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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

Our first new member for 2013 is **VK3AGQ-Dick Gething #14155** who lives in Narre Warren, Victoria. He is our second member from that locality that is a suburb of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, 42 km southeast from Melbourne's central business district. -The name Narre Warren intrigued us, so a look up on the local library web site provided the following: There are three interpretations of the origin of Narre Warren. One definition is that it is a corruption of the Aboriginal words for "little hills". Another definition is that it is a corruption of the Aboriginal words for "no good" from the belief that the creek water was brackish and "no good" for drinking. The Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages website suggests that it comes from the word meaning "red ochre". – Take your pick

Dick sent us this self-profile: - My name is Dick Gething and I live in Narre Warren (a Melbourne suburb) on a typical suburban block. I am married with three daughters & eight grandchildren. I am 69 and retired approximately 10 years ago. Before I retired, I was an Electrical Engineer with the local electricity supply authority.

I started in Ham Radio at the age of 16 as an SWL, using an old "Radiogram" to listen to amateurs on the SW bands. I was restricted to AM of course. However, when I got my first QSL card from England, I was hooked. I then graduated to an ex Air Force receiver and things opened up for me. I obtained my full call (VK3AGQ) in 1965, and used home brew AM, DSB & SSB transmitters on 80, 40, & 20metres with ex military receivers.

In 1975, I went to Papua New Guinea for two years to work on a new Hydro Electric scheme. I had the call P29GQ, and built a Heathkit HW101 to get me on air there. It was fun operating there, where I was a rare call myself. I operated from Port Moresby for 12 months or so. When I returned home, my activity slowed to allow for family commitments at the time.

When I retired, I decided that I would like to go back to CW, and try again to become more active. I built a K2/100 to upgrade from the Heathkit and have been working to get my code back up to speed. It has been a slow process, but with the help I have received on air, I am on the way. I am still slow, but I am trying to get my rhythm right before trying to speed up.

I have also become interested in QRP and am surprised at what 5 watts and a dipole can do. I use a P6 CW Touchkeyer with the K2, and an old Clipsal brass straight key. My interests also include woodturning, and I am a member of our local woodworking club.

I have been a member of the WIA since I started as an SWL and have joined SKCC and FISTS Down Under. Thanks to Ian, ZL2AIM for inviting me to join, and Ralph, ZL2AOH for sorting the details.

Regards to all and hope to see you on the air soon.

We also welcome **VK6TGQ-Brian Andrews #14156** a resident of Gelorup, a semi-rural suburb 10 km south of Bunbury, Western Australia, and 180 km south of Perth, Just before deadline we have another new member **VK4FR-Chris Megaw #14157** who is from Rangewood, Queensland; a rural community adjacent to Townsville. (Thanks to **VK4EI-Lyn #14132** for introducing Chris.)

We have asked Brian and Chris for brief personal histories, so that we can introduce them to members in a later newsletter.

MEMBERS' NEWS

Thanks to the following members for donations received recently – **VK3KX-Derek #14125**, **VK3CGB-Chris #9087** - **ZL2JKY-Jakey #6462** and **VK4ZW-Ray #9681**.

In early December 2012 **VK4EI-Lyn #14132** was on holiday in a vessel off the Queensland east coast. She reportedhad HF on board and a couple of MM CW QSOs! First with VK4ALN Deane, who is ex ship's radio officer which was terrific! Then my ham buddy Col VK4CC (FISTS 14133) which was also an excellent QSO - I wasn't on a hand key, hadn't brought one! Borrowed a Bencher paddle from my friend Chris VK4FR just before setting sail! (Not sail, it was a motor vessel!) Anyway, all great fun. My OM even let me lug everything ashore on Orpheus Island for a brief impromptu IOTA activation (OC-171) first time I've done it, so was good practice and maybe we can plan something similar for next year's voyage.

ZL1ARB-Peter #9658 has recently changed his QTH. He writes: Having a bit of a problem with antennas here, as the section is relatively square, unlike our previous patch which was quite elongated.

That problem is offset by the fact that this section is absolutely level, which makes mowing much less of an ordeal. As far as antennas go, there's no way an 80 meter inverted Vee will fit but was fortunate that Doug, ZL1SS gave me a surplus vertical which I have to do a bit of refurbishing on before getting erected. Here's hoping that the vertical will provide a good enough ground plane signal to re-activate local interest, which at the moment seems to revolve around Sky TV, Anyway the operative theme, at 84, is to 'make haste slowly'.

VK4JKY-Jakey #6462 has checked in, being back in New Zealand for the summer, after a year's break. From his QTH in Golden Bay he reports on what has been occupying him lately: - I have yet to raise my trapped dipole to its proper height. - 14 MHz has been pretty good in the late evenings. - I have to sort out key clicks in next door's VHF radio. Is it a harmonic? Is it front end blocking? Is it my signal getting through the "back door" via mains or speaker leads? I wonder which!

I have made a hole for an SO239 socket on the back of the FL-2000B linear amp to add a 98 MHz quarter-wave open ended stub. This seems to have disturbed something as when I put power on the amp, even on "Standby" the PA meter shows quiescent current. To try to find-fault the bias current I decided to use a Galbraith 12V PSU to save having 3kV floating about. The trouble was that the PSU was negative to chassis; whether by design or not I don't know. To add to the fun, one of the two stud diodes bolted to the heat-sink was not making contact so the unit was running with half-wave rectification. Talk about fixing the test gear first!

OTHER MEMBERS' NEWS

UK Fists reports the appointment of their new on-air Activities Manager, **G5VZ-Chris #12540** <chris@fists.co.uk>. **M0BPT-Rob #5576**, who previously undertook this, is still a FISTS committee member there, with various club duties.

G3ZOD-Graham #8385 has uploaded the UK FISTS web site a log converter program specially written to cater for FISTS awards and contests. The full details and the link to download the file can be found at <<http://www.fists.co.uk/members/membersflc.html>>. Graham be contacted at <g3zodfists@googlemail.com>

HOUSEKEEPING

Here is the latest renewals list. Please check whether you are listed and if so, please forward your renewal subscription. Please let us know if you are wrongly listed, want a replacement renewal form, or generally have any queries.

Renewals due by 28 February 2013; some are overdue: -

9027; 9028; 9048; 9064; 9066; 9096; 9097; 9118; 9601; 9658; 9663; 9670; 9681; 14103; 14105; 14116; 14117; 14118; 14119;14134

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 can 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 this year's prizes!

TRAWLING THE WEB



European Radio Amateurs' Organization (EURAO) is a meeting point for independent radio amateurs' associations around the world, mainly from Europe: <http://www.eurao.org/en>

ZL2AL-Lee #9662 has a wide range of interests and activities and radio friendships, many of which are reflected in his interesting personal web site: [http:// www.zl2al.com](http://www.zl2al.com)

A site for Kenwood aficionados: <http://www.k4eaa.com/>

A big site with lots of interesting stuff: <http://www.qrz.com/db/ei8gqb>

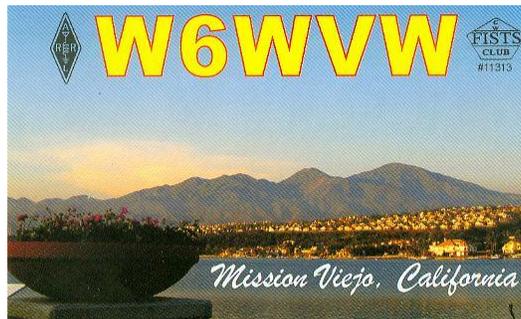
An entertaining little video of ARRL Straight Key Night 2009: <http://youtu.be/aAk7qRdwpGs>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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

NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z Feb 1
Vermont QSO Party	0000Z Feb 2 to 2400Z Feb 3
Black Sea Cup International	1200Z Feb 2 to 1159Z Feb 3
AGCW Straight Key Party	1600Z-1900Z Feb 2
North American Sprint CW	0000Z-0400Z Feb 3
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z Feb 8
YL-ISSB QSO Party CW	0000Z Feb 9 to 2359Z Feb 10
Asia-Pacific Spring Sprint CW	1100Z-1300Z Feb 9
Dutch PACC Contest	1200Z Feb 9 to 1200Z Feb 10
FISTS Winter Sprint	1700Z-2100Z Feb 9
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z Feb 13 and 1900Z-2000Z Feb 13 and 0300Z-0400Z Feb 14
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z Feb 15
ARRL Inter. DX Contest CW	0000Z Feb 16 to 2400Z Feb 17
AGCW Semi-Automatic Key Evening	1900Z-2030Z Feb 20
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z Feb 22
UBA DX Contest CW	1300Z Feb 23 to 1300Z Feb 24
High Speed Club CW Contest	0900Z-1700Z Feb 24
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z Feb 27 and 1900Z-2000Z Feb 27 and 0300Z-0400Z Feb 28

MEMBERS' QSL CARDS



W6WVW-Dick #11313 QSL with **ZL6FF #9600 CC #1568** (Op **ZL2BLQ-Stan #9068**)
5 June 2010 00:31 UTC 14 MHz

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT IN ICELAND

Our good friend **TF3DX-Villi #1658** responds to a query in our September 2012 issue I am in the process of putting my old mobile paper logs on PC. Logging a QSO with "Lindsay" VK2YN Jan. 15th 2001 today. I Googled him for verification of the former VK5 call he gave and it turned out to be VK5GZ while I had scribbled down "VK5GL VK5G?" from the RST 429 sigs during that QSO.

Google also returned the following (<http://www.fists.co.uk/docs/fdu/2012/FISTS-DOWN-UNDER-September-2012.pdf>).

< This month we welcome **VK2YN-Derek Nelson #14148** from Annandale, New South Wales. Annandale is a suburb of Inner West Sydney located within 3-5 kilometres west of the Sydney central business district. In applying to join, Derek said, "You may recognize the Call sign, which I picked up a few years ago, when updating to a 2 letter call. My understanding is that Lindsey was a previous holder of the call and a well-respected CW operator, although I would like to learn more of his history. I am happy to follow in Lindsey's footsteps as a keen CW operator." *Can anyone tell Derek more about Lindsey?* >
VK5GZ was very familiar to me; my old partial PC log shows 5 QSOs including extended CW chats with Lindsay 1991 to 1993. I also heard him often in RSARS QSOs around 14.058 MHz Seeing reference to exchange of letters in the old log now I found his of April 28th 1993 with drawings of his half square antenna and all-band tuner. His address label reads: "L A Collins, VK5GZ, 12 Park Avenue, Rosslyn Park SA 5072 Australia".

This checks with another FISTS DOWN UNDER item that Google turned up from the May 2001 issue under your editorship Ralph:

< ZL2TX-Nigel-9040 sent this e-mail in response to an item in members' news April 2001 FISTS Down Under. Lindsay VK2YN (ex VK5GZ) is a member of the Royal Signals Amateur Radio Society Number 1730. He recently moved to Uki from VK5 and in January took out the new call sign VK2YN. One of the main problems we have, is that 14050 kHz up is very congested, with the following frequencies being used as meeting places for the following:- 14052 kHz Royal Naval Amateur Radio Society, MARAC (German Naval Members) and INORC (Italian Naval members). 14056 kHz Royal Signals Amateur Radio Society. 14058 kHz FISTS and Royal Air Force Amateur Radio Society. All members of the above have their own membership numbers. In my case I am RNARS 0200, RSARS 2712 and FISTS 9040 so there is bound to be a bit of confusion at times. I hope this enlightens our FISTS members.

Finding another QSO with VK2YN April 8th 2002, where he not only mentioned our last QSO but also talks about my old sked friend Alex Mason ZL4IE. Knowing his age, I realize that it just had to be Lindsay ex VK5GZ. He said he himself was just turning 83 "on Thursday", that he moved to Smiths Creek Dec 2000 and "we have just returned home from visiting London".

Reading your FISTS DWN UNDER of May 2001 again I see that you were probably of the same understanding although I couldn't add 2 and 2 to get 4. Pretty obvious that Collins hardly is the father of a son by last name Watt-Bright, but then we don't use family names in Iceland (for my excuse hi)!

Also turned up pictures showing Lindsay visiting in England: - <http://www.winforce.org.uk/room26.htm>

I don't see any dates for those, but apparently Lindsay lived to keep the call VK2YN for a while before Derek got it. More QSOs may turn up as I progress with my paper logs. Would be interesting to know if you have any details of him becoming SK.

Perhaps the last words on the call VK2YN. We received a letter from Mr J J Watt-Bright of Picton, NSW. "I am the son of VK2YN. My father passed away four years ago. You were speaking to a pirate using my father's call sign. Yours is the third card that I have received, including one from Italy and another from Japan; all in March 2001." >

The peculiar thing is that my scribble book shows that the one VK2YN I QSOed January 15 2002 was having an RSARS QSO with G3KOJ prior to ours. In addition, he mentioned our former QSOs between 1991 and 1993, correctly stating the date of the last one as May 16 1993. So if this was a pirate he must have got hold of the genuine Lindsay's log! What do you think?

THE MACK KEY

By VK3DBD-David #3756

A few years ago in a small town junk sale, (- Sorry, Ham Fest they call 'em now!) that I first set eyes on this very scruffy bug key, in a really sorry state. It had been daubed with aluminium paint, was obviously lacking a nameplate which had once been affixed to the base (there were holes to prove it) and I parted with a very nominal sum to give it a good home. - It was some time before I found out what it was, partly because it was added to my ever expanding jobs of things to do when there was nothing pressing and that *never* seems to occur.

Eventually I discovered it was a McElroy key Marketed in the USA in quite large quantities by " The World's fastest Telegraphist" Theodore R McElroyWho much preferred to be known as Ted His manufacturing business commenced in 1934 and continued until 1955 when he sold the business. He produced thousands of keys; about 20 automated types but there were also straight keys and associated code devices History on T.R McElroy who died in 1963 is well documented on the web. His life of telegraphy started when he was 14 in 1918 and at age 21 he was winning many Morse speed completions and set the record of 75.2 WPM, which has never been broken since. (That equates to 72.2 words per min by today's measuring methods)

Like the early Ford cars, you could have any colour you liked as long as it was black and I felt that McElroy keys of that period would probably the same - painted black when it left the factory the chipped and damaged original crackle finish (also known as a wrinkle finish) was not hidden by the coat of aluminium which was no doubt applied to try and hide the scars of a hard life Some careful application of cellulose thinners soon removed the more modern paint revealing as I thought black, unfortunately it was very badly damaged in places and that proved to be a major setback. It was many years since I had actually seen crackle pain for sale, let alone in use and I knew it was formed in that way by a mixture of two different types of paint which, when mixed together would react and dry at different rates thus forming a wrinkled surface. The heavy cast iron base was actually as cast, with quite a rough surface and did

need some paint with covering properties to hide those imperfections. The problem of the missing nameplate was another setback and the project was put on the "back burner" again for another year or so.

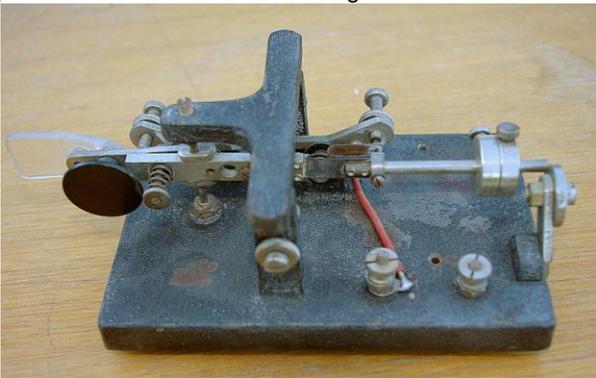
In 2012 I had the pleasure of meeting Fabio IK0IXI, a very keen CW op and a member of Fists and now also a member of FOC, for which I was pleased to add my sponsorship. Fabio is quite an expert on Keys and has written a most interesting book called simply "Vibroplex". Regrettably as yet this is only printed in Italian but does detail the history of the many variations of that famous key over the near 100 pages of the book. Fabio has a key collection also and was able to tell me the actual model of my key - the "McElroy Standard model Mac Key" made in 1938 and was able to provide me with a photograph of the actual nameplate I did not have. . The problem then was how to make a reasonable facsimile.

The Mac key has an unusual feature, the one piece casting includes the upper structure which not only forms a carrying handle but is such that it can be turned on its side and used as a straight key.

One day while visiting a local beauty spot I noticed a pair of Harley motorcycles in the car par and was intrigued to see that one had some extensive and rather new looking black crackle paint on certain parts. This set me making enquiries and frankly mostly drew a puzzled look in the various hardware and paint shops, those that knew what I meant only said it was years since had seen any. But one day in a small auto accessory shop, the owner did know what I wanted and went straight to a shelf and produced an aerosol of wrinkle black.... Success Indeed! Using the paint did take a little practice to achieve the right effect but it covered the visible parts quite acceptably and things were looking good

The nameplate was next; Sourcing an original would be most unlikely and so with the help of Fabio's photograph and the measurement that I could calculate from the spacing of the rivet holes in the base, I used a DTP program on the PC to create artwork as near as I could to the original typeface and layout. The plate originally affixed was made of thin aluminium and initially I intended to create that with electrolytic etching. But the original was actually a painted or printed one with a black background and plain metal where the letters were. Etching was not the answer. My artwork was printed direct on to the plastic film of a photo-resist material called Press 'n Peel This requires a laser printer to form the image, the plastic granules of the laser ink then forming an excellent resist when it is transferred by being ironed on to a copper PC board. An experimental printing on the press n peel and ironing the Laser print onto the metal direct was tested on a scrap piece of aluminium. The results were promising and after some practice - the iron-on action requires some care and high temperatures, a satisfactory result was obtained and the finished plate fixed to the key. Rather than stamp a number onto the plate as in the original I incorporated a suitable number in the printing as one font available was a very good match to the old number stamps used by McElroy. I have number stamps but with a more modern type and after all I am not attempting a forgery, just a restoration as near as I could get it.

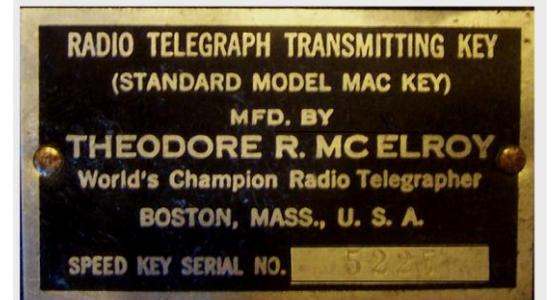
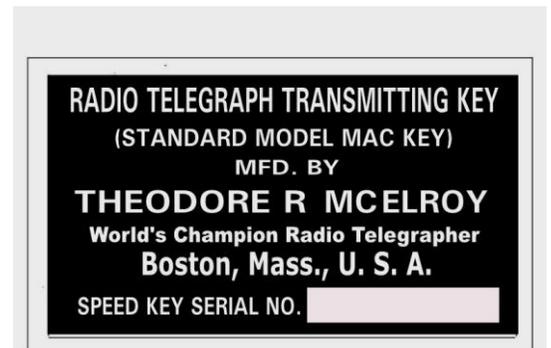
Photographs show the key before and after renovation. The before one was after removing the aluminium paint. As yet I have not used it on air as I need practice with a bug. Some years ago I did manage to operate one, but then trained my right hand to use a paddle and that action now seems indelibly engraved on my brain. Perhaps an irreversible mistake unless I can train the left hand to use the paddle... Who mentioned old dogs and new tricks?



Mac Key – Original State



Mac Key – After Restoration



Name Plate Before and After Restoration