



KEY NOTE



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GREETINGS

The panic of last month following a complete 'down' of the computer and necessitating a wholesale cleansing of the hard drive found me scratching round for a copy of the template which is used to produce the news letter. I knew there was one on a zip disc somewhere so no panic. Trouble was that it had not been up-dated and displayed the wrong information on Subs and QSL cards. Please note the correct costings as above. For our newer members, the sum of £7.00 became necessary when the postal rates for Europe were levelled up. Prior to that of course, the rates were sufficiently close to that of UK inland that £6.00 covered the costs. To a large degree, luck plays a part in whether we break even or lose. A DX station for instance submits £10.00 which leaves a small percentage to help towards running costs but three or four batches of QSL cards can place us into a position where the costs outweigh the payments. We have so many e-mail addresses these days that I am obliged to keep 'em on an ASCII file which Brian (W8BL) regularly updates. Even so, I am frequently caught with my trousers at half mast by a few (sometimes long-standing) members who do not appear on the list. May I just remind you that if you have recently gained access to e-mail and the web, a short note to Brian (blafont@tir.com) will place your address on the list. It is noted that two members (IK2RMZ and PA3AFF) found their way onto the EUCW Contest class 'A' results. The list however is headed the 18th. EUCW Contest, 1998. If this is the case then it's just a wee bit adrift??

Spring looks like it has sprung at the time of writing; in fact it is unseasonably warm having recorded peaks of 13c recently. However, a good broolly would seem to be a worthwhile investment and I understand that some guy over in Blackpool has begun to lay the keel for an Ark. The bands have been mostly kind to us. Listening on 10m is about the extent of my involvement in that band and 15m since even a few watts results in no small measure of audio interference and pretty patterns on the TV. During daytime on weekdays, I can generally get away with working 10 and 15m but evenings and weekends are taboo. Amazing when you think that we have an ultra modern digital television with no VCR. Odd thing is that none of the WARC bands gives any problems despite the fact that (neglecting the mag loop), the antenna is far from being matched and requires an ATU. The fact that the interference is present without an antenna connected points to the problem being mains borne but the rig is powered via a mains filter (and yes, the radio earth and not the mains earth is used) and there is a pair of ferrite rings guarding the mains input

to the TV. so we will have to keep experimenting for the time being. Anyone got an answer? MOCET for instance had big problems on one band only - 40m. This resulted in the neighbours VCR doing something akin to a war dance and much time was spent trying to effect a cure. Recently however, the machine went belly-up and was replaced by a more modern version which is immune to Andy's activities.

You will not believe the amount of flak that came my way over a simple mis-spelling. OK.. I hold my hands up.. it should be MECCANO and not Mechano.

SILENT KEY

Belated advice from his Widow on the passing of **G13MUS** (Bill) on Dec28 1999. No further info to hand.

Also of Dennis, **G400** during an operation Jan 23 and thanks to G0EUD for the information.

WAB AWARD

I have just been awarded the WAB 4000 Trophy after chasing WAB Squares since 1974!

The difficulty of getting this top award can be judged by the fact that mine is number FOUR!!! (since WAB started in 1969).

I worked many on cw but how I wish more UK stations took the trouble to find out their WAB square and their actual county or local authority. In contrast the Germans, to a man, instantly respond with DOK numbers on request.

John, G3OKA

CHANGE OF CALL

Andrew, G8GNI (FISTS 6455) holds the additional call of M5AEX. Also, 2E1HEY (FISTS 7106) is now M5BOB (his preferred callsign) and will be active as from April 1. Additionally, G4ZVL becomes GW4ZVL having moved QTH to sheep country.

ELECTRONIC KEYNOTE

Quite a number of responses to last month's invitation to accept Keynote via the web. The completed list will be forwarded to Andy, G0JLX, in time for this issue and he will organise a mass mailing so there is no need for you to check the web-site to see if it is ready for receiving.

The records of all participating members will be marked so that no label will be printed for snail mail but in the event that there are outstanding QSL cards, I have written a programme which will compare Bob's list with the main file and all entries found to be MAIL=FALSE will have the appropriate address information appended to the mailing list so that you will still receive QSL cards as normal.

As was noted last month, a few stamps here and there may not sound much but the savings can be significant given numbers.

EA3WC IN SMOKE

An e-mail confirmed that Jordi, EA3WC has arrived in London and is located in the Battersea area. Already Tony, G4FAI (who was kind enough to respond to my scream for help) has located a number of clubs for him and hopefully it will not be long

before he gets well and truly settled in. In the interim period, if any member in the Battersea area would like to offer the hand of friendship, I hold Jordi's address here. At this point, lest I be accused of being partisan, I should explain to our overseas members that on the subhead here, 'THE SMOKE' is a commonly used option for LONDON. Now don't ask me why but I have been told that it is because throughout London, Green (or tub cured) bacon is as rare as hens teeth; the preference being for SMOKED bacon.

IT'S ALRIGHT FOR SOME!

Greetings Geo

If you recall some time ago I wrote to let you know of my move to Jamaica. Still having business commitments and a home here in the UK I travel back and forth about 3/4 times a year to keep an eye on things.

Now, whilst lounging on the balcony of my new home, watching the beautiful sunsets into the Caribbean ocean each night, working the key with one hand and sipping exotic drinks with the other, I often work FISTS members.

Josh (G0NAN, 6Y5WJ)

NARROW BAND - NARROW MODES?

I have been an avid user of 30m for quite a few yrs and have well over 200 countries on there (lost count now adays) I do have a full size 3 ele mono band yagi (very big!) which I had made for me in Holland and up to last year 98/99 I had the beam up and I could work the world nearly any time of day. I have since taken that down and put up a 2 ele yagi for 40m and on my 2nd tower I have put a cushcraft AW3s above my TH6DXX and it has the 30m extension on the driven so that it gives me a rotary dipole on 30m. This works not quite as well (obviously) but I still work W6/7 KH6 KL6's nearly every morning on 30m around 0700z. At this time (05.30z after the clocks go forward) I usually use 10107.00 or 10118 ish. The frequency you mention for fists contacts is not very good as it is usually full of commercial stuff I would recommend that you use 10120 -10125 around there, not higher as our French "friends" have decided that they want to use 30m for SSB and they are usually on above 10125. They dont have any respect for us as I have had quite a few run ins with them as I have been on to ask them not to use SSB and the phrase "sod off" comes to mind in the replies I get from them!!!! Maybe you ought to mention this in the newsletter. Also I dont know if you saw it but in last months RAD COM letters the letter from G3GJT saying "Lets Use SSB on 30m" well I am outraged at this and I am sending in a reply to the Rad Com, maybe our members can "Flood" the column what do you think???
John, G4RCG

TRAVELLIN' DERRICK

Derrick (M0BDD), as rep for the RSARS, spends much time at various rallies and kindly plugs FISTS at the same time. All things being well, he will be found at the following venues:

- Apr 16 Cambridge rptg grp, Bottisham Village College
- May 7 MARS, Drayton Manor Park, Nr Tamworth
- Jun 11 Elvaston Castle
- Jul 9 York Race Course
- Jul 30 Hatfield House
- Aug 13 Kings Lynn
- Aug 27 Bletchley Park
- Sep 10 Lincoln Show Ground
- Sep 22 Donnington Park
- Oct 22 Hornsea (provisionally)
- Nov 12 Barnsley Metrodome

WINTER SKW

Oh yes.. the panic of last month and other matters punched a hole of no mean dimensions in my memory. Winter SKW should have been in February but knowing how popular this event is, the seasons have been ignored and it will run from 0001 Sunday, April 9 to 2359 the following Saturday.

The format: RST/NAME/QTH/FISTS NR/DAY where Day is signified by a number between 1 and 7 (Sunday through Saturday) i.e. 579/FRED/KEW/9999/2 showing that the QSO was on Monday. As usual, the reason for the 'day' element is so that contacts may be duplicated. You may not log the same call in any one day. All logs to be with Gerry, GM4BAE by the third Saturday in May. Gerry's address appears on the banner.

Next year, perhaps Gerry (or indeed other members) would be kind enough to remind me in January ready for the February news letter. Hi.

THE LADDER

Hi Geo. = Please find the February LSCWC scores. Those only showing previous total have not submitted a Log on this occasion. Lets hope that it will pick up as the year progresses, sorry F5NTP has not submitted this time, still we live in hope.

Callsign	Mem Calls	Mem Tot	Non Mem	Previous	Total
G4LHI	18	36	2	34	72
G0MRH	11	22	3	32	57
G0ANV				40	40
PA3AFF	4	8		28	36
M5ABN	9	18	1	16	35
G0PEH	9	18	2	8	28
GM0VIT	1	2	7	17	26
M5AGL	9	18		8	26
GW0SSG				26	26
G4RBE	3	6		9	15
G0VBH	2	4		6	10
F5NTP				8	8
M0BHE				6	6

Here is a further copy of the dates for this event:

Mar26, Apr30, May28, June25, Jul30, Aug27, Sept24, Oct29, Nov26, Dec.31.

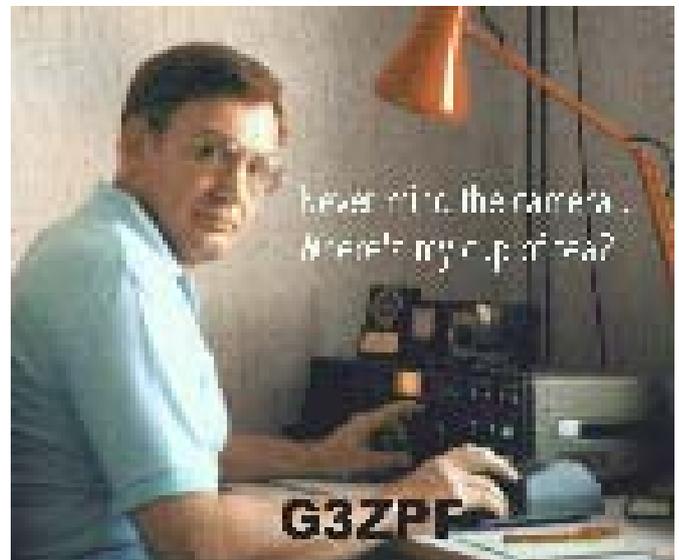
FROM DOWN UNDER

Ralph ZL2AOH, distributes a printout of the e-mailed keynote to his slowly growing band with his own addendum and it is from this that I culled the following item:

The internationally organised beacons on the bands 20 to 10 metres can give a good indication of propagation conditions between your QTH and the beacon. A neat program "Active Beacon Wizard++" is available free on the Internet from <http://www.ncdx.org/beacon/KU5S_2.htm>. You can download the program (690-kb) in just a few minutes.

The program displays a map showing the location of the beacons around the world. You select the frequency you wish to check and the program shows which beacon is operating at the time. To ensure that your computer is time synchronised, there is a built-in facility to check on a variety of master clocks. This it achieves in just a few seconds. Apart from its utility, it is fun to watch and listen as all beacons are operated within a three-minute cycle. You need Windows 95/98 to run this program, although there is a Windows 3.x edition, which performs the same function but which lacks the map feature.

Ralph was in London recently but unhappily on a sad errand - the funeral of his Sister. An attempt was made to pass a telephone number via Bob, G0FRL, but unfortunately the call itself (from a mobile phone) was somewhat garbled and the number was not copied correctly. I understand that Ralph will be at Dayton this year where I am sure he will receive a warm welcome from the US gang.



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CLUB FINANCES

Bob has answered a few queries on this matter and, prior to our AGM, it should be pointed out that we do **not** enjoy the luxury of subs from 7K plus members. What with defaulters and SKs, the total figure is around 4.6K of which FISTS EU has around 1100. The US chapter is financially autonomous because not only would the transfer of funds over the outgoings be a logistic headache but the requirements of the US gang are very much different than our own. They have to pay a professional printer for their news letter for instance and there is a very considerable outlay each year when they represent us at Dayton. In the same way though on a smaller scale, the ZL chapter is also required to raise their own subs and cover their own expenses. I know this has been mentioned before but each year with a batch of new members who are unaware of the situation it seems to need clarifying.

Another point which really should need no explanation since every member receives a copy of the constitution, is that FISTS is a non-profit making organisation. I am delighted to note an increase in the surplus each year now but it is still a source of potential embarrassment. OK, some of the equipment which the club has paid for (the laser printer for instance) is subject to depreciation and at some point will need to be replaced and the offset printer (my personal property) which keeps the subs down as low as they are, occasionally drifts out of ideal set up and requires the attention of an engineer. It is therefore nice to have a hedge against potential costs and I shall be happy for that situation to be maintained.

There are also (it has been pointed out to me) a number of people, ironically not FISTS members, claiming that my trips to DAYTON are funded by the club. Rubbish! The costs of these trips come entirely from my own pocket just as they would have to do for other members who chose to make the trip. It is sometimes necessary to point out that I spend more hours per day on behalf of the club than I used to spend with the Daily Express and I got paid for that!

NEW MEMBERS

7132	G8VDD	Ray	7133	G2BRR	Richard
7134	G3KAN	Alan	7135	M0ADB	Norman
7136	M5AIA	Brian	7137	G0WHV	Roger
7138	HB9DAX	Fred	7139	GM2AOL	Sam
7140	M0CSD	Tom	7141	M0CNU	Tom
7142	M0MJG	Michael	7143	M5AFT	Mick
7144	M5AAQ	Jim			

Yes, quite a small list this month but at the time of composition there are many application forms in circulation.

G8VDD incidentally has staked his claim to G2CD (presumably a family inheritance though no details offered) so we may be hearing him under that call soon and M5AAQ has an alternative call of 2E0ATS..

DUMBING DOWN

Doug, G3KUL, sent me a letter in which he refers to a talk given by a senior RSGB official in Bristol. "Never in my life have I heard such arrogant nonsense" claims Doug who suggests that the Society should review their policy of exposure and choose their representatives with greater care. This particular individual

seems convinced that he is destined to be the 'saviour of amateur radio' and his approach to that end is the entirely misguided belief that relaxing of standards and the abolition of Morse as a qualification for the class 'A' licence is the way to go. As Doug noted, let these people have their way and a class 'A' ticket will be available over any Post Office counter like a vehicle excise licence. He is saddened to see such a great hobby being downgraded to almost that of the horror that was CB together with its bad language and attendant failures.

During the talk, the representative 'rubbished' the UKRS as being of no significance claiming also that PW and other magazines had a falling readership. This irritated Doug even more since, as he pointed out, the Society bought up Ham Radio Today - a real case of failing readership and they did so typically without consulting the membership, renaming it Radio Today. It would seem that the publication is now chasing its own tail in a far more serious way with frenzied offers in Radcom of reduced subscription offers than it did before the acquisition.

On the other side of the coin, Doug attended the RA Roadshow in the Autumn of last year and found it very interesting. The entire RA staff (including Karen Scott and the director of the RA) was entirely 'approachable' and readily discussed matters with those who asked. They answered with complete frankness and without any of the usual evasiveness of the RSGB staff. He speaks of disenchantment within the authority of certain attitudes exhibited by the RSGB and suggests that were it not for organisations such as FISTS and the G-QRP club, the downward slide of the hobby would be greatly accelerated.

G4ZPY

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AGM

I was waiting for Bob and seemingly he was waiting for me so it is fortuitous that I decided to ring and ask. The AGM will be held at the usual venue (Cemetery Hotel, Cemetery Rd, Darwen) on Tuesday, Apr 18 at 1930. There is little actual business to transact so should be over in time for Glen and I to monopolise the dart board. Hi.

Any members who feel they would like to do so would be most welcome to attend and notification of any further business or nominations for officers should be in my hands before this date.

EUCW NEWS

FISTS is a member of the European CW Association (EUCW), an association of some thirty CW clubs across Europe which promotes and encourages amateur CW operation. Each club maintains contact with the Association through an appointed "European Communications Manager" (ECM) and I have recently taken on this task on behalf of FISTS.

Last November's EUCW Fraternalising CW Party produced some excellent results for FISTS and our congratulations go to Maurice F5NQL who took first place in Class A (any licensed power), and to Robert G0WHO who was second in Class B (QRP, up to 5w output).

Although there is a contest element in the sense that certificates are awarded to top performers, the real purpose of the CW Fraternalising Party is to give members of EUCW clubs the opportunity to meet each other and demonstrate that amateur Morse is still alive and well. Above all, it's a fun event and in this sense it's good to see a greatly increased FISTS turnout in the results compared to previous years.

Two EUCW Clubs, AGCW-DL and HSC, with the DARC section for DX and Radio Sports, are holding their annual CW

weekend on 19-21 May 2000 at Willingen, Germany. Included in the programme are the Telegraphy championships of DARC, a fox-hunting competition and, of course, many eyeball QSO's with CW friends old and new - when tables are provided for English and French speakers to help things along. An invitation is extended to all CW enthusiasts who would like to attend this event. I have the details (in German only) if anyone would like them. Just send me an s.a.e. QTHR, or e-mail me at g4fai@connectfree.co.uk.

AGCW news bulletins are now transmitted every Monday on 3573 kHz +/- 3 kHz at 1800 UTC, but are QRV 15-30 minutes earlier to log any stations wishing to be called after the bulletin. The bulletins are transmitted in German at easy handwriting speed and the text can be checked on the internet at <http://www.qth.net/archive/agcw/agcw.html>

Another EUCW club, UFT, the Union Française de Telegraphists, has protested to CQ Magazine about the intrusion of SSB stations into the CW sections of the bands, particularly 40m, during CQ WW DX SSB contests. It suggests that greater supervision be exercised, and that contestants operating on these frequencies should be disqualified. FISTS has written to CQ supporting the UFT protest, and ON5ME, Chairman of EUCW has written a similar letter on behalf of EUCW as a whole.

ODDS N' ENDS

Flea Power

I happened upon G0NTR on 80M one evening last month running a magnificent 800mW but in spite of this the QSO was near to solid. Right then.... next step is 80mW.

The US web site

Nancy confirms that the The url for the US web page is: <http://www.fists.org> so it would seem that the damage caused by the lightning strikes has been made good.

In a blaze of glory

John, G4OOS, tells me that the final few points required for his Gold award included PP6CW and ZL1BSG. Some guys get all the luck!

Change of Call

Andrew, G8GNI, who is FISTS number 6455, has upgraded and adopted the call M5AEX. Also, Bob, 2E1HEX who who was mistakenly identified as 2E1HEY last month is FISTS 7106 and as from the 1st of this month will be QRV with the call M5BOB. Congrats.

Morse prog for the Mac

WD1V tells me that Black Cat systems (<http://www.blackcatsystems.com>) provide Morse Mania, a Morse tutor for the Macintosh. Goes 5-30 wpm plus Farnsworth spacing. This is a shareware package so for any members who are running a Mac, t'will cost nil. Full info on <http://www.blackcatsystems.com/software/morsemania.html>. Also on the web (<http://www.poldhu.com>) you can find oodles of info about the Poldhu Wireless Station. This info from the archivist Peter Hughes who also offers poldhu@glacebay.demon.co.uk in the event of any problems.

Oooh who spake?

A logging computer lets you make more mistakes faster than any invention in human history — with the possible exception of a quart of tequila and a borrowed Vibroplex key. —K0HB

FT100MP AF Kit

Vine antennas are offering this plug in device (and let's face it, with my expertise it has to be plug in) which is reputed to enhance the AF stage of the FT100MP. Well, I am not complaining one jot about the performance of this super rig but if it offers improvements then I will give it a whirl. Let you know next month if it is worth considering.

Wotta Collexn

WD8OCV tells me he has the same number (21) for Gold, Silver and Platinum awards. Most unusual.

THE STRAWBERRY BASKET

Not too many notes and jottings this month. Perhaps some of those pens are suffering from the Y2K bug? However, for what we do have:

G4LHI. Our Peter I note has again secured his place on top of the LS ladder and to reinforce his activity has claimed the Millenium Award. He also finds ZL with contacts on 15m to ZL1BIQ and ZL1BSG. **G3EFY.** Tom was somewhat disappointed to find that the RSGB had failed to recognise him in the

Honours List acknowledging 50 years plus membership of the Society (Feb Radcom). Wheels were set in motion and he has received a cheque for the excess payment since he has been subscribing for 52 years and this fact together with other members similarly overlooked was recorded in the March edition. Members can hardly have failed to note that I personally hold the Society in fairly low esteem but being at the sharp end, I am able to appreciate how easily such detail can be missed. Bob assures me that your call is included in the 'Century List' Tom but to my shame, I appear to have taken the data from an older version supplied by him. **G4OOS.** Yes thank you John. Apart from one or two items of data which are not recoverable, the status of the PC is back to normal. Congrats on the Gold John. **M0AFJ.** Tim is singing the praises of the FT847 which, with the Collins filters and DSP is giving him much joy. He invites skeds from any members on 4m and is available on M0AFJ@aol.com. **G4VLW.** Work demands are restricting Roger to 80m during the evenings and in recent conditions he has found himself struggling with low signal strengths. With the extending hours of daylight it is hoped that he will be able to make more use of the HF bands. **G0GWD.** Alan discovered a thriving population of the Gremlins living in his shack. Front panel jack socket for key was NBG and the rear one played host to the keyer till that also threw a wobbly. He is however on the prowl for FISTS. **GM2AOL.** A real OT here who was licensed in 1939 and now at the tender age of 85 years, still delights in pounding the brass although the pleasures of 'building everything from scratch' are now simply pleasant memories.

G3TUX

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FINALE

Tammy as usual was fast asleep. So deep was his slumber that he was completely unaware that strangers had entered the room. He would not even have felt the prick as the needle penetrated his skin and three minutes later, the vet was carrying him out to the car. His body was transported to a 'pets crematorium' from whence a certificate of his proper and dignified disposal was posted here as with the canine duo which long ago formed part of the family. I am saddened only for my-self at losing his companionship. This was the final act of kindness that I could offer him. His 15 year old frame became almost skeletal in three short weeks and he and was drinking water like it was going out of fashion. There were times when he would simply fall over - his hind legs collapsing under him. Possible kidney failure opined the vet though it could also be diabetes.

Will I get another? I am committed to a silent house at present since at 72 years, I would consider it unfair to take on another dog when there is a possibility that I may not outlive it but life without one will mean life with a huge void. My Daughter (who has two dogs of her own) however berates me for this outlook declaring that should my fears come to fruition, the dog would be well taken care of and making clear her intention to drive me over the RSPCA home so, it remains to be seen.

Quite a few of the new members we have been privileged to welcome in the past year have expressed their appreciation of the readiness of the gang to QRS and, indeed, some joined us in the hope that what they had heard was true. They need no assurances from me.. you, my friends, say it all for me and it makes me at once both grateful and proud.

Enjoy the weather my friends. As usual you will find GX0IPX on one band or another and remember my reputation as a gasbag so be prepared to natter. Hi.

73/88 es stay sober

Geo