

# GYMPIE COMMUNICATIONS & ELECTRONICS GROUP INC.

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER 2011

After a lapse of almost 3 years we are trying once more to get a regular monthly newsletter out to members.

This newsletter is an attempt to pass on to members of the GCE Group information from the Committee.

Be a means of transmitting technical information.

And most importantly be a place for members to voice their views.

It will only succeed if members are prepared to play their part.

In this issue there are two items which cover the history of amateur radio in the Gympie area.

A catch up on the news of Jeff Johnsons fantastic achievement of walking across Australia from East to West.

Report on the electronics and radio courses being run each month

## **Presidents Report for October 2011.**

The last couple of months have seen many achievements for not only the club but its members and non members alike. I'm very proud to have assisted in the training of our two new f-calls and wish both Tanya and Mark the very best with their future years in the hobby. We also have a number of people who are thinking of getting their licence and for others like Jim and Isaac who are in the process of upgrading, from experience I can say that the effort to get there is worthwhile in the end, it took me a few goes to get my standard licence but the joy of making the grade was a fantastic feeling that I will always remember. We now have the internet on at the shed and thanks must go to Isaac, Paul, Roger and Erik for the parts they played in making it all happen. People with internet access can now view the latest photos that members have uploaded via the medium of radio.

The weekly get togethers at the club are a relaxing way for members to catch up and also a perfect opportunity for those who are interested in the hobby to ask some questions over a cuppa.

John Smith has done lots of work behind the scenes with the library and the magazines keep coming !!!!!, John has also put a huge effort into the website based database with the much appreciated help from Roger VK4BNQ.

If any of the group would like to go up to our repeater site and help out with some maintenance it would be much appreciated, if you have never been up there before it is certainly an experience to see the repeater site and all the associated equipment.

The fundraising barbecues have been doing really well and a big thank you to Barry VK4KKN and all his helpers in making sure the club's bank account stays in the black.

In closing I would also like to thank all the members that gave support to Geoff in his walk across Australia, Roger VK4BNQ assisted by Erik VK4AES, Barry VK4KKN and Bob VK4MR ensured that our club and it's callsign was well heard all over Australia.

I look forward to seeing you all at the meetings and if you get a chance please drop in early and take part in Roger's training nights.

Greg Weir President GCEG Inc

## **Office Bearers**

President: Greg Weir VK4VBU  
Treasurer: Barry Molkentin VK4KKN  
Secretary: Isaac Neumann FIBN

**A Review By Our Past President Bob Dixon VK4MR**

In looking back at my tenure as the first president of the newly formed Gympie Radio group it might firstly be worth a brief return to what were perhaps some of the turning point that made this all happen. The advent of amateur radio in the Gympie district dates back a very long way and covers decades of activity, however in the late 1990's sadly it went into decline and eventually no longer remained an active group. So with your indulgence let us take a brief walk back in time and revisit the history of some of our more recent activities in re-establishing the group. About six or seven ago I moved from Woody Point, on the Redcliffe peninsula where I had been a founding member of the radio club to live out at Cedar Pocket. During the moving period I came across what then was the voice of Gympie, Alan Booth VK4EAB, who regularly kept me company as I moved my belongings up to Cedar Pocket. This being so I knew that amateur radio was indeed alive and well in Gympie, at least as far as Alan was concerned. I also noted, from my regular check-ins on the Good morning net, that the Sunshine Coast radio Club were the custodians of the assets of the old Gympie club, which included the 2m repeater, then located along with the 70cms, on Mount Boulder. A short time after my arrival we organised a get-together of local hams at the RSL, many of whom I was now more aware of. This informal meeting was well attended, with many from the old club along with the new comers making the effort. It was at this meeting that the talk moved to once again rekindle the idea of forming a radio Group in the area, however despite the positive comments it did not happen. With the inevitable passing of time we started an informal group meeting, also held at the RSL, with the main players then being Greg now VK4VBU, Alan VK4EAB, Paul VK4YPM, Quinton VK4BQG, Tony Holdup, Chris VK4BX, VK4JZ Len and others who from time to time popped in. It was at one of these gatherings that it was decided we should revisit the idea of re-establishing the group and with a show of hands the idea was passed unanimously. We elected an interim committee that comprised of me as president, Greg as secretary and Barry as treasurer. It was with Paul's generosity that we were able to regularly meet in the basement of his shop in Mary Street, something we did for just on two years or so. During that time we did look to find a more permanent home of our own and to that end I contacted Queensland Rail regarding their old Signallers buildings in Tozer Street. At this point I would have to say that as the president I had as my primary goal the establishment of the

group in a home of its own. I always felt that above all this would be imperative for the survival of the group, particularly as it would give the group the ability to attract new members and grow, which was and still is the case. The Tozer Street site located high up and occupying a good securely fenced off area, and comprising three old buildings QR no longer required, suggested we should have no real problem in securing them as our home. Sadly this was to prove a frustrating and pointless pursuit covering nearly 4 years where in the end QR had I believe, failed to negotiate with us in good faith. Rather than let us use them they opted to demolish them. To say this was a big disappointment to us all would be an understatement in the extreme and was particularly so for me as I was convinced we would eventually make this our home. Sadly over much the same period my approaches to our council for their help also proved to be a similar fruitless pursuit. Our offer of help in emergencies with backup communications as part of their LDMG efforts in a disaster was never taken seriously by them, so further efforts in this direction were seen as being just as unproductive. However, around about this time, following the involvement of EMQ, I was asked to sit on the council's emergency welfare committee which I did. Despite my previous lack of success I felt this could be our best link with council, and, one that might at some point in the future open up the possibility that they would eventually see fit to help us. The now incorporated group, with affiliation to the WIA, took over the responsibility from the Sunshine Coast Radio Club for the running of the two repeaters. During the period that SARC looked after the repeaters, for logistical and access reasons, they moved the 2m repeater from Mt Boulder and re-established it at Mt Wolvi. Whilst the move was understandable unfortunately at Mt Wolvi the repeater had far less coverage and was difficult to access even from Gympie. Into the picture came Jason VK4MIH, who I am sure out of pure frustration with the existing repeater, made a move to put up his own 2m repeater on Mt Corella complete with an IRLP link. This proved to be an excellent site and gave exceptionally good reliable coverage over much of our shire. A few years later, with the Mt Corella site no longer available, Jason sold the repeater and all associated equipment to the Gympie group, all made possible due to the generous help of both the members and Roger VK4BNQ, who covered the prime cost related to the cavities. As it was with others in the group, I felt it was imperative for us to re-establishment our 2m repeater back at the old Mt Boulder site, something that was always going to be a challenge, but one I am pleased to say we met. Our solar powered repeater is a credit to all the members who have helped to pay for it, install it, maintain it and those who use it regularly. Our move from Pauls shop meetings took us to the old church

in the museum complex, and whilst a less than comfortable venue, it did serve a purpose. Whilst I always felt that this was going to be a temporary situation it did have some merit given the old group also used a building in this complex. The other point was that our old radio tower, placed there by the original group, was still standing. Because of this I thought it might have been a possibility we could find a permanent home here, even back in the building previously used by the old group. Once again this was a painful path that in the end was to see no positive outcome, however as time passes a better outcome could perhaps result. Along the way, as it is with all groups such as ours, we have had losses and wins, some that have sadly seen members leave, but on the plus side balanced out by the new members who have seen fit to come and join us. Another area that has been important has been in our applications for grants of one sort and another. One application was successful and that gained us some much needed important gear for the group to use and to assist in training, along with money to help pay for the repeater on Mt Boulder. A few months back now a passing comment made to me by Paul suggested that there was a possibility that a new venue for us might be had with involvement in the "Men's Shed" program then being considered. Following contact with Ken Meldrum from Queensland health we were able to gain access to the shed and get a room of our own for the very first time. This has now seen the antenna farm grow there and a radio station established for all to use. We have a hobby that is unique in that it requires effort, and in no small part money to be part of, however, despite all of that to me it is a hobby I personally feel privileged to be part of and involved with, particularly having been your president. That box in your shack is a box full of friend, every time you turn it on, listen, or call CQ, they are there to pass the time of day with or simply to give you a new country as you perhaps chase that elusive DXCC. The road to this point has been as I say frustrating at times, but that aside it has been fun along the way, and my time as your president has I hope given you all hope that as a stronger group we will continue along a path to greater success. As a consequence of all of our combined efforts I believe we now have a group that at its core is dedicated and committed to the hobby of Amateur Radio in general and in particular Gympie. As your past president I would urge you all to continue to uphold the standards and spirit of our hobby as set by those who have gone before us, now silent keys. Finally I must thank both Greg and Barry as my fellow members of the committee for their untiring support, and to the members at large who have combined to make all of this possible now and into the future. Bob Dixon VK4MR

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## **The Pioneer Of Amateur Radio In Gympie**

In Queensland many people have made valuable contributions to radio, one person stands out as a real pioneer and visionary, that was Arthur Ernest Dillon 4CH/4EZ Ernest Dillon grew up in the gold mining town of Gympie and it appears that his first professional occupation was with the Gympie Times Newspaper. After a short stint as a cadet journalist, he turned his attention to wider horizons and took off for the "big smoke" - Brisbane. During the following six years, AE Dillon was to accomplish more in wireless than many do in a full lifetime of experimentation. Perhaps his most noteworthy achievement was his claim to be the First Sound Broadcaster in Queensland - 25th July 1921, his transmitter and receiver were constructed from 'raw' materials. Records of early transmission test from Dillon and one or two other early radio pioneers show the relative success of their tests but the records clearly show that A E Dillon 4CH, was as progressive as anyone in this area of early broadcasting on the medium wave band. Brisbane's oldest and historically rich building (convict built in 1828), is the Observatory, Signal, or Windmill Tower. It is undisputed that A E Dillon 4CH, was the first experimenter to conduct MW tests and transmissions from this tower during late 1921, or early 1922. The Tower was ideally suited for this purpose as it commanded a panoramic view from Moreton Bay in the east, to Darling Downs on the western horizon. Nearby he erected a 150 feet (45m) mast and strung an 80 feet (24m) antenna between it and the Tower - the most impressive configuration of its kind in Queensland at the time. Under his direction, 240V AC was supplied. This simplified the problem of power supplies and enabled his tests to be conducted on QRO instead of QRP. A E Dillon was largely responsible for the formation of the Queensland Institute of Radio Engineers (QIRE) and became its first Secretary/Treasurer. This body claimed to be the first of its kind in Australia, its main aim was to raise the status of wireless 'tinkering' to that of an organised science,

with its members willing to assist anyone interested in intelligent research. The Institute set-up its headquarters in the Observatory Tower, installed its own transmitter and operated under the call 4EZ. The inaugural meeting was held in March 1922, and the first radio broadcast a month later, in April 1922. The Daily Mail Newspaper reported the test as a phenomenal success: "Using only six watts, reception of music and voice was logged as far south as Sydney, New South Wales". Success indeed! Ernie then returned home to his home town and, with the help of his former employer The Gympie Times, called on all those interested to form a radio club. The Gympie Amateur Radio Club came into being in May 1923 - a first for Gympie and another first for 4CH. In Brisbane in October 1923, Ernie participated in arrangements made by the QIRE to demonstrate wireless transmission to the general public. Using 25 watts of power a musical program was transmitted from the Observatory Tower and listened to by an audience of 1000 people attending a concert at the South Brisbane Technical College. This was quite a remarkable display of interest by the man in the street in the 'new fangled invention of wireless'. Yet another successful first for A E Dillon 4CH - a telegram was received from Sydney saying reception of the concert was loud and clear. Over the next 10 years 4CG was involved with many other wireless interest and scientific groups; The Australasian Radio Relay League. At the inaugural meeting of the Queensland chapter of the League, A E Dillon was voted into an executive position. The Relay League of Queensland (RLQ), a group completely distinct and separate in aspirations from the above-mentioned group, was then founded - and again A E Dillon's name was to be found listed as an RLQ Committee Member. He was also on the Executive Council of another freshly formed society, The Radio Society of Queensland. After a very busy and successful business and family life A E Dillon 4CH, became a silent key on the 24th March 1960 in Brisbane. The above article plagiarized from an article on the GCEGInc web site.

**Jeffs Walk Across Australia.**

Jeff Johnson - VK4XJJ is no stranger to long walks having, in 2007, already walked from South (Spencer Gulf) to North (Gulf of Carpentaria) across Australia, on that journey he was raising awareness and funding for the Deaf Blind Association. Now in 2011 he has completed a walk across Australia from East to West, this time raising awareness and funding for NETS, an acronym for Newborn and paediatric Emergency Transport Service. The South to North journey was a distance of 2500km and took 151 days with Jeff attempting to raise \$60,000 while the East to West journey was a distance of 4971km and took just 162 days and is an attempt to raise \$80,000 all for NETS. During this last walk Jeff was operating a Yaesu FT-817nd on 40mx & 80mx into either a loaded whip on the support vehicle or a 1/2 wave dipole which he strings up between a couple of trees every evening. He also operated from the support vehicle's Codan HF radio with about 100W on the 20 metre amateur band. The Gympie Communications and Electronics Group provided the daily Amateur Radio support and QSL card management (cards were sent via the WIA bureau).



On the 2nd October 2011 Jeff arrived at Steep Point, WA, having walked across Australia.



Boots but no hat.



Hat but no boots.





Morning cuppa.



CQ CQ CQ this is VK4XJJ VK4XJJ VK4XJJ over.

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## **Basic Practical Electronics Training**

The Gympie Communications & Electronics Group, based at The Shed, started some basic electronics training from 1st September 2011. The 1 hour classes are held on the 1st Thursday of each month commencing at 6pm. Everyone is welcome to attend the classes and also afterwards the general Club meeting which will commence at 7:30pm. The lessons will be a combination of practical and basic theory with the emphasis on practical. Each month we will usually cover a single electronic component, explaining and showing the different sizes and forms it may be available in and how it is used in a simple circuit. The aim of these classes is to help people get some hands on experience to start building and understanding electronic circuits and have some fun doing it. This will later help them understand questions in the amateur radio licence examinations or just help them understand more about everyday things in the world that nearly always have some form of electronics inside. No need to enrol, just be there, if you have any questions about the course please email [roger@rdswebs.com](mailto:roger@rdswebs.com) or contact the Club [www.gcegin.org.au](http://www.gcegin.org.au) or phone 0457792857.

## **Antenna, Radio & Operation - Informal Classes**

On Wednesday mornings at around 10am all those interested in Amateur Radio who need guidance, or advice, on all topics of the hobby can attend an informal class. This will include such matters as antennas, radio equipment, regulations and licencing, internet linking and any general inquiries people may have to help them understand how easy it is to gain a radio licence so they can ultimately participate in the exciting hobby of Ham Radio.

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## **Examination Results**

Tanya and Mark were successful in their Foundation Grade Licence examinations.



Tanya with Kathy the WIA Assessor

## **New Members**

James Sweeny