

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/>

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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.

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QSL Cards £7.00 per 100 or £10.00 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.

Useful contacts:

M0AVW 016142-869619 <spence5@ntlworld.com>

M0AYI 01207-283192 <m0ayi@netscapeonline.co.uk>

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, BARNSELY, S73 9AE.

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

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

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

EU/DX Members: IRCs or UK Banknotes to M0AVW. US dollars to HQ. Club will provide envelopes. Any excess over subs from non-UK members will be regarded as QSL postage unless otherwise advised.

GREETINGS

Wow! Summer (or something which closely equates to it) has arrived at last. Up here in the North West of England, there is traditionally an overcoat in difference between us and the South Coast and Home Counties but this year, for more than a few days, this has been reversed. The tits have finally arrived but oddly, one of the most common characters of our birdlife - the starling - has not shown up. I know there are several huge flocks in some surrounding areas and perhaps the individuals which have been prominent in previous years have merely been the adventurous from one of these communes but their absence still leaves me with a very strange feeling. OK, they perch on my beam elements, their toilet training leaves something to be desired, they are raucous and frequently compete with the weak sounds coming from the rig but I still miss 'em.

There are times when it pays to switch off! A threesome enjoying a multi-way natter on a common 40m frequency recently was being badgered and harassed by another station who announced his presence by tuning up on the frequency they were using, sending VERY slow TEST TEST TEST and downing his

key for prolonged periods. Frustrated, they agreed to QSY about 2 KHz away and - yes you have guessed it, the fool followed them and continued his anti-social activities. One of the group seemed to know (or at least suspect) who the jammer was and, with politeness which was not deserved, addressed him by name and asked him to quit. He had risen to the bait! The response was a series of HI HI HI and more protracted periods of key down. Now, these three gents sank to abandoning their original topic and exacerbated the situation by heaping abuse on their tormentor calling his parentage into question and generally making a bigger mess than the idiot had instigated in the first place. This is a rare occurrence by CW standards but surely the wisest action would have been what they were ultimately obliged undertake - close down.

EXTREME QRS

The topic introduced last month may well have been regarded as inflammatory but it was surprising how little feedback was generated. There was ONE member who acquiesced (though with reservations) and three responded indignantly to the suggestion that very slow CW should be discouraged. It is worth mentioning however that the lone supporter of a limit stressed the importance of wider improver support than we have at present. GM4HYF for instance is given very little publicity for the tape service he provides and there is virtually no onward support on 2m for those seeking to increase their reading speed. As far as I am aware, the RNARS still do their regular speed run from QRS to QRQ but I see no publicity about this service or indeed any other.

Of course QRS should not be discouraged - the 5 wpm test is an invitation to ignore CW altogether and get on SSB with the least possible effort.

Far better to deal with the situation. Actively encourage anyone who appears at 5wpm. With a few real contacts under their belt their speed will rapidly increase to the 9wpm 'hump', and then beyond. The bands may be busy now, but what about in 5 years time? Anyone who is using the 5wpm speed requirement as a quick & easy way to HF will probably throw their key away immediately the ticket arrives, but those brave enough to present themselves on the band at 5wpm CW must be interested in the mode and deserve encouragement.

And a last word from the more vociferous of this small batch of responses:

Can I make a final plea for FISTS to actively get back to its core 'mission'. Fostering the joy of CW operation and offering encouragement to those starting out on the rocky road to learning the code.

This subject has raised its head before and the arguments put forward, rightly or wrongly, reflect those views. Contrary to the observation that no-one is applying this sort of speed, there is sufficient activity on 80m and even on 40m to sit up and take notice.

I first encountered this suggestion when visiting the US which somewhat surprised me since there was acreage of space lying fallow on their expanded 40m band and in the evenings, apart from a few traffic handlers, there is almost no activity on 80m. We would I am sure, be better off crediting the QRS operator with sufficient intelligence to realise that his presence close to

a DX pileup or on a contest weekend would be futile and fruitless. The name of the game is encouragement.

As was pointed out last month, the availability of a diminutive but very effective computer programme for converting quite decent sized text files into a CW format which is useable on most computers with a sound board attached could largely counter the reduced number of slow Morse broadcast stations. I converted a small text file using 12 wpm, added one space between characters and three spaces between words which is roughly the spacing I used for slow Morse sessions on 2m but sadly, it does not recognise more than one space. Pity.

However, those of you engaged in producing QRS tapes may possibly like to consider this as an optional service since we seem to be rapidly approaching the situation where computers are as much a part of the average household as the ubiquitous television receiver. Hi.

IMPORTING KIT

When you order stuff from another country, you could be falling into a trap which separates you from quite a bit of your cash. The following from G8VG explains:

A couple of months ago I imported from the USA a K2 transceiver in kit form. I paid VAT @ 17 1/2% and Customs (Import) Duty. You can't get away without paying VAT but I have recently established that such equipment is exempt from Import Duty. The Customs and Excise tariff lists the items that are exempt and the relevant heading reads as follows :

Transmission Apparatus for Radio-Telephony, Radio-Telegraphy, Radio-Broadcasting or Television, whether or not incorporating Reception Apparatus or Sound Recording or Reproducing Apparatus; Television Cameras; Still Image Video Cameras and other Video Camera Recorders.

This heading covers items that are many and varied but it is the first two mentioned that are relevant where amateur radio transceivers are concerned. Each item mentioned has, what is called a 'commodity code' and that relating to transceivers is 8525209900.

My helpful contact with the Customs & Excise told me that consignments arrive in this country with very obscure descriptions on the Customs forms. He said that if there was any doubt about an item then duty would be charged. There must be many amateurs who have paid Import Duty unnecessarily. I have been advised that when gear is ordered from abroad, the supplier should be asked to properly, and fully, describe it on the Customs forms. e.g. 'Transceiver apparatus for radio-telegraphy.' It is also essential for the supplier to include on the Custom forms the 'Commodity Code No 8525209900.

The suppliers of my K2 included the Commodity Code on the forms but described the consignment as a Hobby kit of Electronic Parts for Amateur Radio. Clearly this description did not meet the requirements of Customs & Excise who slapped on Import Duty. I am now negotiating with them for reimbursement of the sum involved.

Another point worth mentioning is that when the US suppliers sent my K2 kit they included the optional SSB kit that I did not order. (What's SSB?) At their request I returned the SSB kit by airmail and am still trying to get a refund of the VAT and Customs Duty that I paid on it. Fortunately I have proof of posting but the Customs and Excise have advised me that it would have been easier to process my claim if I had approached their local office before exporting the unwanted item. I am still waiting, optimistically I might add, to get my money back.

EMPTY ENVELOPES

My apologies to a few members who received a somewhat lightweight newsletter in the post. The cause of the empty envelopes was due to using self-sealing envelopes instead of the normal gummed type because after stuffing a Keynote in the one on the top of the stack, the one below occasionally stuck to it. So far seven cases have been reported which I don't suppose is too bad from a total postal load of 1070.

In fact, I was penny-pinching again because it turns out the self-seal envelopes are actually CHEAPER than the bog standard gummed ones. Now if anyone can explain that, I would be grateful.

RSGB MORSE TEST ANNIV WEEKEND

This annual event caused both 40 and 80m to be loaded with CW

FISTS CW CLUB NEWS LETTER

activity. From HQ, I managed to work 11 of 'em on 40m during the Saturday p.m. though further activity was a no-no for the rest of the weekend due to domestic chores.

There was also a contest running at the same time though it had little effect upon the activity and whilst some of the operators were known to be greyhounds and were worked at some pace, they were all returning with the speed at which they were called resulting in much M5 and 2E0 QRS contacts. Pity it is restricted to a once per year event - it was great fun.

SMART TUNER REQUIRED

We have a member who would like if possible to 'borrow' a smart tuner for a couple of weeks. Any one oblige, offers to HQ Pse.

ROAD USERS BEWARE!

I had to put my car in dock for it's M.O.T., and was told it wouldn't be ready until later that day. Having no transport to get back home, my xyl suggested that I use my sons micro scooter. Loony that I am, I agreed and my 9 year son would escort me back on his bike. We left the car at the garage and set off for home me as leading scout and my son Nathan, taking up the rear and all went well for the first couple of miles apart from the looks I was getting from other traffic. We stopped at the works QTH of G4BNU and left Paul in a daze wondering if what he had seen was real as I scooted away like the clappers with my son in hot pursuit. Only one mile from home so what could go wrong?

I spotted my fifteen year daughter Amanda walking with friends so I thought I would show them how good I was on a scooter after all, I am a FIST, so did a bunny hop and it went wrong. I went over the handle bars and finished up on the deck surrounded by giggling schoolgirls. I picked myself up with a big grin as if it were nothing though every bone in my body was crying out and sped off for home. By now my daughter had phoned with news of the happening so there was precious little sympathy from the family.

Reckon your QSL manager (Chuck, M0AVW) must have felt a proper 'nana' and I trust he will not be trying /M on two wheels.

TO QRL OR NOT?

In my opinion there is no need to send QRL if one just spends a little time listening on a frequency before transmitting. One can hear if a frequency is in use even if there are only weak signals. This practise of QRL? was started by EU stations and is unnecessary. What do the membership as a whole think? G3ZDD.

Derek has encountered a few of those deaf operators who call QRZ? and despite a response of YES, proceeds to place a general call. Was he indeed deaf or did he employ a very narrow filter which placed the response outside his bandpass? According to Mr. Blair, we are all Europeans anyway but no matter who took up the practice, it must surely be regarded as a courtesy. Personally I would prefer the query rather than an unwelcome general call but confess I am frustrated when the originator of an S9 signal fails to tune round the frequency or at least does not hear my response. In any case, I would love to hear what you think!

G3TUX

The QRP Component Company

Stockists of Keys (Bencher, DK1WE, Jones, Kent Schurr and the Swedish pump) also agent for the Samson series of electronic keyers.

Used keys of all types bought and sold

SAE/IRC for prices/data
PO Box 88, HASLEMERE, GU27 2RF
Phone 01428-661501 FAX 01428-66795

UBA OVERSEAS WINNER

G4RCG sent me a copy of the results of the UBA contest held in February in which he is listed as winner in the overseas section. John says it was a very 'easy going' contest and he thor

oughly enjoyed taking part. He would like to seem more FISTS activity on this and others of the same nature.

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DISCLAIMERS

David, G3ZPF, really does dig up some odd things when 'surfing the net' and the latest concerns the disclaimer clauses inserted at the bottom of most e-mails intended to ensure that no-one is offended in a legally contestable way. The author of this suggestion (Failur) proposes to amend his to read:

This Email is meant to offend everyone equally. If, for some reason you are not offended, please write me with a description of yourself including your name, race, weight, religious views, political party, strong opinions, physical disabilities, weird sexual preferences, or anything else that you are touchy about, and I will try to offend you in the near future. You need it and if I can't do it, nobody can. Just sit tight and wait your turn.

I like it!

THE SPACE BOUND HAM

Further to last month's obs on the Space Station, I learn that the American multi-millionaire Dennis Tito who reportedly forked out \$20m to become the first space tourist, passed the US Technician exam whilst undergoing space training in Russia. I wonder if we will hear anything from him or will a Morse key be regarded as 'excess baggage'?

RSGB AFFILIATION FEE

Forgive me if I appear cynical but the Society has seemingly been very concerned about the likelihood of litigation and rising insurance costs for clubs. The result is that they have negotiated terms with an insurance group for all affiliated clubs as part of the affiliation fee. Very kind of 'em but they now rid themselves of the embarrassing reduced rate club subscriptions and load a blanket increase on them to bring clubs fees into line with standard individual membership charges. Hmmm.

CHANGE OF CALL

M5AKX is now recognised as M0MUZ. Murry has tried a number of times to get a response to his general calls on 20m but to-date, no joy. If the signals are weak due possibly to QRP or an indifferent antenna system, it would be more productive to listen out for a strong station, net and call when QSO has terminated. This way at least you can confirm all is OK.

FOR SALE

DRAKE R4C with 500KHz filter and manual. £239,99, Not a bad rig this for an entrance into amateur radio.

Bill seems to have a 'thing' about the Drake gear and although sans computer, made us of the facilities at his local college to dig up info on the R4 receiver modifications via Hobby Trades Services and is seeking other information on mods for the Drake R8-B.

Contact on: 0141-5624571.

EUCW Straight Key Day (New rules for 2001)

This Year's EUCW SKD, arranged by the Scandinavian CW Activity Group (SCAG) is on Saturday 23rd June, from 0800 to 2200 UTC. It is not a contest but an opportunity to bring out your old manual straight keys and make a few contacts. As in all EUCW events, FISTS members are particularly encouraged to participate.

Frequencies: 3540-3580, 7020-7040, 10105-10125 and 14050-14070 kHz.

Mode: CW, straight key only

FISTS CW CLUB NEWS LETTER

Scandinavian participants are encouraged to activate 10 and 14 MHz to give non-Scandinavian stations a better chance to get in contact with them. It is obligatory for Scandinavian participants to make at least one QSO with non-Scandinavian stations. Likewise, it is obligatory for non-Scandinavians to make at least one QSO with Scandinavia.

As a function of the number of QSOs, participants are invited to give a "vote" to stations with a particularly good "fist", as follows: 1-2 QSO, no votes; 3-5 QSO, 1 vote; 6-8 QSO, 2 votes; 9-11 QSO, 3 votes; more than 12 QSO, 4 votes.

Do not issue more than one vote per station.

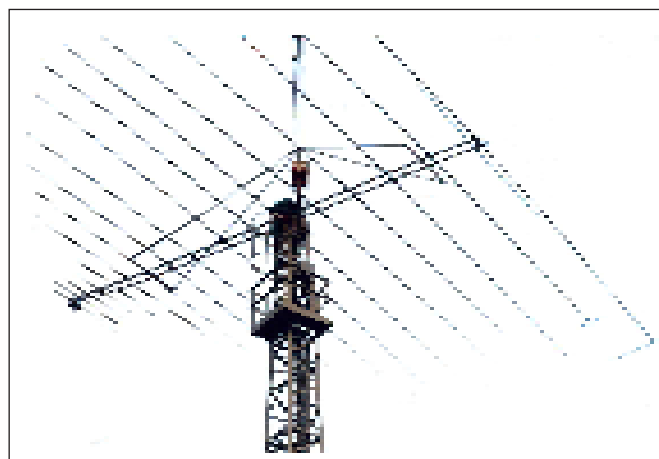
A "Straight Key Award" will be awarded to stations receiving at least 3 votes. Send logs not later than 1st of July 2001 to: Eric Wennström SM1TDE, Vasagatan 9-324, SE-172 67 Sundbyberg, Sweden. Logs can also be sent via e-mail, as a text-file, to: sm1tde@grk.se

I am grateful to Tony, G4FAI for this information. He is as you will probably be aware our 'man' in the EUCW.

MINI BEAM IN OM LAND

Martin, OM1YF (seen left of picture) was somewhat involved in the erection of what appears to be a log periodic antenna at the Bratislava shore station.

The lower view shows the monster finally mounted on the tower though there could be some inaccuracies since I had to 'remove' a crane jib.



OF SHOES & SHIPS & SEALING WAX

Well, it makes a change from odds'n ends and in any case, something recently put me in both a poetic mood and threw me back to my childhood, the Rev. Lewis Carol and Alice. Wasn't it Humpty Dumpty who declared any word meant nothing other than what he intended it to mean? A mis-spelling indeed from a 'G' station who must have spent his English lessons dreaming of other things. "The weatger is raining". He could have abbreviated it to WX and judging from his callsign, he must have spent at least 20 years hamming. His fist was good and he was reading at least 22wpm so why the mis-spelling? It was early morning and to encourage sleep, I had left my bed for a cigarette and a brief listen on 40m so I listened further. There followed at least three more outrageous examples of pseudo English in

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cluding "Abtebba" and "my ruf is Kenwood TS920" before I twigged. Not only did his spelling leave something to be desired (though forgivable of course) but he was using a KEYBOARD. It was the magic word "RUF" that did it. On a QWERTY keyboard, 'U' is adjacent to 'I' and 'F' to 'G'. He was a touch typist and had shifted his right hand index off the guide 'J' Listening further, he shunned at least two stations and for the simple reason that he could not read them... he was also using a Morse reader and these never were very good at resolving hand-sent cw.

I am all in favour of Keyboards especially for those with arthritic fingers but electronic reading also... sorry - I just don't see the point.

Specials from the wrong side of the pennines

Saturday the 2nd found a contest-free 40m and a couple of GB stations including GB2DAM which proved to be the Doncaster Air Museum running QRP and seemingly besieged by FISTS members. A nice signal considering it was QRP and operated by tykes!

2E0000

Roy, G4SSH, phoned Bob asking him to reserve a special number for 2E0000s Century. Before I go further, I must point out that this is one of the club stations which **does** pay subs. This station has been introduced before but just to refresh memories, the Scarbrough Group use it to demonstrate the efficacy of simple antennas, low power and the use of cw. Its main purpose is to demonstrate H/F operating techniques to local Class B and M5 members. They observe all the restrictions imposed upon novice stations except that an experienced operator is usually on the business end.

The 2E0 call is still pretty rare on the DX bands of course but the fact that such a basic setup is used carries a lesson to many with much more sophisticated stations.

40m NET

Bill, GW0SGG, proposes to set up a regular net on 40m located around 7.0265 at 1945 local. No emphasis on speed - come and go as you please.

ANOTHER FOR-SALE

Jim, G0NTR, is in the process of selling his house and is offering a TenTec C22 complete with PSU. £150 and buyer collects.

G4ZPY

KEYS AND PADDLES

All items hand-crafted with the skill of a trained engineer. Also miniature versions which are much acclaimed throughout the world.

SAE/IRC TO:

41 Mill Dam Lane, Burscough, ORMSKIRK, L40 7TG

Tel: 01704-884299

e-mail: g4zpy@lineone.net

<http://website.lineone.net/~g4zpy/index.htm>

THE STRAWBERRY BASKET

G4OHK. Slowly getting back to normal after double hip replacement. Another bionic man? **G0OWS**. It was a fortunate accident when heaving boxes during a house removal caused a haemorrhage necessitating medical intervention. A close up look revealed **cancer** which must have been discovered in its early stages as Jim has since been pronounced clear. **WA7NSY**. Richard is seemingly finding more anomalies than I am. He has a 'thing' about TP (we say KN) with some stations using it as two separate chars instead of as a single entity. I guess it is just that some folks put it into print in that way rather like SK as opposed to VA and beginners who know no better forget that the chars are intended to be conjoined. SK I suppose can be read as 'Sticky Key', 'Someone's Knocking' or 'Send for a KFC'. To be honest I have only heard this once or twice and ALWAYS on the HF bands (usually from a US station). Better to ignore it mate. **G0LSH**. Is re-vamping the shack as a combination shack cum computer room allowing xyl into hitherto hallowed territory. She tells him he has not done bad on the deal - well she would say that wouldn't she Alan? **M5AGL**. Enjoying some

very QRS contacts which - prior to FISTS - was not possible. Primary interest of SSTV has been pushed aside now with hundreds of CW QSOs. Nuff said on number chasing etc Bob, each to his own I guess. Hi. **G3JKY**. Yes, I missed that one about responding to a CQ call with 'K' only and since you are trying to raise ONE specific station then KN would be the answer. Otherwise, the simple 'K' as I suggested would be interpreted as being receptive to anyone's call. Ya see! I'm not always right. **G2HKU**. Ted complains not about the abysmal English weather. The monsoon like conditions prior to June left his lawn like a bog and did wonders for the antenna setup. **G3CWI**. Heck... Ric compare Keynote with the W1BB 'top band' news sheet - going back some way matey but boy - what a compliment! **G3KUL**. Doug lives in sheltered accommodation (anything with a roof could be regarded as sheltered but I know wotcha mean) so antennas are a no-no. By now he must be wearing a groove betwixt there and the local club which is where he does all his operating. Describes the local council as the original cap and muffler brigade and since they tore his modest wire out of the loft, his opinions are well justified! **M0CHL**. Tnks for the card David but what's with the ski-ing penguins? **G0ADE**. Our Bob chips in with the last word on the KN v K subject saying he never uses KN as he expects people to listen to see if it is appropriate to join in. Used to have a pair of Brown Bros paddles also Bob but they were 'gifted' to an old friend of yours (now S/K), Ted in Sale and does that bring back memories? **ON6ZJ**. Got a card from Leon which graphically describes his other hobby - flying gliders. Always wanted to give that a try but lack courage!



Samuel F. B. Morse
1791-1872

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CLUB STNS & AWARDS

I must confess that when the idea of issuing FISTS numbers to club stations came to mind, I did not envisage circumstances when they would be claiming awards. Recently however, Bob has been somewhat dismayed to find that this is what is happening. Let me put you in the picture. When a FISTS member asks for a number for a club station to which he belongs, no subs are demanded. but the club record is flagged as mail=false (no Key-note is sent) and no costs are involved. Such stations would have no voice. They would simply be a source of three point contacts, enhancing the lot of those who are chasing awards. Bear in mind that we tend to make a **loss** on issuing awards and you will see that it is not a healthy situation. I appreciate that clubs would like to display awards etc at their various events but if a club station is not subscribing to the running costs then those members who do subscribe are in fact subsidising them.

There are a small number of club stations who do in fact pay subs in the normal way and one who has no direct FISTS affiliation in the shape of a sponsoring member. Bob will be happy to issue awards to these but but objects to working for 'free' for non-subscribing sources.

FINALE

Run out of steam again people and almost out of space. Am sure there will be many of you around on the bands though so look forward a few good natters since I am relieved of the job of caring for Ivy for a couple of weeks this month.

73/88, have fun and stay sober.

Geo.