

BRASSPOUNDER

February 2013

Issue 81



I'd like to welcome you to this first Brasspounder of 2013 and my own first outing as its compiler.

2013 is set to be a busy year on the FISTS Activity Calendar – all the regular activities plus a couple of new ones: International Days and Fifth Sundays.

But the year has also started with some controversy! The QSY Rule.

The QSY Rule wasn't dreamt up as a bureaucratic blight upon FISTS members. It was brought in to answer genuine pleas from members who felt that contacts on 80m and 40m required queuing for a QSO.

We thought the QSY Rule would help to clear the FISTS nominated frequency on each band. Well, it does do that but there are some knock-on effects.

Thanks to all participants who tried it out during January and provided useful and constructive feedback. The FISTS frequencies are our centres of activity and, yes, we expect activity all around them and not just on one spot frequency. So the QSY rule is changing and with immediate effect.

If you call on a published frequency, please clear the frequency after one contact.

This applies to all participants, HQ stations and members alike. Once off the published frequency there is no mandatory QSY required during the rest of an activity.

The rules have been published on the FISTS web site – www.fists.co.uk. I have also contacted regular activity participants direct, by email, to advise of the change and it will also be featured in the spring issue of Key Note. But we'll adopt the change now – to include all activities from February 2013 onwards.

Again, I'm grateful to those who tried this out and while some found it rather frustrating, at least two discovered it was also challenging in its own way.

The Updated Rule

If calling on a published FISTS frequency, please move away from that frequency after one contact, leaving it clear for other stations. This rule applies to all participants, HQ stations, affiliated clubs and FISTS members operating on **80m** and **40m**.

The earlier QSY Rule is withdrawn.

January Activities

While Rob, M0BPT was busy collating the final 2012 activity results, 2013 got under way with two Ladder Sundays, on the thirteenth and 27th.

The month's logs started to arrive almost as soon as the evening session on 27th January ended.

So let's take a look at some of them.

2E0DPH

Phil says

Please find attached my first Ladder claim for the new year.

It has been very pleasing to hear so many members joining in the ladder activity I do hope you have received lots of claims for the first month.

With the changes to the rules I think there is still a little confusion about moving frequency after just one or two QSO's but I do hope you can clarify this so that we can all become very familiar. I for one am quite happy to keep moving frequency but do feel that to move 2Khz rule is rather excessive,

surely to move anywhere else on the bands would be quite sufficient. My only concern is that it will turn the Ladder into a contest rather than an activity as I feel that I am already experiencing members keeping QSO's much shorter than before.

I wish you very well in your new role as Activity Manager and hope to be able to work you many times during the year with the Fists Activities.

Thank you, Phil for you good wishes and also for participating in the January activities.

G4LHI

Last season's Ladder winner enters the 2013 rankings at the top of the list. Peter tells us

Well Chris, very nice to be sending you my first Activities claim as our new Activities Manager.

Bit of a hairy start to the year mate, but I congratulate you for being brave enough to take on this challenge & handling the comments, in some cases a bit abusive & rude I'm afraid.

But I hope most were constructive and helpful.

The first week was a bit strange compared with the previous years with the new QSY rule, I'm sure everyone was complying, but 2kHz seemed a little large and I'm afraid I did not stick strictly to that and just found and worked on the nearest and most convenient QRG, it seemed to work quite well. I did QSY after each QSO of course!

The second week we had the dreaded "CQ test" on 40m, which made it even more difficult to find a clear spot, as was envisaged.

However, Chris, very many thanks for keeping the Fists Activity alive. I must admit, I did enjoy the challenge and I will certainly, as I have previously told you, support you all the way in your new venture.

I still feel, it seems much more of a "contest" with this new QSY rule, I felt there were guys waiting to work the station you had just worked on your initial CQ call, and you had to make it a rather brief QSO.

It will not give us the time to feel comfortable in helping and welcoming new and less experienced operators like the Ladder was before and a platform to help and encourage these guys. Any way there seemed to be many more members joining in and I do hope they continue to enjoy the activity like us old codgers do hi.

Once again Chris, very many thanks for keeping the Fists Activities alive, long may it continue.

I attach my claim above, and a little summary below for your first BP, you can edit it if you like Chris,

73 for now and hope to find you on the key again one of these events, (if you get time?) Poor Rob always had difficulty in finding the time to join us hi.

Thanks a lot, Peter. I do appreciate your feedback and I hope the changes made will resolve the issues you've raised.

Congratulations on your Ladder success in 2012 and it looks as though your 2013 season is starting well. I hope to catch you on the air very soon.

Some of the other entries now, beginning with Darren, G0OTT commenting

It was nice to meet up with new to me members and the usual ladder participants.

I struggled on all four sessions to make qso's, finding a clear qrg.

My score pumped up by working Graham with the club call on two sessions, than you Graham.

Yes, Darren. Graham has been doing a sterling job! So next up is G3ZOD who says

The Ladder results in January were mediocre, with the evening sessions being particularly tough going. However, I was rewarded with a good (30+ mins) chat with Mick MI0GRG on the evening of the 27th, which was excellent compensation.

Under MX5IPX, a particularly noteworthy QSO was with Bern GM4WZG, #15551. This brings MX5IPX's total towards the Basic Century Award (and more importantly, having its own CC number to give out over the air) to 93 - just a tantalising 7 points to go.

Geoff, G0DDX was also a little frustrated by the QSY rule but his feedback, too was much appreciated and Geoff managed a creditable entry.

It was nice to work a Russian non-member, RA3DUO, and G3RDO whom I have never worked before. Nice to meet you, John. All things considering, I made the best of a bad job, considering all my Ladder work is QRP on 5W with my Flex 1500 and an end fed long wire.

At five watts quite amazing, Geoff! Keep up the good works.

Erkki, OH7QR is a familiar signal on the higher bands:

Please find attached my log for January Ladder. I got only 18 points. 20m is the best band from my QTH and therefore the afternoon session is better than the evening session.

I tried to follow the new QSY rules. I'm sure it didn't have a negative effect on my QSO number.

I noticed that we never have had a QSO and I hope to meet you soon on bands.

I think Erkki is right and I'm looking forward to a QSO very soon.

Richard, G0ILN is a new-comer to the Ladder and his message begins

Please find enclosed my first ever entry for the Ladder.

I only had a short time to be on the air but it was good fun. I must improve my technique I missed so many opportunities for a QSO by not being quick enough to reply. Or not being sure of the call and some one else jumping in. Must do better next time.

Well, Richard, we're both new to this but you've certainly made your mark with your first entry – I look forward to many more!

John, G0RDO is another Ladder first-timer. Welcome to you, John.

This was my first go at the Ladder, and gained valuable insight.

Good fun for me with a 6mtr tall vertical fishing pole, loaded and tapped for 80 or 40m.

I must admit to being one of the "silent Stations" waiting on 3.558MHz during the last 1/2 hour of

the second session where there was a QSO on the go.

Good to have your first entry, John. I hope the February session will see many contacts on frequencies all around 3558!

Next is the entry for G4TRY. Tony posted several messages on the QSY debate and then, it seems, almost forgot to let us have his Ladder entry.

Belated entry - I completely forgot about sending it in - however, given the extension, I thought I may as well do it now.

Glad you did, Tony. F5RPN, Eric was another who almost didn't make it into the January table. This time, it seems, down to the switch-over of email addresses between Rob and myself. But fortunately Eric reads the FISTS CW group messages!

I saw your message in the CW fists list. He says

I posted my Ladder log from January (with another email address) but today I haven't receive A confirmation from you.

What is the problem?

It's my first participation to the FISTS Ladder and perhaps I made an error.

Not your error Eric. I hope every month will be smooth from now on – the activity@fists.co.uk email mailbox seems to be working perfectly now. Thanks for the entry and welcome to the Ladder activity. Good luck!

Ian, G1RVK has told me he is still listening more than keying. So it is great to have your Ladder entry for January, Ian.

Only managed one contact in January. Hope to get on the key more this year, progress from licensed listener status. The Ladder is a good incentive.

Well done and thanks for your entry.

It has been wonderful to see so many first-timers in this new Ladder season. And thanks to all for the preparation of your logs – it makes compiling the listings much easier. All the things that Rob had down to a fine art I am – of course – having to learn and then practice. So every little helps, as they say elsewhere.

The results then

Station	FISTS Number	Name	Jan
G4LHI	2219	Peter	46
2E0DPH	14543	Phil	39
G0OTT	14082	Darren	30
G0DDX	15552	Geoff	19
OH7QR	8318	Erkki	18
G0ILN	398	Richard	15
G3ZOD	8383	Graham	8
G0RDO	6459	John	6
G4TRY	15987	Tony	6
F5RPN	15980	Eric	4
G1RVK	15819	Ian	2
MX5IPX	7778	HQ	12

By the time you read this the February Ladder will be history, too and I will be preparing to receive the entries.

Thanks everyone for taking part in January and I look forward to getting to know you all better in the future.

Coming up is the first of our International Days, St David's Day on 1st March.

FISTS will be at the Wythall Rally on 10th.

Graham, G3ZOD, FISTS 8383, has stirred a few of us into action with a FISTS Club within ClubLog. More of these in the next Brasspounder.

Once again, thanks to everyone for their best wishes on taking on FISTS activities here in Europe.

If you have a photograph of yourself, your shack, a key or any interesting accessory please send it along with your entry. It will be good to put faces to callsigns and it's always interesting to see the shack at the other end.

So, until the next BP

73 and keep on pounding the brass!

Chris

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