

International Morse Preservation Society



KEY NOTE



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NETS

Sunday QRS 0900 (loc) 3.575 2E0AJS
US 0100Z on 14058
Tues: GX0IPX/P 1930 ON 3.558 (+/-)
Wed: US Net 0100z on 14058
DX 14/21/28.058 on the hour for 15mins
Pse keep watch all Novice allocations
UK Net Controls use GX0IPX/P

Awards & QSLs. Claims for awards and QSL cards for onward routing etc. to G0FRL. All other correspondence to HQ.
Up-dated listings may be obtained from HQ. 3 x 2nd class stamps to cover running costs and postage.

Lapel Badges: £1.50. **Fabric patches** £2.50.

QSL Cards: £9.00 per 200 + £1.00 p&p. £6.00 per 100 + 60p p&p.

Subscriptions: UK £5.00, Europe £7.00, DX £10.00.

Renewal dates: Your subs become due on the anniversary of the month you joined and the renewal date is printed on your mailing label. Your anticipation would be appreciated.

YOUR CALLSIGN PLEASE on ALL correspondence.

GREETINGS

Y2K.. well, it's arrived and we are still here to prove the fact. No aircraft have fallen out of the sky, there has been no epidemic of rail crashes, the computers in the Pentagon have not initiated WW3 by detecting spurious missiles and as far as I am aware, everyone's milk was still delivered on time. Mind you, some strange things have been happening radio-wise because when pressed, a button on my rig marked '28' which I had hitherto thought was related to dB gain with SSB signals produced all manner of DX on a number of occasions. I was sure the manual was wrong but now I am beginning to believe that it really is for setting the rig on 28MHz.

Trying to explain the wonder of radio to a friend I started with the thought that when you come to think that a signal from another continent or even on the opposite side of the world having the same sort of power that would light a flashlight bulb can be selected by your receiver from millions of others of far greater power - thats sensitive. But you want really sensitive? When I take Tammy for his usual sniff and dribble, the house is out of sight within minutes. Frequently, on returning, he just can't get in fast enough and his tail is vibrating like a guitar string. I know without asking that Ivy has arrived home during our absence and that Tammy's only clue is the fact that she has put a foot on the step. I have even had him getting excited before we cross the road and suspect that the ambulance has been down recently and he can differentiate between the scent left by the tyres and that of countless others which have rolled down the surface. The sensitivity of that nose I understand is in the order of tens of thousands greater than that of the human bugle. Makes you think doesn't it?

We really opened a can of worms with the Millenium award. Foolishly I thought to give the hunters a bit of a start by publishing a short list but this back-fired in no time with (particularly the US stations) clamouring for a list. This is not the idea - not with this or any other award. On air, it takes no time at all to ask 'Diamond award?' and if affirmed the number will be returned also. I think we may now have a situation where all other members are being ignored in the presence of any of the call signs so thoughtlessly published. It is I confess, entirely my own fault and Bob was a tad miffed when he realised what I had done. Sorry.

QSL cards are processed as soon as possible but during the period when I am in the business of putting Keynote together, they - and just about everything else - assume a reduced priority. Under these circumstances, only subscriptions find their way

into the accounts package. All other matters are relegated to the back burner until time can be found. If your request for QSL cards are not handled promptly, please be patient.. other matters may well have centre stage.

TO PRESERVE OR PROMOTE?

Hi Geo,

It's now just a bit over a year since I got my M0 licence and just under a year since I joined Fists. In that time I've turned into a CW fan, partly thanks to Fists membership. I finally got my CC just before Christmas and now have certificate no. 827. There is a microphone attached to my IC706, but I can't remember the last time I used it! I'm now 100% CW and probably 80% QRP. This last year has also seen a procession of 5 QRP kits through the shack, ranging from a Howes DC2000/TX2000 though a DSW30 from Small Wonder Labs (what a clever little project that is, with DDS, built in keyer and audio frequency readout) to a Wilderness Sierra, my Xmas present from Caroline, my generous and understanding XYL (well she is a pretty serious stamp collector herself ;-)).

I noted in "Keynote" that members had been chiding you for changing from "Preservation" to "Promotion". I think promotion is much better than preservation. Preservation makes us sound like some sort of living museum, keeping CW going like an old steam train, beautiful but not really useful anymore.

I use CW because it's fun, it gives each QSO a sense of achievement and keeps me on my toes using an acquired skill which I keep polished. I'd like to think we promote CW for the fun and pleasure that it offers, its efficiency in getting the signal through and also the opportunity to make QSO's with fairly straightforward home built equipment. As a local said to me when I first got back on the air, "any fool can use a microphone", he didn't add, "and lots seem to" :-). It's something I want to promote, not merely preserve.

I've enjoyed my first year of CW, and I hope to be around to use it for many more with my trusty Kent straight key and my shiny new Bencher paddles from G3TUX. I know that the fashion seems to be for "no-code" or only 5 wpm. It's no good if we just gripe about it, because that just shows us to be steam engine preservers who just think the past more wonderful than the present, let alone the future.

When I was first licensed I was about 16. The old G3's in my local club were sniffy, stand-offish, and never offered to help me learn Morse. It's up to us to be enthusiastic about CW at our local clubs; tell them about how it can be learnt - I used a combination of "NuMorse" on the PC and a Datong Morse tutor as well as one to one tuition, and enjoy our CW on the air, getting those rigs fired up and the keys tapping.

I'm proud to be a member of Fists and GQRP and still, yes, the RSGB, for they got me back into amateur radio after a 15 year gap.

I hope that I'll hear GX0IPX again soon. Sorry I never make the nets, I'm always working or eating!

Vy 73; Paul Barlow M0CDP Fists 5579 GQRP 10289

CQ DE M200A

The Cray Valley gang activated the above call for the new millenium and it will remain active until some time this month

so there is ample opportunity to grab it. I got a splendidly printed colour brochure on project ECHO (Eltham Contacting Hams Overseas) which has an impressive array of sponsors including English Heritage, the London Borough of Greenwich and the RSGB. Support is also evident from SMC, Icom (UK), Highline Comms, Strumech, Nevada, Computata and others. The home of ECHO is Greenwich Park and is open to visitors 1000-1600 Wednesday through Sunday for those of you finding yourselves in the area.

VK6PG



I confess I have had this 'jpeg' file for some time but have been unable to use it because it seriously lacked depth and was generally as flat as the proverbial cows' face. Recently however some delightful processing kit has come my way which allowed me to improve it to the point that it would print reasonably well.

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THE STRAWBERRY BASKET

OK1PFG. George dropped me a line to advise me of a change of address (he is still in Budejovice) the cost of which was supported by a new job - the same one which restricted his time on air - but in spring he is looking forward to planting a tower in the garden together with beams. **G4KLQ.** Edd was having a bit of a lay-down in September when he was struck by a coronary. Fortunately the XYL was there to sound the alarm and he found himself languishing in dry-dock in no time flat. Happily, there appears to be no lasting damage. An old friend of ours, **Ray Pitts** (shame on me.. how could I forget the call) sends me

a page from the Lewison (Maine) journal in which the reader is invited to write a headline in Morse. This is accompanied by a graphical illustration of the code in- and- fashion (ugh) which identifies the symbol we all recognise as zero by the new title '10'. Hmmmm. Edison, it recounts, was so fond of sending Morse that he named his two children Dot and Dash. **ZL2BCW** sends me a copy of the Quartz Hill Story which I would love to reproduce but it occupies as much space as Keynote. Suffice it to say that the Wellington Club is probably unique among such organisations in having a superb antenna farm including vee beams and rhombics at it's disposal. **G0HGA.** I have an absolute blockbuster here from Angie which amounts to 4 close typed foolscap pages (whew!) but an interesting titbit for those of you running WIN95/98 is that the screen-saver '3D PIPES' turns up some very surprising results when SETTINGS is tweaked. One such example is a glorious display of teapots. Hi. A note of caution for those tempted by el-cheapo offers of high powered computers - Angie parted with hard to come-by cash for a virtual lemon.

This month's mail bag was not as small as it appears though most of the communications were in the form of Christmas Cards (some 200 in total) to which it would be a mammoth task to reply.

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

I continue to receive e-mails from members whose addresses are not recognised in Brian's (W8BL) list. If you have an e-mail address and have not already done so then could you please advise Brian so that he can keep his list up-dated. The address: blafont@tir.com. If you wish it, you will receive an up-dated version periodically.

JA LICENCE STATUS

Alen, BV4PS, tells me that there is now a new class of licence in Taiwan with the prefix BX. At the time of advice, there were seemingly some 16 or 18 successful applicants for this licence class - we look forward to many more.

Full status range is:

class	prefix	suffix	mode	band
1	BX	2 char	all	all
2	BV or BM	2 char	all	all
3	BX	3 char	all	above 21MHz
4	BM	3 char	phone	VHF/UHF only

I do hope I have this info correct though Alen's translation is somewhat confusing.

THERE'S A HOLD UP

Shortly before the Oldham Rally, Bob (G0FRL) discovered a metal case full of gremlins. It had hitherto held a fairly modern computer but now, apart from a few beeps and other objectionable noises, it's behaviour was distinctly reminiscent of a rubber ball. He purchased a video board (logical since there was no video at all) only to discover that the problem was more deeply rooted and he will be seeking a replacement mother board at the Lancaster rally. I was able to provide a spare set up which he intends to restrict to FISTS use only but as of Jan 23 at least, he had 4 mail-bags of QSL cards to sort and log together with a batch of new members and award claims to process. This has had a direct effect on myself hence a somewhat belated Key-note.

RALLY VISITS

As you may have gathered from the above item, G0FRL, G0JWB, G0WPO and my-self were to be found at Oldham and the Lancaster University. There were some 40 members signing in and half a dozen new members. It would be appreciated however if more stands were to be located in the various popular rallies up and down the country. Bill is frequently busy with Morse Tests and frequently, I am - to say the least - spaced out but it is good publicity.

MORSE ON THE BOX

Tony, GM4XVF, advises me that the first part of "Churchill's Secret Army" is to be shown Jan 27 on channel 4 TV. I am probably too late with this but it would seem that there will be at least one further part to the programme.



I am indebted to G3PEN for the above beautifully sharp photograph of G0VHS (Peter). As frequently happens in these cases, some lid with a silly hat leaped into the foreground just as the shutter activated. It was taken at the 1999 QRP gathering at Rochdale.

GREETINGS FROM DOWN UNDER

Hello Geo, hpe ur keeping well in the cold old country! Just to say that our move to VK was not without trauma - as we still have grandchildren in London..... Perhaps one day we will retire to Devon. In meantime while you suffer the damp and darkness of winter, we are trying to keep cool. 30° -32°C at moment, unusual warmth for this area. But the fridge keeps the beer cold!

The rig was set up a day or two after moving in to our new home. Dunno why it took so long! First Fist QSO, quite by co-incident, was with Ralph, ZL2AOH who rapidly organised things and sent me a nice qsl and a current newsletter. And asked for my cheque for renewal of Subscription!!

Don't worry, it will be arranged. Very little life on the bands in this part of the world and Fists members scarce. I miss the old ragchews on 80m in the evenings. That band is little used here and would you believe it is a job to find even a BC stn on 7 mcs! So am hoping for more action soon as the ant farm grows (we have 8 acres).

David G3SCD/VK3DBD (3756)

THE WEB PAGE

The EU web page address was modified shortly after the last Keynote was on it's way so I was unable to warn you in sufficient time. Andy kindly agreed to run a general message to this effect to all appearing on the list circulated by Brian, W8BL. If you have it in your address book, simply delete 'olivenet' and replace it with 'asel' the full address therefore is: <http://www.asel.demon.co.uk/fists-hq/>.

More for the benefit of the curious than for members, Andy has managed to do a direct translation from the DTP to Adobe Acrobat. Hitherto, the printed copy had to be scanned and the resultant file was many MBytes in size but he has been able to reduce this significantly.

The listings are updated regularly and an application form is available amongst other items. Also available is the logging programme which contains only FISTS members in it's sample QSO file. However, an updated QSO.DBF may be obtained from HQ for a 1.44mB floppy and return postage. Alternatively, e-mail your request and I can return it as a ZIP file.

THE MORSE TEST SERVICE

If my memory permits, I will remind you again nearer the time but for the moment, mark you diaries because the popular RSGB MORSE TEST ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND is scheduled to

take place on May 13/14. As usual, participating stations will be using GB0 plus their county identifiers and ten of these contacts plus £2.50 to G4HNF, 116 Reading Rd, Woodley, RG5 3AD earns you a certificate.

Activity will be focused on the 40 and 80m bands and in order to encourage newcomers to apply for the award, each team will spend some time calling slowly in the Novice CW section of the 80m band (above 3650). The more competent amongst our members are encouraged to leave these occasions to the slower operators since the same GB0 stations will be available at other times in the general section of the band.

You are reminded that this event is not a contest. Examiners will be happy to reply at whatever speed they are called at and there is no restriction upon the preferred hardware -straight key, bug or el-keyer - it's all the same.

SILENT KEY

Belated advice from John, M0BZG that Gordon (G3MHH) passed away in August/September of last year. Despite his death being due to natural causes, it was still something of a shock to friends and family. Gordon, John tells me, had more or less hung up his key some time ago - frustrated by the twin difficulties of finding work and balancing a meagre income; the failure of his rig and his inability to pay for repairs must surely have hastened his passing.

From G3JRY, I learn of the death of Tony, G0PKB. Those who knew him will know that he was the severely handicapped son of Clarry and was generally to be found operating from his bed.

I am also in receipt of a funeral notification in connection with DE0DXM Peter (FISTS 3706) which appears to indicate that he died January 18th. There is no additional information.

NEW MEMBERS

6496	PA3HEQ	John	6497	PD1ACI	Carla
6498	G3YSK	John	6499	MX0CCF	CLUB
7100	M5AFS	Peter	7101	GX3EEO	CLUB
7102	G4SVC	Tim	7103	M0CPP	Bob
7104	G0TZD	Rich	7105	GW0TQM	Carl
7106	2E1HEX	Bob	7107	G4LJI	Robin
7108	2E0AUK	Tom	7109	OH3TZ	Timo
7110	G3UNM	Alf	7111	G0UCD	Martin

2E1HEX is temp. waiting test and new call.

MX0CCF (sponsored by G0LCG) is the club station of the Scarborough College Combined Cadet Force (I do hope we hear lots of activity from this one) and GX3EEO is the club station of Nunsfield House ARG in Derby. Assuming sponsorship for this one is G0IYZ.

I am also happy to welcome Carla, PD1ACI. She is additionally a SWL bearing a NL-SWL number.

G3UNM (Alf) turned up at the Lancaster University after driving from Cheadle. He has the misfortune of being a close associate of G3HZL whom, I understand, recently turned his 'noddy car' over and is now in the business of seeking four wheels instead of three. And for the benefit of our overseas members (I am sure to get drawn over the coals if I do not mention it), a noddy car is a lightweight 3-wheeled vehicle invented I suspect by a member of Noah's immediate family, which was standard issue to the infirm up to a decade or so past. The one which Don drove was well past it's sell-by-date so a converted Corsa or similar vehicle should be the order of the day.

ODDS N' ENDS

Sticky Fingers

I have done it again! Pse note G0FHK; name is Ray - not Roy *&£%!!... gotta get these specs changed!

It doesn't surprise me one bit

Gordon, G4ZPY, has found himself with a back-log of no mean magnitude on his orders for keys. This I discovered when I enquired about the progress of the presentation key for FIST of the Year. I mention this in case any of the gang are currently awaiting a delivery. Considering the much publicised demise of

CW, it is a strange situation when dealers are struggling to find even 50% of their order for something which allegedly, nobody needs any more. Hi.

EUCW Frat Party

First news of this came from Maurice, F5NQL and at the time, no call signs are mentioned but Class A of the event was won by a FISTS member and we also placed another member 2nd in the QRP category. An excellent result but what is more gratifying is the large turn out by FISTS and, having had a taste, we are hoping for a significant participation next time.

Old QSL Cards

My mention last month of these items which must be sulking in the attics of many of our more senior members brought a response from Jeff (G3LWM) who writes:

"Saw your piece in Key Note abt old QSL's. You could Email: oe9pti@telebout.vol.at

He is involved with an organisation that collects old QSLs. I obtained a copy of a QSL recording a QSO between my uncle (the late G8NK) and an OE station on the 3rd June 1937! When I was a QSL sub-manager the RSGB took all my non collected cards with them to the Hamfest at Fredrikshaven and gave them to this organisation.

Hope this is of some use to you, 73 Jeff"

Talking News Letter

"Hello George,

I was reading Key Note for December 1999 onto tape for our partially sighted listeners when it suddenly struck me. The recording usually occupies about one side of a C90 tape which means we are sending out side 2 blank. Why not record Morse practice on side 2. Anyway I did that using 5wpm QSO's for the first part and 12wpm on the remainder and mailed the six tapes off. We are now awaiting comment from the listeners as to whether they like the idea or not. It was then that the thought struck me; I wonder if my good friend George has each edition of 'Key Note' available on a 3.5" PC disk and so save me a lot of effort messing about with scanners etc. We could then use that as the 'Text' for side 2.

If this is possible all I have to do is to ascertain what Morse speed would best suit each of our listeners (assuming they approve) and 'Bingo' !! It may also be of interest to some of our sighted listeners too as it would provide them with ready made read - back for Morse practice tapes ??

Mind you George, a lot of my ideas are batty but anything that spreads the 'Gospel' is worth thinking about !!

All the very best to Ivy and yourself from Rita and I plus a lot of your friends up here. de George (GM4HYF)"

Now that is a thundering good idea George and it is very kind of you to put yourself to so much trouble. All items which fall into the category of text can be assembled as a single ASCII file and I will stuff it on e-mail for you.

G4ZPY

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WORDS OF WISDOM FROM KA8OQF

"Greetings!

For those who read the statement here recently about the sideswiper that "...it demands far greater discipline to operate cleanly than the bug...", I say horse pockey. After suitable practice (and in my case that was 30 minutes, using only two of five thumbs), a decently clean and intelligible signal can be put out with a sideswiper. Its contact spacing requirements are much less critical than the bug, and its speed/timing constants are not partially regulated by the limits of a spring and how much solder you can wrap around the weights.

If anyone would like to try their hand at the "cootie key", any

single lever paddle can be made into an adequate substitute. The contact spacing and return spring tension should be set to at least twice normal (a bit of experimentation for personal preference will be needed here). The keyer will need to be turned off, and the dot and dash contacts will probably need to be connected together. If you want to build your own, the traditional hacksaw blade works quite nicely. For the more mechanically inclined, the full blueprints for "The Torsion Bar Key" are in the ARRL's Hints&Kinks (red cover edition). This is supposed to be a single lever paddle whose spring action is not a coil spring but a torsion bar (a straight bar that is twisted for the springing). A friend built me one, I forgot to turn the keyer on one night, and rediscovered a time-honored keying method. In addition, the sideswiper has a unique bell-like note on the air when things are adjusted properly (I'm not sure why this is, but it stands out magnificently).

Charlie KA8OQF FISTS #1478"

I am not at all sure the bearded midget is correct about the ease of operating. Don't forget you have to make your own spacing and a heck of a lot of people fall down on this even with an el-keyer. Practice is most certainly demanded.

G3TUX

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ELECTRONIC LOG

With the failure of GOFRLs computer, we began to take a more clinical look at computer prices and, at the lower end of the market, they are falling like Autumn leaves. A very modest 286 plus green screen could probably be had for less than £30 which reminds me of Tex, G3TTH, lamenting the disintegration of his ABC Notebook last year so - needs must - he looked around for something a little less perishable and came up with a 256 KB pocket organiser which probably cost only a little more than a replacement for the paper index. Ideal for keeping alongside the key and of course, unlike the PC in general use, it is truly portable and is equally at home /P or /M.

I remind you that our own logging prog whilst unsophisticated, is available for a blank 1.44MB floppy and return postage. On order the QSO database comes with a up-to-date FISTS listing.

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FINALE

Well again my apologies for the late despatch people. Whilst not always free to be QRV, the rig is invariably set to 2KHz bandwidth on one of the bands and held on the speaker so I do get a fair idea of the level of activity from the gang. If the current band condx continue, we may be in for one heck of a season. With the strength of the club, those award points are a-begging. See you on the bands my friends.

Have fun, 73/88 and stay sober.

Geo.