

 	<p style="text-align: center;">FISTS DOWN UNDER Newsletter – June 2012</p> <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>	  FISTS 25 th Anniversary
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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.

SILENT KEYS

We regret to report that **VK4AFW- Frank Alloway #9639** became a silent key on 15 January 2012. If any of our VK4 members has any information on Frank's family could you please let us know, so that we send them condolences on behalf of Frank's FISTS colleagues?

We also regret to advise members of the death of **ZL4AT-Alan Taylor #9074** on 12 May 2012. When notified of his death by telephone, we were able to convey condolences on behalf of FISTS Down Under,

NEW MEMBERS

This month we welcome **VK4TB-Ian Simpson #14141** from Upper Fern Tree Gully a suburb of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, 32 km south-east from Melbourne's central business district. He says - I have been a Radio Ham since 2005, and am enjoying the learning experience of being a ham. I am married to my darling Annette and we have three children Caleb 15 Hannah 14 and Jemimah 13 we also have 2 foster children Ben 6weeks and Dylan 2 years. I have been learning Morse for 3 years and enjoying the challenge. Please listen for my CQ calls on the club frequencies.

And we also welcome to **VK3KIH-Chris Doyle #14142** who comes from Forest Hill, another suburb of Melbourne, (our second member from there. Chris writes this about himself: - Licensed for over 30 years. I started with a "Z" call, VK4ZDO so I was initially interested in VHF and above. My initial interest in CW came when I got my novice call in VK2 during the early 80's. After a long break of over 20 years, I got active again. My main interest is now CW and it goes back to my first CW contact as a novice. I remember calling CQ (must have been no more than 7 WPM) and there, coming out of the static was someone answering my call. I still find it amazing to hear dots and dashes and realize it's someone calling me. So older and wiser I'm now trying to get up to a "respectable" speed with an old, but good ICOM IC730. My main challenges are, age (which always seems to be against me) and finding slower stations (15 wpm) to work.

TRAWLING THE WEB

A blog article about the Boy Scouts of America's Morse badge –
<http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2012/05/04/a-blast-from-the-past-in-code/>

Go to our website www.fistsdownunder.org to hear an interesting BBC Discovery podcast of a programme about the radio messages exchanged during the Titanic disaster. It can also be accessed direct at
http://www.fistsdownunder.org/-%20Additions/discovery_20120409-2006a%20Titanic.mp3

1859's great auroral storm -
<http://arstechnica.com/science/2012/05/1859s-great-auroral-storm-the-week-the-sun-touched-the-earth/>

MEMBERS NEWS

Thanks to **ZL3HAM-Tony #9015**, **ZL2AMM-Stan #9023**, **VK7TW-Justin #9077** and **ZL1WI-Roy #9678** for including a donation when renewing their subscriptions.



JE1CLH-Mack #9012 (assisted by his XYL Atsuyo – or is it the other way round!) is seen gathering bamboo shoots.

During the Titanic centennial event in Brisbane, **VK4BCM-Bevan #9053** was interviewed for a broadcast on the Australian national radio station 612 ABC Brisbane. You can listen to the 46 minute broadcast again by visiting our website at <http://www.fistsdownunder.org/-%20Additions/130412-titanic-ob-3-4pm.mp3> - It's a large file featuring Titanic enthusiast Robert Martin, President of the Australasian Marine Pilots Institute Peter Lily, Bevan McAleer and Mission to Seafarers Captain Dave Ellis and Adrian Willes - Bevan's interview is about two thirds into the broadcast.



Bevan also sent us this gem: - As a result of explaining the background of FISTS to the ABC a couple of weeks ago I got to thinking and came up with this:

F First **I** International **S** Signal **T** Transmission **S** System

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

These are some of the CW contest/event offerings in May 2012 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>

NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z Jun 1
HA3NS Sprint Memorial Contest	1730Z-1800Z Jun 1 (80m) & 1800Z-1830Z Jun 1 (40m)
Wake-Up! QRP Sprint	0600Z-0800Z Jun 2
Alabama QSO Party	1600Z Jun 2 to 0400Z Jun 3
ARS Spartan Sprint	0100Z-0300Z Jun 5
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z Jun 8
Portugal Day Contest	0000Z-2400Z Jun 9
GACW WWSA CW DX Contest	1500Z Jun 9 to 1500Z Jun 10
NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint	0030Z-0230Z Jun 13
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z Jun 13 & 1900Z-2000Z Jun 13 & 0300Z-0400Z Jun 14
RSGB 80m Club Championship	CW1900Z-2030Z Jun 13
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z Jun 15
All Asian DX Contest CW	0000Z Jun 16 to 2400Z Jun 17
AGCW VHF/UHF Contest	1400Z-1659Z Jun 16 (144) & 1700Z-1759Z Jun 16 (432)
West Virginia QSO Party	1600Z Jun 16 to 0200Z Jun 17
Run for the Bacon QRP Contest	0100Z-0300Z Jun 18
NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint	0030Z-0230Z Jun 21
Marconi Memorial HF Contest	1400Z Jun 23 to 1400Z Jun 24
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z Jun 27 & 1900Z-2000Z Jun 27 & 0300Z-0400Z Jun 28

NZART STRAIGHT KEY NIGHT – 2011
FISTS DOWN UNDER PRIZE

The Following are the section winners in last year's Straight Key Night event:

Open QRP Section	ZL2AIM Ian MacQuillan FISTS #9683
Open QRO Section	ZL2LN Barry Davenport
Vintage Home Brew Section	ZL1AWR Hal Goodacre
Home Brew QRP Kit Section	ZL2AKW Trevor King FISTS #9684
Home Brew QRP Section	ZL4AA Alan Wilden

All these winners qualify for the FISTS Down Under Prize and will receive a certificate. The FISTS members will have their membership extended by twelve months. The others will be invited to join with a year's paid-up subscription.

Other members who participated in this fun event were **ZL2AOH-Ralph #1073**, **ZL1BOP-Nick #96321**, **ZL2JU-Les #14107**, **ZL2BIT-Joe #9021**, **ZL1DAC-Charlie #9675** and **ZL3UJZ-Gilbert #14102**. **ZL1AIH-Ken #9094** & **ZL1WI-Roy #9678** submitted check logs.

We would like to introduce a similar prize for a similar event in Australia. We welcome suggestions from our VK members.

On receiving his certificate and notification of his prize, **ZL2AIM-Ian #9683** responded as follows:-Thank you very much Ralph for the certificate and the prize! It is genuinely much appreciated. The certificate has been laminated and now stands with my 50 points and 100 points certificate.

I do so enjoy making CW contacts and that is what makes my day. It can be just one ragchew or even some good DX and then I am a happy chappy! Most evenings I have gone to bed a happy chappy. I believe that CW is still popular in New Zealand – more so than in South Africa. Of course if I can make a QRP contact so much the better. Today was a beautiful day up in the Coromandel so I decided to take my Icom 703+ outside into the back garden. No fun in using my Windoms antennas, so I threw out a long wire and a counterpoise and called and called on 30m and 20m. Nobody came back to my call. Tried 17m and heard 4s7ne calling. He battled to catch my call sign but he persevered and gave me a 349 which was changed later to a 549. That has made today my day, so everything else this evening will be a bonus.

2012 NZART SANGSTER SHIELD QRP CW CONTEST

We apologise for putting the incorrect dates in last month's listing. FISTS Down Under members were active and those who were heard from the lower North Island included **ZL1AIH-Ken #9094**, **ZL4IM-John #9638**, **ZL2JU-Les #14107**, **ZL2AOH-Ralph #1073**, **ZL2BIT-Joe #9021**, **ZL2AKW-Trevor #9684**, **ZL1ANY-Stephen #9055** and **ZL1BWG-Bruce #14116**. There may well have been others competing as the propagation conditions were particularly poor.

EDITOR'S PRIZES

These are the Editor's selections for the 2011-201 Editor's Prizes.

First - **David Dunn VK3DBD/G3SGD** for "FISTS the Beginning" - December 2011. David receives his prize and a certificate.

There are two Seconds who each receive a year's subscription and a certificate.

Second Equal - **Ray Buck VK4ZW** for "Hendricks QPR Kits PFR-3A" - December 2011

Second Equal - **Bevan McAleer VK4BCM** for Titanic event reports and his efforts in connection with the commemoration.

Articles and reviews are always eagerly sought and will now be eligible for consideration for the 2012-2013 year prizes. Pictures and interesting QSL Cards are also welcome. Material can be sent as e-mail attachments or through the post. Items posted will be returned on request. Our contact details are shown at the masthead.

MARKET PLACE

From **ZL1MH-Mike #9038**. Is anyone on the list thinking of getting an Elecraft K3? I am thinking of selling mine....due to station downsize & activity reduction. Details are as follows.:

S/N 0215. 100Watts.Twin Rxs - main Rx fitted with roofing filters of 6kHz, 1000kHz and 500Hz., also KNB3 noise blanker & KBPF3 (for general coverage). KUSB for internet updates. No microphone. The rig has less than 100hrs on the clock from new and there are no no physical mods; (No screwdriving etc. has been done!)

I suggest, that if you are interested, you check all prices at <www.elecraft.com>, add GST & shipping from US, and make an offer. Prices to check on their list are: K3/100, KRX3, KBPF3.KUSB,KFL3A-6k, KFL3A-1.0k, and KFL3A-500.

I'll respond to all emails <mghutchins@xtra.co.nz>, but as I am on dialup, it could be a case of 'next day'.

We are always happy to place "for sale", "wanted" and exchange advertisements for our members at no cost. (Amateur Radio related of course.)

CARE FOR COAX FITTINGS

By VK3DBD/G3SCD-David #3756, writing from Sunny Lincolnshire

Over the years I have often offered to help fellow amateurs whose antennas have suddenly (or gradually) ceased to "get out" and/or when they are unable to fix it themselves for various reasons. 9 times out of ten I find the cause is usually a bad joint or water ingress into the system.

Water inside a coax normally spells The End for the coax. It is virtually impossible to dry it out. In any case copper and water soon creates that nasty black appearance and soldering it well is nearly impossible.

Coax plugs more often or not are the initial cause and fitting them requires some considerable care. There are many types, some

cheapies some very expensive. It is debatable when it really pays to use the best, like Amphenol silver plated, but good or bad they do have to be made waterproof.

There are the types with the reducer for thick or thin coax and some with a coarse screw thread which allows the braid to be folded back over the outer insulation and a screwing action will securely make a reasonable braid to body joint. I often use these for indoor connectors and indeed for many of the outside arrangement. (Waterproofed as described below)

The inner of course must be suitably cut away using dimensions to suit the particular plug. This can be quite critical and the older handbooks like ARRL and RSGB do list some of these measurements. But common sense will deduce how the inner and outer should be exposed before fitting.

The type of plug that requires soldering to the body is the one where most bad joints are made, it is also so easy to get one un-noticed strand of wire shorting to the other side. Check with ohm meter and check again as the stages progress - and check again on completion.

For soldering the body a BIG soldering iron is needed, if you are outside in the wind, try and find a sheltered spot. Lack of heat is disastrous. At least 75 or even 150 watt iron is the answer. The heat needs to be applied quickly so the insulation does not melt, but so that the metal is hot enough to actually melt the solder. DO NOT melt the solder and drop it on the joint. It will not stick properly. The little gas catalytic soldering devices are very good and expensive but they need to be good ones, cheap ones are not worth the money. They usually have a choice of tip sizes which enables access into the narrow space of a Coax inner

The cheaper plugs which are not silver plated are usually brass with nickel plate. This is difficult to solder and this tip makes it so much easier. See photos:

Take a chainsaw file, say 1/4 to 3/8 size and file across the hole or slot of the internal part of the plug so that the thick metal is severely thinned down at the whole edges this will also expose the brass which will solder well. Take care with getting the braid down the hole. Do not forget the collar on the cable before doing that! Sometimes it can be worth separating the braid into 2 tails and doing two holes but it is not so easy to fish the ends out to ensure no strands are astray. Of course if you have cut the insulation to the correct length, then that will effectively block any chances of a strand touching the inner.

As I said before, apply the tip of the large iron to the joint until it is hot enough to melt the solder, apply enough to flow nicely over the joint and the job is finished. Then check with meter for shorts. It all takes longer to write about than to do. The secret is heat and plenty of it in the right place quickly.

Keeping out water is the next step. Self amalgamating tape is the answer. Forget mastic, plumber's gunge, roofing sealant and various putty substances. Just the tape. It welds itself together in a few hours and can only be undone by destroying and cutting the joint. Said to be waterproof to some 200ft under the sea, it has always been 100% successful for me. In the very UV prone areas, VK and ZL etc, it is best to cover the joint with a layer of PVC to keep the light off. But I have found that several years life seems to be normal exposed to the elements. Wind on under medium tension, overlapping turns to suit and slacken tension near the final turn, pressing it well together.

One picture of a coax fitting to a dipole centre is shown cut open after at least 10 years outdoors. Underneath is shiny and clean. - Keep it dry, keep it resonant!

I have a system of dipole fittings and manufacture for mean hams and that can be seen in another article another time. - *We look forward to that, David*



1. A commercial dipole centre



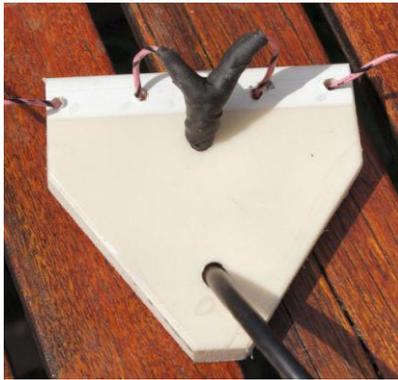
2. Cut open



3., Make a centre



4. Solder the ends



5. Centre complete + weather proof



6. Two dipoles on one



7. Brushcutter line + chockblock clamp



A NEW WAY TO SOLDER

The 1-HSE is an interesting new development that will greatly simplify the soldering process. It can be operated by one hand. The solder is input into the unit in a similar manner to the lead in a clutch pencil. The solder flows when a button is pushed. The amount of solder remaining in the unit is visible through a transparent window. Power is provided by re-chargeable batteries. - Watch out for them soon in electronics stores.