

 	<h2 style="text-align: center;">FISTS DOWN UNDER</h2> <h3 style="text-align: center;">Newsletter November 2013</h3> <p style="text-align: center;">Editor & QSL Manager for ZL: Nigel Hardy, ZL2TX, P.O. Box 15078, Otaki 5542, New Zealand. - Tel: 0-6-364-6339</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;">Web Administration: Gary Cottle VK2GAZ, 96 Luttrell Street, Richmond NSW 2753, Australia. – Tel: 0-2-4588-5429</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>	
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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 MEMBERS

Welcome to **VK4ARC-Bob Sincavage #14170** who resides in Capalaba, Queensland. Capalaba is a suburb 26 km to the south-east of Brisbane

Bob says that he started in Amateur Radio in the US in about 1995 using phone, CW and some digital modes. He had a Tempo One and also a Ten Tec Pegasus. He was a local club member of the Hilltop Amateur Radio Club in the US.

He moved to Australia in 2006 and is now getting back into the hobby with the purchase of an ICOM 718. His code speed is about 8 wpm at best as he has been off the air since 2001. He is looking forward to meeting other amateurs with the same interest.

Also welcome to **VK3MDX-David #14171** whose details and profile will follow in a later newsletter.

FISTS DOWN UNDER WEB ADMINISTRATOR

Our call for a volunteer to manage the FISTS Down Under web site was answered promptly by **VK2GAZ-Garry Cottle #14151**, who we welcomed with open arms! Garry has a lot of experience in this field and it didn't take him long to label the Morse keys gallery, make improvements to layout and maintain the web content fully up to date. If you have any suggestions or queries regarding the web site, Garry's your man. His contact details are in the masthead.

MEMBERS' NEWS

Many thanks to the following members who included a donation when sending their subscriptions – **VK3CGB-Chris #9087, ZL1BHQ- John #9625** and **ZL4IM-John #9638**

We are sorry to report the death of **ZL1IG-Jack Monks #9043**. Jack had been in poor health for several years.

ZL2JKY/G3JKY-Jakey # 6462 reports on a recent Commonwealth (BERU) Contest

I checked the RSGB Contest Results on the "Net" and found that our entry in BERU (or Commonwealth Contest to be more PC) came in 72nd, probably not bad for a trap dipole and a 14MHz ground plane.

The only other ZL in the 24 hour section was ZM2B who came in at No 50. If I read it right the only other ZL entrants were ZL3AB 116, ZL3IO 127, ZL3GA 128, ZL3PAH 138 and ZL2YL 144, all in the 12 hour section. ZL6HQ was active but not as a competitor, being a Headquarters station, so being the only "ordinary" ZL I was worth bonus points to everyone!

My first entry in BERU was as VS6DN, Hong Kong, in 1957. I won a certificate as "Leading VS6", not a big deal, I was the ONLY VS6 ! In 1984 I was VK6AJK for about three weeks at the home of John VK6HQ, formerly G3LXD and now VK6PI. With my key and his gear I managed to win the 14 MHz section, Nowadays there are no separate sections for bands.

My best bag of QSOs was from ZL1JKY in 2003, at my step-son's place (The "Eatery on the Rock" see his web-site) in Takaka where there was enough space for an 80 metre full wave loop that worked well on all the "old" bands using just the pi-coupler in the FT101B for tuning. The only drawback to this set-up was that the QTH was literally on a rock, with little chance of a proper earth connection. Bill ZL2ACA had told us about the results of being bitten by a white-tailed spider, so you can imagine I was a bit alarmed when I felt a bite on my neck while in QSO on 21 MHz one day. I swatted whatever it was (so I thought) but then it happened again. Then I realised that the flimsy cable of my computer type earphones was touching the affected spot. I put the phones down on the desk and checked the PA current with and without them plugged in. There was a difference of about 100mA! Clearly, the phone lead was part of the aerial system! I laid out a quarter-wave counterpoise for 21 MHz and the problem disappeared, what a relief.

It is most unlikely that we shall be making the trip this year, XYL Joyce finds the travel hard going, but a cold winter here may change her mind for 2014/15.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

These are some of the CW contest/event offerings in November 2013, most of which will be of more interest to our northern hemisphere readers. Thanks to www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html and www.fists.co.uk/activitiescalendar.htm

NCCC Sprint	02:30Z to 03:00Z Nov 1
Ukrainian DX Contest	1200Z, Nov 2 to 1200Z, Nov 3
ARRL Sweepstakes Contest, CW	2100Z, Nov 2 to 0300Z, Nov 4
#NZART Straight Key Night	0800Z-1000Z, Nov 3
High Speed Club CW Contest	0900Z-1100Z, Nov 3 and 1500Z-1700Z, Nov 3
ARS Spartan Sprint	0200Z-0400Z, Nov 5
SKCC Weekend Sprintathon	1200Z, Nov 9 to 2400Z, Nov 10
OK/OM DX Contest, CW	1200Z, Nov 9 to 1200Z, Nov 10
Kentucky QSO Party	1400Z, Nov 9 to 0200Z, Nov 10
LZ DX Contest	1200Z, Nov 16 to 1200Z, Nov 17
All Austrian 160-Meter Contest	1600Z, Nov 16 to 0700Z, Nov 17
Run for the Bacon QRP Contest	0200Z-0400Z, Nov 18
NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint	0130Z-0330Z, Nov 21
CQ Worldwide DX Contest, CW	0000Z, Nov 23 to 2400Z, Nov 24
SKCC Sprint	0000Z-0200Z, Nov 27
RSGB 80m Club Sprint, CW	2000Z-2100Z, Nov 28

<http://www.nzart.org.nz/activities/contest-rules/rules-straight-key/>

HOUSEKEEPING

Here is the latest renewals list. Please check carefully 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.**

These are due by **30 November 2013**; some are well overdue: -

9022-9038-9053-9064-9087-9136-9139-9140-9609-9611-9613-9617-9622-9623-9624-9626-9638-9650-9666-9681-9690-14100 -14111-14114-14120-14124-14125-14126-14132-14133-14146-14150-14154-14168

TRAWLING THE WEB

Article on the state of the current solar cycle:

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/24/science/space/the-sun-that-did-not-roar.html?emc=eta1&_r=0

An archive of the now extinct: "73 Magazine" <<http://archive.org/details/73-magazine>>

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FISTS Down Under, the ZL/VK chapter of the FISTS Club has been going since 1998. It's sometimes interesting to sit back and wonder how things were some time ago. Ten years ago it seems members were more forthcoming with their news! The following things were reported in FISTS Down Under – November 2013.

Copies of past issues of FISTS Down Under are available on our web site < www.fistsdownunder.org >

There were three new members whose personal profiles were featured.

There was news from seven of our members and six members from other chapters.

An article on the demolition of a famous radio station site at Welshpool, UK.

A report of radio activity by some of our Australian members.

An article by ZL1BRS-Syd #9013 on the importance of messages altering ships' destinations about the time of the Suez Crisis.

WHAT I'VE BEEN THINKING & DOING – OCTOBER 2013

ZL2AIM-Ian #9683

Firstly, a comment from last month's magazine on Ralphs' musings over the problem of holding regular nets. I believe he is right in so far as things tend to peter out after the initial surge of interest. Whilst operating as ZS5IAN I would try and keep a regular CW net going. It wasn't easy and sometimes it meant sending out emails and making phone calls before each net to try and cajole the operators into booking in to the net. There was normally a perception that the net was too fast, or too slow, or too many people on it or the operator didn't know when it was his turn etc. I found it just was not worth the effort.

Of course there are lots of advantages of joining a Fists net. Think of all the "points" you could pick up for gaining awards! You could gain your awards in just a few sessions! Achieving the Fists Down Under award for 50 points is not that difficult. All you have to do is exchange your Fists number with another Fists DU station and you have picked up some points. The Century Award is gained by working 100 points. Now, that does not mean you have to work 100 stations – far from it – if you are based in ZL then each Fists station you work from ZL gives you one point; but if you work a Fists from VK, that gives you 2 points for a DX station. There are ways of accumulating points quicker if you work ZL6FF, VK2FDU, JE7YTQ, JL3YMV/3 as each of those Fists stations are worth 5 points. If you were to log into the Fists East Asia Club net on Sunday nights you could pick up either of the Japanese stations and start the ball

rolling. Just make sure you keep a handy list of stations worked and do have a look at the requirements for each award. They are explained in detail on the net.

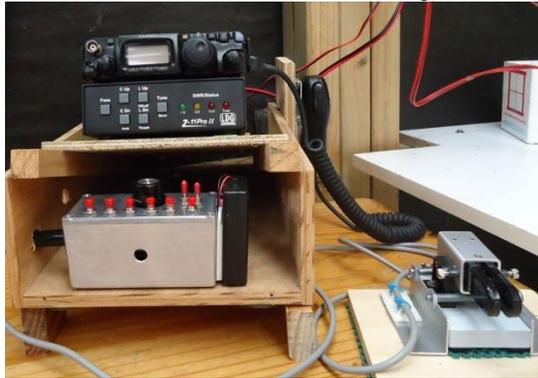
Last week I exchanged Fists numbers with Lyn VK4EI. That gives me two points towards my next goal of 250 points. Recently I managed to obtain the Fists "Millionaire" award. Now please, before you stop reading this, you don't have to work zillions of stations to get that award. You get that award by adding up all the Fists Membership numbers that you have worked. In fact it is quite easy as there are lots of members with numbers in the 14,000's so the total accumulates quickly. When I mentioned to Lyn that I had got the Millionaire Fists award she might have wondered why I run such a cheap station....

OK, you get my drift. Let us try and keep Fists alive by being active members of the club. After all I think that most of you joined in order to keep CW alive. When I look at the membership list that Ralph sends out every month, I look at those members that I have not worked, and in fact have not heard on the airwaves, and would love to exchange my Fists membership number with them. It is generally accepted that when you exchange your number you do so at a slightly slower pace than your qso. It is also accepted that you would repeat your number a second time.

A reminder of the Fists East Asia net on 14.054 on a Sunday at 08h00 UTC. As Ralph writes, it is in plain English CW and is run at about 15 wpm. They will give you a warm welcome. Controller is Nao san JO3HPM.

I do realise that many of our members are not "into" collecting awards and certificates, but one should try and get on the air as often as possible. It all helps spread the message that Morse is very much alive!

I was very lucky recently to pick up a Yaesu FT817 at a price that I could afford. It had been dropped on one corner and the "Sel" knob and clarifier were not working. It was not too difficult to get them back into working order. There is a chunk of the case that is missing, but hey if it works I am not going to worry about the looks! My antennas are Carolina Windoms but they do need something to bring them to 50 Ohms and my automatic tuners are all brand specific. I had got so used to automatic tuning that going back to a manual tuner was a chore for me. I enjoy tuning around the band and then when hearing a CQ, I like to jump in. With a manual tuner that is not always possible and valuable time is lost in trying to get the antenna matched to make the rig happy. So I went on to the web and had a look at what was available. I could get a LDG tuner manufacture for the QRP FT817 but for about \$40 more, I could get one that would tune rigs with outputs of 100 watts. The Elecraft T1 tuner was also investigated but like the LDG817 tuner it had a maximum rating of 20 watts. So I ended up with a LDG Z-11 Proll. I am very happy with it and the FT817 sits nicely on top of the LDG tuner. I use it with my Palm Mini Paddle or Galbraith Paddle. With it set at its maximum output of 5 watts I have managed to work USA, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, Italy, European Russia, Australia and New Zealand. It sits alongside my IC703+ and it has re-awakened my love for QRP fun. I had some aluminium rods that when riveted together total a length of 7,62 metres. It was not cut to any particular length. I hammered a Waritah into the ground and attached the aluminium rod to it (via a 50mm fibreglass pole) and threw out three counterpoise insulated wires along the ground. I fed it with some RG58. The little LDG tuner tunes it up on all bands between 40m and 10m. In fact I got a 559 report from European Russia with that set up.



←The FT817 sitting on top of the LDG Proll tuner and underneath that is my CMOS III keyer with Galbraith paddle on RHS.

Now here's a thing. If you call CQ with your callsign and /QRP as a suffix, I believe that the station answering your call will automatically give you a "qrp" type report such as 449. But using the same rig and calling with your callsign without any mention of QRP I tend to receive RST reports of 569 etc! Another thing I have noticed when operating as /QRP that if you enter it in Logbook of the World (LoTW) then you have to be very specific as to your callsign suffix. You could well find that you entered it as ZL2AIM/QRP and the other station has you as ZL2AIM. In this way, your QSO will not get verified. I am now toying with the idea of not using the /QRP suffix and in the

ragchew letting the other station know what power I am putting out. It does give me a bit of dilemma when working as /P as in LoTW both stations must give exactly the same callsign.

I had noticed that using the vertical antenna that I was getting RF into my IC703 which was causing interference of the packets sounds going back and forward to my laptop when running HRD. I wound about 9 turns of RG58 around a 50mm pvc pipe at the point where the cable left the junction of antenna and counterpoise wires. This cut down the packet interference by half. I then added some ferrite beads to the cable at the rig end and that cut the noise out completely. Nice to have a problem solved!



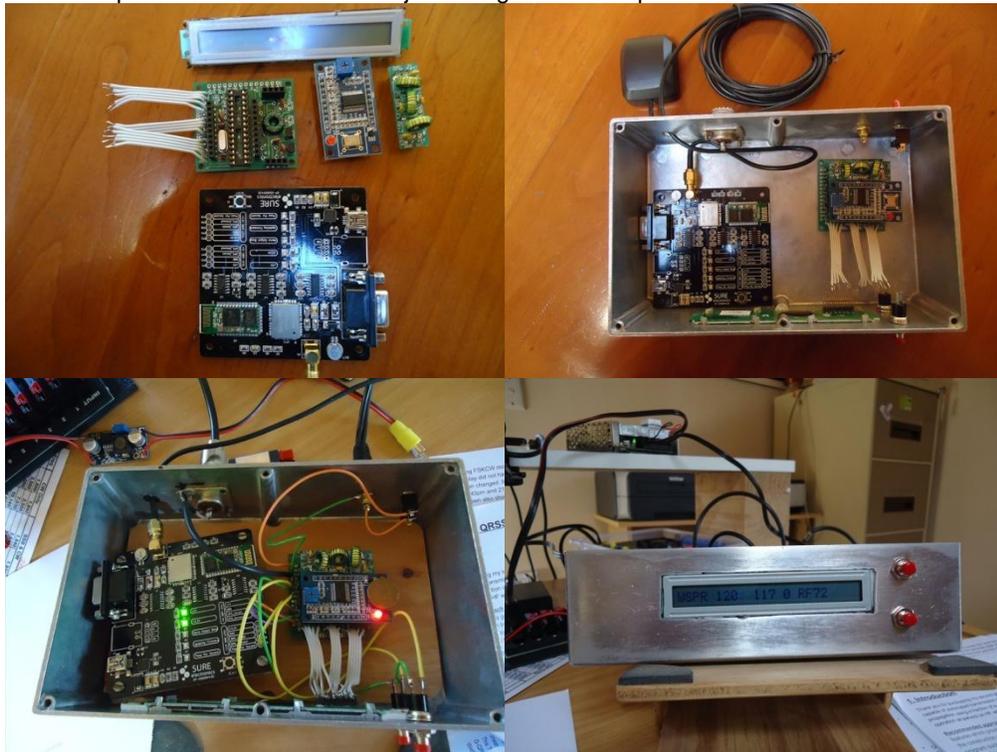
Some time ago I bought from eBay a cable for interfacing the Icom rigs with Ham Radio Deluxe on my computer. The idea of having one cable between the rig and the computer appealed to me as prior to that I used an expensive Icom CT-17 interface with all its extra wires for power etc. The new cable ran with Prolific drivers and it seemed to be "iffy". Some days it would work and some days it would not see the port. It was causing me some headaches as it seemed that "Control Alt Delete" was the only way to get it running again. So I went on to the net and found that RT Systems sold communication cables specific to each rig. I have dealt with them before having bought software with cables from them for programming of VHF/UHF rigs. I emailed them and told them of my problem and they made the suggestion for what I should purchase. They use a different driver than the Prolific one and I have been using their cables for 2 weeks now without a problem both on Icom and Yaesu rigs. Shack Pictures. I am sure that most of the Fists members own a digital camera or at least a cell phone with a camera installed. I would love to see some pictures of the shacks of our members. It matters not whether your shack has lots of rigs and tuners and linears and keys and paddles, – if your shack consists of only one rig and one key stuck into a cupboard shelf in the corner of the bedroom that would also be appreciated. Please make the effort and share you shack with other Fist members.

Soldering Irons. When I started using a soldering iron in about 1956 it was a heavy pyramid shaped copper iron that would be heated over a primus stove and then the solder rod (very thick) was dipped into a tin of flux and the soldering started. I had never been taught the correct way of soldering and used to try dripping the solder on to the joint. It was a hit and miss affair. When I built my first Heathkit medium wave receiver, there was a dire warning about not overheating the new fangled component called a transistor. It had to have a heat sink on during the soldering process, which meant holding it with a pair of pliers and then trying to drip the solder on to the joint. For a ten year old boy, it was a real pain as I just needed an extra pair of hands.... Eventually I lucked out with the joint. After using the iron, I would watch my dad file the copper tip down to clean copper. Well it worked for him, so it should work for me? About 13 years ago I bought a temperature adjustable soldering station from Solomon in Taiwan. Over the years the tip got damaged and I remembered the days when my dad would use a file on the tip. Of course being me, I tried it and that was the end of my soldering tip. So a few weeks ago I started looking for a tip for that iron. I tried all the local stores and even took a trip into the Big Smoke of Auckland but I was out of luck. Eventually I ordered some of them from the USA and they arrived today. I am going to take extra special care of them from now on. Lesson learnt and I will keep my files well away from my soldering tip!.



I must confess that I was tempted to purchase a brand new soldering station complete with spare tips as the price seemed fair. However on opening the box and reading the instructions I noted that they were not written in plain English, so that put me off.

WSPR Ultimate 2 kit. This is really a great fun kit to build. It only takes an evening to wind the chokes and do a bit of soldering. The most difficult part was soldering the LCD display and that takes a steady hand as the pins are quite close together. Basically this kit transmits some code with an output power of 160mW. Now that may seem to be too low of power to be heard by anyone. Believe me when I say that my signal has been reported in the States and Europe. I have managed this on 20m and 30m. When you order the kit you can place orders for filters for any of the HF bands. You can see all the details at <http://www.hanssummers.com/ultimate2> What amazes me is that the price of the complete kit is £17.50! He has just brought out his improved kit called the Ultimate 3.



The WSPR software needs to have a very accurate clock for it to correlate with other wspr stations and the settings on the Ultimate 2 generally will stay in clock sync for few days. Therefore I bought on eBay (very cheap) a GPS board with an external antenna for keeping the kit adjusted to the exact time. That board is the black one marked Sure with the two green LED's. The kit needs to have a 5 volt power supply. Hans Summers can supply the full kit including the GPS etc.

The cost of the project was NZ \$51.93 for the Ultimate 2 kit and the GPS with antenna was NZ \$40.26. A step down power supply from 12 volts to 5 volts cost about \$4 from eBay.

Enjoy CW and hope to exchange Fists numbers with you soon.