



QUARTZ HILL ANNUAL REPORT - FEBRUARY 2008

The Wellington Amateur Radio Club leased the Quartz Hill site from ECNZ (now Meridian Energy Ltd) in 1997 on the understanding that it could be required for a commercial wind farm for electricity generation wind farm at some time in the future. That time finally arrived in 2007. Site works have started for the construction of the new wind farm and it is estimated that the project will be completed in 2009. Our antenna infrastructure was dismantled during a series of special working bees in September/October 2007. All operational bookings after September 2007 have been cancelled.

The eastern end of the Quartz Hill building has been made secure for the storage of the club's assets while the wind farm is being constructed. Meridian Energy has also kindly provided two containers to assist with the storage of the dismantled antenna infrastructure.

The club's wooden poles have all been removed but unfortunately many of them were damaged by the contractors responsible for the removal activity. Meridian Energy is aware of this situation and has assured us that that the club will suffer no overall loss.

We continue to be hopeful that it will be possible to build new antenna infrastructure and once again operate an amateur station at Quartz Hill once the wind farm work is completed. Meridian Energy is supportive of the club being able to continue using the building and associated land for this purpose. The good news is that there is an elevated flat area of land to the north of the existing radio station building that is not being used for turbines and can potentially be used for a new set of HF antennas.

A critical issue is the technical compatibility of amateur radio operations with the RF noise that is generated by the wind farm. The Committee is working with Meridian Energy and Siemens on this matter and hopes to reach a conclusion in the first half of 2008. If the RF noise level is excessive then the club will consider the feasibility of establishing a new station at an alternative location.

We are considering a complete re-engineering of the antenna infrastructure for the new station, as there is likely to be less space for the long wire rhombic and vee beam antennas that we have used in the past. It is envisaged that a new configuration will involve a series of masts (ranging from 20 to 60 metres height) supporting yagi antennas for the higher bands and various wire beam antennas for the lower bands.

The club has limited financial resources, so we are hopeful that a combination of ongoing financial contributions from the amateur radio community, donations of surplus resources from industry, practical support from Meridian Energy, and some clever innovation, will allow us to build a bigger and better array of antennas for the future.

Radio New Zealand (RNZ) and The Radio Network have already kindly made the following surplus masts/poles available to the Wellington Amateur Radio Club for use in building a new antenna farm:

- 1 x 45 metre steel lattice mast
- 1 x 30 metre telescopic steel lattice mast (previously used for broadcast station site testing)
- 2 x 22 metre steel poles (similar to the steel pole that the club already owns at Quartz Hill)

The 30 metre mast and one of the steel poles have already been moved from the RNZ premises at Titahi Bay to Quartz Hill (special thanks to Malcolm ZL2UDF for arranging the truck). The 45 metre mast and remaining steel pole are located in Auckland and are being moved to Quartz Hill by one of Meridian Energy's transport contractors.

The number of financial supporters in 2007/08 was 28, down from 36 in 2006 and 34 in 2005. We welcomed two new overseas supporters, Csaba HA3LN and John W2ID, who joined the ZL6QH team for the 2007 CQ WPX CW contest.

The total number of QSOs logged by ZL6QH is 171,733 and 34,196 QSL cards have now been dispatched. We awarded our QSL Manager, Ralph ZL2AOH, a special framed certificate in recognition of his outstanding achievement in processing this number of QSL cards.

Bob ZL2CA and other LF enthusiasts conducted further LF transmissions from Quartz Hill on two occasions (in March and September), but unfortunately the conditions did not allow any new records to be established.

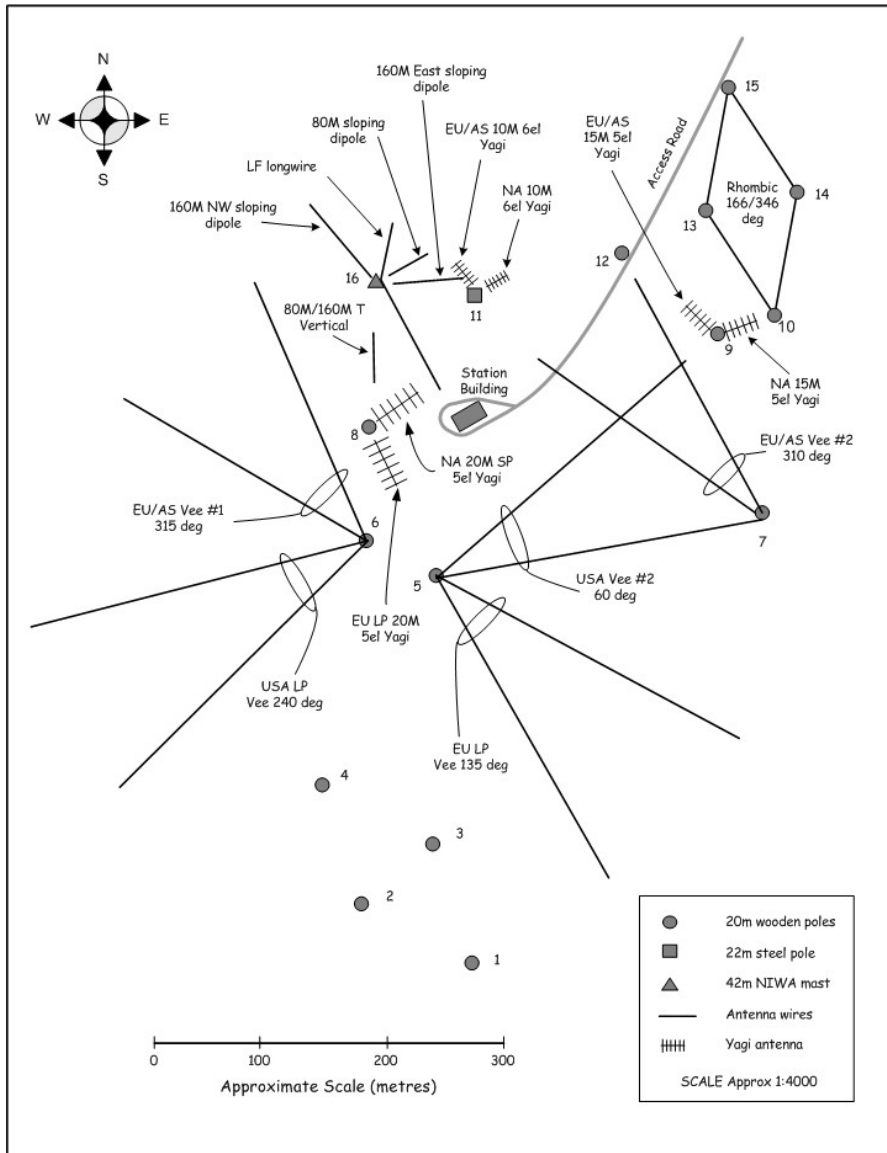
We have seen a few changes to the membership of the Committee over the past year. Bruce ZL2ABC stepped down from the Committee to focus on other personal priorities. Wilbert Knol ZL2BSJ also stepped down at the end of 2007, due to his moving back to The Netherlands to take up a new employment opportunity. Wilbert was an active member of the Committee since it was formed in 1998, and has held the Finance Manager role since 2003. Wilbert did a lot more than just support the business of the Committee - he participated in most of the monthly working bee and contest activities at Quartz Hill, and was also responsible for establishing key initiatives like the ZL6QH HF pactor system. The committee arranged for a plaque to be awarded to Wilbert in recognition of his outstanding contribution. Ralph Sutton ZL2AOH has been appointed as the new Finance Manager, and Andrew Goldie ZL2ACG has been seconded as a new Committee member, to help cover the gap left by the departure of Bruce and Wilbert.

The Quartz Hill account is in good shape with a net surplus of \$943.00 and a closing bank balance of \$4,090.00 being recorded for the year to 31 December 2007. Expenditure over this period was \$1,029.00 and income was \$1,972.00.

Thank you to everyone involved for your support over the past year - in particular: Meridian Energy Ltd for the use of the property and support for our future plans; Vertex Standard (Japan) for the supply of QSL cards; Quartz Hill Supporter Group members for their contributions of finance, time and other resources; ZL1AXG for hosting the web site; ZL2BSJ for his services as Finance Manager; ZL2AOH for his services as QSL Manager; ZL2AMI for his services as Bookings Manager; and the other members of the Management Committee (ZL2BCW, ZL2AOV, ZL2CA, ZL2ABC and ZL2ACG) for their advice and practical contributions.

Clearly there are some big challenges ahead, as the club enters its second decade of activity at ZL6QH, but we do hope to be back on the air again soon and continue the tradition (since 1944) of using Quartz Hill for radio communications.

Brian Miller ZL1AZE, Chair Quartz Hill Management Committee, 15 February, 2008



ABOVE: Layout of the Quartz Hill antenna farm prior to it being dismantled in October 2007.