

# FISTS DOWN UNDER



Newsletter of the Australian / New Zealand chapter of the International Morse Preservation Society

August 2015

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Recommended FISTS calling frequencies (MHz): 1.808 3.528 7.028 10.118 14.058 18.085 21.058 24.908 28.058

## This month:

- Member profile  
- Bob VK2BTJ #14187
- Pixie 40m transceiver kit
- New member  
- Mike ZL4OL #14190
- FISTS awards
- Down to earth  
- an effective ground mat
- A homebrew paddle

## Trawling the web

- Ian ZL2AIM #9683

In this [Youtube clip](#), the chap is using a Palm Mini paddle by holding it in one hand and sending with the other hand.



I have two of those paddles but never thought of using it by holding it in my hand. It is amazing what he can achieve with it!

I got this site from my good CW friend Adrian ZS1TTZ in Cape Town, South Africa.

## Member profile

## Bob VK2BTJ #14187

*Bob joined us in April this year and he recently sent us the following information about himself.*

I was born in 1937. As far back as I remember, I was fascinated with the 'wireless set', which was a pre-WW2 battery operated, tuned circuit radio, an 'Invincible' brand with a warship on the dial. The children were not allowed to touch this magic piece of furniture, but I would often get a chance to look behind the cabinet and wonder how sound came out of it with just a wire antenna.

*As far back as I can remember, I was fascinated with the 'wireless set'...*

This fascination increased as I grew older and then, when pocket money came along, I started to buy parts to build a crystal set. Once I left high school and started to work, the building of superhets commenced. I was able to get a job in a local town with a radio and electrical store at age 18 as a serviceman. Years went by and at age 24 travelled by passenger ship to Fiji. On the ship I met the 3rd Radio Officer and decided that I would work as an R/O on merchant ships, only problem was Morse code.

After Fiji, I flew to Auckland, secured a job and commenced Morse training at the Radio College there. I returned to Australia two months later and completed training at the Marconi School of Wireless in Sydney. Passed the First Class Operators Certificate and went to sea as a junior sparks on the Aramac (previously the NZSC 'Remuera')

For four years I worked on ships, two of those years with Harrisons (Clyde) Ltd of Glasgow, tramping in and out of Japan to places such as Brazil, USA and Europe. It was a marvellous experience.

In 1970 I started my own travel business in Sydney, operating package tours to Japan and the Orient. After 16 years, I retired from that and became a farmer on the mid-north coast of NSW until 1998 when I sold the farm in lots and retired.

During the time I had the tour business, occasionally an amateur radio operator would travel to Japan on one of the tours. If I met them personally, we usually became friends. One such couple from Adelaide encouraged me to get a 'Ham Licence' which I did in 1980. I was active until 1996 when so many Japanese hams gave up and went on the internet to contact the outside world. I also spent a lot of time overseas and in Cape York, so amateur radio went on the back burner until this year. I am 'hooked' again, but CW only. It is my pleasure to become a member of FISTS Down Under.

## Pixie 40m transceiver kit

Ralph ZL2AOH #1073 recently spotted this interesting CW QRP kit available online at <http://www.ebay.com.au/itm/161620881469>.

According to the specs, it puts out 1.2 watts at 12 volts and covers 7.023 - 7.026MHz. The cost of the kit is around AUD\$7 which includes postage from Hong Kong.

Entries close on Friday 21 August 2015



We have four of these kits to give away to FDU members. Enter the draw by submitting your name and callsign [online here](#) or via post to Chris VK1CT or Ralph ZL2AOH. The only catch is that we would like the recipients to submit a short article on their experience of building and using the rig. ☺

## Members news



Congratulations to **Chris Coyle #14182** for obtaining his radio licence with the callsign ZL2CJC.

In the latest round of contest results, FISTS Down Under members have been among some of the top entrants. In the 2014 Oceania DX Contest, **Brian VK3MI #9078** achieved a very high score and **Doc VK5BUG #14136** took out first place in the 40m QRP category. A copy of Doc's award is shown on the right.

In the John Moyle Field Day held in March, **Andrew VK2ONZ #15873** achieved first place in the 'CW only, six hour portable' category and **Greg VK1AI #9604** achieved second place in the 'all mode, six hour portable' category. In the Harry Angel Sprint held in May, **Steve VK7CW #14164** came in equal first and **Joe VK2KJJ #9689** came in equal third. Well done all!



### Internet links

When you see underlined text in these newsletters, it usually means it's hyperlinked. So if you receive the PDF electronic version, you can simply click on the underlined text and it will take you to the relevant website.

This saves the reader from having to copy and paste internet addresses.

### New member

We extend a warm welcome to **Mike McAlevey ZL4OL #14190** from Waitaiti, north of Dunedin, who has taken up the offer of a year's subscription following his success in the NZART Straight Key Night 2014.



Mike sent us this introduction: As a kid I listened with fascination to CW on the old short wave radio. Because the messages were repeated endlessly I eventually figured out that I was listening to marine coast stations announcing their listening frequencies.

With the encouragement of a teacher at school in Dunedin, Brother John Rogers ZL4HO, I was licensed as ZL4TAD in 1963, then ZL4MU in 1964 after passing the 15wpm HF permit CW test. During a period overseas, I operated as P29MJ and then as ZL4OL on my return to ZL. I dabble at times on all bands from 136kHz to 1296MHz, CW, digital and SSB.

## FISTS awards



It is difficult to know why Fists Down Under members join our club. Maybe because they have a love of the code and like to see it perpetuated. Others join because they enjoy getting on the air and working different countries. Others like to enter competitions and get great excitement by increasing their score.

Hopefully it also appeals to those folk who are just starting up with CW and would like to be in contact with other CW operators. Personally I enjoy nice meaningful ragchews with other stations that enjoy using the code. I also enjoy getting a new country into my log. I am not into working competitions per se, but do enjoy the fun of a Straight Key Night.

When did you last look at the FDU website? It might be prudent to surf around it and go to the [awards page](#). There are awards that most members could earn straight away. You have probably exchanged Fists numbers with enough folk to get at least the 'Fists Down Under Award'. My certificate is dated May 2010 and was number 15 so hopefully there have been a few since then. If you don't already have this award, then do consider applying for it.

FDU also has the 'Prestige' award. You will also notice a link to the other Fists awards from UK and USA at <http://fistsna.org/awards.html>

### Ian ZL2AIM #9683

In 2010 I also received the Century Award, number 2087. That means there are a lot of Fists members on the air looking to earn a certificate. The Millionaire Award is actually easier to get than it sounds. One earns it by adding up the membership numbers of those you have worked and it doesn't take that many to add up to quickly gain one million 'points'. My Millionaire award is number 1442, gained in 2013.

Late last year, I applied for the Silver Award. It arrived in the post in November and was number 572. There are Fists members that put a lot of time and effort into making these awards possible. Dennis K6DF and Ralph ZL2AOH both are involved in this effort. I would be negligent if I forgot to mention the Editors Awards, awarded by Chris VK1CT (and formerly by Nigel ZL2TX).

So here is my suggestion. Most of the awards require that you exchange your membership number over the air – via CW of course! When in QSO with another station you can ask 'Fists?' If the answer is yes, then exchange your numbers. I have found that all members send their Fists number slowly and repeat it two times. So please extend the same courtesy to them.

73 de ZL2AIM and I look forward to exchanging numbers on the air with you very soon.

*'There are awards that most members could earn straight away.'*



# Down to earth - an effective ground mat

Doc VK5BUG #14136

Here are some photos of how I went about optimising my earth mat system that includes 60 wire radials from 20 to 195ft long.

First, I design the skyhook to suit my purpose and space access/availability. I know that my systems are detailed and will therefore have to be done in stages.

Then I start with a radial plan and install them: at least four of the longest before anything else gets done. Everything is cleaned and soldered. Conductive paste and stainless steel hardware is used at every junction.

Experience has shown me that to install an aerial FIRST means operating will happen before radials are completed properly and therefore the aerial system is most likely NEVER to reach its optimal potential.

Second comes the feedline, since 1975 almost always balanced line for me and from the aerial base/ feedpoint right to the balanced aerial coupler terminals at the operating desk. No baluns, no coax on the output side of the coupler.

There will be one exception and that will be the switchable new MF aerial for 630 and 160m which will have RG213 to a HV series coupling capacitor at the aerial base, because I am installing one frequency system at a time.

Thirdly, I fabricate/ assemble the aerial, install, tune and test it on air. Make any mods, silicone everything for which I have used conductive paste and joining hardware and hi ho away I go!

The photos:



← A rain water tank bonded to a short radial at the aerial base.

Radial bonded to Mum's garden shed then continued for another 10m or so. →

Rain water tank bonded to the workshop shed which is already bonded to the radial system. ↓



← Several radials bonded to the workshop shed as above. Note a pair of radials run in the paving slab channel and smothered with silicone: these head out to the opposite side of the yard boundary fenceline for about 165ft.

Bonding to both → the cold and hot water copper pipe networks (quite extensive throughout our 90 year old dual residential house). Also connects with one of the domestic earthing stakes as shown.



← Shows fence iron sheets and both metal fence rails bonded together with copper wire bridges.

The buried black wire is buried under three sets of path paving and is bonded to the copper pipes as per the photo above.

Each of these has been tested for bonding continuity before silicone was applied.

As I previously had a large Inverted-L and ran a pair of 195ft radials running right below it, the new one will be in the same spot so will have that as well. Good practice for any end fed aerial in my opinion.

I have a few more tanks to bond and once our eastern boundary neighbour fence issue is resolved, I will be able to get more done over on that side of the block.

Worth noting is that if I ever have any visitors with braces on their teeth, they had better not stand still for long or they too may find themselves 'bonded to me'!

It's another one arm challenge that does also involve a considerable amount of stooping - so I dragged an old cushion around with me and simply lay down on one side to do the ground level stuff, because it gets too painful in my back and hips otherwise!



## FISTS Down Under nets

### CW

Tuesdays on 3.528MHz

1000 UTC

Net controller: Chris VK1CT



### CW (slow speed)

Wednesdays on 3.528MHz or 7.028MHz depending on band conditions.

1000 UTC

Net controller: Garry VK2YA



## Remembrance Day Contest

Sat 15 - Sun 16 August

0300 - 0300 UTC (24 hours)

This contest commemorates the Amateur Radio Operators who died during World War II and is designed to encourage friendly participation and help improve the operating skills of participants.

More details: [www.wia.org.au](http://www.wia.org.au)

## International Lighthouse and Lightship Weekend

Sat 15 - Sun 16 August

0001 - 2359 UTC (48 hours)

An annual amateur radio weekend event.

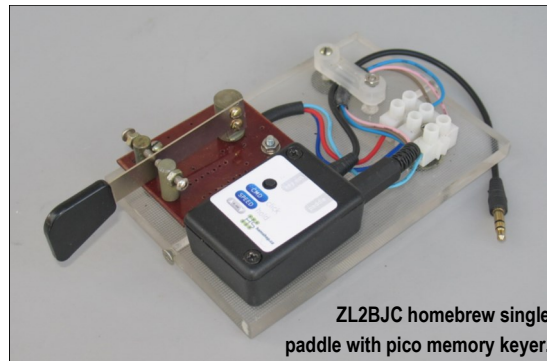
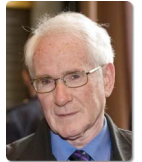
Founded in 1995 by two members of the Ayr Amateur Radio Group (AARG) Scotland, and held on the third full weekend in August.

More details: [www.illw.net](http://www.illw.net)

## A homebrew paddle

Iain ZL2BJC #12

Following on from the July FDU newsletter, Ian ZL2AIM #9683 prompted me to send in a photo of my latest homebrew single paddle keyer. The engine is a pico memory keyer from [hamshop.cz](http://hamshop.cz) and the rest is cobbled together from various bits and pieces found lying around the shack. Ian and I often ragchew around 7.020MHz and we have a mutual interest in QRP CW.



ZL2BJC homebrew single paddle with pico memory keyer.

The paddle is light in touch and a delight to use. Sometimes I alternate operation with my EZ KEYSER from the Four State QRP Group and my Kent single paddle key. Languishing in a drawer is a lovely shiny Bencher iambic paddle, a method of keying I have failed to master. That said, there are four hand keys in my arsenal which are used from time to time and will be QRV for our SKN in November.

## President retires

Karl Zuege KB1DSB #6938, FISTS Americas Chapter President, has decided to retire from the role as of 1 August 2015.



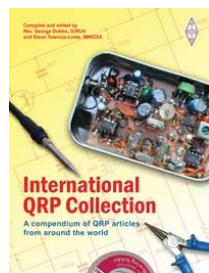
The Americas Chapter Board of Directors expresses their thanks to him for all the hard work he has done for the chapter over the last year and a half and wish him good health and good DX in his retirement.

Dennis Franklin K6DF #3076 is currently acting as President. In the months ahead, the Board will search for a permanent replacement for President, continue to expand the membership, and work to increase participation on the bands.

## FDU competition

Last month we invited members to enter the draw to win a book by answering the question: **In which year was the FISTS CW Club formed?** All entrants correctly said it was 1987.

The lucky winner is **David ZL1DCC #14188**.



He will be receiving a copy of the 'International QRP Collection'.

Edited by Rev. George Dobbs G3RJV and Steve Telenius-Lowe 9M6DXX, published in 2009.

## FISTS 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary

In 2017 it will be the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the FISTS CW Club. Yes, that does seem like a long time away, but planning for the event has already begun.



Shirts and cups with a special logo were issued for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This is something that can be done again. The US chapter is looking to activate their national callsign KN0WCW from all states during 2017. We could do something similar Down Under with VK2FDU and ZL6FF.

Please let us know if you have any thoughts on how we can celebrate the special event.

## Membership renewals

Ralph ZL2AOH #1073

Thank you to Phil ZL2OWL #14122 for including a donation with his renewal.

The following memberships are due for renewal by the end of August 2015:

9007 - 9023 - 9053 - 9058 - 9075 - 9608 - 9613 - 9644 - 9694 - 9695 - 9697 - 14121 - 14131 - 14144 - 14147 - 14148 - 14167 - 14169 - 14175

If you are listed in error, wish to receive a replacement reminder notice or would like to discuss your membership, please email us at: [fists-down-under@ihug.co.nz](mailto:fists-down-under@ihug.co.nz)



Until next month, 73