

TWO AUSTRALIAN ATV RECORDS IN 3 DAYS!

August 2006.

The saga had a number of different but related facets! After a gestation period of the usual 9 months, the plan was completed, and the journey began. It was a complicated plan, involving the record attempt on a week-end, followed by a journey by all concerned to Lismore to take part in the ARISS contact by the Tevan-Tintenbar School. Jack, VK2TRF and Dan VK2GG were at one end, and Nick VK2ZTY was at the other end.

The ARISS schedule eventually presented by NASA made the details of the plan very tight indeed! However we proceeded, intending to utilize the week between the record attempt and the ISS schedule for surveying of future ATV sites.

Jack had taken possession of some WR-90 waveguide with flanges that very week – so Dan took out hack saws and files and had a penny feed ready to go in less than half an hour - with a genuine Australian penny! After pizza's and a bottle of red wine, followed by an early night, Jack VK2GG and Dan VK2GG traveled north to Dorrigo with the not-very-promising weather forecast of rain for the whole week-end. The weather in Dorrigo was cold, with occasional showers, but the pub provided a ham-friendly motel room, albeit basic.(see photo) The meals and other consumables provided by the pub were also quite acceptable!



MOTEL ROOM



Nick VK2ZTY Still from Video

The first day of the record attempt was windy and quite wet. The day began quite early, with Jack adjusting the Terlin Outbacker for 80M, for the “Stone the Crows” net on 3.588 khz at 6.00 am. We were at a very quiet HF location, and finally managed to be heard by Ted VK2UI at Raymond Terrace, and by Allan, VK3ASB, who was mobile on his way to an Air Show at Temora.

By about 12.00 pm, VK2's TRF and GG had gotten themselves lost in an (absent) farmer's paddock looking for a site near Ebor, and were at least an hour from the scheduled ATV spot. Of course we had the GPS and trusty laptop displaying moving map! Finally, nearly an hour later, we were able to erect a serviceable shelter at the lookout near Ebor, west of Dorrigo, under which dishes were set up for both 2.4G and 10G. We then settled down to await Nick's domestic duties (of soccer, etc) to be completed, and for him to set up the Mt Nardi end of the link.

After starting the gas stove with a spark from jumper leads, we enjoyed soup, coffee and then heard Nick VK2ZTY SIMPLEX on 70cm as he set up (195km away!). This

HAD to be a ripper path, and so it was on 2.4G, with lovely P5 pictures from Nick firing through some small sapling trees in the rain! Note Jack's Test Card with Call Sign for ID written by hand on the back window of his Rangie! 10Gig was not at all a goer, not surprisingly; obviously 10Ghz does not like rain! The return 2.4G video was also P5, and we achieved the record of 194 km at 3.30 pm. Whew! What a day!



Now came the convoluted part of the programme! Nick was unavailable for week-day ATV playing, so Jack VK2TRF drove solo to Lismore, as there was better weather being forecast for later in the week. Meanwhile Dan VK2GG waited in Dorrigo while Garry VK2UNI drove up from Wingham in Dan's truck. The plan was a further attempt at 10Ghz on the Monday, from the same location near Ebor. Weather in Dorrigo remained fine and sunny nearly all day, while Dan and Garry waited for Jack to survey a likely spot north of Mr Nardi. This proved unsuitable, and Jack then proceeded up the slippery slopes of Mt Nardi, near Lismore. Comments such as the melting state of the "Tim Tams", the impending sun-burned state of both Garry VK2UNI and Dan VK2GG were not greeted with much enthusiasm by Jack VK2TRF! Some people just have no sense of humour! Luckily, the rain cleared enough for P3/P4 pictures to be received over the 194 km path, with a small horn at Jack's end, and a combination of 60cm and 1.2M dishes at Dan's end. What a thrill! 200mW over nearly 200 km! Imagine what we can achieve with dishes at each end! Congratulations and thanks to: Jack VK2TRF, Nick VK2ZTY, and Garry VK2UNI.

Equipment details:

2.4Ghz: G1MFG exciters with ex-commercial 30W PA's both end; 24db Gridpack Antennae. G1MFG receivers with home-brewed signal strength meters.

10Ghz: G1MFG 2400mhz exciters with Khune MKU 10X (4 X multipliers). G1MFG 23cm receivers with 9Ghz LO LNB's. MA-86551 X-Band Horn with 17db gain and Kuhne 1W amp one end, and 60cm/1.2M parabolic dishes with penny feed the other end.

A packet of Tim-Tams (or is that a carton?) is on offer to anyone who can point out elevated sites which exceed 200km apart, and which UKW Tools say is LOS!



Dan VK2GG