



FISTS DOWN UNDER

Newsletter – March 2012

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FISTS 25th Anniversary

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.

SILENT KEY - ZL2ABZ

It is with deep regret that we have to inform members of the passing of John Moore ex FISTS #9005. John was a founder member of FISTS Down Under and was most supportive in our early years. He had been in indifferent health for a number of years but regularly attended old timers' meetings in Wellington. There he entertained us with interesting stories of his long career in radio in the RNZAF and the New Zealand Post office as an operator and later as a radio inspector.

Until his health intervened he was an active supporter of the Quartz Hill contest station and often took part in working bees. On one occasion he surprised himself by walking into a bog when taking a short cut across a field; much to the amusement of everyone present except John.

Condolences have been sent on behalf of FISTS Down Under to his wife Nerissa and the family.

DOWN UNDER MEMBERS' NEWS

We appreciate the donations made by VK6QH-Bill #14106, ZL2IH-Ian #9027, VK2PS-Steve #9022, VK5BSC-Brian #9601, and ZL1AAR-Gwynne #9028.

VK4EI- Lyn #14132 has been holidaying in Ireland. She wrote: We are enjoying mild weather compared with the UK and Europe. Haven't been on air yet but have been invited to the QTH of EI9JU next weekend to try to work back to VK and maybe get my Marconi 365A on air for the first time

ZL1AZE-Brian #9073 who is now living in Melbourne reported that he had made a presentation on the Wellington Amateur Radio Club's former Quartz Hill station, ZL6QH at the Central Victoria Radio Fest. A copy of this interesting PowerPoint presentation can be seen at
<http://www.fistsdownunder.org/-%20Additions/zl6qh%20presentation`>



Congratulations to Brian who has just been made an honorary life member of the Wellington Amateur Radio Club. This is in recognition of the long service he has given to the club, particularly for the establishment and management of the Quartz Hill station.

ANNIVERSARY MERCHANDISE

As we advised earlier, both the UK and US FISTS Club Chapters have taken the initiative on making available souvenirs to celebrate the 25th anniversary of FISTS.

M0BPT Robert #5576 reports that the first batch of FISTS mugs has been manufactured and distributed. - See pictures at [25th Anniversary Mugs](#).

There will be a second batch produced in April with the aim to dispatch them by the end of April. Be aware that if you order a mug now, it will be for one in the April batch and postage to VK/ZL/JA is approx 10.00 Pounds U.K.

Depending on the demand for the April batch, we may or may not produce a further batch mid-year. So, to be absolutely sure of getting your mug, please ensure you order in time for the April batch. Robert can be contacted at m0bpt@yahoo.co.uk

WZ8C-Nancy #0379 advises that there are now souvenir T-shirts and polo shirts available in a range of sizes. The prices are \$US 7.00 for the T-shirts and \$15.00 for the polo shirts. Postage to ZL/VK is \$US10.00 for one shirt and \$us 7.00 for each subsequent shirt. Nancy can be contacted at nancy@tir.com

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

These are some of the CW contest/event offerings in March 2012 most of which will be o m0bpt@yahoo.co.ukf more interest to our northern hemisphere readers. Thanks to WA7BNM Contest Calendar <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html>

Wake-Up! QRP Sprint	0600Z-0800 Mar 3
ARS Spartan Sprint	0200Z-0400 Mar 6
AGCW YL-CW Party	1900Z-2100 Mar 6
AWA John Rollins Memorial DX Contest	2300 Mar 7 to 2300 Mar 8 and 2300 Mar 10 to 2300 Mar 11
RSGB Commonwealth Contest - BERU	1000 Mar 10 to 1000 Mar 11
AGCW QRP Contest	1400Z-2000 Mar 10
Idaho QSO Party	1900 Mar 10 to 1900 Mar 11
SKCC Weekend Sprint	0000Z-2400 Mar 11
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400 Mar 14 and 1900Z-2000 Mar 14 and 0300Z-0400 Mar 15
RSGB 80m Club Championship CW	2000Z-2130 Mar 14
Russian DX Contest	1200 Mar 17 to 1200 Mar 18
AGCW VHF/UHF Contest	1400Z-1659 Mar 17 (144) and 1700Z-1759 Mar 17 (432)
Virginia QSO Party	1400 Mar 17 to 0200 Mar 18 and 1200Z-2400 Mar 18
Run for the Bacon QRP Contest	t0100Z-0300 Mar 19
NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint	0030Z-0230 Mar 22
SKCC Sprint	0000Z-0200 Mar 28
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400 Mar 28 and 1900Z-2000 Mar 28 and 0300Z-0400 Mar 29

TRAWLING THE WEB

ZL1CDX-Turne r #9048 and David **VK3DB #3756** spotted this oddity -
[<http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=mEz_hcYumQI>](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=mEz_hcYumQI)

M0HJA-Billy spotted this site of tersest to key enthusiasts: <http://www.goofus.org/kk4dw.html#directory>

ZL2DW David, searching the East Anglia University film archives found this fascinating film about Wartime Radio Interception -
<http://www.eafa.org.uk/catalogue/5108>

FROM OUR MAILBOX – THE SEQUEL

Readers will recall the item about the Californian Brighter Futures Charter School in last Month's *Fists Down Under*. This "feel good" story has an interesting and weird follow-up.

Ralph ZL2AOH thought that it would be a nice gesture to send some information about New Zealand to the children of Miss Cassandra Smith's class. He emailed asking how many children were in the class and the postal address of the school. After a few days without a reply and a follow-up email he started investigating the situation. There is a very comprehensive nicely illustrated web site about the school and the school community. However it did not give the location. The "contact us" form provided, somehow failed to forward. Ralph looked for the school on the California State schools web site, but Bright Futures didn't appear. An inquiry to the administrator of the list confirmed this.

A Google search revealed a listing from a blogger that is worth reading - <http://mr-pandakun.livejournal.com/> The blogger reported that another organisation had received an almost identically worded letter from Miss Smith on another topic. This came to the same conclusion that we had; that the whole business is a fiction. Goodness knows what purpose this elaborate deception is supposed to achieve. Someone has gone to a lot of trouble and expense setting up the web site and email address, researching the topics and sending out the emails to the various organisations. There was no request for (and certainly no parting with) money so apart from our feeling foolish at being hoaxed we don't think any damage has been done. We wonder how many other organisations have been affected?

RMS TITANIC 1912 – 2012

As reported last month, a lot of effort by radio amateurs worldwide is going into commemorating the Titanic disaster. UK FISTS has organized the TITANIC 24 hour Sprint on Sunday 15 April 2012 0000-2359 UTC and Members and the Redcliffe & District ARC are planning a special event station in Brisbane. We will repeat the event's details in next month's *FISTS Down Under*. We trust that all of our members will participate in some of the day's on-air activities. Those wishing to operate using the FISTS Special Calls please contact Ralph (for ZL6FF) and Chris (for VK2FDU) respectively as soon as possible. It would be nice to have 24 hour schedules for both calls.

VK4BCM-Bevan #9043 reports on developments on the Brisbane special events station.

Application has been made for the special event call sign **VI4MGY**

A team of guys at Redcliffe Radio Club is being rallied to visit the Southbank site to ascertain logistics. They have already compiled a list of equipment they consider necessary. That is all actually at the moment.

The support we are getting internationally and around the country is wonderful. It looks like it is to be a memorable day. We need to decide on an identifier. For what it is worth I suggest TC being for "Titanic Centenary".

We just need the word to be spread where ever we can .I trust the FISTS organisation is promoting this around the globe.

Last Monday was "World Radio Day". I managed to get 5 minutes on ABC radio about some old radio broadcasting valves we have in our museum c.1925. I also managed to squeeze in info about the contest, Marconi, amateur radio and the FISTS Club. This triggered a 12 minute live interview on site at the museum later in the day which was very rewarding.

RE: OPERATING AWAY FROM HOME BY ZL2AOH RALPH #1073 – ANOTHER MAN'S VIEW

I read with interest Ralph's article sharing his experience of setting up a transmitting station 7J5AAN during 1995. Whilst my definition of "working away from home" differs greatly from Ralphs insofar as he had the politics of another country to contend with, I just wanted to work a portable station 10 kms up the road.

So what is the best way of setting up a portable station? What is the best equipment to use? Is it better to work QRP or the full 100 watts? Should one use a "quick to erect antenna" or spend more time erecting a decent wire antenna such as a G5RV? Should one use a matching unit? What happens if the band of choice is dead? What key or paddle to use? What power supply to take along? If you have pondered any of the above questions before setting up a portable station, then perhaps this may be of interest to you.

I will start off by saying that I don't like to lug around a lot of weight, hence I will always opt for a QRP station. Secondly, I want to use the smallest lightest power supply that will give me at least 4 hours of fun. Therefore my rig must be mean on current usage. The rig must be of solid design and preferably have a built-in tuner. The antenna must be quick to erect, must be multiband so that if one band is dead, there are other bands that I can use. Whilst I normally use a Vibroplex paddle, I prefer to go for a smaller unit and hence use a Palm Mini Paddle. Whilst I love the Elecraft K1 and K2 QRP rigs, I have found that the convenience of having a sturdy rig

such as the Icom 703+ is a good idea as I would hate to subject my K2 to any outdoor abuse. If truth be told, I would like to use the K2 as it is the rig of my daily operation and know its menus etc, I use the IC703+ as otherwise I would have no justification for having bought it!



Icom 703+

The first thing that I do is to explore possible sites for operation. Top of hills or close to the sea? In my experience I have found that I get better luck operating close to the sea than I do when up in the mountains. I have no firm scientific basis for saying this other than what has worked for me in the past. I like to work from a sturdy table and seat rather than lug along a table and chair. Luckily in the Coromandel where I live, lovely sturdy picnic tables with benches have been provided at many beautiful spots near the sea. I look for a spot that would have some shade if needed as well as some trees in the vicinity to hook my antenna up on to. I do this as a pre plan so that I don't have to faff around with last minute hitches on the day of operation. I also take into consideration the proximity of power lines as I will be throwing a wire into the air and don't trust my aim. (My aim is great, but it is just that the weighted line does not always go where I want it to go.....)



Tairua Estuary showing vertical pole and wire to tree in background.

Let's start off with the antenna. As I said earlier, I prefer to use a multiband antenna and have a tuner to do the work for me. I have experimented with many different antennas for portable operation including half size G5RV in inverted vee formation, half size Carolina Windom antennas in inverted Vee formation, Buddipole De Luxe in various shapes, ATX Walkabout antennas, Hustler coil and whip antennas, Icom AH703, Miracle Whip etc etc, but the simplest and quickest to put up is what works for me. I don't want to waste a lot of my transmitting time trying to get a dipole into a branch or trying to fine tune a Buddipole with an antenna analyser. Therefore I go with a long wire. What I do is the following;



Method of clamping pole to table

I use an extendable paint pole for the start of my antenna. It is about 1.7 metres long when collapsed and must extend to about double that length - about 3.4 metres high. Seeing as the picnic tables that are scattered around our peninsula are very sturdy, I have made up a type of clamp fixture that secures the paint pole to the table whilst resting its base on the bench seat. The seat is already about half a metre high, so now I have a height of nearly 4 metres off the ground. I had started off using a length of insulated wire about 15 metres long which tuned up nicely on most bands except the 30 m band, so I added a few more metres and it now tunes up on all bands. Here's how I go about putting up the antenna. (It won't tune up on 160m but it is not a band that I would use for portable use.)

I use a fishing weight tied on to some soft thin nylon type rope. (I use the word nylon loosely as it may well be polypropylene or similar.) I throw the weight underarm to a point up the tree. I attach the insulated antenna wire to the other end of the rope, and pull it via the weighted end of the rope. The OTHER end of the insulated wire, I attach to my unun and feed it up the paint pole to the top. I hold it in position with some cheap plastic clamps but you can use insulating tape or whatever. The wire then slopes towards the tree. I tie the weighted end to a branch on the tree in order to anchor it and keep the wire fairly tight.



Some time ago I read an article on using an unun as opposed to a balun for a long wire. I built it using the plans of KC8AON's QRP projects. I mounted it in a plastic box and used loudspeaker spring loaded connections for attaching the antenna and counterpoises.



The counterpoises are just insulated wire cut to approximately a quarter wavelength on all the bands. The longest being 20 metres long for the 80 m band and the shortest being 2.5 metres long for the 10m band. I bound them together so that they don't get tangled up and soldered them all together at one point for inserting into the unun box. The counterpoises I lie along the ground in a straight line in such a way that they won't trip up any visitors.



The power supply. I had always used 12 volt 7 Amp Hour batteries in the past as they were easy to obtain. This is fine if you plan on using the radios full potential of 10 watts. However I still have my original Icom

BP228 Ni-Cad battery which puts out 9.6 Volts and is fine for 5 watts output. Just bye the bye, the battery is one that I bought in about 2004 and still performs well. I have fitted Anderson Power Poles to all of my radio and power source equipment making it easy to change from one power source to another.



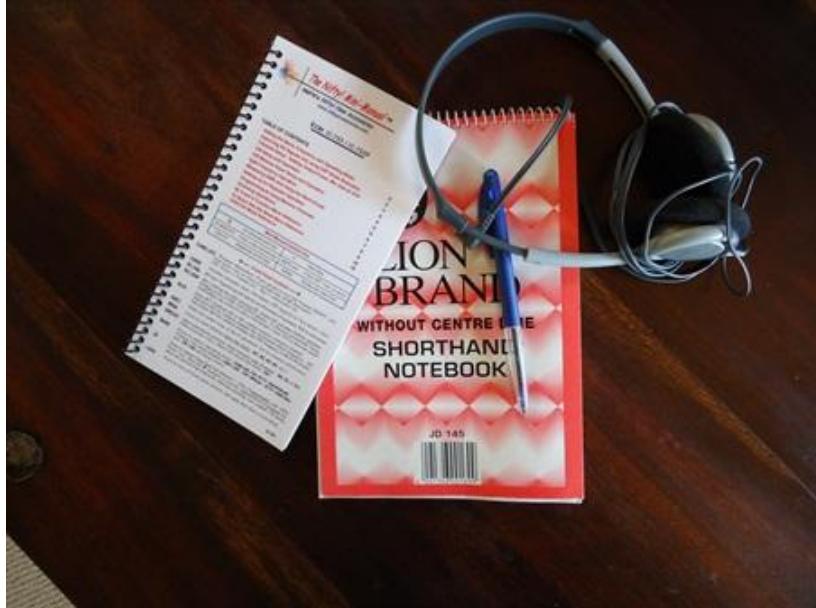
I mentioned the Palm mini paddle earlier. However if my call is answered by a straight key, I like to also answer with a straight key. I have a Jardillier key that was used by the South African army. It is very lightweight and has a nice "give" in its movement. It does mean a quick plug change at the rear of the rig and a quick menu change, but having a paddle and a straight key is just my personal choice.



Having passed my 65th birthday, I like to make a list of things to take along with me so as not to arrive and find I have left my short length of RG58 at home. I suggest you do the same regardless of age..... I have made up

a few sheets of a log book from a spreadsheet for my portable operations. This I keep on a clipboard with an old LCD watch attached. The watch is set for UTC time and date.

I like to use earphones when operating portable. I use a pair of cheapies that are obtainable at any Dick Smith outlet.



As the Icom 703+ is not my normal rig, I find that the menu's are a bit confusing if only using the rig occasionally. Therefore the Nifty Mini Manual is a handy thing to have when out in the field.



Lastly don't forget the logbook complete with old watch set on UTC date and time!

For me, little beats the fun of working outdoors in paradise Coromandel with a quick to erect antenna, 5 watts in hand and a decent paddle or key to make that DX contact.

Enjoy your qrp/p De ZL2AIM