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 	<h2 style="text-align: center;">FISTS DOWN UNDER</h2> <h3 style="text-align: center;">Newsletter August 2013</h3> <p style="text-align: center;">Editor &amp; QSL Manager for ZL: Nigel Hardy, ZL2TX, P.O. Box 15078, Otaki 5542, New Zealand. - Tel: 06-364-6339</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Newsletter Distribution &amp; QSL Manager for VK: Chris Thompson, VK2CTN, P O Box 65, Dickson, ACT 2602, Australia</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Membership/Awards Liaison: Ralph Sutton, ZL2AOH, 12c Herbert Gardens, 186 The Terrace, Wellington 6011, New Zealand Tel: 0-4-473-0847. Fax: 0-4-473-0848</p> <p style="text-align: center;">QSL Manager for ZL6FF: Nigel Hardy, ZL2TX at address above. QSL Manager for VK2FDU: Chris Thompson VK2CTN at address above</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Address e-mails for all persons above to: &lt;<a href="mailto:fists-down-under@ihug.co.nz">fists-down-under@ihug.co.nz</a>&gt; Web site --: &lt;<a href="http://www.fistsdownunder.org">www.fistsdownunder.org</a>&gt;</p>	
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#### SUGGESTED FISTS CLUB CALLING FREQUENCIES

1.808 MHz (160m) – 3.528 MHz (80m) – 7.028 MHz (40m) – 10.118 MHz (30m) –  
14.058 MHz (20m) – 18.085 MHz (17m) – 21.058 MHz (15m) – 24.908 MHz (12m) – 28.058 MHz (10m)

Members are reminded that the above frequencies are suggested calling frequencies. If they are busy, it is suggested that once you establish contact with a station, it may be prudent to change frequency down the band, avoiding other calling frequencies of known clubs.

#### NEW MEMBER

This month we welcome **VK4GSF-George Ferguson #14165** who lives in Wellcamp a locality near Toowoomba, Queensland located 12 kilometres (7 mi) west of the city centre.

The locality was named in the 1860s by the Railways Department after a camp for workers constructing the Toowoomba–Hendon railway, which happened to be located beside a well in the area

Here is George's bio from the QRZ.COM site that he hopes helps reveal his history. - Novice license in 1956 KN5IWW-- General in 1957 K5IWW -- Amateur Extra in 1958. Lost license in 1986 due to international travel and former FCC rule to log time.

Retested to Amateur Extra November 2011 as K4GSF. Constructed Elecraft K2 Transceiver Kit in January of 2012. Relocated to Australia (Toowoomba, Queensland) June 2012. My Elecraft K2 arrived 26 September. Launched a Mostly Horizontal Long-wire 37 meters long about five meters above ground. Current power to 12 watts. Finally completed and fired-up a ZS6BKW antenna on 24 June 2013

Awarded an Australian Call Sign (VK4GSF) on 28 November 2012.

#### MEMBERS' NEWS

Many thanks to the following members who included a donation when sending their subscriptions –  
**VK5BSC-Brian #9601, ZL2AMM-Stan #9023, VK4CU-Colin #14138, VK3POC-Jim #9679 and ZL1ARW-Jim #9006**

**OTHER MEMBERS' NEWS**



N7CFA –Ed #1402 reports on some recent adventures. - About three weeks ago, my very first helicopter ride. We flew up into the crater of Mt. St. Helens. There was a cloud cover over the mountain but still room to fly in under it and around the crater area. Great flight!

My first skydive. "Fun at 91"! We flew up to 13,000 feet, jumped out (tandem jump), free-fall for 8,000 feet at 120 miles per hour, then the chute popped out and we floated 5,000 feet gently to the earth. What a feeling. No fear! It was real fun.

**FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

These are some of the CW contest/event offerings in August 2013, most of which will be of more interest to our northern hemisphere readers. Thanks to WA7BNM Contest Calendar

[www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html](http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html)

The UK/EU FISTS activities in August 2013 is extracted from [www.fists.co.uk/activitiescalendar.htm](http://www.fists.co.uk/activitiescalendar.htm)

NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Aug 2
European HF Championship	0000Z-2359Z, Aug 3
North American QSO Party, CW	1800Z, Aug 3 to 0559Z, Aug 4
RSGB RoPoCo CW	0700Z-0830Z, Aug 4
ARS Spartan Sprint	0100Z-0300Z, Aug 6
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Aug 9
WAE DX Contest, CW	0000Z, Aug 10 to 2359Z, Aug 11
SKCC Weekend Sprintathon	1200Z, Aug 10 to 2400Z, Aug 11
UK/EU FISTS Ladder 2013	1400-1600 & 1800-2000Z, Aug 11
NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint	0030Z-0230Z, Aug 14
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Aug 16
Run for the Bacon QRP Contest	0100Z-0300Z, Aug 19
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Aug 23
Hawaii QSO Party	0700Z, Aug 24 to 2200Z, Aug 25
YO DX HF Contest	1200Z, Aug 24 to 1200Z, Aug 25
UK/EU FISTS Ladder 2013	1400-1600 & 1800-2000Z, Aug 11
HF CW Contest	1300Z-1630Z, Aug 25
SKCC Sprint	0000Z-0200Z, Aug 28
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Aug 30
Colorado QSO Party	1200Z, Aug 31 to 0400Z, Sep 1

**VK5BUG-David (Doc) #14136 advises of a special activity**

Eight members from the Adelaide Hills Amateur Radio Society (AHARS) will be travelling to Kangaroo Island, South Australia between 16 and 19 August 2013, and will be active over the RD Contest/ILLW weekend using CW, phone & other modes.

The Society's call sign **VK5BAR/P** will be used for the 24-hour **Remembrance Day (RD) Contest**, 0300UTC Saturday 17 August to 0259UTC Sunday 18 August.

Planned frequencies for the RD Contest are 3518/7018/14018/21018/28018KHz +/- QRM.

CW operator for the RD Contest will be Doc/VK5BUG **FISTS 14136** (ex-RMS Titanic VK5MGY).

For interest sake, Doc will be using paralleled PMG straight key, Vibroplex 'Champion' semi-automatic & homebrew keys & manual logging "*Just like the good old days!*" throughout the weekend.

Special call sign **VK5CWL** (Cape Willoughby Lighthouse AU-0095) will be used for **ILLW, IOTA (OC-139) and AHARS Conservation Park award** contacts.

CW operators for the ILLW, IOTA & CP Award activities will be John/VK5AJQ & Doc/VK5BUG (on completion of the RD Contest).

Planned frequencies for the Award activities are 3525/7020/14025/21025/28025KHz +/- QRM.

Further information may be found on the VK5CWL website at <http://vk5cwl.weebly.com>

We look forward to working FISTS Down Under operators as part of our weekend activities.

**UK/EU FISTS ANNOUNCES A NEW AWARD**

The FISTS Spectrum Award will be issued for working 100 different FISTS Members on any one band, i.e. all QSOs listed in the log must be on the same band.

The award Start Date is 1 July 2013; all logged QSOs must be made on or after the start date.

Spectrum Award Endorsements available for 100 FISTS Member contacts made on additional bands, other than the original band the award is issued for.

An award certificate will be issued for the first log of 100 contacts on the same band. For each log submitted thereafter, endorsement stickers for the appropriate band will be issued. This endorsement sticker may be attached to the original certificate.

Required Log Data needed for all Spectrum Award QSOs: - Call Worked, Name, Date, Band, and FISTS Number.

The same FISTS station may be worked once on each band.

For more information, see <http://fists.co.uk/spectrum>

**HOUSEKEEPING**

Here is the latest renewals list. Please check whether you are listed and if so, please forward your renewal subscription. **Please let us know if you are wrongly listed, want a replacement renewal form, or generally have any queries.**

These are due by 31 August 2013; some are overdue: -

**9007 - 9018 - 9033 - 9053 - 9057 - 9058 - 9082 - 9083 - 9609 - 9611 - 9613 - 9617 - 9620 - 9677 - 9690 - 9694 - 9697 - 9699 - 14121 - 14122 - 14124 - 14131 - 14137 -- 14146 - 14148**

## **PLAYING WITH AN ALEX LOOP MAGNETIC ANTENNA.**

### **Ian MacQuillan, ZL2AIM # 9683**

I have used a few magnetic loops for HF. Some were bought and a few were home brews. I have an MFJ 1786 which handles frequencies between 30m and 10m. It is quite heavy and is fine for a permanent antenna, but is not practicable for portable operation. Being high Q it can be quite finicky to tune it each time you change frequencies.

Like many other technical things, once you use it frequently, it is easy to change frequencies and bands. It can handle 100 watts with ease.

Some weeks ago Jim ZL1LC loaned me his Alex Loop Walkham. This is a magnetic loop made by Alex PY1AHD. Alex has been playing with magnetic loops for over 10 years and is certainly well known for his experiments with these loops. This loop covers 40m to 10m and is ideal for QRP and will handle up to 20 watts.

The loop is packed in a nice case, similar to a Laptop case. The whole lot weighs in at 1,5 kgs which is great for portable operation.



It is professionally built and all the external parts are of high quality. It is very easy to put together. Alex does include instructions on how to assemble it.



With the other loops that I have played with the exciter loop has been on the bottom and the capacitor was on the top. Alex has it the other way around and for good reason. The tuning capacitor is then at the correct height for it to be easily tuned by hand whilst sitting beside your radio.

I used a pipe welded to a base that I normally use to put under my car wheel to hold up a portable pole for other antennas. This time I stuck a piece of polyurethane foam to keep the paint pole in the centre of the pipe. I then adjusted the length of the paint pole so that the tuning capacitor was within easy reach.



I used the Alex Loop with my Icom 703+. I set it at 5 watts output and switched off the tuner. Then after plugging the antenna in to the rear of the set and plugging in my paddle, I started tuning the loop. This proved to be very easy and quick. Just turn the capacitor until the background noise peaks. Then touch the paddle and check the SWR. I always keep my 703 set on the SWR meter. The SWR will be low if you have peaked on the highest volume for noise. It is then just a case of fine tuning the capacitor on the loop until you reach the lowest SWR. In most cases that I used on each band in the CW portion, I could get very close to 1:1.

On its first outing in the back garden the band conditions were poor. I could hear the DX coming in on 20m and 30m but my 5 watts wouldn't make the grade. I tried it a few days later and the conditions were a bit better and I managed to work VK7CW and RA4HPI both on 20m. Whilst VK7 is only 2,500 kms away, Dima in Russia is over 16,000 kms away. Dima gave me a 449 whilst Steve in VK gave me a 549. This was an encouraging start to the Alex Loop.

As you probably know, when I work portable I normally use a multiband antenna that is easily portable, quick to erect and no nonsense. My favourite so far has been a long wire strung up on a paint pole and then into a nearby tree. I then have a cable of counterpoise wires that I throw out in a straight line. It has worked very well for me and my station only takes about 10 minutes to erect and get on the air. With the Alex Loop, there is no messing around with counterpoise wires and I can easily pre-erect the loop at home and stick it in the back seat of the car. Hence the whole erection process takes only a few minutes. This is a great bonus as the more time on the air and the less time throwing weights into trees, the happier I am! Just as a matter of playing around, I did a few tests with the counterpoise wires attached to the 703 but it made no discernible difference, so I just left them off.

In the picture below you will see my box that I use for portable operation. This is dual purpose as it holds all the paraphernalia that I like to have with me when operating outside. The front comes off and becomes a flat working surface for my paddle and my log whilst the rear panel becomes a sunshade. (And rain cover when it showers!)



I have noticed that when I use my laptop for logging with HRD, I get a bit of interference from the laptop on to the radio. However, with the Alex Loop, I could null away the interference by just turning the loop around until the noise is nulled away. Should you wish to point the antenna in the direction of a station you would turn the loop as follows. Imagine the loop as a wheel. The strongest signals will be in the direction of the tyre of the wheel and the weakest signal will be pointing along the axle of the wheel.

I have managed to work a few good DX stations with it and my QRP IC703+ and it certainly is a good antenna. Certainly it wins hands down for a quick to erect get on the air set up.  
Ian Fists #9683

### **LAMINATION OF CERTIFICATES**

We have acquired a laminator that will enable us to laminate our membership and awards certificates in future.

If any existing member wishes to receive a replacement laminated certificate, please send us a \$5.00 note in your currency. (This to cover the cost of postage and stationery.)