

2, June, 2026

This issue was sent to individual hams and the following NZART branches: Br 02 Akl, Br 03 W. Suburbs, Br 10 Franklin, Br 28 Whangarei, Br 29 N. Shore, Br 65 Akl VHF, Br 66 Papakura, Br 71 Rodney, Br 78 Far N., Br 80 Hibiscus Coast, Br 84 Bay of Islands, Br 86 Musick Pt, Br 90 Waiheke I. If you or your branch wants to be removed from the email list, please email me.

The list of articles for this issue is

- Editor's Desk
- Branch 02: 2m tape measure Yagi
- Auckland QRP weekend (flyer attached)
- webSDRs
- Towers on the Air
- From the last issue: HEMA vs SOTA
- Definitions
- Topics
- Calendar of Events
- Author and Contact
- Appendix

Editor's Desk

After I published Issue #1, I received the following suggestions on ways to improve the AOTA newsletter:

a) Use close-up photographs. I will certainly do this when it is reasonable to do so.
b) Make the appearance of the newsletter more professional. No doubt the appearance of the newsletter will evolve.
c) Include the suggested frequencies for events listed in the calendar of events. I will add the suggested frequencies if they are included in the rules for the event.

Philip ZL1PSH

Branch 02: 2m tape measure Yagi

On May 23, Br 02 held a workshop on making a 2m tape measure Yagi antenna. The design was based on that described by KB9VBR [1].

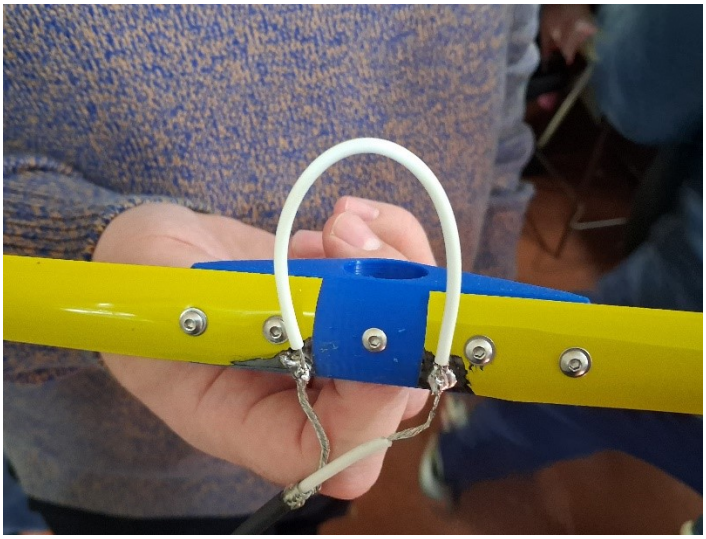
Although none of the 14 workshop attendees completed the antenna in the 1 ¾ hours available, some came close. This was a good result because time was lost through attendees sharing equipment.

The first photograph shows 11 of the attendees and one potential future ham just before the start of the workshop.

The second photograph shows the centre connector for the Yagi. The blue component was 3D printed by a Br 02 member. The Yagi's boom slides through the hole

in the component. The gamma match was cut from the central part of coax cable.





The workshop's very good attendance suggests a similar workshop could be used by other branches as a desired member benefit.

[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmHoQrDfw-0

Auckland QRP Weekend

Br 29 will be hosting the 2026 Auckland QRP weekend on June 20 & 21. The event helps celebrates Region 3's (IARU) annual QRP day on June 17.

I have attached a flyer for the event. The 967 words of text may make the event seem daunting but the format of the event is simple. On Saturday, you make QSOs and measure your performance by the total score you get for the day. On Sunday, you attempt to achieve one or more goals. There is a large number of possible goals to help ensure that most hams have at least one goal that interests them.

If you have any questions about the event, you can email Br 29 or me or post on the Br 29 FB group.

WebSDRs

WebSDRs provide a way of hearing a signal that you cannot hear using your receiver at your current location. The use of WebSDRs evokes a wide range of opinions from "ops who use webSDRs are cheating" to "webSDRs help counter the increasing levels of QRM, making the hobby more inclusive."

Using webSDRs is permitted by some award programs including POTA and SOTA. In a mild contrast, the rules for NZART's NZ Parklands Award state: "Use of internet-connected SDRs by chasers is permitted so long as the SDR is located in the same DXCC as the chaser".

I have S7 noise on 40m during the day with the pre-amps of my IC-7300 off and I use New Zealand webSDRs at times. My most commonly-used webSDR is that near the village of Marahau northwest of Nelson.

Ultimately, it is left to each ham to decide which webSDRs, if any, they will use.

Towers on the Air

Towers on the Air (TOTA) [1] is an awards program for activating lookout towers. The towers must be open to the public and include a viewing platform. The program began in the Czech Republic and has spread to nine other countries. An activation requires 13 QSOs on HF or three on VHF and above. The activation point must be within 200m of the tower.

For me, the desirable features of TOTA are that the towers must be accessible to the public and just three contacts on VHF and above are required, making TOTA very suitable for new hams.

Since the beginning of May I have been working with Ivan OK2IH and Mirek OK1CYC to create a pilot TOTA scheme of 20 towers in greater Auckland. My current proposed list of towers in given in the appendix. My YL and I are performing field checks of the towers as time permits.

[1] https://www.rozhledny.eu/

From the last issue: HEMA vs SOTA

Q. HEMA and SOTA both require four QSOs for a qualifying activation. What is a key difference between these two sets of four QSOs?

A. For HEMA, each of the four QSOs must be with a different operator. Not so for SOTA.

Definitions

The first four definitions are slightly edited versions of the definitions on rfcafe.com.

73 - *Seven-Three*. Said quickly before packing up in a race against the sunset in 73 minutes.

LOG - Lost On Grass. The logbook you dropped somewhere between the trig and your pack.

OM – Overloaded Mind. Trying to log callsigns, adjust the rig, and stop your mast blowing away at the same time.

SOTA - Somehow on the air. You made it to the summit, the wind's howling, your hands are cold, you have run out of food and the antenna's sideways but you're on the air.

XYL - Extraordinary young lady. Often mispronounced as ex-young lady.

Topics

The possible topics for articles in the AOTA newsletter include the following:

- Antenna: testing, comparison
- Award hunting
- Contesting
- DXing on 10m and below
- DXing on 6m and above
- Education & introductory activities e.g. JOTA
- EME
- Fox Hunting and ARDF
- ISS: contacting
- Maritime and aeronautical mobile
- Modes: using them
- Portable operating
- QRP and QRPp operating
- Remote operating
- Satellites: using
- Special event stations: contacting, running
- webSDRs

Calendar of Events

Below is a calendar of some local, NZART, POTA and SOTA events until the end of 2026. Further information about the events can be had by googling. If you know of events you believe should be added to the calendar, please let me know.

June 14. Winter Straight key night. 0800-0900 UTC.

June 20 & 21. Auckland QRP weekend. See the flyer.

July 4. NZART Memorial Contest. CW & SSB on 80m. 100W & QRP sections. 0800-1100 UTC. CW: 3520-3550 kHz. SSB: 3610-3660 kHz.

July 18. Trans-Tasman Low Band Contest. CW, SSB, and PSK & RTTY (combined) on 160m, 80m and 40m. 08:00 UTC - 14:00 UTC. SSB: 1843-1875, 3535-3570 & 3600-3700, 7080-7300KHz.

July 18 & 19 UTC. POTA Support Your Park.

Each Tuesday in August. ZL Winter Sprints. CW, SSB & FT4 on 80m. 100W & QRP sections. 0800-0829 UTC CW only, 0830-0859 UTC SSB only, 0900-0929 UTC FT4 only. CW: 3520-3550 kHz, SSB: 3620-3670 kHz, FT4: 3575 kHz.

August 15 & 16 UTC. ILLW.

(TBC) September 12 NZST. Andrew White ZL3CC Memorial Day. A SOTA event.

October 3 & 4. NZART's VHF and above Microwave Contest. All bands 32 cm and up. All modes. 0400 - 1000 Sat UTC, 1800 Sat UTC - 0000 Sun UTC.

October 17 & 18 UTC. POTA Support Your Park.

December 5 & 6. NZART's VHF and above Field Day Contest. All bands 6 m and up. All modes. 0400 - 1000 Sat UTC, 1800 Sat UTC - 0000 Sun UTC. Operations on 6m must be 50.150 and above.

December 6. Summer Straight Key Night. 0800-0900 UTC.

December 8. H Night Contest. AM only on 80m. 0630 - 0900 UTC.

Author and Contact

Unless stated otherwise, all content in this issue was written by Philip ZL1PSH zululima1psh@gmail.com. I welcome feedback, corrections and articles.

Appendix

Below is a list of the location of 23 possible towers for the TOTA pilot scheme in greater Auckland. I believe all of these structures will be acceptable under the rules of TOTA (I already know Maungawhau / Mt Eden is). If they are, I would reduce the list to 20 structures by eliminating the three that required the most effort to get to from downtown Auckland.

1. Achilles Point
2. Arataki Visitor Centre
3. Clevedon Conservation Area
4. Cossey Dam
5. Dome Forest
6. Hakaramita
7. Hobson Bay
8. Hobsonville
9. Kauri Glen Reserve
10. Kendalls Bay
11. Manuka Reserve
12. Maungawhau / Mt Eden
13. Maungakiekie / One Tree Hill
14. McElwain
15. Muriwai
16. Parry Kauri Park
17. Parkinson Point
18. Pirongia
19. Rangitoto
20. Shakespear Park
21. Shephard's Park
22. Slip Track
23. Te Aroha
24. Te Rau-o-te-Huia / Mt Donald Mclain

Extra

The photograph below shows the viewing platform in Kauri Glen Reserve that I am proposing as a tower for TOTA.



From the tower you can look out on a small valley of Kauri and Rickers (juvenile Kauri). Just behind the photographer, there is the main track perpendicular to the boardwalk in the photograph. Because of Kauri Dieback disease, Auckland Council requests park users to stay on the track or the boardwalk shown in the photograph.

The lat and long for the centre of the viewing platform are, subject to further confirmation, -36.80572 and 174.73564 respectively. The bush is possibly too thick to activate the tower from the viewing platform using VHF and above. The tower is moderately popular.

Where would you activate from, and what bands and types of antennas would you use?