

5, September, 2026

- From the Shack
- ILLW
- Foxhunting
- Andrew White Memorial SOTA Day
- The Taranaki Award
- Vernal Equinox Activity Day
- Major POTA event
- ZL6FF
- Calendar

From the Shack

Grey line. I know from talking to members of the public while I have been operating in the field that contacting stations in other countries is seen as impressive. This leads to my suggestion of having operating sessions around grey line that are open to the public.

SSB, FT8 and CW could all be demonstrated at the sessions. The emphasis should be on SSB because visitors can immediately understand what is being sent. FT8 could appeal to people who use computers a lot. CW would have historical interest and could, as it does even today, attract people to the hobby.

Regional events. I believe we could help promote the hobby by having more in-person on-the-air regional events in popular public areas. In Auckland, there have been POTA days in Long Bay Regional Park and a SOTA day on Maungawhau / Mt Eden. Other possibilities include a foxhunting event where members of the public accompany the hunters, and attempts on an NZART vhf and above distance record where members of the public are encouraged to watch.

ILLW

The 2026 International Lighthouse Lightship Weekend (ILLW) was held August 15-16. Ten NZ lighthouses were activated. The North Shore Radio Club (NSRC) activated Bean Rocks Lighthouse, see the photograph below [1], from Bastion Point.

The NSRC operated from its coms van on 40m, 20m, 15m using SSB, and on 2m and 70cm using FM, SSB and DMR. Yagis mounted on the van's mast were used for 2m and 70cm. Steve ZL1SRP's GP4 quarter wave vertical with four resonant radials per band was used for 40-20-15-10. The GP4 antenna has two coils and a capacitance hat.

I assisted with the NSRC operations. We found the local nose on HF was very low. We had lighthouse to lighthouse contacts with three lighthouses in NZ, four in Australia and one in the US. We also had QSOs with France, Greece, Indonesia and Israel.

The ILLW went well for Br 29 and I look forward to the 2027 event.



[1] Lee Gilbert, via Wikimedia Commons.

Foxhunting

As part of its centennial celebrations, Branch 02 Auckland held a 2m fox hunting event on August 16 in a southern part of Lloyd Elsmore Park, Highland Park, Auckland. The wooded parkland in the photograph below shows the area. Participants were not required to go north or east of the creek in the photograph.

There were six foxes. These were made by the Branch 02 president Matt ZL1LZ and are programmable. Tracy ZL4TRX adorned the foxes as shown in the second photograph. Each fox had its own frequency on which it transmitted its id. The signal strength among the six foxes was not uniform. I found I could not hear at least three of the foxes in the start area.

I used a two-element Yagi. Everyone else used three-element Yagis including those that were made at a Br 02 workshop earlier this year. Two groups found all six foxes and were awarded prizes.

This event was an enjoyable two-hour activity and is something other clubs might consider holding, preferably several times to give members an opportunity to develop skills at foxhunting. Possibly Auckland clubs could rent the foxes from Br 02?





Andrew White Memorial SOTA Day

The Andrew White Memorial SOTA day is an annual event held on or near Andrew's birthday. Andrew was a pioneer of SOTA in New Zealand. This year the event will be on September 12 and will provide a good chance to make summit-to-summit contacts.

Br 29 will be supporting local ops who would like to try activating a SOTA summit on the memorial day.

This support includes: advice on the content of a SOTA go bag, accompanying an op on an activation which can include a trial activation, and advice on alerting, spotting, logging and uploading logs.

The SOTA summits an op could activate include Pukekohe Hill, Moir Hill, and Maungawhau / Mt Eden. The summits of Pukekohe and Moir Hill can be driven to; Maungawha / Mt Eden requires a 10 to 15 minute walk.

The Taranaki Award

The 2026 Taranaki Award runs from 12:01am NZST Friday 18th Sept to 11:59pm Sunday 20th Sept.

Operators outside of Taranaki need to earn 25 points by contacting stations in Taranaki. ZL6FRA (a compulsory contact worth five points); ZL3AB, ZL2QF, ZL2TO, ZL2HWA, ZL2PT, ZL2ANN are each worth three points; other Taranaki stations are each worth one point. Each callsign may be scored once only.

Operators within Taranaki need to earn 30 points.

Any band may be used. The Western Link Repeaters of New Plymouth 720, South Taranaki 705 and Wanganui 690 can be used, as well as the National System, and the daily net on 3660kHz at 8pm.

Vernal Equinox Activity Day

Br 29 is hosting a Vernal Equinox Activity Day on Saturday, September 26 at the POTA park Maungatauhoro / Wenderholm Regional Park. The event is open to all radio amateurs and will run from approximately 10:45am to 1:30pm.

The activities during the event will include an activation of the POTA park and experiments with amateur radio equipment. A possible experiment is seeing how many contacts can be made on 2m from sea level at Wenderholm.

While at the park, people could visit the Couldrey homestead. It is open 1-4pm. Admission is $7.

Major POTA Event

Rhode Island POTA is coordinating the activation of all 61 POTA parks in Rhode Island on September 11, 12 and 13 (some activations will be September 10). The webpage for the event is at https://ripota.org/activate-ri-2026/ and the schedule of the activations is at https://ripota.org/activate-ri-2026/schedule/

This event should provide an enjoyable DX challenge for ZL ops.

ZL6FF

Those of you who listen on the CW frequencies might have heard the call sign ZL6FF. This is the national FISTS call sign for New Zealand. It is used for CW only.

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.

Sep 11 - 13. Rhode Island POTA event.

Sep 12 NZST. Andrew White ZL3CC Memorial SOTA Day. Br 29 will support new local SOTA activators.

Sep 18-20 NZST. The Taranaki Award. See in this issue.

September 26. The North Shore Radio Club's Vernal Equinox Activity Day. 10:45am to 1:30pm approx. See in this issue.

Oct 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.

Oct 17 & 18 UTC. POTA Support Your Park.

Dec 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.

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

Dec 8. H Night Contest. AM 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. The opinions expressed in this issue are those of the author(s).