

# BRASSPOUNDER

August 2011

Issue 65

Welcome to another edition of BP.

As I write this, SKW (Straight Key Week) logs are arriving in my inbox, already it seems that the activity has been welcomed and enjoyed by members and non members alike.

The ladder and four seasons are going along nicely. (See my comments later in this publication) Although entrants are reporting that the going has been somewhat tough over the past month. Other comments suggest that the higher bands are waking up with surprising openings to Asia. So I'd suggest that you listen on this part of our spectrum.

I'd noticed, after reading one of the articles in the RSGB Journal, that, an amateur who was using his equipment, legitimately in a country under the CEPT agreement, had to face a harrowing court appearance, and had his equipment confiscated. Without the RSGB, The Foreign Office, and the National Radio Society of the country intervention; One wonders what would have happened to the poor individual! All because of the country in question failing to understand the concept of the "Lifetime Licence" so we're told. I beg to ask the question; If the country in question had signed up to CEPT, why did the authorities in question not confirm the explanation before putting the individual before a court? I expect that there are underlying reasons that we are not aware of; but it does raise the thought that all other so called "civilised societies" are not as civilised as they purport

to be.

As you may recall, I'm hoping to operate as 5B/M0BPT next year; so I'm hoping that the Cypriot authorities do not take this kind of draconian actions against visiting/holidaying amateurs.

Onto the comments and band reports received this month.

From Erkki. OH7QR

Hello Robert,

Please find attached my FSA and Ladder logs for August. Conditions are becoming better, so there will hopefully be many members on bands during the SKW. I hope also to meet you during the week.

Good hunting! 73 de Erkki OH7QR # 8318

Hello Erkki.

An impressive entry from you this month with both ladder and FSA.

From Graham. G3ZOD.

Hi Rob.

This month I have submitted logs for MX5IPX as well as G3ZOD. I think the appearance of MX5IPX during two of the August Ladder sessions caused a little surprise! I plan on regular appearances but I'm not going to make announcements about it, since this would lead to some disappointment due to my poor antenna. I am uploading all MX5IPX QSOs to LoTW and eQSL, although I'm not in a position to do this retrospectively. Unlike the other two club callsigns (GX3ZQS and GX0IPX), MX5IPX does not have a Century Certificate number to give out over the air. I'll do what I can to rectify this, but sadly we seem to have lost all of the MX5IPX log books, meaning that it's a case of starting

from scratch. With a grand total of 9 points out of the requisite 100 so far, it's going to take a long time.

As usual, the evening Ladder sessions proved better for 80m. During the 28th August sessions, I used a short whip as a receive antenna on 40m to try and reduce the problems I have with electrical noise on the band. This did indeed improve the signal to noise ratio on signals by a few dB. While not a lot, it made having QSO's a little easier.

To make it straightforward to see when events such as the Ladder are coming up, I've added a short list showing current and upcoming events on the top right of the FISTS website's home page <http://www.fists.co.uk>

There is also a link to the left of the list to a dedicated page that gives more room allowing better layout, information on times and events further into the future. So, no excuses for missing FISTS activities!

Finally, I'm indebted to Thomas M0TRN for pointing out a K3 modification to me, and also getting me an SMD resistor for the modification as part of an order he was putting in. This would have otherwise (for a resistor costing a few pence) cost me around £6 to order the official Elecraft modification kit from the USA or £7 to order one from the cheapest UK component supplier that stocks the particular value!! I also asked QRP project in Germany if they stocked Elecraft modifications. While they don't, I received a very helpful reply from QRP project's Nik DL7NIK discussing the various alternatives using different wattage wired resistors. So all in all, it's great that there are such helpful people as Thomas and Nik around - the amateur radio spirit is very much alive and kicking!

73 de Graham G3ZOD FISTS #8385

Thanks for all the information Gra. I imagine that MX5IPX  
on air created quite a stir!

From Uncle Dick SV0XBN

Dear Nephew.

Not what you would call a good month, with only one  
counting QSO.

Still, I hope for better things in the next week when we  
have no-one staying.

However, nothing lasts forever and we have more relations  
arriving mid-month.

Just to cheer you up, we have not seen a cloud in the sky  
since early June I reckon . . .

However, beer remains cold, which is the main thing.

73 Uncle Dick. SVØXBN/9

Greetings Uncle.

They all count, any entry no matter how small! So, the beer  
is cold, not a cloud in the sky. Think about us all when you  
blow the froth of the next cold one!

From Martin. IK2RMZ

Hi Robert,

this August was 3 degrees warmer than the average August  
here, so the shack was just too hot to be used.

Anyway, it's good to be in the 4S participant group and I  
enjoyed it once more. September will probably be low in  
activity, too, but I am sure I will enjoy every QSO again.

Take good care. Martin

Good to hear from you once again Martin. Glad you're

enjoying the FSA.

From Phil. M6PHL

Hello Rob,

Hope all is well with you.

Another month goes by and here is my log for the August ladder. It was really good to work the club station on 80m, a first for me, even though condx were not the best at the time but it was also good to hear the bands gradually improving again on the second afternoon session this month.

Great to get 2 points from Geoff G0DDX fists 15552 for the first time as well, I hope it is the first of many Geoff and welcome to the society.

Well, will see what September brings so once again thanks for the QSO's and 73 to you all.

Phil M6PHL Fists 14543.

Always a pleasure to hear from you Phil. Good to hear you met up with MX5IPX.

From Derek. M0DRK.

Hi Robert,

Here is my log for August, only got on air for a short period. Very happy to meet G0DDX 15552 on the Ladder and hope that he will enjoy Fists Activities. Hope all ok with you, Mollie and I ticking over nicely still. Take care. 73 for now, Derek, M0DRK.

Glad to hear that you and Mollie doing fine Derek. Not too bad here. As ever, busy (Hi) What busy lives we lead these days.

And from Peter. G4LHI.

With his summary and report for the ladder and FSA during August.

Hello Robert,

I attach my claim & report for August Activity Ladder.

Very many thanks once again to all who persevered the ruff conditions to try & make the Ladder Activity again this month.

80M was a little better for the first session & very nice to winkle a few different guys out of the QSB/noise, but back to very little propagation the second session & had to winkle out the points on 40M. Very mni tnx fer the 5 points Gra with MX5IPX

Conditions were yet again ruff, & a real challenge, but enjoyable, my scores are slightly better this month, so hope there may be a change in propagation so fingers crossed.

Hope things improve for the SK Week in Sept.

All my thanks, as ever, to members, future members? & non members that are always there in spite of the ruff condition.

I do like to chat with the non members & hope to persuade them to join our Club one of these days? you never know.

For the month I had 19 QSO's for 39 points, so must not complain, I do enjoy the challenge.

Looking forward to September Ladder & the SK Week & as I said, perhaps conditions may improve?

My August Summer Four Seasons report.

My summary for this month. A fairly average score for my last three months, but certainly an improvement in my QSO's & points this month (mni tnx to Erkki for my improved calculations)

I think I have worked about the same number of non

members, as Fists members again this month, but a good opportunity to spread the work of our Fists Club.

I had 101 QSO's for a total of 444 points, very pleased to work 80 new members, had two maximum 90 minutes with Erkki, OH7QR, & Tony, G3ZRJ, many thanks guys.

I had some very good DX QSO's, NY, NJ, OH, LA, CT, MD, all Fists members, PA, Brazil & Argentina, non members, on 20 & 30 Meters.

Very many thanks to all those that support this event, members & non members, & let's hope the band conditions will soon improve?

Very many thanks as always to all members & non members that suffered the poor conditions on the bands again to make this a very interesting & challenging event, looking forward to September FSA & SK Week & many more nice QSO's.

Take care & until we meet again, keep bashing the brass & keep the bands open & most of all enjoy cw & have fun.

73 de Peter G4LHI # 2219

As ever Peter, many thanks for your report and summaries for the month.

From Piet. PA3AFF

Dr Robert.

Another month gone, so new score lists for the Ladder and 4Seasons competition. For the Ladder I could be QRV in each of the 4 time-slots. I did choose for the 2 afternoon sessions with only 40m QSO's. Also happy to have worked our club station MX5IPX for some extra points. Ladder score: 18 points.

For FSA I gained 88 points. I had one memorable and long QSO (>30 min) with PA3DEB operating a side swiper key

(SSK). He motivated me to give it a try. So I built a cheap SSK with a steel ruler activating 2 micro push buttons and spent lots of time training. It gave me new fun for CW hi!  
73 de Piet PA3AFF

Hello Piet. Good to hear from you, and thanks for your report. Pleased to hear you've had fun with your new SSK.  
Why not put an article together for KEYNOTE about the build?

From Graham. 2E0JYK

Hi Rob.

Hope you're well? Had a very good time on the activity ladder as you can see. Totally enjoyed it, I am looking forward to the straight key week so that will be more training for me and enjoyment of CW. I am sure there will be a lot more years of CW from me as I enjoy this part of the hobby; why did they do away with it from the exams? Good luck, and 73 to all.  
Graham. 2E0JYK.

Hi Graham. Good to hear from you once again. And very pleased to hear that you're still enjoying your CW; and plan to use it for many years.

Your question regarding the removal of the code pass certificate to gain UK HF privileges!

I will leave that to the readers of this publication to come forward with their thoughts and answers!

Over to you, readers!

And from Greg. G0DUB.

Hi Rob,

Apologies for only making one day of the ladder sessions this month, the airlines seemed less than enthusiastic about



me trailing an antenna from the plane on the 14th leaving me just the 28th to try and salvage some points :-)  
I seemed to have a fair run on 40m in the afternoon session though QSB was making things difficult at times. A nice comparison was Phil M6PHL, though who was my last contact on the afternoon session on 40m followed by being my first contact in the evening session on 80m to show that as the nights draw in we should have some good conditions in store on 80.

Nice to work new member Geoff, G0DDX for the first time and thanks also to Pol G3HAL for the reminder of the SKW coming up.

73, Greg. G0DUB #6095

Good to hear from you Greg. I wonder if you did bother to ask the Captain about trailing a wire from the aircraft (Hi).

Finally. From FISTS member, Geoff G0DDX. Who introduces himself and joins the ladder activity for the first time.

Robert,

Please see attached File for my first Fists Ladder session. As a new member to Fists I have had a lot of encouragement from Peter G4LHI (Thank you Peter). I passed my 12WPM CW test over 26 years ago after being taught by Peter along with Stan G4VHP. I then got into Packet and Data modes, running GB7DDX for many years and neglected to use my new skill.

Having just retired, I decided one of my retirement goals would be to get the key out, dust it down, along with my rusty skill, and get started on becoming proficient.

So apologies to any than I have worked, for my not so good CW. Many years ago, Peter told me "It'll come".

Sure enough many years later. Its actually coming together!  
I'm having a lot of fun, and my CW skill is growing albeit slowly.

I am looking forward to working many more of you in the years to come.

Best Regards

Geoff G0DDX Fists: 15552.

A warm welcome Geoff. We're all very pleased to welcome you to the "FISTS Family" There are no apologies necessary for your CW. I know that many will listen out for you, to make your acquaintance, and welcome you to the society. I look forward to receiving your entries and reports in the coming months.

Geoff commented in a later mail;

"All the HF work is done with 5W QRP, my retirement present to myself? a Flex 1500 (SDR). Its a cracking bit of kit and probably the best receiver I have ever used. Its excellent on CW. I look forward to meeting others on the air, and just hope my RX skills improve a little more"

I can comment Geoff, that you will receive lots of encouragement from members on air!

#### FISTS Awards

Congratulations to the following members:

Bert F6HKA, #14577-Diamond Century Award

John 2E0JCY, #13253-Millionaire Award

Before I get to the results tables, just a few words regarding last months results tables.

I know the eagled eyed amongst you noticed that the FSA table was rather "Lacking" shall we say! (Hi).

As I was preparing BP for publication I suffered a catastrophic failure of the laptop I use solely for FISTS. Rather embarrassingly I didn't have any files backed up, so consequently I had to get information from previous offerings on the web. THE FSA results were, shall we say; lacking in accuracy. This has been addressed for this edition, so hopefully I should be on an even keel. And yes, I know, I should have backed up files, very remiss of me. (Hi)

Here's the results tables for this month. I see that some exceptionally high scores have been recorded in this months FSA. Well done to all.

CALL	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL	POWER
G4LHI	28	37	34	20	34	23	23	39					238	QRO
M6PHL	20	25	28	15	29	23	30	34					204	QRO
OH7QR	27	27	19	22	26	19	22	36					198	QRO
PA3AFF	13	8	10	17	16	17	7	18					106	QRO
M0DRK	0	22	19	10	16	14	10	10					101	QRO
2E0JYK	10	12	12	0	19	14	12	14					93	QRO
G0DUB	4	16	17	11	0	17	4	13					82	QRO
G3ZOD	5	18	18	4	6	12	1	12					76	QRO
G0BAK	9	24	6	0	0	0	0	0					39	QRO
2E0TEK	17	12	0	0	0	0	0	0					29	QRO
MX5IPX©	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18					18	QRO
G0DDX	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14					14	QRP

### And the FSA

CALL	JULY	Aug	TOTALS	CLASS	FISTS
G4LHI	200	444	644	A	EU
OH7QR	186	300	486	A	EU
JO3HPM	105	131	236	A	EA
PA3AFF	80	88	168	A	EU
IK2RMZ	73	49	122	A	EU
G3ZOD	9	37	46	A	EU
K4UK	11	21	32	A	NA
MX5IPX(c)	0	30	30	A	EU
SV0XBN/9	14	1	15	A	EU
HB9DEO	0	17	17	A	

Thats all from me for yet another month.  
Suffice to say once again, many thanks for your reports and  
observations.

Till next month.

Keep well;  
Keep pounding Brass.

73.

MOBPT