# Silent key

Trevor Niven VK5NC (22nd January 1945 -17th February 2023)

Born in Mt Gambier, Trevor married Beth Thompson in 1969 and had two children - David and Lisa.

At school he was one of a group that built crystal sets to listen to the local broadcast station, but when one of them heard Stuart Milowick (VK5MS) on 14 MHz talking to an overseas amateur this began Trevor’s interest in amateur radio.

Al Rechner, VK5ZCR/VK5EK (SK), also an amateur in Mt Gambier, suggested that they could build themselves a 288 MHz transceiver, using a 6J6 as the main oscillator /super regenerative receiver as a learning exercise to become a radio amateur. Trevor took his portable transceiver to Mt Lofty near Adelaide where he had many contacts from high up in the hills.

Trevor gained his VK5ZTN licence in May 1965 and was active on 144MHz.

Being a Fitter and Turner by trade, these skills proved valuable for his interest in the higher frequencies as many of the amplifiers required cavities and special metal work in their construction.

Trevor helped Ron Wilkinson with the construction of his 20 foot dish, made his 1296 MHz dual mode feed and later a two tube cavity amplifier using two 3cx110(7289a) triode valves.

In 1973 he passed the morse examination at 14 WPM and became VK5NC.

Trevor was very active on the 50, 144, 432 and 1296 MHz bands and in the following years won the coveted Ross Hull contest in 1987-88 and again in 1988-89. His interests expanded higher in frequency to the 3.4, 5.7, 10 GHz bands with portable equipment during the 1990s. He was an active participant with several significant DX Expeditions which resulted in numerous distance records. These national and state distance records although now superseded, will be remembered by his colleagues. Later, 24GHz was added and he was a joint winner of the Ron Wilkinson Achievement Award in 2001 for his design, construction and operation of equipment for 24 GHz.

He was one of the people who helped Chris Skeer (VK5MC) with the EME challenge over the years, firstly with the rhombic on 144 MHz and later parabolic dishes. Whenever he could find time, Trevor was a frequent visitor to Chris’s shack for many EME activity events.

Trevor was a Foundation Member of the South East Radio Group. He held various positions on the committee and was appointed a Life Member in 1989. He was recently made a patron of the South East Radio Group.

Trevor moved to Perth, Western Australia in March 2020 to be closer to his family who had been living in the West for some time.

Vale Trevor Niven VK5ZTN/VK5NC