

6, October, 2026

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Andrew White Memorial SOTA Day

The Andrew White Memorial SOTA day is an annual event held on a Saturday at or near Andrew's birthday. Andrew died in 2018 and was a pioneer of SOTA in New Zealand. This year the event was September 12 which was Andrew's birthday.

The day is a good opportunity for chasers to earn chasers points and for activators to earn S2S (Summit to Summit) points. The day is also a good opportunity for experienced SOTA activators to introduce ops to SOTA activating.

I activated Moir Hill, my first solo SOTA activation in four years. The time of the activation overlapped with the weekly meeting of Br 02 (Auckland) and I was well supported by Branch members who chased me on 2m FM. I finished with 37 QSOs across 40m, 20m and 2m. I had six unique S2S.

The postings on the FB group *ZL SOTA and other /P* show that other activators enjoyed the day and made many contacts. The Andrew White Memorial SOTA Day can rightly be regarded as a highlight of the annual ZL SOTA calendar.

Br 29 Vernal Equinox Activity Day

Br 29 (North Shore) held an activity day at Maungatauhoro / Wenderholm Regional Park on Saturday, October 3. The park is 35km north of the Auckland CBD as the crow flies. The activity day had been postponed from the previous weekend because of bad weather.

The photograph below shows Br 29's QTH at the park. The QTH was built around a picnic table and was about 15m from the carpark. L-R: Steve ZL1SRP, the Br 29 president, Cillian ZL1RPC, a Br 29 committee member and manager of Br 29's radio room, Olivier ZL1XS (contest callsign ZM1K), a well known ZL contester, and Charles ZL1CNB, a Br 29 member. There were other Br 29 present who are not in the photograph.

Two radios were used. A Yaesu base radio owned by Steve and a portable radio, a FX-4CR [1], owned by

Charles. The antennas used were a 40-20-15-10



multiband vertical with two resonant ground radials per band, and an EFHW 40-20-15-10 antenna with a coil so the antenna can be used on 80m.

Charles used his FX-4CR to activate the park as a POTA park. Other activities on the day included DXing, testing filters designed to eliminate the interference between, and discussions about radios and contesting.

Several of the attendees told me the day went well. I believe the three main reasons for this success were

- The setting was picturesque.
- The weather was good. No rain and little wind.
- The day was mostly unstructured. Turn up and do what you want to. A good example of the KISS principle in use.

The next Br 29 event is likely to be an activation of the POTA park at Musick Point, possibly combined with an activation of Motukorea / Browns Island.

[1] FX-4CR Transceiver (prod)

Mid-Week SOTA

Over the last three weeks, I have completed four SOTA activations on weekdays. Back when I did SOTA activations in 2022, I did not attempt activations on regular weekdays because I thought I might struggle to get the required four contacts. I had no difficulty getting the four contacts on the recent activations. I averaged about 10 contacts and this was using just SSB on 40m and 20m, and FM on 2m. Using CW as well would have given me more contact, especially with VKs and JAs.

The photograph below shows part of the view from my shack on Maungawha / Mt Eden.



The next photograph shows my shack on the Clevedon summit. My YL often comes with me on my activations.



We took a pair of secateurs with us on the Clevedon activation because we thought there could be gorse growing across the second half of the track. There was not but there was a bush lawyer plant [1]. The photograph below shows me giving the plant a light trim.



[1] Bush Lawyer (Rubus cissoides) | NZ Native Plants

Oceania SSB DX Contest

The 2026 Oceania SSB DX Contest was held from 0600 UTC Saturday October 3 to 0600 UTC Sunday October 4. I listened to the contest on Saturday evening and early Sunday using my phone and a New Zealand webSDR. I also listened on Sunday from the Br 29 clubrooms using a club radio and made three contacts on 15m (I will submit a check log for these contacts.)

This was the first time I had listened to an Oceania DX contest and three aspects of the contest stood out for me.

- The QSOs were often conducted at a more relaxed pace than I expected and the exchanges were often not the minimum possible. For example, I heard a station say after completing a QSO with a mobile station "Safe driving".
- The VK and ZL stations had strong signals. This is hardly surprising given the stations would have been running at least 100W. The strong signals contrasted noticeably with the weak signals I hear (or do not hear) from activators of outdoor features. Many of these activators use no more than 10W.
- Four character callsigns were common.

JOTA

Jamboree on the Air (JOTA) runs from October 16 to 18. On Saturday 17th, the Whangarei Amateur Radio Club will be on 40m from about 10am to 2pm for JOTA. They would appreciate contacts from ops in other parts of New Zealand. The Whangarei Club will be operating on 7.090 or thereabouts.

There is an informative article on JOTA and JOTI on pages 8 and 9 of the October, 2026 issue of RASA's QTC magazine, see QTC Magazine – The Radio Amateur Society of Australia

Oct 17-18: POTA & SOTA

There are two OTA events scheduled for the weekend of October 17 and 18.

There is POTA's quarterly "Support Your Park" event. This runs from 00:00:00 on Saturday October 17 to 23:59:59 on Sunday October 18. The event is for both activators and chasers. If you activate at least one park, you earn an award. If you chase at least one park, you earn an award.

In the late afternoon and early evening of October 17 NZDT there is a SOTA event involving S2S contacts between VK/ZL and European stations. This event will be a very good opportunity to earn one of SOTA's All Band Mountain Hunter awards and to gain S2S points.

You will probably need at least 20W. If you do not have far to walk from the road end to the summit, you could use a 100W transceiver and a large battery such as 50AH. Possible local summits are Maungawhau / Mt Eden, Pukekohe Hill and Moir Hill.

In a FB post, Warren ZL2AJ said "You also probably want to consider a hill without RF on it to be able to hear the weak signals."

Morse Code World

In mid-September, Stephen Phillips who is the developer of the Morse Code World (MCW) website, released a new QSO trainer Ultimate QSO | Morse Code World on

the website. This trainer gives the user a lot of control over the type of QSO.

Along with other ops, I tested parts of the new trainer. In particular, I tested the part of the trainer that generates SOTA QSOs. I suggested some changes to the QSOs generated for ZL SOTA activations. Stephen implemented my suggestions and made changes to the QSOs for other countries. A lot of work for Stephen.

If you are interested in using software to improve your ability to receive CW, I can strongly recommend the new QSO trainer on the MCW website.

Contest Group

I am interested in forming a local contest group. The aims of this group would include improving the contesting skills of the group members as well as participating in contests as a group.

I see my involvement in amateur radio as a zero sum activity. The more time I spend on off the air activities, the less time I have for on the air activities. I prefer the latter type of activities. Hence the contest group would not have the formal structure of a club. For example, there would be no long meetings, no large committees and modest adherence to Robert's Rules of Order.

Let me know if you are interested in helping to set up the contest group.

Portable radios

If you are thinking of buying a new radio for portable work, or like collecting different portable radios, you could find reading the Field Kit Gallery [1] on QRPer.com worthwhile.

The page has links to information and photographs about the following radios and their use in field kits:

CFT1
Elecraft KH1
Elecraft KX1
Elecraft KX2
Elecraft KX3
FX-4CR
Homebrew/Kits
Icom IC-705
mcHF
Mountain Topper MTR-2B
Mountain Topper MTR-3B
Mountain Topper MTR-3B V4
Mountain Topper MTR-4B
Penntek TR-35
Penntek TR-45L
QRP Labs QCX-Mini
QRP Labs QDX
QRP Labs QMX
(tr)uSDX
Venus SW-3B
Xiegu G90
Xiegu X6100
Yaesu FT-857D
Yaesu FT-891

[1] Field Radio Kit Gallery | Q R P e r

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.

Oct 17. VK/ZL <-> Eu S2S event. Late afternoon and early evening NZDT.

Oct 17 & 18 UTC. POTA's 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).

The shack for my recent SOTA activation of Maungakawa ZL1/WK-125. We were protected from the strong wind.

