



## FISTS DOWN UNDER Newsletter March 2013

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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) – 24.908 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 MEMBER

This month we welcome **ZL1HIT-Bryan Rentoul, #14158**, who joined on the on-air recommendation of **VK3XU-Drew #9118**. Bryan lives in Papatoetoe a satellite town in southern greater Auckland 18 km from the city centre. We hope to have a brief personal profile of Bryan in a later issue.

### MEMBERS' NEWS

Thanks to the following members for donations received recently – **VK3CGB - Chris #9087, VK3KX - Derek #14125, VK3TX - Deane #9664, VK4ZW – Ray #9681, ZL1AAR – Gwynne #9028, ZL1AYQ – Jim #9602, ZL2JKY - Jakey #6462, and ZL2TX – Nigel #9040.**

### 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; 9048; 9064; 9066; 9096; 9097; 9601; 9658; 9663; 9670; 9681; 14103; 14105; 14116; 14117; 14118; 14119; 14134**

### TRAWLING THE WEB

Many of our members started their interest in radio as short wave listeners. So this reference about the current state of short wave broadcasting, although not Morse nor ham radio related should be of interest. - <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/events/prizes-and-celebrations/celebrations/world-radio-day/shortwave-radio/shortwave-article/>

An enjoyable little video of an overnight woodlands CW operation by G0VQW-Sandy #3739 - <http://youtu.be/kSvnCuYzflw>

An interesting mug for sale on E-Bay – [http://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/Morse-Code-Amateur-Ham-Radio-CW-Mug-/320848091963?pt=UK\\_Collectables\\_Kitchenalia\\_RL&hash=item4ab4095b3b](http://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/Morse-Code-Amateur-Ham-Radio-CW-Mug-/320848091963?pt=UK_Collectables_Kitchenalia_RL&hash=item4ab4095b3b)

The ITU have published the International radio regulations free in PDF -<http://www.itu.int/pub/R-REG-RR-2012>

RSGB is to publish a bi-monthly e-newsletter "Getting Started". Although aimed at beginners it is anticipated that experienced radio amateurs will find something of interest. RSGB members can sign up for your free copy of "Getting Started" at <http://www.rsqb.org/gettingstarted>

**FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

**2013 RSGB COMMONWEALTH CW CONTEST**

**Date: 9 -10 March 2013**

**Time: 1000 -1000UTC**

**Bands: 3.5, 7, 14 , 21, 28MHz**

The Commonwealth Contest or BERU as it was known, is the longest running DX Contest in Amateur Radio and promotes contacts between stations in the Commonwealth and Mandated Territories. A more relaxed contest environment gives the opportunity to work some choice DX. Full rules, history, and details of planned DX can be found on G3PJT's Web Site: -

**www.beru.org.uk**

R.S.G.B. Centenary Celebration 1913 -2013. Stations making more than 75 QSO's in the above contest will be entered - automatically into a prize draw. There is a splendid limited edition Morse Key for the winner.

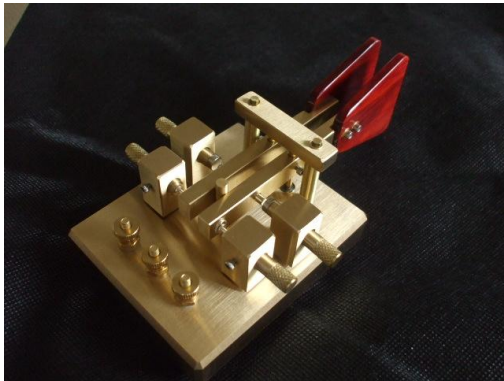
These are some of the CW contest/event offerings in March 2013, most of which will be of more interest to our northern hemisphere readers. Thanks to WA7BNM Contest Calendar <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html>

Wake-Up! QRP Sprint	0600Z-0800Z, Mar 2
AGCW YL-CW Party	1900Z-2100Z, Mar 5
AWA John Rollins Memorial DX Contest	2300Z, Mar 6 to 2300Z, Mar 7 and 2300Z, Mar 9 to 2300Z, Mar 10
AGCW QRP Contest	1400Z-2000Z, Mar 9
Idaho QSO Party	1900Z, Mar 9 to 1900Z, Mar 10
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Mar 13 and 1900Z-2000Z, Mar 13 and 0300Z-0400Z, Mar 14
Russian DX Contest	1200Z, Mar 16 to 1200Z, Mar 17
AGCW VHF/UHF Contest	1400Z-1700Z, Mar 16 (144) and 1700Z-1800Z, Mar 16 (432)
NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint	0030Z-0230Z, Mar 21
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Mar 27 and 1900Z-2000Z, Mar 27 and 0300Z-0400Z, Mar 28

**ALL THAT GLISTERS IS NOT GOLD**

**By ZL1CDX-Turner (Geordie) #9048**

Recently I came across this whilst trolling the web, when I should have been on 20m calling "CQ Fists" and found OM Jerry's website [www.k8ra.com](http://www.k8ra.com) - I thought I had opened Pandora's box.



Since making the move from the traditional pounding brass pump key to the iambic paddle and keyer some 20 years ago I have tried many brands of keys including homebrew jobs and found them all wanting in many ways. Most move around the desk caused by sideways motion operating the paddles so trying to offset this with a heavier base is not going to work unless it weighs a ton, some keys having three legs causes more instability. I solved this problem in two ways one by securing the sides of the base with 22mm right

angled plexi-glass to 3 of the sides of the base r/l/r ,a simpler solution was to secure the bottom of each leg with Velcro male/female 10mm dots stuck to the desk.

The engineering of some makes of keys leaves a lot to be desired. The thread pitch of the adjusting screws are not suitable and do not lend themselves to the fine adjustment required hence the constant re adjustment of the paddles which can lead to the embarrassing sending of the eight dits. Hi!

I ordered the P-2 model as OM Jerry has all of the above sorted. I had explained to Jerry how expensive freight is to ZL so he included a pair of wood paddle handles "free gratis" and sent it by US Post Service surface mail, a considerable saving. Of course, service like this could only be provided by a fellow member of Fists, Jerry's Fists No is 13838.

Within 7 days, the courier was at the door with my consignment and the first thing I noticed was how well it was packaged. The engineering quality is extremely high and very well designed and manufactured. Once you have adjusted the paddle to your own personal "feel" that's it, nothing is going to move including the key as it is a fair weight but it also has real rubber feet (4), not plastic coated ones. On the "air", it is a pleasure to operate.

The pictures are self-explanatory.

### **SKY HOOKS**

By **VK3DBD-David #3756**

Two very popular aspects of Amateur Radio seem to be in fashion; QRP and Odd Locations, IOTA, SOTA, or just QRP/P in the backyard or in the wild. - A combination of all perhaps - But the leading question, especially for the low bands like 160 or 80m is- "What Antenna".

When I was first licensed way back in the 60's the challenge of operating away from mains power was far greater, (remember this was before the transistor was in common use. Valves usually needed DC 200+ volts and a 6v or 12v heater too)

160m was one of the most popular bands then despite a large chunk of 160m being occupied with Loran, a navigational device which provided QRM with which one could not compete.

Many city dwellers combined their experiments with a family holiday by the seaside where at least the beach was an escape from TVI and most man-made QRM and of course there is no better earth than nearby salt water. As I already lived by the sea, the location was no novelty but the activities of those who tested their ingenuity were not only fraught with power problems. Kite aerials was a favourite, presumably often bought as an excuse to treat the children and on 160m and 80m a 1/4 wave near vertical antenna certainly produced some notable radiation. (so much that the Radio ops at the Humber Radio shipping station only a few miles away were often troubled by transmissions very near to their 1869 kHz channel which was used for voice transmissions of ship to shore Phone calls and general shipping information.- More than one amateur has been asked to QRT or at least QSY.....

Marconi was perhaps the very first person to use a kite to lift an antenna into the sky - And what a Kite is was too!!

Before then and indeed since, Kites have been used for many purposes by military and scientists as a virtually free method of gaining height, for surveillance, with instruments and cameras, (In WW1 kites were actually used to hoist a man high up to spot the enemy. Sounds a dodgy business to me as it works both ways, a man hanging from a kite would make an attractive target for trigger happy enemy soldiers!

Kite design goes back for 1000s of years, enthusiasts are still trying out new ways of achieving their ideal, whatever that may be. For antennas support we need not one of the popular stunt kites with steerable lines, but a stable platform, easy to launch and which will carry reasonable weight for its size.

I am no expert with Kites but my interest goes back to the late 1940's when there was very little available in the shops in UK, but war surplus of many kinds was sold in vast quantities by enterprising business folk who had taken the gamble and bid for large quantities of dubious items in government auctions -in the hope it could prove profitable.

A relative presented my brother and me a "dinghy kite" and this certainly entertained us well on suitable days on the beach near our home in Skegness. This was an American dinghy kite and it is the only one I have ever seen.

It was white, really an irregular hexagon shape, but more of triangle at a glance and would launch easily in almost any light wind and climb high in the sky where usually it sat relatively still and yet if the string broke it would drop almost straight to the ground for easy recovery. It's intended method of use was of course to erect a wire antenna from a rubber dinghy for "ditched" airmen to operate their emergency radio, part of the Dinghy survival kit. The kite was cleverly compressed by means of elastic cords to fit into an approximately two or three inch dia. tube and fired into the air by means of a small explosive charge, Possible a modification of a Very pistol? Of course that part was never sold on the surplus market!

The British forces to the best of my knowledge used a bright yellow box kite which was deployed in similar manner and these were quite commonly seen by the seaside about that period. It may be my imagination, or misty memory but I am sure those kites were never quite as easy to fly.

Our original kite was lost along with other "toys" over the years but the design is quite clear in my memory. The internet produced a little information on that design during my efforts to find out more about it. - It is known as a "Patented Wheelwrights Rescue Kite" and a short demo movie is to be found on the Web if you search the Web for the above phrase. A rather similar kite was used by the French military, its purpose or when, is not stated.

The frame of our original was made from lightweight alloy tubing and the kite would easily fold into a small diameter, perhaps 3 or 4 inches by pressure on the sides operating again the forces produced by the bungee cords which were part of the kite construction. Another way to describe the design is rather like a triangular tube with vertical wings attached. The actual size of that Wheelwrights kite was I am sure about a meter wide and a little more high.

Last year I felt the urge to attempt to manufacture one on these kites and purchased some suitable cloth for the task. It never got much further than that. as small diameter light tubing proved difficult to obtain. But very recently in the local Aldi store I was surprised to see some kites on sale, in various designs for a mere \$5.95. Among them was a kite bearing similarities to the Wheelwrights or the French Military. Of course, I had to buy one and indeed it flies well in a light breeze and is stable - to an extent depending on the wind of course. Its stated measurements are 183cm x 81cm. As yet I have not hoisted an antenna to use in anger, in Yackandandah wind is a very rare commodity. At least the right sort of wind. This new kite uses the modern Carbon Fibre springy rods to keep the tension and no doubt this can be bought somewhere to home brew a kite. It has advantages over the alloy tube in that is it much stronger and possibly lighter, 5mm dia. appears to be adequate. The fold-into-a-tube feature is not a requirement.

The Aldi Kite is described as a Trapezoidal design, and like the French Military has a cut out in the centre of the main body between the upper and lower sections of the three sided Box. The Wheelwrights has no cut out and the triangular box shape is in one piece forming a full height tube.

The ideal wire to use with a kite for antennas is of course a light one and of reasonable strength too. It is worth mentioning that a wire hanging from a kite can very easily collect static electricity and handling such a wire should be done with extreme caution, first ensuring that it is actually touching the ground before you handle it. If there is any suggestion of an electrical storm in the area, forget kites. I have seen six inch sparks jump to earth off a kite wire. Voltages can be very high indeed.

As the saying goes, "Its volts that jolts but mils that kill" And of course those volts would not do your super-deluxe expensive radio much good either. - Even though there is usually a built in bleed resistor for such purposes - no need to test it to destruction!

Another note of caution: Most civilized countries have laws prohibiting Kite flying above certain heights and / or in the vicinity of airports. These vary but in general commonsense applies. Just don't fly your kite on a 1000 ft line and certainly **NEVER** near power lines.



The author, demonstrating the ease of launch in a very slight breeze, the Aldi Kite is "A rarin' to go"



Typical surplus kite wire winders.



Business side of the original yellow dinghy rescue radio kite wire assembly that was built into the transmitter ( pictured in a fairly recent Keynote article) This holds around 200 feet of 1 mm diameter multi stranded woven copper wire



This photograph of the inside of a Wheelwrights Kite shows the similarity of the shape principle and the way in which the elastic bungee cords are fitted - but which are not actually fitted in this picture - They are indicated with the dotted lines showing how they tension the cross struts to keep the kite open when in flight..

### SHACK VISITS

Next month we propose publishing an illustrated article we have received about a member's shack. We hope to make shack visits a regular feature. However, to achieve that we need members to write to us showing where, with what and how you are operating. Don't disappoint us and the other members!

#### MY CZECH ARMY KEY

By ZL2AIM-Ian #9683



I use a straight key with my hand completely clear of the desk and generally speaking my elbow as well. I have been known to rest my elbow on the desk whilst transmitting but don't think I have done that for a long time now.

I found that my hand was getting tired using the Czech key. Therefore, I investigated and found that the height of the top of the knob with the Czech key is 38mm off the desk whilst the Junker PO key is 60mm high and the NATO key is 70mm off the desk. I made up a base for my Czech key so that it would be free standing but sitting on a plywood base that I stuck some non-slip matting on both sides. The top of the knob, has now been raised from 38mm to about 53 mm. This makes quite a difference for me. I had been calling for about 15 minutes on 20m and then got into a rag chew with a RA9 station. I have had many rag chews with Yuri and he sends good English. The rag chew was about 10 minutes long, After the QSO plus the 15 minutes calling my hand was not getting tired.

Therefore, that is what is comfortable for me. I will use it on the next SKN (a long way away!) and will see how it shapes up over a longer period.

The picture of the three keys shows the difference in operating heights.

#### MORSE IS A PIECE OF CAKE

As part of the birthday celebration of **ZL2AOH-Ralph #1073** his granddaughter Fiona decorated a cake with a chocolate Morse key and a Morse message in jellybeans. - SRI she isn't taking orders



*CONGRATULATIONS RALPH – FROM ALL OF US IN FISTS!*