

BRASSPOUNDER



November/December 2009 (Issue 45)

Greetings once again and welcome to the November/December edition of BP. As many of you know, the editions of BP are allways published a month later than shown, this is of course the give people time who enter the activities to get their logs to me. So, November edition will be published on line during December etc. I've mentioned this to reply to some of the comments seen on the FISTS NG. So I hope this clears up any confusion....

December was a busy month for me, I have spent some time in Hampshire over the festive period. (G4LMW, passed through your town on the way, 2m seemed very quiet. Hi) And also visited mainland Europe. So, the November edition was postponed, and consolidated into a two month edition, of which you are (Hopefully) reading now.

IMPORTANT!!

I've been asked by members if I'd consider expanding the bands of operation in the VHF/UHF activity to include SHF, that is, 23cms and 10GHz. I see no problem with this; so, from immediate effect, it will become the VHF/UHF/SHF Activity..If you know of anyone who does not have the facility to read BP online, should they be interested, would you inform them by whatever means at your disposal....Thanks.

Onto business, lets look at reports and images received from members and participants.

Firstly, G4LHI, commenting on Novembers ladder activity.

Hello Robert,

I attach my claim & report for the November Ladder Activity for your next edition of the BP.I was fortunate enough to manage 7 QSO's in the first session & 11 in the second & I must say it was very nice to find so much more activity this month. We have a few very new members that dipped their toes to test the water, & I hope they enjoyed it & will be regulars on the various Activities during 2010? & also a few old members that have come

out of the woodwork & very nice to QSO again with them. It's getting more like the good old days of the Ladder. I was very pleased to work three very new members, one in the first session, Phil, M6PHL, 14543 & two in the second, Jerry, G0AZR, 14553 & Alan, G0RWB, 10804, very nice to meet you & hope we have tempted you to join in on Robs many Activities during 2010, & of course in the last Ladder of 2009 hi! I will be sending QSL cards in my next back to Chuck. Was very nice to work John, GM4WZL again, long time since I had the pleasure of working you John, we have had many chats in your early days as a Fists member, also with Janet, pleased to hear you are both keeping well. Not forgetting the many stalwarts that are always there to keep the Ladder alive, many thanks for your continued support, look forward to the Dec Ladder & a dash to the "Podium" hi! Also, I must thank you all for your many good wishes, support & kind remarks to Jean & myself in Jeans continuing long illness. That's about all for November, so once again, many thanks for all the points & chats in the Ladder & look forward to good conditions & lots of QSO's in Dec if not before. "Keep Pounding the Brass" & enjoying the chats on the key & of course the comradeship of our Fists Club.

73/88 de Peter G4LHI # 2219 & Jean.

Good to hear new members coming on and "Dipping their toes" in the pond Peter. Long may it continue.

From Derek. M0DRK.

Hi Robert,

Here is the log of my Ladder for November.

Sorry to read in Brasspounder of your recent minor RTA and hope that your daughter Laura and yourself have got over that ok and the subsequent paperwork is being dealt with alright.

Pleased to have worked two new stations this month, Phil M6PHL and Bill G0BAK and hope that we shall have them both calling in again on the Ladder.

Take care Robert, only one more Ladder log to come in 2009. 73 for now.

Derek, M0DRK.

Good to hear from you Derek, and thanks for your kind thoughts, yes, all is going well, just be glad to get back to some sort of normality (Hi)

And from G0BAK

Hi Rob,

Please find attached my Ladder Log for November 2009.

I had a bit of a change at my qth this month and I now have a new antenna.

Coming up to Christmas, I sold my Motorbike and bought a small car to get me to work. I have had enough of the cold and wet Winter months on the bike. I was sad to see it go, however the money left over meant that I could buy myself a new radio. After listening on the air to a few stations, I settled on a Yaesu FT950. The xyl was not impressed as I think she had other plans for the cash, hi. To keep her sweet I told her it was for Christmas so its still sitting in its box. I realised that the new radio was going to need something other than a short wire tuned for 80 metres so I had a look on the web to get some ideas. A full size G5RV was out of the question at this qth but I still wanted some sort of multiband antenna. I found a short multiband antenna on the web pages of G7FEK, link here <http://www.g7fek.co.uk/index.html> To say I am pleased is a bit of an understatement. The new antenna performed well with my 5 watts on the Ladder. I only managed one 2 hour session this month, however with the multiband antenna, I managed to work both 80 and 40 metres without having to go to my garage and re tune the atu. If I can take this time to wish yourself and all members all the best for 2010.

73 Bill

Fists Nr 13262

Good to hear from you Bill. Sad to hear that you parted with your motorcycle to fund the purchase of your new radio, congratulations on the new aerial build at GOBAK, I'm very pleased to hear that your 5 watts are working well for you.

From G3ZOD

Hi Rob.

WSPR

For anyone who's interest was piqued in WSPR, there is a new version available: WSPR 2.0. I was privileged to be invited to take part in testing and proofreading, so it comes with my personal recommendation! <http://www.physics.princeton.edu/pulsar/K1JT/wspr.html>

Thanks to Keith G0SXG for solving the puzzle I mentioned previously about using Excel to plot time values that aren't evenly spaced; the trick is to set the chart type to "XY (Scatter)".

Key Notes

I'm still trying to get hold of copies of old Key Notes for addition to our FISTS web site. Imagine my hope when I saw this email in my Inbox: "3 Days of Keynotes". Sadly, though,

it turned out to be an advert for a computing conference, ah well. While I'm here, I might as well slip a plug in: I'd like to get hold of copies of Key Note for the following months. Scans would be great, or if I can borrow them, I can scan and return them:

February 1995, January 1994, May 1994, February-April 1993, June-November 1993 and any for the years 1987 - 1992.

Construction

I've just "finished" building a Tixie QRP CW transceiver for 30m. This is a variation on the well-known minimalist Pixie transceiver that extends the design to include a keyer chip, side-tone and an automatic transmit offset. The transmitter works well into a dummy load, giving 1.5 watts output, but any attempt to connect a real antenna causes the PA/detector transistor to lock up after transmitting a few dots. I've not given up on it yet, but if all else fails I can always link the output of the keyer chip to the phone jack socket and use it as a keyer instead HI!



G3ZOD making final adjustments to the wayward Tixie!!

Getting Connected

I needed to connect up a 2m antenna very quickly for a sked. It has a PL259 connector and the piece of coax I needed to use has a BNC plug on. (I'm trying to standardise on BNC now as screwing and unscrewing PL259s becomes very tedious when moving antennas between rigs. Also, long term it probably doesn't do the sockets any good either.) Anyway, I have a variety of adaptors and eventually conjured up a chain of them to link the antenna to the coax.



On looking at it later, it seemed rather complicated and no doubt very lossy. Nothing to do but take it apart for a closer inspection:



Oops! The two adaptors on the right aren't doing anything useful at all. This would have worked:



How embarrassing - age must be setting in. Will try harder next time!!

A question for the engineers: I have two slightly different types of BNC plugs. Some have a tiny hole in the side of the hollow metal pin that I can feed solder through. Others don't have this hole and I can't see how to solder the coax cable's stranded inner wire into them. Pre-tinning the inner wire is going to make it too "fat" to push into the pin and I don't really want to "thin out" the inner wire as it's going to mean cutting a lot of strands off. Hmm.

Ladder

The first session on 8th November in the afternoon yielded just three contacts, all on 80m.

The next session on 22nd November afternoon was a bit more varied with a contact on 20m, a contact on 40m and two on 80m.

I was monitoring 60m using WSPR this week. The stations were mostly in England running no more than 5 watts. However, I didn't really need software to hear them as they were far from weak - frequently S9+ signals. I don't know how much this is due to their good antennas, but it does make me wonder if 60m would be fantastic for the Ladder if it were a "real" band rather than a handful of spot frequencies and didn't require NOVs. Anyway, as that isn't likely to change, I'm still hoping that conditions on 40m will soon improve to offer good inter-G propagation during daylight and provide a better experience than 80m currently does.

73 de Graham (Gra) G3ZOD FISTS #8385

[Good to hear from you Gra..Thanks for an excellent article for inclusion..](#)



Here's a nice image of Tony, G3ZRJ looking justifiably proud with his certificate (Amongst his many others) recognising his winning entry achieved during SKW 2009..
Congratulations Tony!

[Tony emailed again later to say;](#)

Hi Rob,

Thanks for all your very hard work keeping us in order in FISTS.

I hope the pic of myself and the SKW cert didn't cause too much mental pain.

Take care and hope to work you soon

Here is a nice autumn misty morning I manage to catch just right some months back, view to North from the QTH here. (Tony is near to Hereford)

Vy 73 Tony

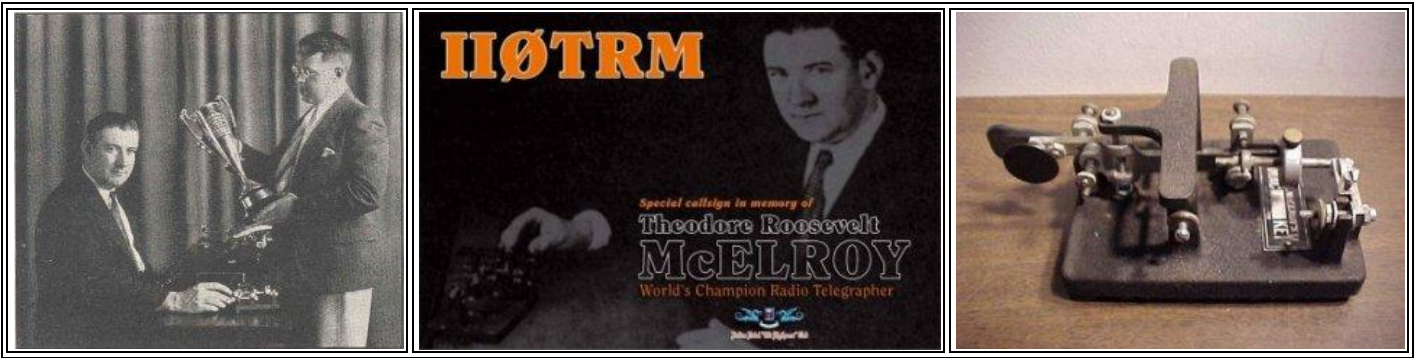


From new member Fabio IKØIXI 14539, who recently took part in a special event remembering Theodore McElroy.

Theodore R. McElroy – Ted (he hated his given name) was born in September 1901 (Boston, MA - USA). He began his telegraphic career at age 14, as a Western Union messenger, and within a year he was a telegraph operator. By age 21 he was winning code receiving contests and setting records. In 1936 he had his ham radio callsign of **W1JYN**. He set the all-time, still-unbroken official record of **75.2 words per minute** in 1939 (corrected to today's 25-dot word standard, that would be 72.2 wpm). McElroy began manufacturing telegraph keys (his "**Mac-Key**") in late 1934. By 1941 he had put out about twenty variations of his semi-automatic key, and several variations of straight keys. There were also code practice oscillators, inked tape keyers and, for the military during WWII, many automatic Morse devices and code training equipment. Ted made millions of dollars during the war, but when demand shrivelled after the war, he lost most of it. In 1955 he sold his company (by then located in Littleton, Mass.). He continued to work for it for a while, then for other electronics companies. He gave code demonstrations, and became interested in local politics. McElroy died in November 1963. **IIØTRM** was active from Nov. 16 to Nov. 22 to remember the great champion.

Operators: IKØIXI – NB1V (FISTS 14539), IZØDDD, IKØLZR, IK5TSZ. More than 1,100 QSO made on all bands, all continents worked. All contacts confirmed with a special QSL card via bureau.

73 de Fabio, IKØIXI - NB1V (Fists 14539)



From Bill, GOBAK with his final ladder log of the year, and comments;

Hi Rob

Please find attached my Ladder Log for December. I am not sure if it was the new FT950, the new tuned limited space aerial or the fact that it was Christmas time, however I had a super session on the 27th. One station after another, many Fists members also on the radio for the GQRP winter Sports so an added bonus for me.

I used my Christmas Radio for the session on the 27th, but still had the power set to 5 watts qrp. I would like to wish yourself and all the fists members all the best for the New Year.

Bill GOBAK

Fists 13262

I noticed a good final session from you Bill, thanks for your support.

From good friend Peter, G4LHI, with his final log and report of the year.

Hello Robert,

I attach my claim & report for the December Ladder Activity for your next edition of the BP. I was fortunate enough to manage 9 QSO's in both the afternoon sessions giving me a total of 34 points with 18 QSO's this month. I must say it was very nice to find so much activity again this month, albeit, conditions were not so good, very deep QSB, but the good old CW got there in the end, would have thrown the towel in long ago if it had been a SSB activity hi. I found one new member that I worked in November joined us again this month, so nice to hear you again Jerry, GOAZR & hope you worked a nice few members this month & will be a regular Fists Activity Contester? Also found a few old members that have come out of the woodwork & very nice to QSO again with them. It's getting more like the good old days

of the Ladder, & I thank all members, old & new for the many QSO's during 2009 & hope we can continue the same during the new year 2010?. I did not find any new members this month, but look forward to meeting some of the new members during 2010 that keep appearing on our web page (many thanks Graham & John). I must not forget the many stalwarts that are always there to keep the Ladder alive, many thanks for your continued support, look forward to keeping in touch during 2010, take care & have fun on the key. Also I must thank you all again for your many good wishes, support & kind remarks to Jean & myself in Jeans continuing long illness. Not a great change in her condition unfortunately but she keeps cheerful & gets lots of TLC, bless her. That's about all for December & the last Ladder in 2009, so once again, many thanks for all the points & chats in the Ladder etc & look forward to good conditions & lots of QSO's in 2010 if not before. "Keep Pounding the Brass" & enjoying the chats on the key & of course the comradeship of our wonderful Fists Club.

73/88 de Peter G4LHI # 2219 & Jean.

As ever Peter, thank you for your kind words, support, and enthusiasm for FISTS activities throughout the year. Our good wishes and regards go to Jean and wish her a speedy recovery to good health, this I'm sure I can say on behalf of all in the FISTS fraternity..

From Gra, G3ZOD with his final report of the year

Hi Rob.

W1

As it was my birthday in October, I took the opportunity to ask for a "toy" that I would otherwise have had difficulty justifying! This was an Elecraft W1 SWR/watt meter kit. This was partly utility as it has QRP/QRO ranges of 1.4 watts, 14 watts and 140 watts and partly because in addition to the LED display, it can optionally be connected to a computer so I can have a bit of fun doing some programming.



In practice I was surprised at just how versatile the W1 is. From a CW perspective, it gives a reading on the shortest dit - quite a difference from using an analogue meter. It's also auto-ranging - no meter needle hitting the end stop hard when not adjusted correctly. The lowest reading using the LEDs is 150mW (using a computer allows finer-grain readings). A very nice gadget, especially when using CW and QRP!

17m

Over the past 6 days (it's 4th January as I write this), 17m has opened every single afternoon into the USA for a number of hours, so I've been having a bit of fun up there. I don't suppose this will last for much longer but I'm making the most of it while I can! 17m seems to be a well kept secret. A lot of people I've talked to don't tend to have antennas available for 17m, I presume because it's not open as often as the lower frequency bands. I did hear one of the USA stations working Sandy G0VQW #3739, so I'm not the only one up there HI.

Ladder

I was very pleased to meet up with Peter G4LHI in both of the final Sundays in the 2009 Ladder. Thanks to everyone who I had Ladder contacts with during 2009 and hope we'll meet up again in 2010.

Finals

Thanks for all the FISTS work you've done for us during 2009, Rob.

I hope everyone has a very happy 2010 and, of course, lots of contacts!

73 de Graham (Gra) G3ZOD FISTS #8385

[As Ever Gra, thanks for your articles over the past year, always a pleasure to hear from you.](#)

[And From Kevin. G4CMZ who comments;](#)

Hi Rob,

Happy New Year to you and yours!

Looking forward to another year of Fists events, this time I will be concentrating on 40 metres with my 2 watts. Have recently acquired a paddle, due to problems with the wrist these days, its given me a new lease of life! All the best for the year, and many thanks for all the hard work, its much appreciated.

73 G4CMZ 6440

[As ever Kevin; many thanks for your kind words and support throughout the year.](#)

[A warm welcome to new member Phil, M6PHL who comments;](#)

Hello Rob,

Please find attached my first entries for the Fists Ladder.

Being a newcomer I hope it is all OK, I also had a couple of contacts in November but understand this is not acceptable now.

This has all come about by the encouragement and help of Peter G4LHI, who has been my tutor since May of this year.

I look forward to sending in more entries during 2010.

Kind Regards

Phil Hughes

M6PHL

Fists:14543

Hello Phil. A real pleasure to receive your first ever entry, on behalf of us all, let me welcome you to the FISTS Family. I'm sure that during 2010, many will be looking forward to hearing you on air, and will be looking forward to a chat with you. Glad you've enjoyed the help and encouragement of G4LHI; looking forward to receiving your entries during 2010.

From Derek, MODRK with his final log and comments for 2009.

Hi Robert,

Here attached is my December log.

Hope you and your family had a good Christmas. Mollie and I had a very quiet but pleasant time and with our children living in the village with their children we got to see them all. Many thanks for all the work that you put in during the year for the Fists Members.

Many thanks to all Fists Members that I met throughout the year and look forward to many more hook-ups on cw. Happy New Year to you all.

73 for now, Derek MODRK.

Again. Thanks for your kind words and support over the year Derek. An enjoyable but busy time during December; as it is for everyone. Normality is just returning (Hi).

And from Erkki, OH7QR who sends some brief statistics ith his final log of 2009.

Hello Robert,

Attached my log. Conditions were very strange on 27th. Just after I had finished with Peter (599/599) I heard Derek calling me with 579 but after my over I lost him in very deep QSB. The band (20m) was totally closed.

Some statistics of Ladder-QSOs in 2009:

all in all 65 QSOs with 19 members and 17 QSOs with NM.

Members with more than 1 QSO:

G4LHI - 16

M0DRK - 6

2E0TEK - 4

G3ZOD - 4

G4HXL - 3

G0GSY - 2

and 13 members with 1 QSO

57 QSOs on 20M

8 QSOs on 80M

Many thanks for the QSOs to all and I hope to meet you in 2010. All the best for 2010.

Many thanks for your good work Robert. I hope to meet you on bands during the year.

73/88 to all

Erkki fists 8318 and Leena

[Thanks for your support in 2009 Erkki. Look forward to meeting you in 2010.](#)

[Martin, IK2RMZ email with his final log of the year; and comments on the VHF activity.](#)

Hi Robert,

I just worked one of the splendid FISTS club stations on the other side of the pond and got 2 FISTS numbers. This animated me to exploit the qsos for any of the fists activities.

Unfortunately, I found none on the brasspounder site so I think I should say hello at least and wish you an excellent new year.

I have also added a ladder contribution for December in order not to get stuck with a score under hundred.

I hope I can contribute to the VHF activity on 6m, guess the 6m TV channels will shut down this year when all tvs go digital. But this is rather unlikely....

My UK contacts on 6m are;

20080524;1850;G3GNR;6M;CW;559;559;;;IO80HP

20090525;1610;G4DDL;6M;CW;599;599;MIKE;;IO91PJ

20080524;1532;G4WBB;6M;SSB;57;54;DAVE;;IO93IH

20080817;1307;GB2GNL;6M;CW;599;599;;;IO87WE

20080817;1303;GM0ELP;6M;CW;559;559;DOUG;;IO75XR

20090525;1547;GW0GPQ;6M;CW;599;599;;;IO81BW

20070619;1610;GW3JXN;6M;CW;599;;;IO72RC

20060618;1110;GW3NJW;6M;CW;599;;CLIVE;;IO81

20080817;1315;MM0BSM;6M;SSB;59;59;;;IO86AD

20060607;1648;MM0CEZ;6M;CW;599;;;IO75XU

especially England is a little too close for most openings

Thanks for the good job and enjoy 2010...

Martin fists 853

Hi Martin, good to hear from you after such a long time, thanks for the final log of 2009 and look forward to hearing from you during 2010.

Well, thats nearly all from me for this consolidated edition of BP covering two months. All that remains for me to do is to publish the final ladder results of the year.

Before I do, I'll take the opportunity to thank you all for your good wishes and support of the activities within the society. I hope that all who read this offering will enjoy a good, happy, healthy, and peaceful 2010.

Final ladder results.

LADDERTOTALS 2009														
CALL	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTALS	PWR
G4LHI	29	40	44	30	27	7	0	26	28	32	35	34	332	QRO
M0DRK	10	22	15	15	8	3	0	16	17	17	15	17	155	QRO
M5ABN	27	40	27	21	0	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	130	QRO
G0BAK	6	8	16	14	12	4	10	9	5	5	9	24	122	QRP
IK2RMZ	7	12	20	0	43	10	0	0	0	0	0	25	117	QRO
G4CMZ	0	21	26	22	5	4	13	8	7	0	0	10	116	QRP
G3ZOD	8	12	11	7	7	4	7	6	10	17	13	9	111	MIX
OH7QR	15	4	5	5	12	3	0	14	8	21	0	9	96	QRO
2E0TEK	18	20	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	52	QRO
G8XGQ	2	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	QRO
M6PHL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	10	QRO

Congratulations are in order to G4LHI who made an impressive and untouchable score of 332 points during the year. Derek, M0DRK and Peter M5ABN in second and third places respectively. A mention must go to the two QRP operators G0BAK and G4CMZ who plugged on doggedly during the year in "Marginal" conditions... Congratulations to you all, and once again, thanks for your support of the activity during 2009. I'll guess that you've all had time to peruse the 2010 activity calendar, I look forward to hearing from you during the coming months; with your observations and reports etc. Till then, keep well, keep pounding brass.

73, M0BPT



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