our initial attempt at 1296 was a struggle, but while rag-chewing on 432 Mark noted my signal had built up to over S9, and suggested we try 1296 again. This time it was a pushover with 5x3 signals both ways. The distance is nearly 700 km - not bad going, and grid number 38 is in the bag.

Saturday morning I also worked Colin VK2FABV in West Wyalong on 2 m for a new grid on that band. He was 5x2 and gave me 4x3.

Another notable contact was Leigh VK2KRR. Ordinarily, Leigh puts a pretty healthy signal on 144 and 432 at my QTH anyway, and we seem to be able to work at will on 1296, but Saturday evening his 1296 signal was staggeringly strong, prompting me to grab my digital camera and record a movie of one of his overs. It's 38 MB - Leigh can talk!

Thanks for that, Chas. The movie hasn't appeared on the YouTube Featured Videos yet – hi!

Jim VK3II was also having some success, as he usually does from his good location:

I worked Colin VK2FABV on 2 m SSB on Saturday 0901 hrs – 0905 hrs (local) at 5x2. I think he also worked VK3AAK and VK3HZ before me. I also worked Colin again on Sunday for over 15 mins, starting at 1000 hrs (local). His SSB signal got up to 5x4 at times. Colin has a pair of stacked 10-element yagis at 60 ft. His QTH is Wyalong - a 524 km path for me. Not bad for 10W

It's great to see our newest class of amateurs becoming seriously interested in the "right" end of the 2 m band. We should do what we can to encourage this - it can only be a good thing to have more active VHF/UHF stations spread across the country.

Speaking of stations spread across the country, Peter VK5ZPG in Quorn – 40 km north of Port Augusta - is one of our more remote VHF enthusiasts. His closest opportunities for contacts are in the Adelaide area – a distance of around 300 km. Nevertheless, Peter is quite active in the VHF arena using any possible propagation modes that will achieve long-distance contacts – Aircraft Enhancement and Meteor Scatter being two of the main ones.

Peter has been hard at work improving his station. He reports: *the 'new' linear (AM17) is up and running, putting out a conservative 300 to 350 watts PEP. A 40-foot tower has been purchased and is yet to be delivered. Until then, I'm limited to a yagi height of only 18 feet. Being a little out of the way re beam headings for operators between capital cities, hopefully these improvements will help attract a little*

more attention.

We look forward to some big signals from Quorn when summer comes around.

Please send any Weak Signal reports to David VK3HZ

Digital DX Modes

Rex Moncur – VK7MO

Welcome to George VK4AMG, who has been participating in the FSK441 Meteor Scatter Activity Sessions for several weeks on 144.230 MHz. These are held from 7.00 to 8.00 am NSW/Vic local time each Saturday and Sunday morning. George is still to complete a QSO but he has got close by exchanging callsigns and reports and just missing out on those RRRs for confirmation. Persistence will pay off – good luck George.

Local EME: Sometimes, if a local signal is not too strong, it is possible to complete EME QSOs on JT65 with stations only a 100 km or so away. The direct signal will normally be much stronger but it is often possible to see the weaker Moon Echo because it will come back on a slightly different frequency due to Doppler Shift. Around Moonrise the Doppler on 2 meters will shift the signal up around 300 Hz and proportionally greater on the higher bands. If you see two sets of the JT65 reference tones when beaming towards the moon check the Doppler on WSJT to confirm that the signal is coming from the Moon. Then you can use the freeze/tolerance facility on WSJT to select only the signal from the moon and complete a local EME QSO.

Please send any Digital DX Modes reports to Rex VK7MO

The Magic Band – 6 m DX

Brian Cleland – VK5BC

May produced several sporadic E openings particularly from Queensland to VK2, 3 and 5. The openings weren't always of long duration with only medium signal strengths.

On 16th May there was a brief opening from VK5 to VK2. The VK2RHV beacon was audible in VK5 with Paul VK2BPL working Brian VK5BC.

Then on the 18th May, the band opened for several hours from VK5 to VK2, VK4 and FK8. Unfortunately, not a lot of contacts were made but Brian VK5BC worked John VK2BHO, Paul VK2BPL and John VK4KK. The FK8SIX beacon was audible up to S3 for nearly 3 hours. At the same time, the band was open between VK4 and VK2 with the FK8 beacon being audible in both states. John VK4TL and VK4ZFC in Far Northern Queensland worked several VK2's including John VK2FAD at Budgewoi and Dave VK2JDS near Bathurst. Kevin VK4BPK at Mackay also worked John VK4KK near Gympie.

The 19th May saw another opening from VK5 to VK4. The VK4RTL Townsville beacon was up to S9 in VK5 with Brian VK5BC again working John VK4KK.

Another opening on the 21st May - this time Kevin VK4BPK working John VK2BHO near Wollongong, Brian VK2AH at Bulli and Rob VK3XQ in Melbourne. At the same time Allan VK4ID was hearing the VK5RBV beacon up to S7 and completed a contact with Brian VK5BC.

On 26th May, the band again opened from far Northern Queensland to VK5 with the Townsville VK4RTL beacon being heard in VK5. Brian VK5BC completed contacts

with Andru VK4KAY in Mackay and Peter VK4APE in Charters Towers. The same day Norm VK3DUT reported hearing the VK5VF and VK5RBV beacons as well as the ZL TV and Karl VK7HDX in Launceston reported the ZL TV.

On the 27th May, Jack VK2XQ in Sydney reported the ZL TV being audible for some time and working Bob ZL3NE in Auckland. Jack also reported the Hobart VK7RST beacon. The same day, the Alice Springs VK8RAS, Longreach VK4ABP and Townsville VK4RTL beacons were all audible along with the Toowoomba TV sound (51.672 MHz) in VK5. Brian VK5BC worked Allan VK4ID, Glen VK4BG (ex VK4TZL) and Mick VK4ZAA. Weak contacts were also made with VK4KAY & VK4BKP both in Mackay.

To complete the month the band again opened on the 28th May. Dave VK4ASB in Zillmere worked Kevin VK3WN in Ballarat and Jack VK3XQ. Kevin VK4BPK in Mackay completed contacts with Jack VK3XQ, Norm VK3DUT, Rod VK3TG, Trevor VK3VG, Steve VK5OZ in Adelaide and Joe VK7JG Launceston. Kevin also reported hearing the Alice Springs beacon.

On the 6th June, Jack VK2XQ, Brian VK2BX and Norm VK3DUT all reported hearing strong New Zealand TV and later in the day Jack reported hearing the FK8SIX beacon at S5.

Please send any 6 m information to Brian VK5BC