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The New Zealand Association of
Radio Transmitters Incorporated



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Special Issue

Greetings Everyone,

It is with regret that I inform you that NZART Honorary Life Member and Past President Don Mackay ZL3RW passed away peacefully at his home in Christchurch this morning after a long illness.

Honorary Life Member and Past President Terry Carrell ZL3QL provided these words earlier today:

Sadly we record the passing of Don Mackay, ZL3RW. Those of us at the Hamilton Conference will remember Don becoming ill and although he made some recovery it was never complete. Those close to him watched the gradual deterioration while others of us hoped that he might return to his old self.

Don's history of contributions to our Association is well recorded but other milestones are not so well known. I well remember sitting in the family lounge at Hastings Street watching the early Television test transmissions on the TV set Don had built himself. While they were only "mug" shots we watch as if it were magic.

Don was the Editor of Break-In from 1970 to 1976. Many were the articles in Break-In and great was his interest in mobile operation. The beginnings of the Galbraith Projects were due to his dedication in bringing back from England an early VHF converter – can you remember the AF102s? It was simple to add to the front of an AM broadcast receiver. Soon Don had a design for a 3-valve 12-watt 2 metre transmitter using a Tait AM modulator (2N301s). These units were copied around the country and VHF mobile literally took-off.

Christchurch Branch grew under his influence, as did AREC. Many will remember the AREC training camps in Lewis Pass and other localities. In time, at his new home in Waipara Street, Don constructed a purpose built SAR/CD/AREC "shack" with every facility for search and rescue communications.

Beside that he had his other love, his own picture theatre. Many will have watched cartoon and other old films in his exceptionally well-set-up cinema.

Many came into amateur radio with Don's help, many through the courses he ran. These often included camps where students concentrated on learning the skills, both theory and practice.

It is difficult to think of any area of amateur radio or our Association not touched by Don. Much of what we have achieved can be traced to his influence, especially in the Christchurch area. This includes our excellent club-rooms, the growth of the old and active VHF group, satellite interest and the AREC communication vehicles.

Don had influence on the introduction of VHF/UHF repeaters in New Zealand at a time when our Post Office was opposed to such operation. He used his AREC experience to sway the decision in favour of repeaters and for many years it was the emergency communications aspect that ensured their continuity. We may look back now and wonder that such steps were necessary but it is a different world, much due to the foresight of amateurs such as Don ZL3RW.

Strict as a leader, Don could never be faulted for his dedication to our interests. He held most offices in NZART being finally raised to Life membership in 1992.

Don is survived by his sister Margaret and to her we extend our heart-felt sympathy.

The celebration of his life is next Saturday 18th January 2003 at 1030 hrs in the Westpark Chapel, Wairaki Road, Christchurch.

Ends.

Jim Meachen ZL2BHF
Editor