



TNC-Pi Assembly Instructions & Operating Tips

By John Hansen, W2FS

Portions by

John Wiseman, G8BPQ – Linux configuration

Jim Whiteside, M0HPJ – Xastir

Document editing support by

Ed Slingland, N2WD

Website

<http://tnc-x.com/TNCPi.htm>

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Introduction

Thank you for purchasing a TNC-Pi: TNC-X for Raspberry Pi or TNC-Pi 2.

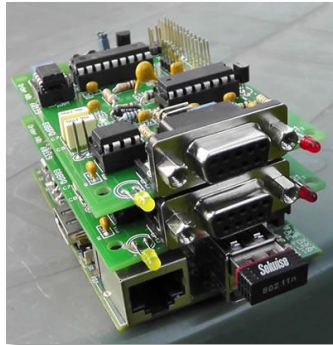


Figure 1: Two TNC-Pi's stacked on one Raspberry Pi



Figure 2: TNC-Pi mounted on a Raspberry Pi

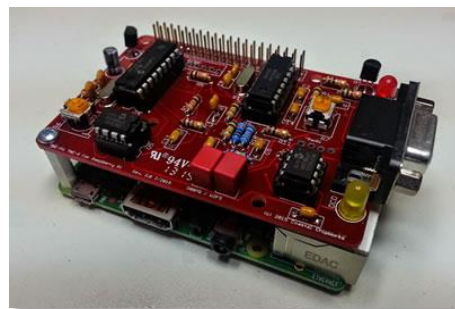


Figure 3: TNC-Pi 2 mounted on a Raspberry Pi 2.

Assembly Instructions

Parts List

Your kit should come with the parts listed in the table below. You can use the two columns of checkboxes to track your progress. As you inventory your parts, put a checkmark in the first column. Once you've installed a part, put a checkmark in the second column.

Inventoried	Installed	Designation	Description	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	C1	4.7 uf or 10 µf electrolytic	Polarized
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	C2, C4, C5, C6, C11, C14, C15, C21	0.1 µf monicap	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	C7, C8	0.01 µf 2.5%	Red and yellow or grey; if grey marked 10 nF
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	C9, C10	18 pf ceramic disk	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	C12, C13	22 pf ceramic disk	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	C3	100 pf ceramic disk	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	R1, R2, R3	100K resistor	Brown, black, yellow
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	R4, R17, R19,	1K resistor	Brown, black, red
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	R5, R11, R14, R16, R18	10K resistor	Brown, black, orange
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	R8	24.9K resistor	Red, yellow, white, red, brown

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	R9	9.31K resistor	White, orange, brown, brown, brown
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	R10	18.7K resistor	Brown, grey, purple, red, brown
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	R6, R7	10K trimmer potentiometer	Orange or Blue
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X1	3.57 MHz crystal	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X2	20.00 MHz crystal	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	D4	Red LED (PTT)	Polarized
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	D5	Yellow LED (DCD)	Polarized
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Q1	PN2222 transistor	3 pin, flat side (don't confuse with U1)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	U1	MCP1700-33 or MCP1700-30 Regulator	3 pin, flat side
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	U2	CML MX-614 Modem	16 pin IC
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	U3	PIC16F1847 microcontroller	18 pin IC
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	U4	MCP6023 Op Amp	8 pin IC
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	U5	23K640 Memory	8 pin IC
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	IC Sockets	For U2, U3, U4, U5	One 16-pin, one 18-pin and two 8-pin sockets
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	JP3, JP4	2-pin header Not included in newer kits	Combined into one 2x2 pin header
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		2 x 13 extra long header 2 x 20 in TNC-Pi 2	

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		9 Pin D-Sub connector	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Printed Circuit Board	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		2 shorting jumpers Not included in newer kits	

Assembly

Note: John McDonough has published a number of high quality photos of various stages in the assembly process. See <http://www.qsl.net/wb8rcr/BuildingTheTNC-Pi.html>

- Start by installing the parts that lie flat on the board. This includes:
 - a. all of the 0.1uf moncaps and
 - b. all of the resistors except for R6 and R7.

R10 and R11 have pads that are rather close together. Be careful that you do not accidentally create a solder bridge between them. Note that all of the components except for the 26 (or 40 in TNC-Pi 2) pin header are installed on the side of the board with the silk screen.

- Next install the two crystals.
Ensure that the 20 MHz crystal is the one nearest the 18 pin IC.
- Next install the IC sockets.
Ensure that the notch on the socket lines up with the notch on the IC outline on the PC board.
Do not plug the chips into the sockets at this point.
- Next install the rest of the capacitors.
With C1, make sure that the longer lead is placed in the hole marked with a +.
- Next install the two potentiometers (R6 and R7). You may find these to be a bit of a tight fit. If so, take a pair of needle nose pliers and flatten the leads before inserting them into the board.

- Next install the two LEDs.
Ensure the shorter leads on the LEDs go through the holes closest to the flat side of the LED outline.

The LEDs can be installed with bent legs so the LEDs point toward the front of the board. This makes them easier to see when TNC-Pis are stacked one on top of the other.

- Install the transistor.
Ensure you are installing the transistor rather than the voltage regulator... they look a lot alike.

- Now install the voltage regulator.
It goes in the three holes above C1. Install it so that the flat side of the regulator faces away from U3.

- Now install the 9 pin D-Sub connector.
Ensure that you push it all the way in so that it is flush against the board. In addition to soldering the pins, you'll gain mechanical stability by soldering the pins that go into the large round holes on the sides of the connector.

Note: The D-Sub connector is optional. You can install the Radio header to connect your radio to the TNC-Pi instead. See the section, [Connecting the Radio](#), for more information.

- Solder in the 2 x13 header. With the TNC-Pi 2 kit this is a 2 x 20 header. This part is somewhat tricky. It is the only part that is installed through the bottom of the board.
 - a.** Start by installing this jumper on your Raspberry Pi and then
 - b.** Lower the TNC-Pi board onto the connector so that the body of the connector is on the BOTTOM of the TNC-Pi board.
 - c.** Now you'll need to solder the board about a half millimeter from all the way down in order to prevent the board from bumping into the USB connector on the Pi. It is not necessary to solder all of the pins. You should at least solder the 4 pins in the corners (for stability) and the first five pins on each row (pins 1 – 10).

Your best bet is to carefully trim the solder leads on the part of the TNC-Pi board that will be on the USB connector side of the Pi to get as much clearance as possible. You might also want to put a piece of insulating tape

on top of the USB connector just to be on the safe side. You can then solder the pins that come through the top of the board.

These pins will allow you to stack a second TNC-Pi on top of the first one if you choose to do so.

- Now install the 2 x 2 jumper (JP3 and JP4). If your board has a JP7 location, also take a short piece of wire and solder it in here to make a permanent jumper. **Note: If you are building a TNC-Pi 2, none of these jumpers are needed or included in the kit. If you are building a newer kit from the original version JP3 and JP4 will also be missing, but you may need to put a wire across JP7.**
- I've included 2 4-40 screws and a 5/8" spacer. If you have one of the Raspberry Pi Rev. B and the original TNC-Pi kit, or if you have the Rev. B+ or Pi 2 and the TNC-Pi 2 kit, you can use this to provide some additional mechanical stability by putting it between the hole in the Pi and the hole in the TNC-Pi. If you have a Pi B+ board and the original TNC-Pi kit, these parts are not needed. There will be plenty of mechanical support from the extra USB jacks on the Pi board, but you will want to use insulating tape on these jacks to keep them from shorting the TNC board.

If you are stacking 2 or more TNC's you might also find it preferable to use a spacer that is a male to female, rather than female to female. These male to female spacers are available on the TNC-Pi website.

- Now install jumpers at JP4 and JP3. They should be installed so they are parallel to the body of the 2x13 pin connector. **If you are building a TNC-Pi 2 or newer original TNC-Pi, none of these jumpers are needed or included in the kit.**

Leave the board connected to the Raspberry Pi and power up the Pi. Check the voltage between pin 5 (negative) and pin 14 (positive) on U3. It should read about 3.3 volts. With the notch at the top of the chip, these pins are the ones half way down the left side (negative) and right side (positive) of the chip.

If the voltage check is not successful, find and fix the fault before proceeding.

- Power down the Pi and remove the TNC-Pi board from the Pi, then install the 4 ICs.

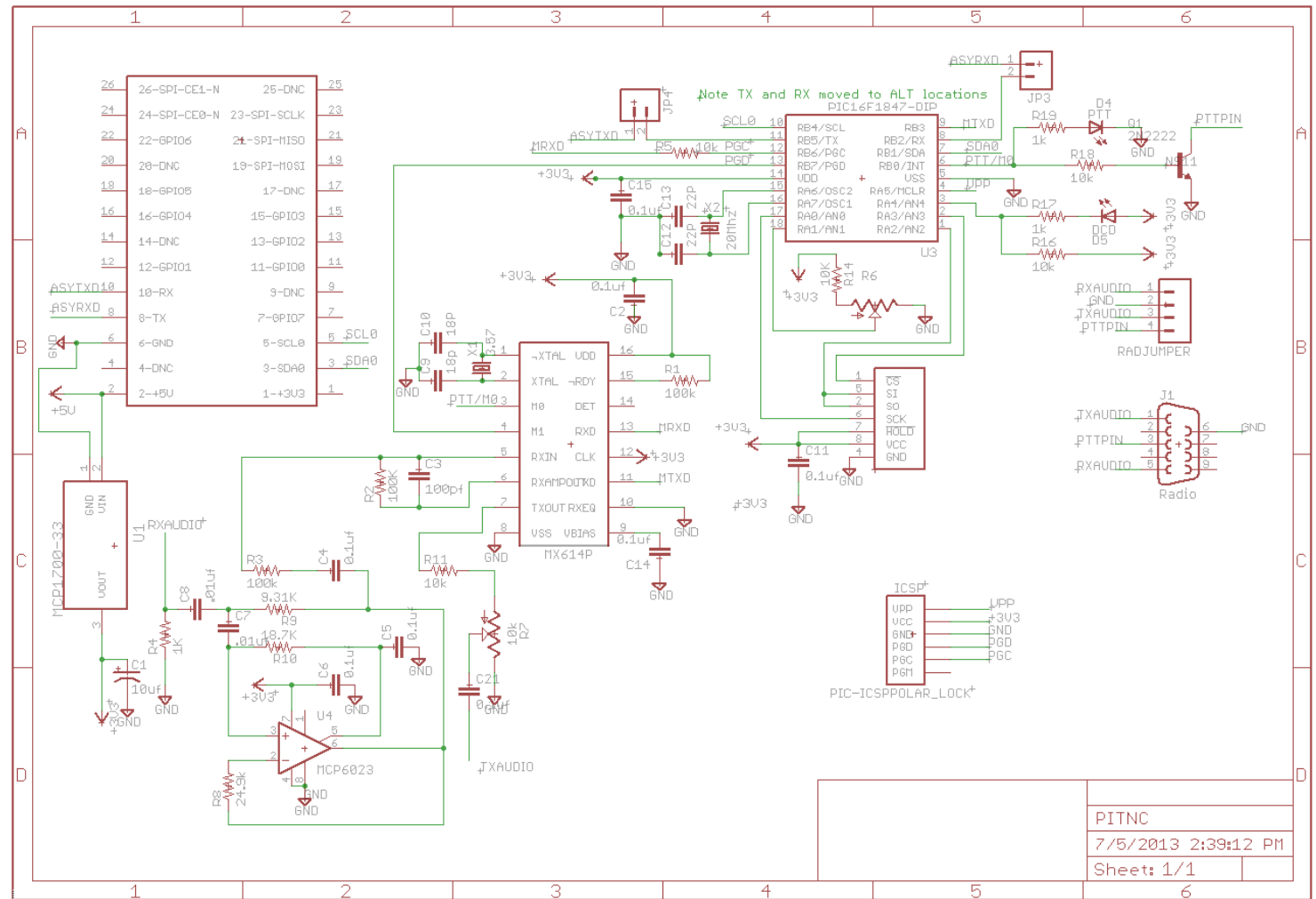
You may wish to bend the pins of the four ICs slightly inward to facilitate inserting them into their sockets.

Ensure the notch on the top of each chip lines up with the notch printed on the PC board. Also make absolutely certain that you do not mix up the two 8 pin chips and plug them into the wrong sockets.

Note: Nothing will be installed at the 6 pins marked **ICSP** or the pins marked **J**.

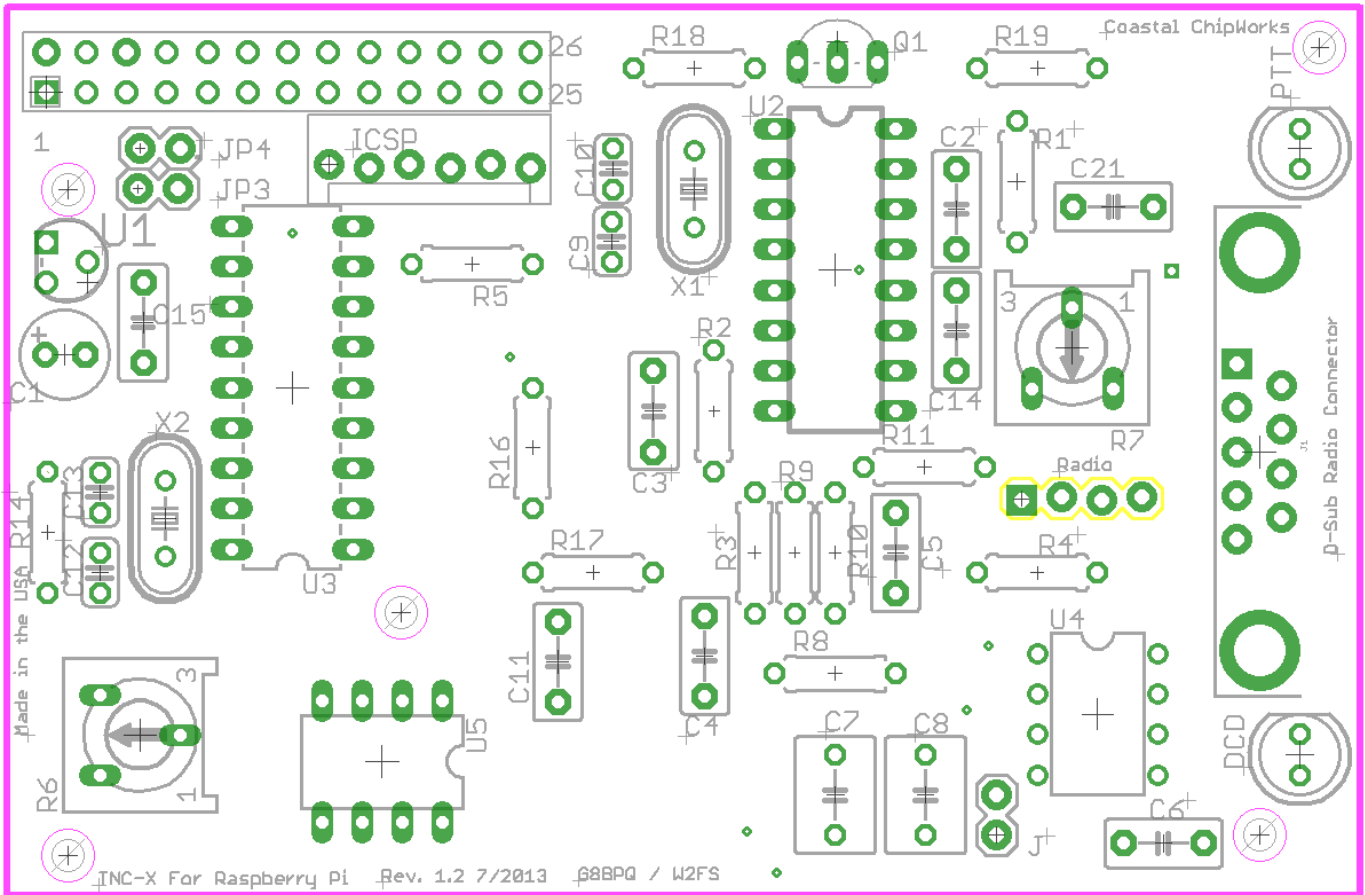
Congratulations, you're done assembling the TNC-Pi.

Schematic Diagram

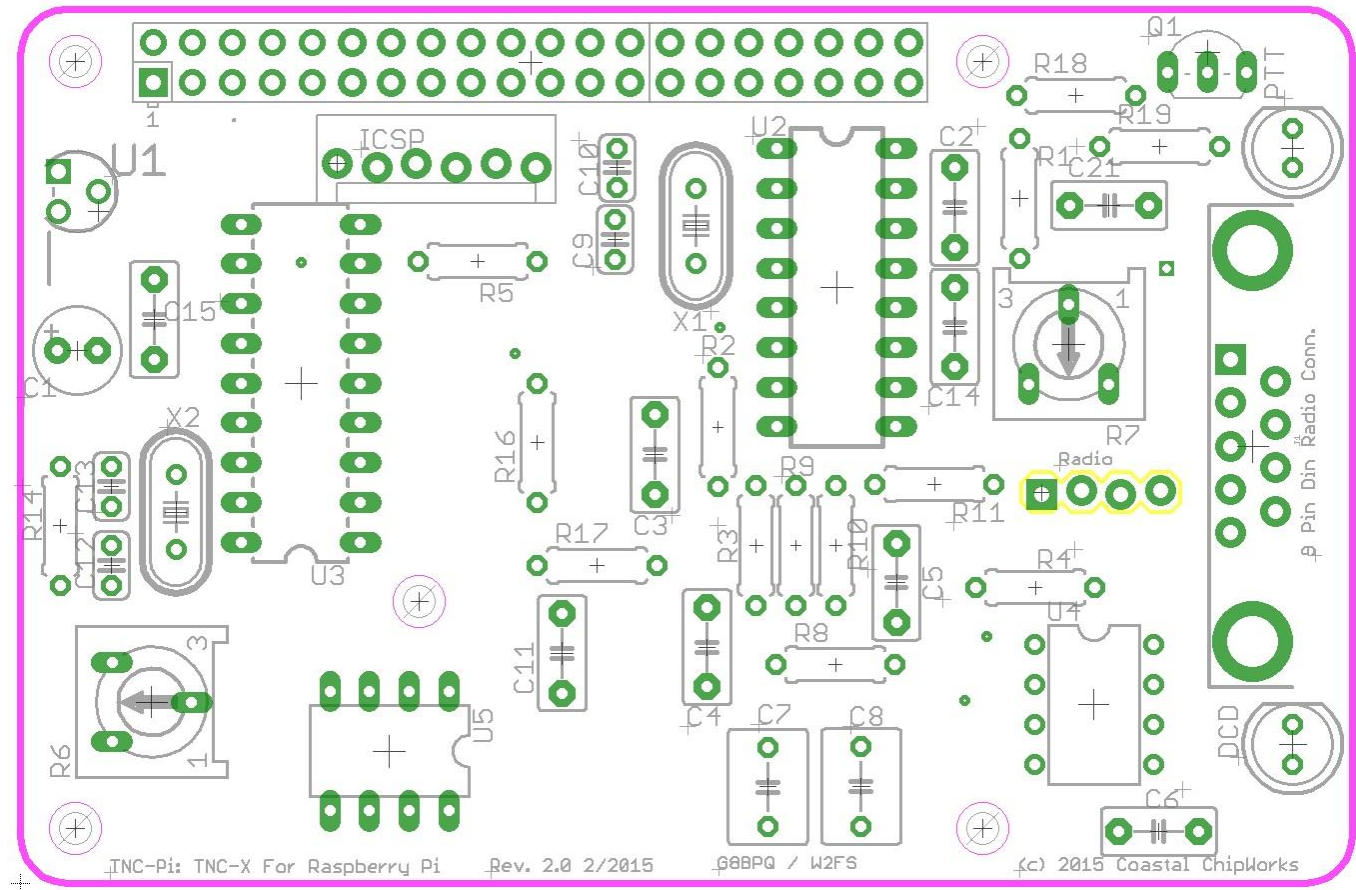


(see next page for parts layout diagram)

Parts Layout (for TNC-Pi)



Parts Layout (for TNC-Pi 2)



Connecting the Radio

You can either wire up a 9 pin D-Sub plug to mate with the one on the TNC-Pi, or, if you'd prefer, you can use the four holes below **R7** labeled **Radio** to hard wire a radio connection. (No header is provided in the kit for this.)

If you use the 9 pin D-Sub connection, it should be wired as follows:

- Pin 1 (the square pad): TX Audio**
- Pin 3: Push to Talk (PTT)**
- Pin 5: Receive Audio**
- Pin 6: Ground**

If you are using the holes marked "Radio" the connections should be:

- Pin 1 (the square pad): Receive Audio**
- Pin 2: Ground**

Pin 3: TX Audio

Pin 4: Push to Talk (PTT)

Adjust transmit audio output

Potentiometer **R7** adjusts the level of the transmit audio output. Most people will find that they need to set it fairly near the minimum setting.

One way to set this is to use two radios, one to monitor the transmitted signal and the other connected to the TNC-Pi.

1. Key the radio connected to the TNC-Pi manually by pushing the PTT button on it.
2. On the other radio you will hear a continuous tone (even though no data is being transmitted... you don't need to be running any software on the Raspberry Pi to do this).
3. Turn R7 all the way down and the tone will go away.
4. Then slowly turn it up until the volume doesn't increase any further in the monitor receiver.
5. When you reach this point, back it off just a little and you should have it about right.

Set the transmit delay

The transmit delay (**TXDelay**) can be set either in software or using **R6**. The default is to set it in software. To change the **TXDelay** parameter, you'll need to use the **pitnc_setparams** program as explained below in the section, Using Xastir.

If you set the value of **TXDelay** to 0 using the **pitnc_setparams** program, you can then use **R6** to set the **TXDelay**.

Most users will find the default setting for TXDelay to be just fine.

Configuring the Raspberry Pi

The following instructions were based on a downloaded image of the "Stretch" version of the operating system. I did this by downloading Raspbian, not NOOBs.

It might be a good idea to make sure your Pi operating system is up to date. You can do this from the command line by entering the following (this assumes you have either hard wired or wireless network connectivity):

sudo apt-get update
sudo apt-get upgrade

With previous version of the operating system, it was necessary to edit some of the configuration files in order to get the serial part to work. With the Stretch version of Raspbian, this is no longer necessary.

Go to the command prompt (by clicking on the black screen icon at the top of the GUI desktop).

Run the following:

```
sudo raspi-config
```

A menu will come up. Scroll down to item 5 using the arrow keys and select:
"Interfacing Options"

Scroll down to item P6 Serial and select that.

It will ask you if you want to be able to get a log in shell via the serial port. Say No. It will ask you if you want the serial port enabled. Say Yes.

You'll go back to the main menu. Tab over to <Finish> and you'll have the opportunity to reboot.

Do that, and you are done. There are no files to edit. Nothing!

Ok, there is one catch. When you address the serial port you have to do it as /dev/serial0. Using the older version of the operating system it was called /dev/ttyAMA0.

Note that these configuration instructions work with any version of the Pi.

Note added 12/4/2018: Some individuals have reported that there is a problem with the November, 2018 revision of Raspbian that results in the serial port not being accessible. You would notice this, for example, if you run pitnc_getparams and you keep getting "retrying..." instead of the menu. In this case you need to edit the config.txt file in the /boot/ directory. You can do this by running the following from the command line:

```
sudo leafpad /boot/config.txt
```

Add the following line at the bottom of this file:

dtoverlay=pi3-miniuart-bt

Keyboard to Keyboard Connections (note: if you want to run Xastir, skip this section and go to the application notes section below)

Note: For the following steps the Raspberry Pi must be connected to the internet.

You can use the Linux AX.25 routines to do connected mode packet. To do this you need to install the ax25 apps and tools. From the command line enter the following:

```
sudo apt-get install ax25-tools
sudo apt-get install ax25-apps
```

You'll need to configure it for your callsign by editing the `/etc/ax25/axports` file. You'll find two lines that allow you to enter your callsign. I did so as follows:

```
1    W2FS-1 19200 236 2    TNC 1
2    W2FS-2 19200 236 2    TNC 2
```

The serial rate must be at **19200**, because that is the only baud rate support by TNC-Pi. The next two values (**236** and **2** in the above example) are the values for **paclen** and **maxframe**. **Don't leave any blank lines in this file.**

Now attach the serial port to the AX.25 system using **kissattach**:

```
sudo kissattach /dev/serial0 1 10.1.1.1
```

The number in blue above matches the port number from the axports file above. The number in red is an IP address. It's required here even though you aren't using the IP protocol on it.

Note: If you are using the IP protocol on your TNC-Pi your address should conform to the local convention for IP routing. The address in that case will almost certainly start with 44.

You can monitor packets on this channel by entering:

```
sudo axlisten -a
```

You can connect to another station for keyboard to keyboard QSO's as follows:

axcall 1 hiscall

where **hiscall** is the call station of the station to which you want to connect.

There seems to be a bug in the axcall routine. The first time you use it after calling kissattach, it will take significantly longer for the Pi to send a valid connect string to the TNC than it does in subsequent attempts. You may have to wait 10 – 15 seconds. Further attempts occur instantaneously. You can abort this first try by issuing a **Ctrl-C** and then issuing the **axcall** command again. It will then connect immediately.

If you are having trouble getting the TNC to respond to these commands from the serial port, you can check to see if it is working by using the pitnc_getparams program. You can download this program from www.tnc-x.com/params.zip. If you have run KISSATTACH, make sure that it is not (rebooting is the easiest way to do this). Unzip the file and change the permissions so that anyone can execute it (the is most easily done from the file manager in the GUI interface). Then go to the command line, switch to the directory that the program is in and type:

```
./pitnc_getparams /dev/serial0 0
```

If a menu comes up you will know that the TNC-Pi is communicating with the Pi.

Support

If you have any questions about your TNC-Pi or are having hardware issues with it, please contact John Hansen, W2FS at john@coastalchip.com. Software issues, particularly with regard to the Linux version of BPQ are best addressed to the author, John Wiseman, G8BPQ.

Additional information can be found on the TNC-Pi website: <http://tnc-x.com/TNCPi.htm>

The configuration programs **setparams** and **getparams** are available here:

www.tnc-x.com/pitnc.zip

Application Notes

Using Xastir

Thanks to M0HPJ for the following information

Another popular packet program that works well on the Pi is the APRS program Xastir.

Note: For the following steps the Raspberry Pi must be connected to the internet.

Update the package list

To install Xastir from the command line, first update the package list as follows:

```
sudo apt-get update
```

Then install Xastir

```
sudo apt-get install xastir
```

Kill kissattach

If you have been using the AX25 apps, you'll need to unload **kissattach** before Xastir will work. You can do this by simply rebooting the Pi, or you can kill the **kissattach** process from the command line. To do the latter, first find out what process number it is by using a **ps** command to list running processes:

```
ps -A|grep kissattach
```

Inspect the list to see the process number of the **kissattach** process, then kill the process using the **kill** command. For example, if the process number is 2335, issue the command:

```
sudo kill 2335
```

At this point it may be a good idea to rerun the **ps** command to be certain that the **kissattach** process was successfully killed.

Note: If you have not been using the AX25 apps, it is still necessary to edit the `cmdline.txt` and `inittab` files as described in the section on configuring the Pi.

Start Xastir

You can start Xastir simply by typing Xastir at the command line. The first time you run Xastir you'll be asked to put in your station parameters. Then you'll need to specify the port that the TNC-Pi is on. Click on Interface and then Interface Control. Click "Add" and pick "Serial KISS TNC" off the list. Push Add and it will bring up a properties list. Under TNC Port enter:

```
/dev/serial0
```

Running Xastir

Everything else is pretty self-explanatory. Do make sure you change the baud rate to 19200. This is not the default. You can select "Maps" and the Map Chooser to select a better set of maps than the default. If you currently have internet connectivity, one of the cloud map options is probably best. If you select a new map option, you should deselect the old one. I haven't yet explored the option of caching the maps to the local SD card so that I don't need an Internet connection, but I expect to look into that soon.

More information

A much more detailed discussion of running Xastir on the Pi in a mobile environment is contained in a paper presented at the 2013 ARRL/TAPR Digital Communications Conference. It can be found at:

<http://www.tnc-x.com/DCC2013.doc>.

Note: In this paper I discussed using maps that were available from Cloudmade. Since the time that this paper Cloudmade has discontinued free access to these maps. However, the same maps are available from the following source:

<http://download.geofabrik.de>

The procedure for obtaining and using the maps is the same as those referenced in the paper for Cloudmade.

Configuring TNC-Pi for Use with the I2C Protocol

The TNC-Pi can be configured to communicate with the Raspberry Pi using the I2C protocol. To configure the TNC-Pi for I2C, you will need a configuration programs `pi_tncsetparams` and `pi_tncgetparams`. The `getparams` program reads the

parameters from the TNC-Pi while the **setparams** program allows you to set them. These programs are available at:

www.tnc-x.com/pitnc.zip

Setup

Before using them, however, it will be necessary to make some additional configuration changes to the Pi. First, make the following changes to the following files:

1. In the `/etc/modprobe.d/raspi-blacklist.conf` file, remove the line: **blacklist I2C-bcm2708**
2. In the `etc/modules` file, add the line: **i2c-dev**

Get and set parameters

Note: Before running the **getparams** and **setparams** programs, ensure that **kissattach** is not running.

The **pitnc_getparams** program lists the values for all of the user-settable parameters. Its syntax is:

pitnc_getparams b d

where:

b is the number of the I2C bus and

d is the number of the I2C device on that bus.

TNC-Pi is shipped with both of these parameters set to 0. An I2C device number of 0 means the TNC is using the serial port rather than the I2C port.

The **pitnc_setparams** program writes values to the TNC-Pi. Its syntax is:

pitnc_setparams b d p v

where

once again **b** and **d** are the bus and device,

p is the parameter number (1 – 7) and

v is the new parameter value.

The parameters that you are most like to use are:

<i>Parameter value</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Notes</i>
1	Sets the TXDelay	With TNC-Pi, you can set the TXDelay either in software using the pitnc_setparams program or in hardware using R6. Setting this parameter to 0 causes the TNC-Pi R6 potentiometer to determine the value.
7	Sets the I2C address	Setting this to 0 causes data communication on the serial port (default), any other value up to 63 will cause I2C to be used with the TNC using this address. This permits you to use multiple TNC's with the same Raspberry Pi.

The BPQ software for Raspberry Pi is currently in beta and can be found at:

<http://www.tnc-x.com/InstallingLINBPQ.htm>

If you ever need to reset these parameters to their original factory values, this can be done by powering down, turning the TXDelay potentiometer all the way to minimum and then powering back up. You should see the yellow LED flash once per second. When you see it flash, you'll know that the parameters have all been reset. The power the device back down, move the TXDelay off of minimum and power the device back up.

Running Applications other than LinBPQ with TNC-Pi in I2C mode.

John Wiseman, G8BPQ, sends along the following information about running other applications using I2C:

The TNC-Pi can be used with applications that use the Linux ax.25 stack, or applications that expect to see a KISS TNC on a serial port. Program `I2ckiss` converts the I2C protocol to a standard KISS presentation on a virtual serial (pty) port. It is available here:

www.tnc-x.com/i2ckiss.zip

One copy is run for each TNC-Pi. The first two parameters to `I2ckiss` are I2C bus, I2C device. If using the kernel ax.25 code, then specify the port number (from

axports) and the ip address. To use with other software, specify symlink and a symbolic name - I suggest com1 - com255

For example, to use with the Linux ax.25 stack:

```
sudo ./i2ckiss 0 16 1 10.1.1.1
```

i2ckiss will create a **pty** pair, and execute kissattach on the slave half, using the 3rd and 4th parameters

To use with a KISS application

```
./i2ckiss 0 16 symlink com1
```

i2ckiss will create a **pty** pair, then create a **symlink** to com1. The application would then be configured to use port **com1**.

Note: On Version 1 Pi boards (without mounting holes) the I2C bus number is zero, for the Version 2 boards it is 1.