

3, July, 2026

In this issue

- From the Shack
- A POTA activation
- VOTA day
- Potaholics Mid-Winter 30
- LLOTA
- Mentoring scheme
- Calendar of Events
- Translate

From the Shack

Ostensibly, the goal of the AOTA newsletter is to report on Auckland on-the-air (OTA) events. More fundamentally, the goal is to promote OTA activities and to provide insight about these activities that hams wherever they are, might participate in or organise.

My YL and I have almost finished checking the proposed towers for the New Zealand Towers on the Air pilot scheme. We rejected one tower three weeks ago. The tower had the desirable feature of being a lookout point but the trees immediately in front of the tower had grown to the point that the views from the lookout were poor.

The July 2026 World Wide Award Sprint started on June 29 and goes to July 5. At the time of typing this sentence (0133 July 1 UTC) there had been 263,157 QSOs logged on https://hamaward.cloud/wwa/award. I hope some of you chase the special event stations.

A POTA activation

On June 20, the North Shore RC activated the POTA park NZ-0018 (Shakespear Regional Park). As the photographs below show, the activation area had a picturesque setting.

The park was quickly activated on 40m using 10 watts SSB and a lowish dipole. The hams present then spent an enjoyable two hours having lunch and comparing the performance of antennas and radios.

Photograph 1 shows Charles ZL1CMB with his mag loop antenna. SSB signals were received on 40m and 20m. Photograph 2 shows the base of Steve ZL1SRP's quarter-wave trapped vertical for 40m, 20m, 15m and 10m. The antenna was tested on 40m SSB and worked well. Photograph 3 shows 2m and 70cm Yagis on top of a hydraulic mast. Despite the height of the Yagis, no contacts were made on 2m or 70cm FM.

The day was a lot of fun and the club has already starting planning another day.

Photograph 1. Charles ZL1CMB and his mag loop.



Photograph 2. The base of Steve ZL1SRP's 1/4-wave vertical.



Photograph 3. The 2m & 7cm Yagis on the hydraulic mast.



VOTA Day

Branch 2 Auckland ran a VOTA activity day from 11am to 1pm on June 27. VOTA is Volcanoes on the Air and was introduced by Philip ZL1PSH in 2024 as a way to utilise Auckland's volcanic cones.

On the activity day, hams were encouraged to activate or chase volcanic cones. Almost all QSOs were on 146.500 MHz using FM. Having simultaneous activations on the same frequency did not lead to confusion. Activators took their turn making individual contacts. The led to a sensible interleaving of the QSOs in different activations.

Cillian ZL1RPC and I chased from Br 29's club rooms. Despite using 100W and a Yagi at about five metres, there were QSOs we could not complete because there was no line of sight.

I was well pleased with chasing 11 activators in two hours and thoroughly enjoyed the event.

Potaholic's Mid-Winter 30

Potaholics is a Facebook group that complements the Facebook group *ZL SOTA and other /P*.

Members of Potaholics organised a 12-hour event for June 29. The goal for participants in the event was to make 30 contacts with activators of New Zealand parks and lakes or with other ZL operators. The goal of the event was to get more activity on the bands.

Cillian ZL1RPC and I chased from the Br 29 club rooms as time permitted between 9:50am and 3:30pm. We used 40m, 6m and 2m. Ranked in order of decreasing number of contacts, the bands were 40m, 2m and 6m.

There was a lot of activity on 40m and this led to many people reaching the goal of 30 contacts. I chased 28 activators and one non-activator.

I daresay the success of the event will mean more such events will be held.

LLOTA

Lakes and Lagoons on the LLOTA [1] started in Chile in 2024 as an expansion of existing national certificates. The goal of this expansion was to provide a global, accessible, and 100% aquatic-focused award program.

LLOTA was introduced into ZL land about two and a half months ago with Matt ZL1NVW as the New Zealand manager. There are currently 1052 lakes and lagoons in the New Zealand program. The ontheair.nz website [2] has all the information about these water features you are likely to need.

LLOTA provides another set of opportunities to get on the air!

[1] https://llota.app
[2] https://ontheair.nz

Mentoring scheme

The Radio Society of Great Britain has an operating award for the bands 6m to 70cm. The award [1], known as the V/UHF Activity Award, has five levels. A very good mentoring scheme for new ZL hams could be created from the first level.

For the first level of the award the recipient has to make 30 contacts on 2m and 20 contacts on 70cm using FM and/or SSB. All contacts must be simplex. All contacts on a band must be with different stations. A station can be contacted on two bands. No QSLs are required. Just a signed log of the contacts. The reference [1] gives more precise details about the requirements for the award.

As well as helping to mentor new hams, the first level would get some established hams on the air more.

[1] https://rsgb.org/main/operating/amateur-radio-awards/vhfuhf-awards/

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.

July 4. NZART Memorial Contest. CW & SSB on 80m. 100W & QRP sections. 0800-1100 UTC.

July 18. Trans-Tasman Low Band Contest. CW, SSB, and PSK & RTTY (combined) on 160m, 80m and 40m. 08:00 UTC - 14:00 UTC.

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.

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.

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

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

Translate

Last night I was SWLing on an overseas webSDR and heard a CW operator send

CQ LH SM/XXX/P LH SWE 2O6

where XXX denotes a German callsign. Translate the above CW into plain English.

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.