

 	<h1 style="text-align: center;">FISTS DOWN UNDER</h1>  <h2 style="text-align: center;">Newsletter – December 2012</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">Editor & QSL Manager for ZL: Nigel Hardy, ZL2TX, P.O. Box 15078, Otaki 5542, New Zealand. - Tel: 06-364-6339</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Newsletter Distribution & QSL Manager for VK: Chris Thompson, VK2CTN, P O Box 65, Dickson, ACT 2602, Australia</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Membership/Awards Liaison: Ralph Sutton, ZL2AOH, 12c Herbert Gardens, 186 The Terrace, Wellington 6011, New Zealand Tel: 0-4-473-0847. Fax: 0-4-473-0848</p> <p style="text-align: center;">QSL Manager for ZL6FF: Nigel Hardy, ZL2TX at address above. QSL Manager for VK2FDU: Chris Thompson VK2CTN at address above</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Address e-mails for all persons above to: <fists-down-under@ihug.co.nz> Web site --: <www.fistsdownunder.org></p>	  <p style="text-align: center;">FISTS 25th Anniversary</p>
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SUGGESTED FISTS CLUB CALLING FREQUENCIES



1.808 MHz (160m) – 3.528 MHz (80m) – 7.028 MHz (40m) – 10.118 MHz (30m) –
14.058 MHz (20m) – 18.085 MHz (17m) – 21.058 MHz (15m) – 24.918 MHz (12m) – 28.058 MHz (10m)

Members are reminded that the above frequencies are suggested calling frequencies. If they are busy, it is suggested that once you establish contact with a station, it may be prudent to change frequency down the band, avoiding other calling frequencies of known clubs.

NEW MEMBERS

New member **FO5MD-Denis Ferrand #14153** is our first member from French Polynesia. Denis lives in the municipality of Utoroa, the main port of Raiatea Island, about 200 km (120 mi) northwest of Papeete, the Tahitian capital.

Here's what he told us about himself: My name is Denis, call sign FO5MD (ex FO8MD) I am 57 and I live in Uturoa (the main township), on the north side of Raiatea Island that is the second largest in the French Polynesian Archipelago known as the Society Islands, after Tahiti, and the largest of the "Leewards".

I have been a licensed amateur radio operator since passing our full licence exam in 1984 obtaining the call sign FO8MD. Having passed the 10 wpm Code test, I worked only a few CW QSO, and then I went to RTTY AMTOR and PKT.



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After a long break of over 15 years, I got active again since a couple of months. I first heard about the "Fists Club" some time ago while visiting F6IIE's (FISTS #014) website in search of CW articles and tips to gain a degree of proficiency in CW and to operate CW on a regular basis.

I am using an FT-897D, and the antenna is a "home brew" GP on 20m band. Others bands will be added soon. My tools include a Kent single paddle and a Begali Signature.

My other significant interest is big game fishing.

I look forward to eventually becoming acceptably proficient at sending and receiving CW and making many new friends in FISTS! Good Luck to you all, Good DX and pleased to work you on the bands.

Also joining this month is **VK2RQ-Matt Maguire #14154**. Matt lives in Belrose, a suburb of Sydney, 19 kilometres northeast of the central business district.

Rejoining after a short break is **Bob Fields #14120**. Bob's former call of ZL4BF has been cancelled and he is in the process of obtaining a new call, stay tuned!

MEMBERS' NEWS



Thanks to these members for enclosing a donation with their subscriptions:- **VK4KF-Ken #14150; VK2PSD-Steve #9022; ZL1AJ-Jack #9095 and FO5MD-Denis #14153**.

VK3DBD-David #3756 has returned to VK3 after his regular pilgrimage to the Motherland. He is once again QRV from Yakandandah and will be checking the usual Fists frequencies most days on the HF bands, 15,20,30,40 etc - assuming that his antenna farm survived the wintry winds.

VK5BUG-David (Doc) #14136 sent us his message: - My wife & I visited the North Island during the first week of this month as I made a conference presentation @ Rotorua. We spent some time in Auckland, the Waikato province including Huntley power station, Hamilton, Waitomo Caves, the geothermal area around Rotorua & finally, Wellington.

We had a great trip: too short but we packed in what we could! In 2008, for a similar conference, the venue was Christchurch & this was the first North Island trip for us. Both times the locals were really friendly & informative and we have some good memories now.

My message to members today is that I have some good FT241 crystals for the 630m band (505-515 KHz) for disposal, eight in all, @ just \$5 each plus postage if anyone is interested. I purchased them less than a year ago from the USA & have not taken them out of their individual wrapping: just opened the USPS box. I have an ex-marine 500Kcs xtal transmitter for that band & have opted for a different selection of frequencies so these rocks are available. Please contact me if you would like them. VK5BUG/Doc Wescombe-Down via d.wd@bigpond.com will find me.

We are sorry you did not contact us while you were here Doc. Make sure you do so on your next time across the pond

We earlier reported that **ZL2AOH-Ralph #1073** planned to make a short trip to Melbourne in early December. Unfortunately Ralph had to cancel the trip. He says he was disappointed that he wouldn't now be able to meet some of our members within the Melbourne region.

ZLW MEMORIAL PROJECT

Update from Barry Alison



The plan is to proceed with the unveiling on the Te Ahu Mairangi (Tinakori Hill) site of ZLW at 1100 Sunday 22 September 2013. FYI the next day marks the 20th anniversary of ZLW closing.

The format is yet to be decided. Should we have a minister? Should there be prayers? Who should be invited? (The Wn Mayor and at least one WCC parks and reserves worker are a no-brainer I think but want to hear your views) who will speak; will Morse form a part of the ceremony; what flag will cover the table before unveiling and who will do the unveiling? I certainly wish to speak on the day.

The two plaques have been cast and can be viewed at Geoff Kenny's workplace, contact 04-589 7067 1/64 Hutt Rd Petone Lower Hutt. They cost \$1019.69

Wellington City Council will pay half the cost of the table on which the plaques will be fixed. Our half is \$1400.00. Other expenses yet to be incurred could include hire of a portable (battery powered) PA unit for use on the day; perhaps a few bottles of bubbly for toasts during the unveiling and lastly food and refreshments for an after-match function.

I have opened a ZLW Memorial Account with ANZ Gisborne. The number is 01 0641 0249869 00 – into which pledges can be deposited. Please tag deposits with your name

The Interislander have donated the following: Two return family trip for 2 adults, a vehicle and up to 3 children. There are blackout periods which means they cannot be used for travel during our peak times of Christmas, Easter or Labour Weekend valued at \$600 each for us to make money out of as we see fit.

We are still waiting for responses to sponsorship requests from NZ Post and Telecom.

HOUSEKEEPING



In the last FISTS Down Under, we floated the suggestion that each month, we would include a list of members whose subscriptions were due. A few of our members welcomed the idea. In fact, the only opposing comment came from a different chapter, citing privacy issues. However, what we will do each month is to publish an unobtrusive list of members whose renewal is due up to the end of the month of publishing. The list will consist only of member's numbers; no names, call signs or dates. So here is our first list. Please check whether you are listed. Let us know if you are wrongly listed, want a replacement renewal form, or generally have any queries. Renewals due by 31 December 2012 are - **9674: - 9022: - 9035: - 9040: - 9060: - 9064: - 9087: - 9096: - 9136: - 9608:- 9681: - 9695: - 9696: - 14100: - 14103: - 14113: - 14124: - 14125: - 14131**

The last month has been a bit difficult here at FISTS Down Under Central. The computer holding our records began to run more and more slowly until it eventually refused to boot up. All of our efforts failed to resurrect it. It was taken to the vendor to see if they could have any more success than we did. They didn't take long to realise that they also were stumped so they decided to return it to Toshiba. It was about six months out of warranty but they considered it a good candidate for action under the Consumer Guarantee Act. A few days later it was returned with a new hard drive installed at no cost.

That was the easy part. Another easy part had been that the files were fully backed up. However reloading all the data is a time-consuming activity. Loading the files took many hours as did checking that as far as is possible, all the files (especially membership, financial and email data) were correct and up to date. We think this is now the case but if you observe that this is not the case, please tell us.

A few days after the recovery, Murphy struck again. The printer used to print FISTS Down Under and Key Note died. We tried unsuccessfully to get it going so checked what it would cost to be repaired. Because of the age of the printer and the fact that parts for it were not readily available outside Japan, the estimate was more than the cost of a new machine. So it was a no brainer to get a replacement. The new machine will be fully tested with the printing of this newsletter and the latest Key Note.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

These are some of the CW contest/event offerings in December 2012 and January 2013, most of which will be of more interest to our northern hemisphere readers. Thanks to WA7BNM Contest Calendar <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html>

Wake-Up! QRP Sprint	0600Z-0629Z, Dec 1 and 0630Z-0659Z, Dec 1 and 0700Z-0729Z, Dec 1 and 0730Z-0800Z, Dec 1
TOPS Activity Contest	1600Z, Dec 1 to 1559Z, Dec 2
ARS Spartan Sprint	0200Z-0400Z, Dec 4
NCCC Sprint	0230Z-0300Z, Dec 7
ARRL 10-Meter Contest	0000Z, Dec 8 to 2359Z, Dec 9
SKCC Weekend Sprintathon	0000Z-2359Z, Dec 9
NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint	0130Z-0330Z, Dec 12
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Dec 12 and 1900Z-2000Z, Dec 12 and 0300Z-0400Z, Dec 13
NCCC Sprint	0230Z-0300Z, Dec 14
Croatian CW Contest	1400Z, Dec 15 to 1400Z, Dec 16
ARRL Rookie Roundup, CW	1800Z-2359Z, Dec 16
QRP ARCI Holiday Spirits Homebrew Sprint	2000Z-2359Z, Dec 16
Run for the Bacon QRP Contest	0200Z-0400Z, Dec 17
NCCC Sprint	0230Z-0300Z, Dec 21
AGB-Party Contest	2100Z-2400Z, Dec 21
RAEM Contest	0000Z-1159Z, Dec 23
SKCC Sprint	0000Z-0200Z, Dec 26
DARC Christmas Contest	0830Z-1059Z, Dec 26
NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint	0130Z-0330Z, Dec 27
NCCC Sprint	0230Z-0300Z, Dec 28
RAC Winter Contest	0000Z-2359Z, Dec 29
Stew Perry Top band Challenge	1500Z, Dec 29 to 1500Z, Dec 30
AGCW Happy New Year Contest	0900Z-1200Z, Jan 1
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Jan 4
EUCW 160m Contest	2000Z, Jan 5 to 0700Z, Jan 6
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Jan 11
MI QRP January CW Contest	1200Z, Jan 12 to 2359Z, Jan 13
WW PMC Contest	1200Z, Jan 12 to 1200Z, Jan 13
North American QSO Party, CW	1800Z, Jan 12 to 0600Z, Jan 13
NRAU-Baltic Contest, CW	0630Z-0830Z, Jan 13
DARC 10-Meter Contest	0900Z-1059Z, Jan 13
Midwinter Contest	1000Z-1400Z, Jan 13
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Jan 18
LZ Open Contest	0000Z-0400Z, Jan 19
Hungarian DX Contest	1200Z, Jan 19 to 1200Z, Jan 20
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Jan 25
CQ 160-Meter Contest, CW	2200Z, Jan 25 to 2159Z, Jan 27
REF Contest, CW	0600Z, Jan 26 to 1800Z, Jan 27

OPERATING IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

VK1AI / H44PA –Greg # 9604 reports on his recent trip to Soilomon Islands:- I wanted to tell FDU members about my radio experiences in Solomon Islands where I went for work for four weeks, from 17 September to 16 October.

In planning what luggage to pack I had my heart set on taking some gear for some HF activity, but I didn't have a clue how on earth I would get on air from a hotel room. I decided about a fortnight before my departure to buy a Yaesu FT-897D transceiver with internal power supply. At the time I wondered whether I would get any use out of it at all. It turned out to be an excellent decision. I have a metal case into which it fits perfectly, and it travelled well through all the handling at various airports. (Although the whole box weighed about 18 kilograms, and it took a fair effort to lift.) - I also took a manual antenna tuner, about 60 metres of wire, a couple of 15 metre lengths

of coax, a 40 metre dipole with balun, magnetic loop antenna for low power use, plenty of rope, a few simple tools, and of course, a CW paddle.

About 10 days before leaving Australia I e-mailed a licence application to the Telecommunications Commission of Solomon Islands (TCSI), asking for the call H44PA. The efficient and friendly TCSI staff had the licence ready for me to pay for and collect when I arrived in Honiara.

The first two weeks in the Solomons were radio free. However, on my first day at work I was immediately very interested in the high inverted Vee antenna which had been installed at the office for communications to outlying provinces. A quick check of the office radio revealed that it was programmed with about 10 fixed frequencies in the 5 MHz band.

The boss had no hesitation granting me permission to connect my own gear to the workplace antenna. The first available occasion outside working hours was on the afternoon of Saturday 29 September.

I was able to tune, the inverted vee for use on 21 MHz, and was expecting to get pileups in response to my CQ calls, but in three hours I managed only 3 contacts, one of which was to the 3D2C dxpedition in nearby Fiji, another a phone contact to a V73 station on the ANZA net. (This turned out to be my only contact on phone.) But I did also manage to work Kelsey KK6AW FISTS 8196 which I felt made the afternoon worthwhile.

Fortunately, before I left Australia I had made e-mail contact with Rob VK4QX/H44QX. Rob is an AFP radio technician on a long term placement in the Solomons. He very kindly gave me a 2 to 20 MHz whip antenna which we strapped to the balcony of my first floor hotel room. We fashioned a rough ground plane for it out of some of the wire I had brought. It turned out to be the best antenna – I never went back to the inverted vee.

I had doubts about whether I was getting much of a signal out from the whip until the morning of 2 October when I worked 29 stations on 18 MHz, including 27 from JA, one in Northern Ireland and one in Canada. Stations were calling over the top of each other trying to work me. I eventually had to stop replying to stations calling so that I would not be too late for work that day. It was such an exhilarating experience. I went into work feeling quite an adrenalin rush. I got even more excited when I later discovered that I had been spotted on a DX cluster.

I got on air at least once every day until I had to come home, and most days someone put a spot on me. On 7 October I worked another pile up when there was a good opening to Europe, again on 18 MHz. It was chaos. Many stations again called at once, and there was also a lot of deliberate QRM which made my job even more challenging. I called it quits at about 1:30AM after about two hours. I had added another 58 QSOs to the log.

A station in Ireland was so pleased to have worked a new DXCC that he put a video of his QSO with me on YouTube <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w8ekuyTCKs8>>

My H44PA log has 362 QSOs in it. Of these, 361 were CW. I made 3 contacts on 21 MHz. The rest were fairly evenly split between 14 MHz and 18 MHz. Being mindful of the risks of RFI in a hotel environment, all contacts were made using between 20 and 50 watts. - I am sure a good number of my contacts will turn out to be FISTS members. I am now enjoying receiving a lot of interesting QSL cards, and with each one I try to remember the QSO.

I hope to go back to the Solomons again before long. Next time I will let FISTS know before I go, and I will try calling on suggested FISTS frequencies. I hope to work more FISTS members soon, either from my home call or from the Solomons again.

STRAIGHT KEY NIGHT 2012



This enjoyable annual event took place on 4 November 2012. As usual, a number of FISTS members was present. Conditions were variable generally favouring stations in the north of North Island, while those in the central districts were overwhelmed by noise. When the results of the event are published we will be making the usual FISTS Club awards to the winners in each category.

VK2CTN-Chris #9057 – I had a listen for Straight Key Night activity, but only a few very weak signals were audible. I even made an effort to dust off one of my straight keys and did a little sending practice!

ZL1BRS – Syd # 9013 – from Dunedin reported the night was cold, but I braved the weather to go out to the shed in which my Ham gear resides. I fired it up, only to hear a few signals, which were weaker than usual. I managed to work a ZL2 station and heard Ralph ZL2AOH but lost him in the noise. Decided conditions were no good and returned to the warmth in the house.

ZL2AIM-Ian #9683 sent us his report on preparing for the event:-

I enjoy SKN in New Zealand. I am one who prefers the calmness of a “party” rather than a contest. I have only missed one SKN in the 5 years that I have been in this lovely country. I am not a certificate collector but I am very proud of the 3 certificates that I have gleaned from previous SKN's. I have used a German Post Office key (Junker) as well as a Navy Key (Marconi type). Both are favourite straight keys of mine. I have entered with 100 watts as well as QRP using my Elecraft K2 and K2/100. This year I used my Icom 703+ and the Junker key as I much prefer the challenge of using low power.

I guess that the folk that enter this competition are a bit like me. They don't normally use a straight key when operating and in general would use a paddle or maybe even a bug. So the chances are that the straight key used for SKN has not been used since the previous year's SKN. This is why I believe it is important to spend a bit of time preparing for the SKN. Here is what I do.....

A few days before the contest I decide which key I will be using. I plug it into my rig and listen to what I am sending. You guessed it – the contacts are not making perfect dits and dahs. OK, it could be me that is not very proficient, but those points have got dirty or corroded or whatever. But they are not clean and therefore are not putting out a nice easy to read signal. I have found the easiest way to clean the contacts is to open them a bit and slide a sliver of ordinary smooth paper between the contacts and pull it through a few times whilst maintaining enough pressure on the key to ensure that sufficient cleaning is taking place. I adjust the space again to my preferred gap and plug it into the rig once again and start transmitting.

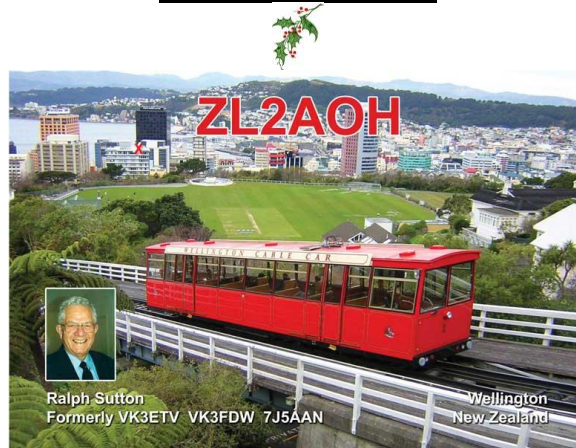
The next bit of preparation is to start using the straight key at least a day or two before the SKN. It is not as easy as using a paddle and I find my wrist gets tired quite quickly. One of my favourite keys is a small Jardillier key. It has a lovely soft action, and whilst it is great for 15 minutes or so, it gets quite tiring to send over a period of 2 hours. So unfortunately that key is a no go for a 2 hour SKN. I find that both the Junker and Naval keys have sufficient soft action for me and I can use them over 2 hours without too much trouble. It is important to get the brain and the hand action co-ordinated before the start of the SKN. Listen critically to yourself transmitting and you might find that you are not sending as well as you thought! Make a recording of yourself and play it back and you might even be a bit disappointed with your sending. But, you are doing this a day or two before the SKN, so you still have a chance of improving your sending skills before the SKN.

One could also practice sending your reply to each call. In my case it would be 599/Hikuai/Ian/Junker/IC703/5 I suggest that you practice sending your version over and over again until you know you are sending it correctly – or more to the point – sending it so that the other station can read you clearly. Don't forget that forward slash dah dit dit dah dit! That is an easy one for me to remember as I use it daily when sending ZL2AIM/QRP.

Whilst all the above may sound a bit daunting to you, the main thing is to enjoy the evening and to have a bit of fun. Just remember, if your sending with a straight key is good, the more fun the other operator will have; if your sending is from a dirty contact, a key that has not been "oiled", a fist that has not used a straight key for 12 months, etc, the other operator may have some difficulty in reading your CW. Whatever you do, enjoy the SKN and hopefully I can meet you on the band.

The band conditions on 80 metres were excellent this year for SKN although we had to put up with a lot of DX during the first hour or so, it was manageable. I did work a lot of stations that I worked in previous years so it was nice to reacquaint once again. Due to the good band conditions I missed out on a lot of contacts due to the signals of the more powerful stations coming over my signal.

MEMBERS' QSL CARDS

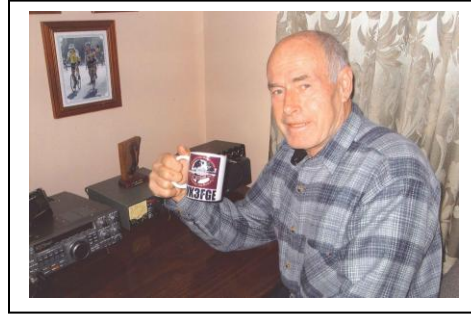


Ralph's QTH is marked with the red cross

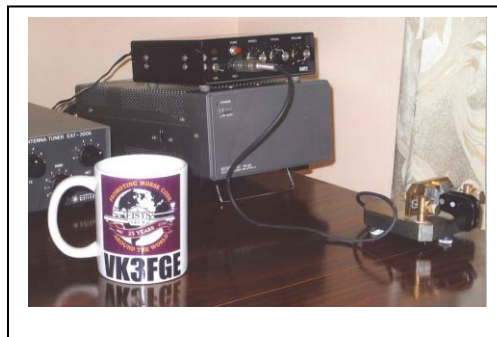
FISTS 25th Anniversary “Personalised MUGS”

Photograph Left: - Chris Thompson, VK2CTN #9057 with his personalised FISTS mug.

Photograph Right: - David Bell, VK3FGE #9088 with his personalised FISTS mug



Photograph Centre: - Close up of “Davids” mug alongside his home made keyer.



FISTS DOWN UNDER NEWSLETTER



Remember this is your newsletter!

Your Editor URGENTLY needs your articles, stories, photographs and items of interest. Once again, there will be a prize for the best article received during the year ending with the May 2013 issue. For the Runner Up, there will also be a Special Award of a FREE Subscription for one year to FISTS Down Under.

Articles and photographs may be submitted by either e-mail or post. Those submitted by post will be returned to the sender once dealt with. Our addresses are in the newsletter header – please use them! - Please think about it! - Start writing now for next year's prizes!

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS



We come to the end of yet another year but with much more optimism for good propagation as King Sol climbs slowly to his maximum. There have been much better band openings recently on the higher frequencies. So now is the time to start looking to achieve some of the FISTS awards.

Thanks, all our members, for your participation during 2012 with your subscriptions, donations, letters and emails and frequent kind words of encouragement. Thanks also to those managing the other FISTS Club Chapters for exchanging information and being supportive.

We hope that our members and readers, their families and friends, wherever they are, have an enjoyable Christmas and that the New Year will bring happiness, good health and peace to you all.

We have a publishing holiday in January so our next issue will be for February 2013. CU then.

VY 73 de

Nigel ZL2TX, Chris VK2CTN and Ralph ZL2AOH

