

June 2007

Issue #18

This newsletter is sent out to all who have called in on the AWA net with the hopes that it will encourage you to call in again and help to keep the AWA net alive and well.

With some of the money gathered from sales of donated goods to the AWA, we are now able to pay for envelopes and mailing of the newsletter to almost all who want it.

Should you not want to receive any further publications of this newsletter, drop me a note and I will take you off the mailing list.

Happenings:

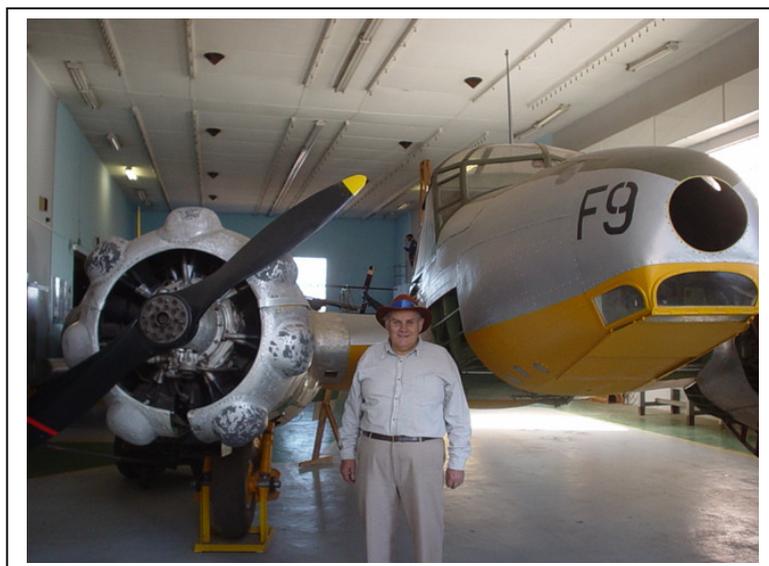
On Saturday 12 May, OM Cliff ZS6BOX paid a visit to ZS6MUS, the SAAF Museum Amateur Radio Station at the Swartzkops Airbase. There together with Dave ZS6AAW they called in on the AWA SSB Net. On the previous Thursday Cliff had visited ZS1MUS at Ysterplaat, which although not operative at the time, is clearly visible through a glass display window.

Dave has religiously called in from ZS6MUS on Saturday mornings, setting out from his home QTH in Irene. He could certainly do with a few more visits from other OM's willing to key the mike.

Says OM Cliff, "make a family outing of it like we did. We took a World War II pilot along with us to view all the aircraft on display, many of the type of which he had flown. Dave together with The Friends of the SAAF Museum will be delighted to show you around. They also run a nice little cafeteria and pub so rest assured you will get to watch "the match"

Swartzkops is going to become even more interesting, as WaterKloof is soon to close in order to resurface the runways etc, and some of the squadrons will be moving across. So one will actually see some military aircraft activity during your visit.

In the picture are left to right, John Howie who rebuilt an Anson to static display condition (see other picture), OM Cliff, his XYL Wendy, Doreen Pooley, John SealyFisher the pilot and OM Dave. The aircraft is a Ventura used by the SAAF to transport VIP's around during and after the war.



Letter from John ZS6JBJ about his recent trip to the US:

Our trip to the states planned last year had to be cancelled for health reasons. Failure of both kidneys of my wife, stated by the medical fundi's to be irreversible plus dialysis every 6 hours made it unlikely we would ever go.

However the miracle did happen, kidneys recovered to 38% function, dialysis was no longer required. Just getting on board that airplane was something special, the holiday of a lifetime that followed was the icing on the cake.

At 1840 hrs on 29th March we took off from Johannesburg headed for Atlanta via Dakar (crew change). The 16 hour flight is best forgotten, the seats were designed for midgets. An American lady in the next seat had the gift of being able to talk a gramophone into scrap iron. QRM was successfully reduced by giving her our muti intended to make us sleep.

Next morning, 30th March ,our 44th wedding anniversary, we cleared immigration and customs at Atlanta. Suggestion that cup of coffee be anniversary present was gracefully declined.

Atlanta airport is massive and very busy, with 4 landing runways in use it was interesting to see planes coming parallel in non stop on each with 2 minute gap between.

4 hours later the short 1 hour connecting flight took off for Charleston, South Carolina. it was a jol. After a 3 year absence emotions were running high on seeing our son Iain and his wife Rene again. Rene is a Krugersdorp meisie. We then were driven to city of Goose Creek about 20 kilometres from Charleston. There are about 50 S African families living in the surrounding area

First impression which was very noticeable was how clean everywhere was, not once did we see any broken bottles, empty tins or plastic bags anywhere.

In the fast food eating places everyone removed their plates etc when finished and dumped them in bins provided. Eating out places were on every corner, all busy, meal portions were huge. Eating out is a way of life and not expensive. The local MacDonald's was open 24 hours a day, it had a drive through section, strange to see kitchen staff inside with hands free kit taking the orders and communicating with the cars.

We also saw a drive through chemists and drive through banks. Believe it or not in an Irish pub a toilet seat with pressure pads, when you stood up it flushed itself.

Nowhere was there such a thing as a car watch nor did many of the houses have walls or burglar alarms in surrounding area, any who did were hooked up to the police station, not private security companies. Cars were left parked in the short driveways overnight plus braai equipment left on stoep. They do have crime but police are highly visible everywhere and on the ball. My only contact with the law was when the local 2 meter tall sheriff, all 150 kg of him complete with 10 gallon hat, sagging gun belt and chewing cigar who heard me talking in MacDonald's, came over and drawled "where you from boy?" Jokingly I answered Goose Creek. Seems his curiosity was aroused because he said it was not local accent. When I said S Africa the mildly curious changed to become extremely suspicious. Next question was "How come y'all from S Africa and speak with a Scottish accent?" Had to explain before S Africa lived in Scotland. Told me back in past his family roots were Scottish, welcome to Charleston and enjoy my holiday. For a few minutes I had thought he was going to lock me up as an illegal immigrant.

Every second house was flying the national flag, they are extremely proud of their country. The cars have only one number plate on the rear, while living in that state the number plate stays with the owner permanent. There are numbers on either side that show month and opposite side the year road tax expires. You can easily see if tax is expired, for every day expired a heavy penalty of \$20 is imposed. The front place for number plates is decorative. For example I saw on one the rebel flag. Above it was written " American by birth" on bottom side was "Southern by grace of God" Locals were very friendly and were only too willing to explain about damn Yankees and war of Northern Aggression.

The roads were good, busy and fast, during peak hours there was slow movement of traffic same as Joburg. Drivers were sometimes impatient. When the school bus stopped to offload passengers, a sign with "stop" on it automatically extended from the side, traffic in both directions had to stop either side of bus until sign was retracted. Potholes were non-existent

Charleston is very historical and has many interesting tours. The houses are made of wood and have false brick covering same. Hurricanes are not uncommon for area and severe damage does take place every so often. The first shots of the civil war were exchanged between the two forts guarding the entrance to Charleston harbour. The harbour is the 4th largest for container traffic in the USA. Main industry is tourism.

Climate whilst there was good, temperature generally in mid 20's, in the summer months the humidity is extremely high making it unpleasant to be out or to drive if vehicle does not have air conditioning.

The radio hams in the area are friendly and extremely active in promoting the hobby. The Charleston Amateur Radio club retired members, or those who can meet every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at a fast food place for breakfast and a rag chew. The club has an official meeting once a month in a steak house, after the meal the business is dealt with. I attended their last official meeting and was made very welcome. Lots of questions about how ham radio was doing in S Africa. About 55 members were present, lots of activities on the go. I missed their successful hamfest by one month. The average age of members would be around 55 at a guess, some really interesting over the hill billies.

I did not take an HF rig with as putting up an antenna on or around the house could lead to complaints being made. I did however buy a 2 metre hand held and chatted to the locals when the chance arose. Their operating practices are much more relaxed than here. Call signs were mentioned at start of QSO and at end when signing off. In between never heard a call sign, very different to here in RSA with overuse of call signs in comparison.

There is a very impressive maritime museum at Patriot Point, Charleston. Moored there is the aircraft carrier USS Yorktown commissioned in 1943, on the same jetty is the USS Clagmore the last of the diesel powered submarines. In addition there is a WW2 destroyer and a Coastguard ship. All are open to visitors and well prepared for visitors to look around. Veterans are there to give information on any query visitors may have. This was the highlight of the holiday for me, being on an aircraft carrier again brought back a few memories. Its 40 years since I left HMS Hermes and the RN. The Charleston Amateur Radio Club, besides having their repeater antenna erected on the Yorktown, also have a clubroom there, which is used for contests and special events.

Eileen my XYL, who "disappeared" for the first 3 days of the holiday, was exploring the local store named Wal-mart, its open 24 hours a day and is massive. I mean massive and sells everything.

Rental is paid for the phones over there, but local calls are free making access to Internet so easy. Browsing through all the ham related sites without keeping an eye on the clock was a novelty. Radio equipment costs much less than here and mouth watering to see all the ham items that were for sale. The postal system was impressive, usually next day delivery for local stuff. If in stock ham equipment could be fedexed within 3 days of ordering from most parts of the USA, even one day by paying extra and if you were not in the item was left on your doorstep. Very few times items in post got "liberated"

Whilst there I made fairly regular contact with OM Clive ZS6AVP on a programme for hams only called CQ 100. It's completely computer orientated, no rig, antenna or power pack needed. CW could also be tx using keyboard but rx was audio only. Not many ZS stations use it but its bringing lots of hams back into the hobby elsewhere especially in housing complexes or where money is tight for replacing old rig.

On negative side we were told the medical services are very good but extremely expensive, a routine visit to doctor sets you back R700. Everyone has personal liability insurance because there is a culture of being sued for the slightest thing. If not successful the person suing does not have to pay costs.

On the 18th April we returned to Sunny South Africa. Very much a 3rd world compared to where we had been but still "home".

Best 73 de John ZS6JBJ

ZS0AWA/CW.



Heard on frequency this last month has been Barrie ZS6AJY, Ian ZS5IAN, Clive ZS6AVP, John ZS5JON, Denis ZR6DNS, John ZS6JBJ. Join us on Saturday afternoons at 14:00 SAST. The net is run at ± 12 wpm and so should meet the needs of all interested in CW. 7020 is the frequency. Wanting to upgrade to full ZS, here's your opportunity to do some slow CW and get some practice in.

AM Net:

Please come up and join us if you have the time and the inclination. 19:30 Wednesday evenings and 06:00 Saturday mornings on 3615. We have changed the time on Saturday's due to the band opening a bit later as the winter months approach and the sun raises it's head a bit later every day.

The band certainly has not been very favourable , but we continue to stick it out.

The Saturday morning net has been well attended. Heard on frequency this month have been Gary ZS5NK, Rod ZS5RK, Don ZS5DR, Munro ZS5IN, Rad ZS6RAD, Barney ZS6BLL, Willem ZS6ALL, Denis ZR6DNS, Brian ZS2AB, Eddie ZS6BNE and yours truly ZS6ADY.

The musical frequencies on this band are really of a high standard and it is extremely interesting to hear the different tastes of music enjoyed by those taking part. Of course you don't have to play music to join us on freq.

SSB Net:

The SSB net continues to grow in numbers as the band improves. More and more new callers coming, in and some of the guys that haven't called in for a while. So keep it up. Pass the word around that you do not have to specifically be running antiques to join the net, although it would be nice, but to have an interest in the restoration of these fine old boat anchors.

We appeal to all of you, when calling in on 40m, should you not be able to hear the control station, try letting someone know who you can hear and you know can hear the control station. It's better than doubling over everybody.

We seem to be averaging around 20 callers every week, which goes to show the kind of interest being generated in valve rigs at the moment. The most call ins have been 32 this month in one session. Willem really needed his coffee after that one.

Rad – ZS6RAD, sent me this interesting article from the internet on Astatic Microphones.

Astatic Microphone Laboratory, Inc.

Model D-104

Astatic Microphone Laboratory, Inc. was founded in 1933 by two hams, C.M. Chorpening, W8WR (later W8MJM) and F.H. Woodworth, W8AHW. The two hams experimented with different types of microphones for their AM ham stations beginning in 1930. Their mutual friend, Charles Semple, worked for Brush Development Co. where he had been experimenting with Rochelle Salts crystals. Semple demonstrated some crystal pick-ups that Brush was working with and Chorpening and Woodworth recognized that a crystal microphone would provide excellent service in their AM ham transmitters. When Astatic was incorporated, in 1933, Semple was brought into the company as general manager. The D-104 Crystal Microphone was introduced in 1933. Almost instantly, the D-104 became a favorite of AM ham operators for its high frequency response, which resulted in very intelligible audio. Its high output voltage was characteristic of crystal elements and its high impedance allowed for direct grid input. The early D-104 mikes use of a 1" thick case and has a large ID tag along with tapped holes for "ring & spring" mounts. The case thickness was reduced in April 1937 and smaller tags were then used and the ring holes eliminated. The "grip" switch stand ("G" Stand) was introduced in January 1938 but didn't become popular until much later. The early "G" stand bases are gloss black with metal ID tag. Astatic was originally located in Youngstown Ohio, but moved during WWII (late 1944) to Conneaut Ohio. After WWII, Astatic Microphone Laboratory became The Astatic Corporation. The D-104 continued in production with little change until the 1960s when a solid-state amplifier was added to the "G" stand. In 1976, an eagle and shield was added to the rear cover to commemorate the US bi-centennial. Other variations appeared from time to time until 2001, when production ceased - an incredible 68 years after the first D-104 was offered.



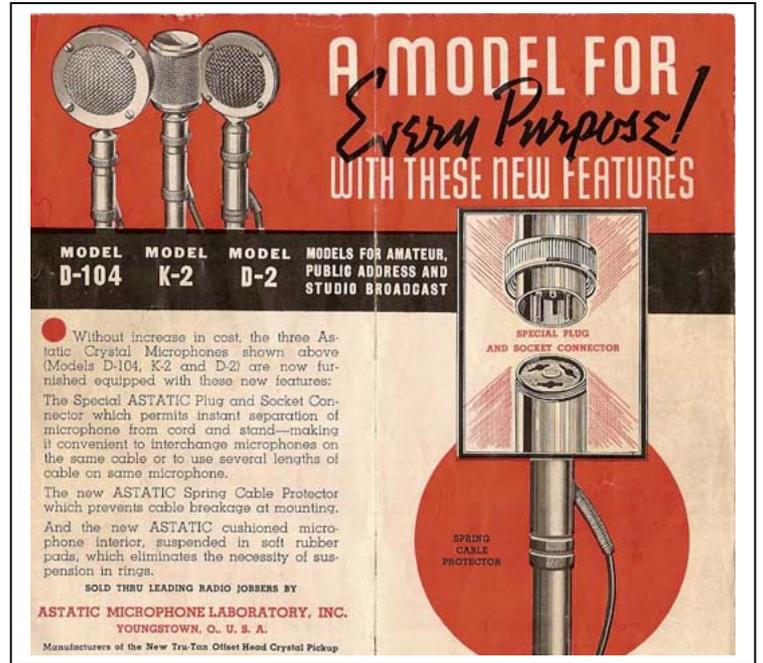
Mid 50's Style with G Stand

Pre 1937 Style

1937 - 1944 Style



Late 30's in Original box



Swap Column:

Gordon ZS6RE, has the following items for disposal:

- FT-101E
- FT-101EE
- FR50B
- FT301 – with PSU, ATU and original mike
- Speedx – Model 515 Paddle
- Barlow Wadley – not working

Should you be interested in any of these fine items, contact Gordon at 082 944 4101. He is situated in Linden – Johannesburg.

Any swaps or items for sale in the antique line ? Let me have the details and we will advertise it here.

There is an online swap shop on the website of the Highway Amateur Radio Club for ALL amateurs and interested parties to use - it is not restricted to members only. We have been invited to make use of this facility too. Should you want to, use the link to the HARC at the end of the page to take you to their website.

If you would like to forward this newsletter to any other interested parties, please feel free to do so. Print it out and put in on your club notice board, or give it to someone interested in valve radios. If you know of any who report in on the net but don't have email, print it out and give them a copy.

Net days and times:

Saturday 06:00 AM Net – frequency 3615Mhz

Saturday 08:30 SSB net - frequency – 7070Mhz

Saturday 14:00 CW net – frequency 7020Mhz

Wednesday 19:30 AM net – frequency 3615 (-5 for QRM)

This, and past copies of the AWA Newsletter can be downloaded from <http://members.harc.org.za/newsletters/AWA/>. Our thanks to the Highway Amateur Radio Club in Durban (<http://www.harc.org.za>) for providing this service to our members and other interested parties.

Thanks for the bandwidth.

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