

• THE BRASS POUNDER •



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Meet Woody ZS3WL

Woody's resume.

My road to becoming a Radio Amateur has been a long and interrupted one, going back as far as 1964.

I attended SACS Junior School, and later SACS High School in Newlands in Cape Town. A good friend of mine was at that stage involved in building small valve Hi Fi amplifiers, and naturally I also eventually also became involved. This served as my introduction to electronics, and radio. (building crystal sets and the like.).

So the world of electronics was not foreign to me when in 1979 the Citizens Band Radios was the vogue. Through this avenue I met At du Plooy (I think his call was ZS1ADP) who stayed in Durbanville and he was an Amateur and if I remember correctly a lecturer at what was then the Cape Technikon.

The quarterly
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THE COOL
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CLUB



At the time I was resident in Brackenfell and met up with ZS1MH Molly Van mollendorf who lived two roads down from me. I worked for a large Insurance Company, and the Engineering Manager was Colin Godfrey ZS1RG. Needless to say discussions came about with regards to Amateur Radio and in 1980 I started attending RAE classes given by At du Plooy.

I had the intention of writing the RAE in 1983, but as life turns out got married in the same year, and much to my trepidation RAE classes took a back seat.

In 2014 after my then life partner passed away I ended up in the Karoo, and my new life partner's son who was a Ham re-introduced me to Ham Radio. I wrote the RAE in October 2015 got an overall "B+" pass and here I am 8 years later putting the story on paper.

During 1980 whilst attending the classes in Cape Town, I was exposed to CW, which has always fascinated me. With me deciding not to write in 1983, naturally any CW that I had picked up and learnt went out the window.

I met Dick van der Bergh ZS2VV (SK) in Cradock in 2019 and he was kind enough to give me a box of CW keys amongst which were 4 paddles and 2 Camelback straight keys. Dick also gave me his ex-army fiberglass link poles that you use to erect a field antenna.

My serious arm bending for CW is due to none other than Mike ZS6MSW. I am on infrequently and my first “session” with Mike had me shaking like a leaf. You realize that there are those operators out there listening to every dot and dash that you send.

I have downloaded many CW tutorial programs, have my wall plastered with a huge CW dots and dashes A3 printout and try to listen to the sounds rather than look at the printout.

I have spent many, many hours listening to Tom ZSOMT doing CW with one of his contacts and I estimated Tom must be around 25 to 30wpm, maybe more.

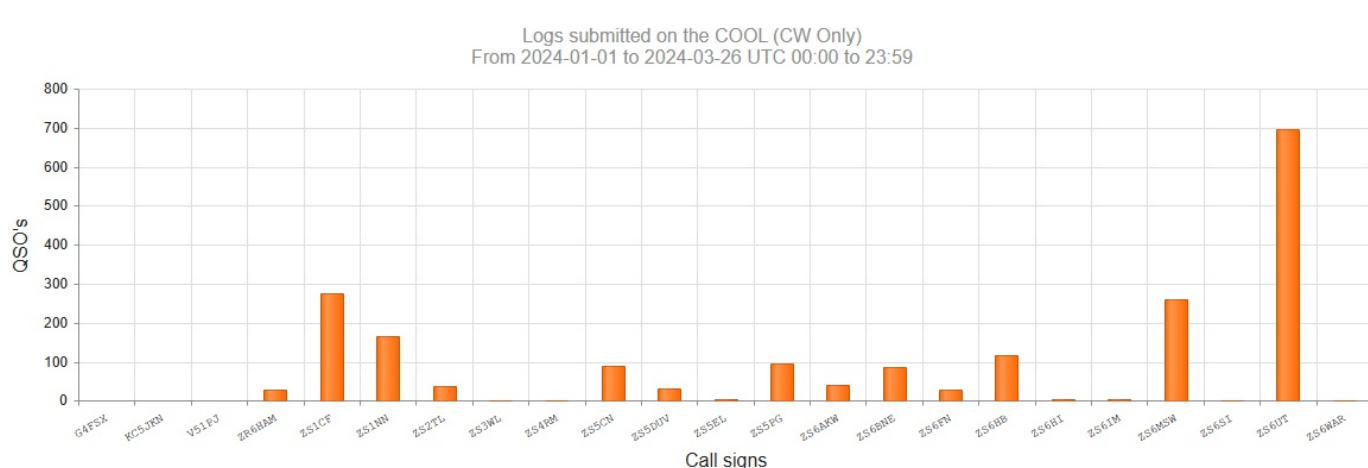
Tom is I think about 12 years my senior and I am aware that Tom was a Radio Operator in the then SA Navy, hence his dexterity. (Must be second nature for him).

Being retired and classified as one of the “grey squad” and not so young anymore, my entry into CW is somewhat belated and it’s a case of getting the brain in functional order to finally distinguish the dots and dashes. I have now started something that I did not envisage myself doing on the “wrong side” of 60.

Hopefully I will be able to master the art of CW before I become a SK. If it was good enough for Marconi then it’s good enough for me.

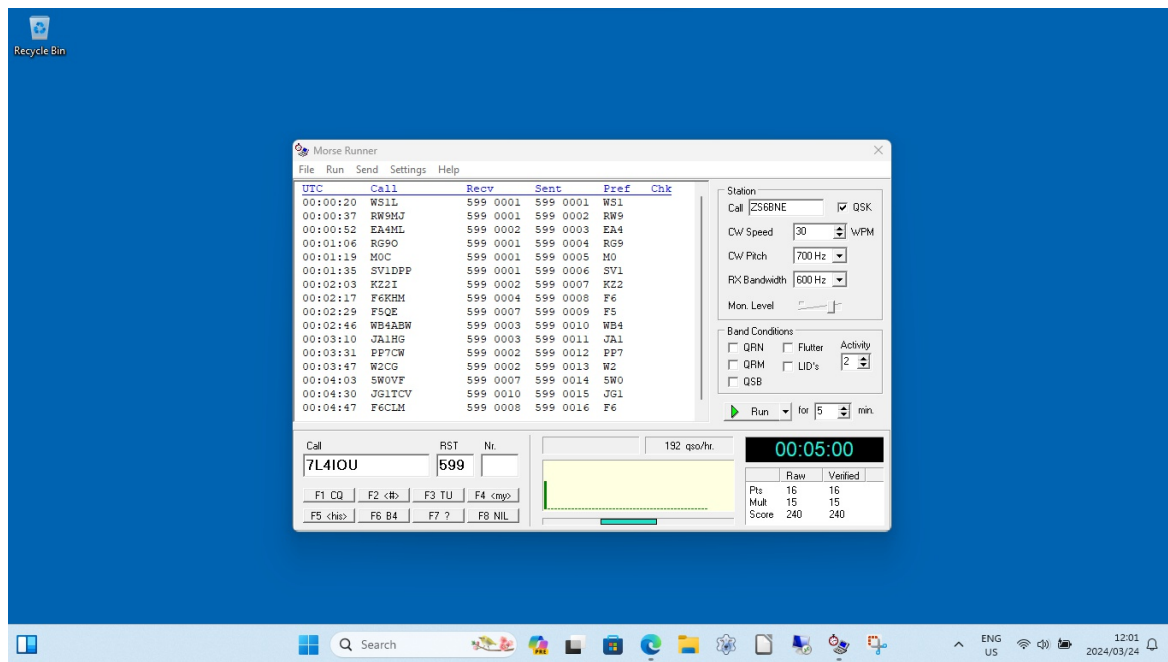
When success comes about there will be nothing that will take the huge smile off my face.

Regards
Woody Collet
ZS3WL



The CW activity logged by The COOL CW Operators Club for the first quarter of 2024. Woody also made his first CW QSO and we congratulate him. The first step is the most difficult, it becomes easier over time. Ed ZS6UT is our leading DXer and very active on the local bands too.

Some stations have become less active as the demands of daily life take priority.



Many years ago a proposal was made to the SARL to introduce a form of recognition for Morse code ability and Morse Runner was to be the evaluation criteria. The idea was accepted in principle.

Morse Runner is the best software that prepares CW operators to venture into the DX environment where speeds are usually in excess of 20 wpm. Morse Runner trains the ear and even more so the short term memory and sharpens character recognition.

The format of exchange is also very similar to exchanging FIVE NINE NINE's and a serial number. The student becomes accustomed to this format and expectations which makes fast QSO's easy.

Longer QSO's seen as "Rag chews" become more possible through "Head copy" once this step is reached.

This is virtual reality as we know it now but the software is already decades old. There are many other CW learning programs but in the opinion of the author, nothing comes close to Morse Runner.

Become a member of the fast growing community of CW operators in South Africa. The COOL CW Operators Club.