



South African Radio League Amateur Radio Hall of Fame

John Samuel Streeter ZS1W
Inducted in 2016

John Samuel Streeter was born in London in 1884. He emigrated to Cape Town before the First World War. He used the callsigns A1A, A4Z and ZS1W. Streeter's interest in radio started in his youth. His activity around 1909 was terminated when he received a sternly-worded letter from the Post Office.

At the end of WWI, Streeter commenced with broadcasts from his home at 2 Irwell Street, Observatory. A plaque to commemorate this was later erected by the SAIEE. He also founded the Radio Society of South Africa in 1920.

He solicited the help of Len Wells, a neighbourhood boy scout. The Post Office insisted that the boy's father Jimmy had to obtain an amateur licence and supervise his son's activities. Prior to 1922, Streeter obtained the callsign A1A and Jimmy Wells became A1B. Streeter's broadcasts of gramophone records were heard throughout the country, attracting considerable media attention.

During 1922, Streeter supported Shackleton's Antarctic expedition, then returning to Cape Town. He passed world news to the crew and received reports from them that were published in the Argus. These exploits resulted in favourable press coverage for the newly-minted craft of radio. He also established regular contact with amateurs in Johannesburg.

In 1923, he joined the ARRL. He used this avenue to make the Americans aware of his activities.

When commercial broadcasting started in 1924, he discontinued his own broadcasts. He was asked to ceremonially turn on the 10 kW transmitter for the first transmissions.

In 1925, using the callsign A4Z, he made South Africa's first inter-continental contact with Brazil. Later that year, he worked the first American on 36 and 37 m. By the end of that year, he had contacted all continents.

Also in 1925, he became the founding vice president and secretary of the SARLL, which later became the SARL.

His example inspired a slew of South Africans into DX. Len Wells had by this time been allocated the callsign ZS1AU, now assigned to his grandson Dennis. In 1990, Dennis received a headset that had been used in the original experiments from Bill Bryington, who had been an early participant with Len Wells in the Boy Scout listening experiments.

