

The Old Codger Writes

The Last Old Codger (Probably)

G'day! How the **** are ya?

Well, it is done. We finally got out of the old Country and to be truthful, it is a weight off our minds. What with the high levels of crime (despite 'official' figures saying otherwise), ever rising costs, CCTV cameras on every street watching your every move and people in Government that are more interested in feathering their own nests than doing anything useful, I am glad we got out. Yes, there are problems out here too but most of 'em don't seem to be self inflicted. Even the bad WX back in G-land seems self-induced somehow.

We arrived to find that all the radio gear was here before us and all in one piece. The new house needs a bit of TLC with a paint brush but nothing the XYL can't handle over the next few months. Within a week of being here I had the offer of a tower for a ridiculously low price as it seems a local guy has just got promotion with his firm and is moving down to Tassie and so will have no room for the tower. Quite a result!

Although we have only been here a few months, we are now treated like locals and not like Whinging Poms. This may be because of the fact we were here only recently, or the fact that we don't complain like some of the other 'immigrants' do. Yes, of course we miss things like warm bitter, proper bacon, decent sausages etc., but we don't go on about it. Just the other evening, round at a friend's barbie, I would have gladly paid £10 to put one of these moaners back on the bloody boat and he has been here for nearly 40 years!

Before leaving, we had to do the usual whizz round and say cheerio to all our friends and relatives and this meant trips all over the UK and a couple of trips abroad. It is when you are overseas, and you see the 'English' abroad, that you realise that there is little hope for the country in future years. I think that 90% of Brits I bumped into while abroad could not string more than two words together without there being some profanity in there somewhere.

It is when you are flying hither and yon that you form opinions on certain things, and even after nearly 60 years of flying, these opinions never change. One of these is that children, under the age of 10, should not be allowed to fly, even if accompanied by an adult. Those children above the age of 10 and below 18 years of age who wish to fly should (a) be accompanied by both parents, and (b) should be muzzled.

I got really p****d off on one trip as there was a lady behind us with a baby. The brat cried and / or screamed for most of the, mercifully short, flight. The woman just smiled and expected everyone to go "ooh" and "ah" at the little sod. Not me. I just told her in no uncertain terms that she should have stayed on the Pill and that babies and travel do not mix. My advice to her was to stay at home in future and keep her knees together. On hearing this, three people sitting nearby actually applauded. I don't think the EasyJet stewardess liked my views much either, but tough, these selfish, thoughtless idiots need to be told.

Since being here, I've decided I will not be doing this 'Infernalnet' thing. To me it seems too technical, too expensive, wastes too much time and has no place in Amateur Radio. If you can understand how to use it, it might be fine to look up stuff, but for everyday radio use it is crap, and the way it is used in contests for example, it is cheating, pure and simple. However, the XYL will still play with it when she pops next door as she seems to have mastered how to use that mice thing, and does 'email' on it, but it is not for me. If anyone wants to contact me, it will mean good



ol' pen and paper. This has already caused some raised eyebrows in town as everything that you fill in out here asks for your email address. It is also assumed that you have a mobile phone. This also causes consternation as we don't have one and won't be getting one. Even having a 'normal' phone installed was a bit of a problem as I was told that I had to have something called 'broadband', while all I wanted was a bog standard telephone. After some 'discussion' they agreed that they could install a normal phone after all.

Way back in the June edition of RadComic, some woman asked for comments about the magazine. Well, just before we left, I did what I said I'd do and I took her up on her request and wrote several pages on all the things that were wrong with it, including the fact that each month the Comic would drop on the mat earlier and earlier and that if this continued, people would be getting the Easter edition just before Christmas. It will, therefore, come as no surprise that I did not even get a reply to my letter. In fact, I did not even get an acknowledgement that they had received it.

This outcome does not matter to me now as I have resigned from the Radio Society of Greater Bedford. However, not content with just writing in and saying that I quit, I wrote the down all the full and detailed reasons why, not just the fact that we were moving to VK, and sent a copy to several people on The Board. It might not change things but I felt a bloody lot better afterwards.

I also felt better after finding out that, just before we left, I had beaten British Telecom, formally known as 'The Bastards'. I have been fighting them for some months as they want to charge me for repairing their own equipment, i.e. their socket on the wall. They said that the fault we had was caused by damp and that it was my fault. After several letters and hundreds of phone calls from their 'caring' call centre people in downtown VU2, I finally wrote to the Telecommunications Ombudsman. That started the ball rolling and within a couple of weeks I received a call saying that the 'charge' had been cancelled. It was really nice to be able to say thank you to the lady who telephoned with the news and then to tell her in the same breath that they can come and take out their equipment as I don't want it any more.

Have not got much in the way of aerals yet. Have managed a dipole that gives me coverage from 160 through to 10m, but it is not very high at the moment. Managed to fit a pole to the chimney, and ran the dipole to a nearby Eucalyptus tree, so it is about 35 – 40 ft up but the tower will have to wait few months until the back yard has been sorted. Will let the XYL finish painting the house first before setting her loose on the yard. However condx seem to be picking up quite a bit and it is good to see 10m open again. When we moved it, a dig through the junk left in the garage resulted in a damaged CB vertical which I have repaired and have trimmed it to work on 28,025 and it works bloody well, I can tell you, as I can regularly work JA, 9M2, 9M6 and KH6 most days as well as the 'locals', the ZL's. Only have it fixed to a galvanised pole hammered into the ground with no radials or anything like that, so it must just be the good moist soil being so close to the Ross River that does it. Have also managed a short QSO with Marc 'TOC on 20m and it was good to hear him on the key again. Heard Frank, 'LWI, chasing some DX one evening, but not sure if he caught it. The only other Club Member heard has been Dick, 'URA, with his J49 call in a contest but he was a bit weak and operating S&P, so I could not catch him.

It was good to read that the Christmas 'Do' will now be held in January. After the total cock-up the other year, this was the only thing that could be done. It's a pity I will miss it, but rest assured that at the appointed hour, I will raise a glass of 4X and toast the Club. I say 4X, but there are quite a few damn good Aussie wines in this neck of the woods and some of the local Cabernet Sauvignons are as good as any French plonk, so I may toast you all with a bottle of the 2005.

Despite what you may read in The Sun, we do not eat Kangaroo. Some boffin out here says that we should start eating 'em as this would cut down on the amount of cattle that roam the place and cut down on all the 'gas' they produce. Daft idea. Each ruddy cow has an area the size of Essex to wander over all to itself so I would imagine any 'gas' produced would be easily dispersed. Pity



they can't stop all the gas being produced by these boffins down in Canberra. Now that would help a bit.

Went up to see John in Mission Beach the other week. He told me about the cock-ups on the RSGB web site, which he checks regularly, where Clubs are not listed correctly and even those that are listed are often shown under the wrong Regions or even the wrong County. Even 12,000 miles away the RSGB have become a joke.

A good few days were had by one and all and we even got to spend some time out on Dunk Island, which is beautiful. If ever any of you get out to VK, you have got to go out to some of the islands on the Reef. Green Is., Dunk, Magnetic and Heron Islands, are all worth a visit. Fantastic.

Not so fantastic is a bird that is quite common round here called the Cassowary. [Look it up in your Funk & Wagnel] It is a big sucker, a flightless beast, a bit like an Emu, but with one hell of a temper. They used to be seen rarely, but recently have become bolder and can often be seen near roads. In fact we saw one by a creek on the way back from John's. You don't get near these buggers either as they can attack you for no reason, and there is no point in running away as the sods can run at 30mph with no problem.

The local Club have welcomed me back with open arms and I have sent the Club QSL for Deez to add in here somewhere. Most are active on HF, but all use 2m for chatting while out and about so it seems I might have to put a 2m rig in the car at some stage. Hell, me on 2 meters, who'd have thought?

Will try and drop you a line when time permits, but I reckon we are going to be busy out here for the next couple of years. Meanwhile, to those who don't use the mode, I implore you to learn CW. Even with a limited HF aerial, because you are in a flat or have a postage stamp-sized garden, and have to use low power because you have TVI problems, there is more fun to be had in working around G or near EU stations on the key than there ever is in chatting on 2m FM. For us out here, those on QRP CW regularly work up into JA and even W6 when the wind is in the right direction, so DX can be worked. In fact there is a chap just south of Townsville who regularly checks into the South-East Asia FISTS Net on CW each month, works JA and ZL with no problem, and he never runs more than 8 watts output. How do we know he runs only 8 watts? Well, he still runs a Codar AT5 TX from the 60's!

Keep pounding the brass guys.

73's

The Old Codger

