



FISTS DOWN UNDER Newsletter June 2013

Editor & QSL Manager for ZL: Nigel Hardy, ZL2TX,
P.O. Box 15078, Otaki 5542, New Zealand. - Tel: 06-364-6339

Newsletter Distribution & QSL Manager for VK: Chris Thompson, VK2CTN,
P O Box 65, Dickson, ACT 2602, Australia

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

QSL Manager for ZL6FF: Nigel Hardy, ZL2TX at address above.
QSL Manager for VK2FDU: Chris Thompson VK2CTN at address above

Address e-mails for all persons above to:
[<fists-down-under@ihug.co.nz>](mailto:fists-down-under@ihug.co.nz)
Web site -: www.fistsdownunder.org



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.

MEMBERS' NEWS

ZL1BRS-Syd #9013 is interested in maritime themed books. He has sent us some comprehensive book lists from a British book seller who specialises in maritime, naval and aeronautical books. These lists can be lent to any members who are also interested in those themes. Send us a self addressed prepaid C-4 envelope. The bookseller is Terry Smith, in Norwich. <terrence.smith578@btinternet.com>

ZL2AIM-Ian #9683 reports on a chance encounter . - .Some time ago I saw a picture of a wheel cover on the back of a car with the Fists Logo. Well, whilst waiting for a swap shop to open in Hamilton, I saw the van and its driver – **ZL1CDX-Turner #9048**. We had a nice eyeball rag chew!

Anyway, I had arranged to meet a friend (non-CW operator!) at the swap shop and on arriving at my car, he presented me with a sign. It was very thoughtful of him to have the sign made with the Fists logo. I see he got it from a company in Ohio called ProjectGM. <<http://www.projectgm.com/>> - I have attached a photograph of it.



Turner's wheel cover is shown in this photograph of an earlier face-to-face between **ZL2AOH-Ralph #1073** and Turner in Rotorua.

OTHER MEMBERS' NEWS

A recent debate on the UK/EU FISTS discussion group, evolved from a request from a newly licensed member on the use of single lever paddles. This was the advice given by **N1EA-David #9227** who was a professional marine radio officer

I started learning Morse code at around age 10, obtained a amateur radio license at 13, commercial licenses, both telegraph and telephone first-class ratings later, sailed at sea, worked at radio stations that sent Morse, Music and Video (television!).

I recommend the old school for good reason - you develop rhythm.

Here is what they said in the mid-1960s to me and I think it still holds.

- Do not touch a "speed key" (Semi-auto or auto key) until you can send 17 wpm on an up and downer key.
- Listen only to the sounds of the Morse, learn the sounds mean letters, numbers, punctuation and procedure signals - do not translate dots or dashes but listen only to sound. Dah-di-dah means K. It never means dash dot dash.
- Do not seek to send fast at the sacrifice of quality. Clear transmissions rarely have to be repeated, sloppy and incorrect transmissions must be.

Even if you have some sort of difficulty in getting up to 17, persist. Every one wpm on a hand key roughly takes twice as long as the previous one wpm increase. It is diminishing returns but what happens is the fluidity of your thought from English to Morse improves as does your coordination.

Focus on what in the old days we used to see at railway stations: A news ticker. The letters entered from the distant RIGHT and proceeded to the LEFT where they "fell off the end" - in other words disappeared as the letters moved from right to left.

See what you are sending - visualize the news ticker - and see each letter, see each word, and remember to send the spaces! Send the space between the characters; send the space between the words. This is one of the most important things to do and you will find that many even so called first-class quality operators fail at this. Learn it correctly:

SEND THE SPACES!

If you are up to 17 wpm, and are having difficulty with a speed key, you need to: PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

If your speed is under 17 wpm, the most likely problem is that you haven't gotten the overall fluidity of knowing Morse, it is not just the finger coordination, it has to do with the rhythm and knowing the code so there are no interruptions of thinking, grasping for what to do

If you are at 17 wpm or higher, and have practiced, I agree with you, iambic sending is difficult but it "used to be" for even more experienced users who were having problems sending fluidly at 40 wpm. It is easier to send at 40 wpm when using English on a paddle with iambic than with a single lever paddle.

In other words, if you're at 17 wpm and learning an iambic paddle, you are taking TWO GIANT STEPS; one is using a keyer which is difficult and then in addition, learning the iambic sequence.

FAR too much to ask a person to learn at the beginning, I believe. One step at a time.

These keys were made to allow EXPERIENCED users to send FASTER and BETTER.

At 40 wpm, the iambic is probably the way to go. At 20 wpm, I'd still use a hand pump. At 25, I'd use a paddle

"THE LONG SILENCE FALLS"

In the review of this book last month, it was stated that it was available through the RSGB bookshop. RSGB has sold out of the book, as has the publisher, the Radio Officers Association (ROA.) ROA says that it has arranged for a reprint, but in a soft cover format rather than hard cover. Those interested in obtaining a copy should monitor the ROA website <<http://www.radioofficers.com/>>.

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 the renewals that are due by 30 June 2013; some are overdue: -

**9013; 9023; 9072; 9073; 9078; 9079; 9601; 9620; 9645; 9663; 9677; 9678; 9679;
9690; 14105; 14118; 14121; 14137; 14138; 14145**

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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

<http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.htm>

Wake-Up! QRP Sprint	0600Z-0800Z, Jun 1
Alabama QSO Party	1600Z, Jun 1 to 0400Z, Jun 2
ARS Spartan Sprint	0100Z-0300Z, Jun 4
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Jun 7
SKCC Weekend Sprintathon	1200Z, Jun 8 to 2400Z, Jun 9
Portugal Day Contest	1200Z, Jun 8 to 1159Z, Jun 9
GACW WWSA CW DX Contest	1500Z, Jun 8 to 1500Z, Jun 9
NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint	0030Z-0230Z, Jun 12
CW ops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Jun 12 and 1900Z-2000Z, Jun 12 and 0300Z-0400Z, Jun 13
GB 80m Club Championship, CW	1900Z-2030Z, Jun 12
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Jun 14
All Asian DX Contest, CW	0000Z, Jun 15 to 2400Z, Jun 16
AGCW VHF/UHF Contest	1400Z-1700Z, Jun 15 (144) and 1700Z-1800Z, Jun 15 (432)
West Virginia QSO Party	1600Z, Jun 15 to 0200Z, Jun 16
Run for the Bacon QRP Contest	0100Z-0300Z, Jun 17
NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint	0030Z-0230Z, Jun 20
Marconi Memorial HF Contest	1400Z, Jun 22 to 1400Z, Jun 23
SKCC Sprint	0000Z-0200Z, Jun 26
CW ops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Jun 26 and 1900Z-2000Z, Jun 26 and 0300Z-0400Z, Jun 27

This list of FISTS activities in May 2013 is extracted from www.fists.co.uk

Sun 09 Jun	FISTS Eu Ladder	1400-1600 UTC 1800-2000 UTC
Sat 22 Jun	EUCW Straight Key Day	0800-2200 UTC
Sun 23 Jun	RSGB 6m CW Contest	0900-1200 UTC
Sun 23 Jun	FISTS EU Ladder	1400-1600 UTC 1800-2000 UTC
Sun 30 Jun	FISTS Emu Fifth Sunday	1300-1700 UTC

SHACK VISIT

This month we hear how operating from a high-rise apartment block was achieved.

My High Altitude Shack By ZL2AOH-Ralph-#1073

I always intended to become a radio amateur once I retired. Several opportunities for interesting part time work after I retired from full-time employment meant that my intention was somewhat delayed. In the meantime, I was a SWL, a hobby that I had started as a schoolboy way back in the 1930s. At that time, I used to construct radios with parts scrounged from the local radio shop. From crystal sets I progressed to a three valve all wave set from plans in one of the radio magazines borrowed from the local library. WW2 intervened and although I continued my SW listening, I never got back to construction and technology change overtook me, so I am rather restricted to soldering cable to plug connections!

In 1990, I thought that I ought to do something about becoming a ham before Father Time took over. I studied through the Open Polytechnic and a couple of commercial handbooks. I also brushed up my long disused Morse. Having obtained a third class marine ROs certificate in 1947, I wrote to the NZPO and asked if it had any relevance. It took them over four months to reply "No". Through their procrastination, I missed one of the infrequent exams. Consequently, it was several months before I was able to sit the next exam. It at least allowed me more time to shine up my rusty Morse and technical knowledge. I eventually sat and passed the exam in October 1990, 43 years after my first radio exam. I declined to get a licence immediately as my intention was always to be a Morse operator. A month or so later I sat and passed the Morse test and I was given my own call, ZL2AOH. At that time, there were no "on demand" exams and no personal choice of one's own call sign.



As we were in course of changing our residence, I deferred setting up a station. Moving from a house to a 12th floor of a 13-floor apartment building presented some problems. The apartment has no balcony, so that option did not exist. The large flat roof could have accommodated a short tower and beam, but the winds at 45 metres above the street can exceed 160 km/h at times and a beam would not survive that. I consulted my friend and Elmer Trevor King ZL2AKW (FISTS #9684) and we went up to investigate the opportunities on the roof. We decided on the present configuration; a big dipole extending from the corners of the building to the top centre of the lift tower, a slightly inverted Vee. The transmission line from the dipole into the shack is a 100-metre long high quality 300 Ω foam insulated twin wire TV cable. It was then readily available from Tandy in Australia and Radio Shack in the United States. The cable travels down into the shack through a service duct and into the shack. The cable is terminated with a 6:1 balun and to an AT-300 tuner from the much-missed AEA Inc.

United States. The cable travels down into the shack through a service duct and into the shack. The cable is terminated with a 6:1 balun and to an AT-300 tuner from the much-missed AEA Inc.

My equipment includes an ICOM-736 100W transceiver, a



back-up Kenwood TS-120V 10W transceiver. To overcome the grounding problems to be experienced so far above the ground, I use an MFJ Artificial Ground Model 931. Other equipment includes an MFJ-493 memory keyer that is almost solely used for calling CQ! I have a desk microphone for the IC-736 and a range of hand microphones for the IC-736, TS-120V and a hand held transceiver for 2m that has gathered dust and cobwebs. I have a number of Morse keys but my preferred one now is my Czech Army key. – Out of consideration for my neighbours, I have never considered having an amplifier.

I can operate successfully on all bands 10m to

80m. At one time, I caused interference problems getting into the building's TV reception and cabling system. This was diagnosed as being through incompetent installation of the TV system and resolved by employing a more efficient installer who reconfigured the system. I maintain my log solely by a CI-V interface to my computer. 99%+ of my operation is by Morse code; voice contact mainly with my local branch Sunday morning net. I enjoy DX HF operations, not knowing whom I am likely to be working and where in the world they are situated. I keep regular skeds with radio friends in Japan and England.

Therefore, with only minor limitations, I am very lucky to be able to enjoy my hobby in a high-rise apartment block,

We are still anxious to feature more shack visits: please send us details of yours with photographs. If you are not confident about what to write, just send your notes and we will edit them into an article.

SOS FROM TIMBERTOWN, NEW SOUTH WALES

We recently received this message from Timbertown. – If anyone feels disposed to offer help, please communicate with them direct.

Subject: Timbertown Heritage Park

Date: Tue, 30 Apr 2013 12:16:22 +1000

From: Timbertown Functions functions@timbertown.com.au

To:
<fists-down-under@ihug.co.nz>

Hello.

I work in the Events Dept. of Timbertown Heritage Park at Wauchope, on the Mid North Coast of NSW (www.timbertown.com.au). We have a telegraph office in the Village that has a Morse code radio and are looking for someone that might be interested in operating this machine during school holiday periods. If you know of anyone that might be interested I would be keen to speak with them. Thank you for your time in this matter
Regards, Judy Lockwood, Timbertown events <Tel: 02-6586-1941>

EDITOR'S AWARDS 2013

It's that time of year again where I have to pick the two most interesting articles submitted by members over the past year. The winners are: -

First - "Operating away from home – Another man's view." Ian Macquillan, ZL2AIM #9683

Second – "28MHz Extended Double Zepp Loop Antenna." David (Doc) Wescombe –Down, VK5BUG #14136

Ralph, ZL2AOH will contact you and organise your prizes. Well Done Gentlemen, keep those articles coming!

73 Nigel, ZL2TX