

International Morse Preservation Society



KEY NOTE



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<http://www.asel.demon.co.uk/fists-hq/> or <http://www.smartgroups.com/vault/fists/>

OFFICES

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COMMITTEE

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G4PSE
G4XHZ
M0AVW
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G4PPG
G3ZQS
G4MZS

NETS

Sunday QRS 0900 (loc) 3.575 2E0AJS
US 0100Z on 14058
Tues: GX0IPX/P 1930 ON 3.558 (+/-)
Net Control G3HZL
DX 14/21/28.058 on the hour for 15mins
Pse keep watch on all Novice allocations
UK Net Controls use GX0IPX/P

SUBS: UK £5.00, EEC £7.00. Others £10.00. Your renewal date appears on the mailing label and your anticipation would be much appreciated.

Up-dated listings may be obtained from HQ. Please include 3 2nd class stamps to cover return and running costs

Lapel Badges, £1.50 incl.

Fabric patches £2.50 incl.

QSL Cards £6.00 per 100 or £9.00 per 200 (UK and EU pse add £1.00 for p/p. DX members - on advice.

Personalised stickers £1.00 per sheet of 65. Max order 5 sheets. Please include your **CALLSIGN** on **all** correspondence.

All outgoing QSLs to M0AVW (address on banner).

All UK members send stamps and labels (no envelopes necessary) to the appropriate sub-manager as below:

M or 2 calls (Except for Wales) M0AYI. 7 Tynedale Terrace, Annfield Plain, STANLEY, DH9 7TZ.

G0, GM0 etc (Except GW0). G3JRY. 3 Rochford Cresc, BOSTON, PE21 9AE

G3, GM3 etc (except GW3). G0UQF. 2 East St, Darfield, BARNESLEY, S73 9AE.

G4, GM4 etc (Except GW4). M5AAQ. 6 Central Ave, SHEPHERD, LE12 9HP.

G2, G5, G6, G8 (Except for Wales) and **ALL** special (GB etc) calls to M0BPT. 38 Wheatley St, WEST BROMWICH, B70 9TJ.

All members in Wales. GW0SGG. 14 Heather Cresc, Sketty, SWANSEA, SA2 8HE

EU/DX Members: IRCs or UK Banknotes to M0AVW. Eurocheques, Girocheques or \$US bills to HQ. Club will provide envelopes.

GREETINGS

Welcome to the 'official'? twentyfirst Century. Mind you it is not the most auspicious of starts. Those kind people over in Russia and Scandinavia - having run out of pop-groups, tennis stars and rally drivers - exported the very worst of their weather to the UK and areas of Europe which would normally be enjoying somewhat more temperate conditions. The weather continued to be an absolute bitch. We had snow on Christmas morning, there were clear night skies with attendant frosts and even on New Years day itself, there were gales and rain which caused even more misery to the areas previously affected by flooding. There was however one favourable aspect to all this the bands were most lively. Many pile-ups were in evidence on 10 and 12m with some very juicy DX and listening to the responses, I gather that a lot of FISTS members were roping 'em in.

Such is my knowledge of geography that I had hitherto envisioned Croatia as being a sort of add-on to Serbia or such. It was somewhat surprising to discover from a brochure delivered in a tube that it comprised no less than 1,185 islands, islets and reefs. This enlightening compilation was accompanied by an amateur magazine with the title 'Radio HRS' written unfortunately in a language as alien to me as Bazaar Martian. The whole point of some very high expenditure (postal-wise) was to point me to an introduction to FISTS by Ivo, 9A5I. Thankyou very

much for the most welcome publicity Ivo.

This is the time of the year when the books are 'cooked' as it were. The financial report for 2000 will be published following the AGM of course but I am pleased to say that again we have a healthy balance. Aside from the demands of HQ, significant among the expenses is the cost of running the bureau. Chuck regularly mails weighty packages to the US and ZL bureaux and, of course, we needed to cover the cost of suitable envelopes. Well worth the expense though because the system is running quite sweetly now.

She had so far behaved herself immaculately. Suzy walked to heel and paid scant interest in the Sky Terrier who, together with it's owner, crossed our path. For some reason, she took an instant and intense dislike to the magnificently groomed Boxer dog who probably exceeded her own weight by a factor of 50. There was a flurry of silver and and russet as she took off and set about the bemused creature. Even after I had scooped her up she continued to pour serious verbal abuse upon him much to the amazement if not amusement of the elderly lady accompanying this magnificent animal. Anyone out there with a degree in canine psychology?

FUTURE LICENCE STRUCTURE

If amateur radio is to survive, we need to encourage more people, particularly youngsters, into the hobby. Sound familiar? It should be because that is what just about every amateur has been saying since the end of WW2 but this enlightening disclosure is made by the RA in its publication "Proposed future structure of Amateur Radio licensing". Their answer (a Foundation Licence) seems to be something we already have under the title Novice Licence. The requirements here would be more practical than theoretical (was that applause I heard) covering safety, operating techniques, a knowledge of basic licence conditions and a basic technical knowledge; being run ideally through approved amateur radio clubs. Restricted to VHF and with only commercial produced equipment permitted, they hope that these privileges would tempt the user into furthering their knowledge and progressing up the ladder which it is proposed to erect - a system not a million miles removed from the current US system. I fear that for a large percentage, this will mean little more than adding to the invective, sloppy operating standards and offensive language already existent on VHF bands but who are we to criticise?

The authority is clearly convinced (and no doubt with good reason) that the World Radio Conference in 2002 will pave the way to scrapping the Morse requirement for 30MHz and below. Three new classes are proposed: Advanced, Intermediate and Foundation though they do not explain how this differs from the current Class A, B and Novice. Do these proposals enhance or denigrate?

If the government wants more qualified doctors to augment a failing National Health service then perhaps they should use the RA as an example and permit disenchanting bricklayers to practice surgery in a limited fashion hoping that they will progress to the qualifications of Dr. Shipman.

Do I hear mutterings out there of 'Geo, you are a cynic and a luddite' well perhaps in 73 years, 30 of which have been spent as a licensed amateur, the essential juices have lost what limited

sweetness they initially possessed but I know that I can migrate to the CW portion of the bands and experience contact with friendly, polite and helpful souls of similar leaning.

SILENT KEY

I am grateful to John, G3SJE who wrote to say that Tony, **GOIGP**, passed away through a heart attack on 19 Dec, 2000.

Tony was treasurer of the Edgware ARS and was a recent winner of the RSGB Cumulative Contest.

STRAIGHT KEY WEEK

This will run from 0001z on Feb 11 to 2359 on Feb 17 though the watch may be interrupted whilst you shop for flowers on the 14th. It will be the main SKW unless other arrangements are made so nominations will be accepted for FIST OF THE YEAR. Please do not use the WARC bands for this event. I know it is not a contest as such but there is a contest flavour about it and we would not like others complaining that FISTS was violating the non-contest status of the WARC bands.

Usual set up except for QTH which a great many members complained about last time as being something of an unnecessary fist full - a distinct disadvantage for someone living in Little Muckwart under Weaver as opposed to Hull so: RST/Name/FISTS Number/Day where Day 1 is Sunday Feb 11, Day 2 Feb 12 etc i.e. 579/Fred/1234/2. Logs to Gerry by end of month please in the format Call, Name, Number, day/points on the basis of one point per contact.

These are Gerry's preferred dates. He will accept logs for this event but currently is having some very severe health problems and is finding LS Ladder a wee bit too much. As a result, he asks that he be relieved of the job so we are now in need of a new Contest manager. Again, access to the web would be an advantage but other than that, it is simply a matter of making up a simple spread sheet or database in which to record the scores month by month. Volunteers please drop me an e-mail and I will ask Gerry to give a rough outline of what he has been doing and how he has gone about it. This should ease the job.

MORE TABLE-TOP ENGINEERING

This very impressive bug is amongs other items fashioned by the imaginative M0BLO



and here, I have taken the liberty of blowing up and hacking away the trembler to show how the spring has been soldered to a bush providing easy adjustment with good contact..



This is most impressive and Peter must be well pleased with his skillful efforts.

Deliberate QRM

Many letters arrive here complaining of deliberate QRM from a variety of sources. On 80m for instance much of Europe is plagued by 'fishfone' and when a QSO is interrupted by SSB one is tempted to regard the interference as malicious. The boat causing it however hears some CW in the background but is communicating with another boat in the immediate vicinity so your signal is nothing but a flea bite. He probably assumes that his signals will be as insignificant to you also but in any case, considers he has as much right to be there as you and since the contact he seeks would bend the average S-meter needle he will simply walk all over you. From what I see, there is little or nothing that can be done about this though as we learned recently, the number of active fishing vessels is being rapidly depleted due to diminishing stock so it could mean less of this type of annoying disruption. Why don't they use VHF I hear you ask. Well I suppose that any antenna on a fishing vessel is quite low to the horizon so it would not need too much distance between them for VHF to be useless. I align myself with those who ask why these vessels cannot be allocated a specific segment of 80m but that is a matter for governments already pre-occupied by such important things as the curve in bananas or naming conventions for confectionary.

The sort of QRM which is indeed malicious has been highlighted before in Keynote. The DX station deliberately swamped by frustrated hunters who take the view "if I can't work him then nobody will" is sadly closer to the truth than we would like to believe. What can we do about it? The answer again unfortunately is nothing.

There are also individuals who are running a vendetta against particular stations and in this case, although proof would be required, there really is something that can be done.

Activity and the WARC bands.

Many have been the dedicated directional antennas found on 18/24 Mhz and I have even found yagis and wire beams on 10.1 Mhz but oddly these bands still remain relatively unused. Beacons are a good guide to band conditions and a quick shufti on 24.915 the other day revealed IK6BAK, a beacon which added its web address (www.ql.net/ik6bak). Accompanying this lower in the band were two German stations, one OM, one FR and a weak but audible VE3. QRN was minimal and the band would have supported scores of solid QSOs.

Wotta pickle

The e-mail list is still a long way from 100% accurate and I continue to receive letters and e-mails here where the address differs from that shown in the listing. If you have changed your address recently, pse check with the e-mail listing from Brian, W8BL <blafont@tir.com>.

M5IPX

G3ZQS de G4PDJ

As you remember, I took out the call M5IPX, with the intention of using it as a 'semi-official' club call for a proposed net on 30m for 'Eurofists'. The net attracted no real interest from the 'plebicate' of the club, and never made it onto the list of 'official' FISTS nets originating from head office. I also used the call on a few occasions when Don was unable to conduct the net, but as I did not then have the transmit muscle that I do now, had only limited success in working the net above quite determined QRM from FISTS in other parts of the country.

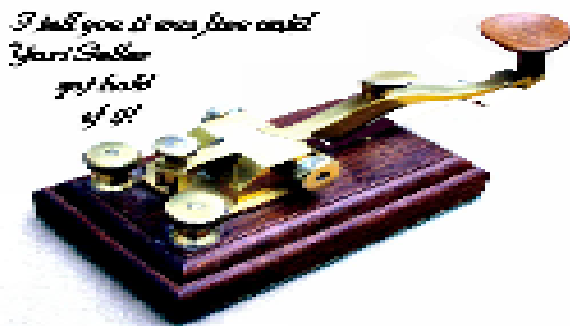
The call will soon be up for renewal, and I would like to know if there is any interest from HQ in me doing so.

The regular Tuesday net seems to have 'died a death' and has been replaced by the excellent G3KTT. Welcome though it is, I believe Mike sees his net as a semi-official gathering mainly for the benefit of members in the far North of the UK. It involves several QRP stations in that part of the country who are normally impossible to work from down here due to QRM from the Continent.

There are a lot of keen FISTS down here, but I have noticed a decline in on-air activity and I think it would be to the benefit of the club if there was a 'Southern UK/Northern EU net' (similar in concept to Mike's 'Frozen North' gathering) for us 'Great Southern Jessies' on (say) 3558 during GMT and 7028 during BST.

Perhaps you could somehow take a small 'straw poll' via the newsgroup and see if there is likely to be any interest.

Well there you are folks. It is really down to my disgraceful memory because otherwise, Chris' efforts would have been more widely publicised. Let the lad have some feed back pse.



WANTED

Bill, GW0SGG has a TS930S which has gone belly up requiring a transplant of a Digital Unit X54-1670. Anybody help??

LAST SUNDAY LADDER

Callsign	Mem	MemTot	Non Mem	Previous	Total
G4LHI	13	26	0	349	375
M5AGL	13	26	4	228	258
M5ABN	13	26	4	220	250
PA3AFF	0	0	0	190	190
G0MRH	0	0	0	180	180
G4RBE	4	8	0	158	166
G0ANV	0	0	0	158	158
GM0VIT	1	2	0	132	139
G0PEH	1	2	6	105	113
F5NTP	0	0	0	88	88
GW0SGG	0	0	0	26	26
G0IYZ	0	0	0	23	23
MOBHE	0	0	0	23	23
G0VBH	0	0	0	14	14

Our thanks I am sure go to Gerry for his work despite some very serious health problems. As mentioned earlier, it is these same problems which have obliged him to seek relief from his duties. As you can see, there are only about ten updated logs which though disappointing is understandable given the condition of (especially) the 80m band. Perhaps it is indeed time to give it a rest or find some other formula which attracts more support. Gerry asks that I QSP his best regards to all those who offered such kind wishes to Ailsa and himself.

STICKY KEYS

I am, as many of you will be aware, a touch typist but despite this, my eyes are frequently on the keys when really they should be on the VDU. A letter recently received offered the suggestion that perhaps my diabetic condition was responsible for a number of missing characters (principally 'P' and 'L') but I hasten to point out that my 'Pees' are functional and regular. However, there is a fault on the present keyboard which affects these characters together with one of the cursor keys so, on completion of this news letter, I will be purchasing a new keyboard. In the meantime I hang my head in shame for not properly editing that which I write.

AGCW

A copy of the AGCW news letter arrived recently and they have pre-empted the QRS contest with a significant parcel of a page. Further publication of the event is scheduled in many publications so, when the time comes, your support would be very desirable. Only one snag: 'Mein Deutsch ist sehr klein' so to make any real sense out of it, I need to scan each page and stuff the resultant text files through an interpreter but even then, such is the complexity of the operation that the end result is laughably inaccurate because grammar and linguistic context are at such variance.

MYSTERY QRN SOLVED

The following from G0UKX:
Just for laughs another EMC problem. We recently bought one of those lamps that are switched on by touch and have several

degrees of brightness before being switched off by touch. Found I was suffering very severe noise on 14MHz, was unable to trace the source until I went into the spare bedroom and found the above mentioned light shining brightly. Funny I was sure I had switched it off! Did so and when I sat down at the rig noted that the noise had ceased. Called someone on 20m and the noise returned. Checked the light and found it switched on. It is OK now, always switch off the power at the mains and it is not a problem. With our daughter staying was unable to transmit early this morning as I think a light shining in her eyes would have been most unwelcome.

THE IN-BOX

The e-mail inut this month was large indeed and here is a synopsis of what turned up:

ON6RL. Guido has a NOKIA 3210 mobile phone has successfully programmed this to announce "QTC QTC". T'would seem that with that particular model at least, it is not a difficult process. **G4XVE.** John took a lead from the item and, tiring of the sounds produced by his computer, spent some time gathering .WAV files from various Morse Groups. After a little 'tweaking' the computers both at home and at work issue 'QRV' instead of the irritating default boot up sound of Windows and the sickly 'You have e-mail' has likewise been replaced with QTC. Like Guido, he also has a Nokia and notes that a readily available 'SMS' (Short Message Service) together with another sequence (Connecting People) which gradually increases in volume is to hand. **OH2CF** (Matt) also programmed his 3210 with 'CF' and found it easy. He points to a bonus in-as-much as it is simple to modify the tempo thus QRS for beginners with an increase in speed with advanced reading ability. Another big advantage says Matt is that in (say) a crowded bus queue, the common ringing tone has everyone scrabbling for their phones whereas he knows it is either his phone or it is not! **IK2RMZ..** Martin enlarges on the WANTED QSL of DL1ZQ which is not a singular card but a club card from the FMC. FMC means Friends of S.F.B. Morse. *The founder of this fun club "Grandpa" Fried DJ6QM passed away 5 years ago. Fried's second hobby was painting and drawing. He's the author of all WANTED cards and many other QSLs, there must be at least two dozens of them and I do eagerly collect them. I was invited to join FMC right after Fried's death but I have at least a dozen of WANTED cards in my QSL collection. The club has a Website in German: <http://www.qsl.net/dl0af/> managed by DF5DD. "FMC is a restricted club like FOC and it is lead by three OM (one of them is DL1ZQ). The most prominent activity is the Morse Memory Week, a yearly activity week starting on SFB's birthday (i.e. the 27th of April). There is also a monthly QTC on the air".* **M0AVW.** *Hi Geo. Can you please try to put this in the next newsletter. Myself and my xyl Mandy extend our sincere thanks to all fists stations that sent us xmas greetings via xmas cards, emails and letters it was very much appreciated, we both hope you all had merry xmas and a happy new year. Thanks again Chuck.* **G4LHI.** *I did have a bash at the Concours UFT during the week-end, thoroughly enjoyed it but unfortunately not able to spend as much time as I wanted to 'cos of family visitors etc. I did work Les a couple of times and also found our Mary (G0BQV) was a UFT member and gave her a point! very nice.*

SWANSEA RALLY

Bill, GW0SGG, will be running his usual stand at the Swansea Rally on 25 Feb. If you are heading that way, pse pay the lad a call.

THE STRAWBERRY BASKET

G5WW. And Paul includes a brief message on a QSL card explaining that has injured his hand and is unable to write or key properly. Hope it's not too long mate. **GM4ELV.** We have greetings here from Dave, Ruth and Guinness - the latter turns out to be the family tri-colour border collie. Tnks for the paperwork. **G3LCG.** Our Peter has been having a rough year starting with 12 days in dry dock (internal bleeding) followed by shingles in August and pneumonia just before Christmas. On the latter occasion however, the escape committee got together and he managed to make it home for Christmas Eve. I am now on AOL Peter which has to be paid for but there are lots of free ISPs out there. Snag is you get lumbered with the bill for phone calls. Wouldn't it be nice to see all local calls being free of charge as

they are in the US? **M5ABN**. Peter is another who will miss the Last Sunday Ladder. A trip to Pickets Lock resulted in the acquisition of a Swedish key. Know you will enjoy using that mate. **2E0BGD**. Brian acknowledges his welcome pack with a card and an excellent piccy of a Salvation Army Band. I mention this because a note on the face states "Photo by Brian Davis". Making the camera earn its keep Brian? - well done. **M5AKX**. Hope we have sorted out any errors in the listings murky but it was correct on my database. I note however that the name is Murry and not John. **M0CMQ**. Little response to Mark's suggestions re. 'Improver Nets'. He is still keen to get this off the ground and offers his phone number (020-82796452) to anyone who would care to discuss this with him. **M5AGL**. Bob is disappointed to see the end of the LS Ladder and wonders if it would be possible to run it as a seasonal event such as the US spring sprint etc. He also noted that many first contacts were either not aware of the ladder or of its format. This is part of the problem Bob because once started, those who jump in part way through the event are at a disadvantage and dis-inclined to continue when they view the monthly results showing that they have a mountain to climb. Question - is placing more important than simply taking part? **M0BTG**. Our Gillian has been on the road a good deal recently and on a recent visit to Wales, intended to park on grass for convenience (antenna-wise) but it was so wet that she would have been axel deep. Most XYLs would have a joint roasting in it but Gillian put her roasting tin to some purpose by using it as a base mount for her antenna. Now then lass.. what about strapping a few of 'em together with flexible copper braiding in such a way as to permit them to be stacked and then spread to provide a sort of counterpoise? Worth a thought! **G3VQO**. Regarding the formation of an @ character, Les says "I, too, have found it a problem, and I suggest that there is a definite need for a universally-agreed morse character for @ in the 21st century. As with any language in daily use, morse must keep up-to-date. My suggestion for the @ character would be 'dah-di-di-dah-di-di', but I'm open to other ideas!!!".

THOUGHTS ON NUMBER CRUNCHIN'

Whilst I sympathise with those who find their contacts are jumped on by number chasers the underlying problem often is failure to follow procedure in the use of BK, K, SK and KN.

The sending of "K" is an open invitation to anyone to join in the contact and make it a multiway, anyone using this during a two way which they wish to keep exclusive have only themselves to blame if someone else accepts the invitation and joins the contact.

Even worse is the growing use of "PSE K" which positively invites others to join the contact. The way to keep it exclusive is to use "KN" which means "Keep off the grass". An even better method having established contact is to operate using BK (break) with no call signs until the final over when both sign with SK to signify its all ended.

What really goads me is the misuse of "BK" as in the string "So OK? BK to U call de call pse k" by which time I have usually sent half a sentence! Fortunately this does not happen very often because I use full break in but very few others seem to have this facility.

As to dedicated numbers chasers, they can be worked in a flash, they are happy and I can go my merry way happy as well.

John G3OKA (Member 3743)

Now then. John reinforces something which has been a trait with yours truly for many years. If you hear "G3ZQS K", you do not need to have a degree in logic to work out that it has been preceded by a CQ. Through this simple mechanism, the CQ is actually redundant which is why you will invariably hear CQ(1) de GX0IPX(3). I will be honest with you; even if it is considered DX, it is rare for me to answer a station who issues a string of CQs. I recently encountered a station who sent CQ no less than 23 times - after first hearing him I counted - and although I tame the impulse, there is a temptation sit on the QRG and call CQ as it should be used or chide the operator for wasting time. Its most annoying!

QRS SUPPORT

Gerald, G3MCK, has recently been in touch with the RSGB with the idea of nominating a specific area of 80m as a place to promote CW having the beginner in mind. The suggestion was 3.770 +/- 5KHz. If this works out OK then it will be a better

alternative to QRS Nets. People shy away from these largely because of the waiting time - the larger the net the greater the delay before it is your turn - and in addition, it demands some pretty serious dedication by a number of operators to maintain. Gerald, in his letter to G3PJT says "To be successful, such a scheme would have to be sponsored and continually promoted and I think that the RSGB would be a suitable body to do this". In addition, he suggests that the Society seek the support of other bodies, citing VERON, PW, and FISTS among others. Be interesting to see if this is followed through.



MUGSHOT

The above (LZ1AF) is the first use of a recently acquired 42-bit scanner; the original (24-bit) having gone belly-up after many years of good service. Whilst I confess that the original photograph was excellent, the improved colour depth has certainly made life easier enabling me to blow up the image you now see by a factor of 3 or more. It was necessary only to apply the usual two sessions of 'sharpening' followed by a light diffusion to produce a near perfect result. The device is some way from being up to speed with the best professional kit but I feel it will serve us well..

NEW MEMBERS

7737	G4ENW	Alan	7738	M5FRA	Colin
7739	G4AYO	Mike	7740	M0BKB	Andy
7741	2E0BGD	Brian	7742	M5PLY	Ivor
7743	M15MTC	Mick	7744	M0NTY	Chris
7745	OZ1FTI	Hans	7746	G3HSL	Fred
7747	G3JXV	Ron			

As you can see, we continue to attract interest and indeed support though I surely wish we did not have so many defaulters. A percentage of these invariably turn up later to renew which causes much extra work but I suppose it is better than dropping out altogether.

2X0000

Mention has been made previously about the Scarborough Special Events group and their latest venture, 2E0000 demonstrating the efficacy of bare bones techniques. They use a QRP rig demonstrating the hobby to non-amateur audiences (latest being a local golf club) with a current target of 100 countries.

FINALE

After Christmas, Ivy collected a virus which made things very difficult. As usual, by the time she was clear, I was entertaining the self same bunch of whoopsies and do so even as I write. Doc prescribed her anti biotics but for me it is paracetamol and lots of cuppas. Value my immunity protection troops too highly to compromise them.

Have a nice February people and look forward to a little more inter-club activity on WARC over the month.

73 es stay sober.

Geo