

BRASSPOUNDER



May 2010 (Issue 50)

Welcome to the May edition.

After returning from a visit to "5B" Land recently. I was impressed by the country enough to plan a second trip in the future. I would like to go armed with my K2/100 and perhaps operate within the CEPT conditions as 5B/M0BPT/p. I would be pleased to hear from anyone who has experience of operating under such conditions; i.e. perhaps a table of "do's and dont's" which I'd be happy to publish in BP for myself and others to learn from...

Looking at comments received, the May ladder was an uphill struggle for some, due to "Atrocious" conditions. Lets hope that as the year progresses, things will improve.

Onto the comments received this month... There are two excellent articles from members this month, many thanks to you all for your input, lets have many more, as I've mentioned before; there wouldn't be a BP without you.

From Derek, M0DRK

Hi Robert, Rather a shameful score for May, but condx were so bad that I called time hi. Hope that I can do better in June. As I will be around for one Sunday I will try and get both sessions in on the first Sunday. See you soon, 73 for now, Derek, M0DRK

Hello Derek, always good to hear from you. You weren't the only who suffered during the May ladder; lets hope condx will improve....

And from Erkki, OH7QR

Hello Robert,

Please find attached my Ladder log for May. On 23th I missed the beginning (very sorry Peter) and managed only to have one QSO (many thanks Jerry G0AZR)
All the best, 73;
Erkki OH7QR # 8318

Hello Erkki Nice to hear that Jerry made contact with you under such poor condx.

From Phil; M6PHL

Hello Robert,
Please find attached my log for the May Fists Ladder.
Conditions on 80m still not great during the afternoon so I am working the evening sessions instead, still difficult but at least better than earlier in the day.
Many thanks again to all those I had QSO's especially Graham 2E0JYK one of our newest members, who is QRS at the moment but a great effort and well done for giving it a try.
I look forward to working you all and that conditions improve in June.
73
Phil
M6PHL

Good to hear from you once again Phil; as you'll have seen by other comments in this months postbag, May seems to have been a difficult month.

And from Peter G4LHI.

Hello Robert, I attach my claim & report for the May Ladder. I had to do a little jiggle with my claim this month, I did have 8 QSO's for 15 points on the 9th but had to discount that log & enter logs for both sessions on the 23rd giving me a total of 16 QSO's for a score of 31 points, slightly less than the previous three months, but considering the ruff condx I was lucky to get this score. Again very many thanks to all for the QSO's the signals were up & down on all stations, but we made it. I was very pleased to work David, G3SCD (VK3DBD) who is on holiday in Lincolnshire, I was hoping to have a nice chat with him on 80m while he is in the UK, but with the QSB, I told him we have better luck on 30 from OZ hi! . Hope he manages a few decent QSO's while he is in the UK , condx permitting of course. Was nice to meet a few of our members & members of the EUCW on the QRS Party & the Fraternizing Party, always very enjoyable to meet up with many old friends on these events. That's all for now folks, see you on the Ladder in June.
73/88 de Peter G4LHI # 2219 & Jean.

Hello Peter, always a pleasure to hear from you. Considering the conditions, you did well to amass such an excellent score, I'm hoping many members manage to get David in their logs while he's over here.

And from Jerry; G0AZR (with his monthly tongue in cheek comments, that I always look forward to receiving and sharing with you all)

Hello Rob,

Hope you are doing ok.....

Well what a Sunday afternoon.

I found the condition atrocious; 20mtrs was wishy washy at the best, although Erkki was ok.

On 80 mtrs I found it similar to trying to operate in porridge.

Apologies to Gra, G3ZOD; John, 2E0JCY; Dave, M0TUB for not signing off...all three just disappeared back into the gloop.

For some reason I struggled to get a tune on antennae and also had S8 noise for most of the time.

Plus of course, I decided to run QRP on Sunday, 5watts instead of the usual 50watts.

Not to worry.....still good to chat and also work two new members to me Tony, G4ZVR (scary when he sends his FISTS number) and Pol, G3HAL.

No ladies this time.....must be losing my touch.

Take care of yourself.....keep taking the tablets (no charge for that medical advice)

73 Jeremy G0AZR

Hello Jeremy... G4ZVR...yes indeed (hi) Incidentally, 6660 are the last 4 digits of my telephone number; I guess I must live next door (hi)

From Bill. G0BAK

Hello Rob

I hope you and your Family are well. Find attached my Ladder Log for the month of May 2010.

I could not manage a full session on the 9th due to other commitments. I was quite surprised to work 4 members and 1 non member during the evening session. I found conditions quite noisy at my qth, then again that seems to be the norm now. Working the evening session is not really an option for me here due to the noise, however on that day I only had that option available.

On the 23rd May, I worked the earlier session as normal. This turned out to be a big mistake. Conditions for 80 metres were terrible and I suspect due to the very hot weather, most members were sunbathing. I only managed to work 3 members on this day, M5FRA, Colin, G4LHI, Peter and finally M0PIE, Bob for the final points of the day. I found 80 metres almost unworkable so I worked 3 non members on 40 metres and also a station on 10 metres

which made a very nice change. Super signals on 10 metres and with no interference, bliss. Well Rob that's it once again for another month, how time passes quickly. All the best and many thanks for your work with Fists.

Bill G0BAK Fists 13262

Hi Bill...Sunbathing? Did we have some warm weather? I must have blinked and missed it! Oh dear... I guess I'll have to wait another 12 months then.....(hi)

And from Peter M5ABN

Hi Rob,
Please find attached my meagre log for May. The 23/5/10 evening session was poor with heavy QSB/QRM here. Still not to worry, there is always next month Hi Hi 73 fer nw,
Pete M5ABN #6423

Hi Pete, good to hear from you and nice to know you're finding time to get on radio with your busy schedule; look forward to hearing from you next month.

From Piet PA3AFF

Hi Rob,
Here is my 2nd entry for the Ladder Activity 2010. I was only active in the last timeslot.
I was pleased to give M3WCK his points. With his 1 Watt he was weak at my side. I heard once again 2E0JCY calling CQ, but he didn't answer my call.
My exchanges: Piet, Schaft, Fists 445. Pwr 15W into Zepp ant.
73 Cul PA3AFF

Hi Piet, Glad you found time once again to get on air, nice to hear that you met M3WCK. I must ask John, 2E0JCY through these pages to listen out for your call.....

Colin. M5FRA comments;

Didn't do so well this month, conditions were not good, the QSB was very deep taking S7-8 sigs to S0. There did not seem to be many stations on or was it just me? It was a glorious day and I guess most sane people were out enjoying it! Will try again in June.
Colin - M5FRA

Hello Colin. Everyone had the same problem this month. Colin sent me an article for publication at the request of G3ZOD (Thanks Graham) Read on....

I have always enjoyed portable operating, it started in the early 1970s with bits of ex AM PMR gear in the back of an old Morris 1100. So when I returned to radio this year I decided that /P operation was a must.

Being some what physically challenged in that I cannot lift heavy weights, or haul up long antenna poles with 6 element 6m beams on top, I opted for the light weight approach. Six metres was a must and finding plans for a Hentenna I decided it fitted the design criteria. It also fitted the wallet criteria as I could scrounge enough bits to make one.

My 6m Hentenna consists of 2 lengths of plastic conduit salvaged from a scrap milking parlour on a local farm, around 8m of black connecting wire, 3 lengths of brazing rod I bought for car repairs 30 years ago and a strip connector which I had to buy for 50p.

The resulting antenna was secured to an old 10m (now about 8.75m after several mishaps) fishing pole. As the antenna weighs in at less than 500gms (or about a pound) it was easy to erect even in a 'stiff breeze'.

I was eager to try it out and as there had been a good sporadic E opening the day before so I drove a short way to a spot that is about 460m ASL (1500 feet).

Yes it was a bit windy, almost a gale, but the antenna and pole stayed up once I had tightened all the joints to stop spontaneous telescoping. I doubt if I could have managed to haul up any other type of antenna that has some gain (~5db claimed) let alone keep it aloft in that wind.

Unfortunately the sporadic E was not to be and I only managed 4 contacts in a couple of hours, 3 of which were on CW, sorry but I succumbed to a phone QSO. I'll be back as they say and I am sure the antenna will work well. Next project is one for 2m made from 15mm water pipe and to finish the 'Heath Robinson' version of the Buddipole.

Colin – M5FRA



Thanks for an excellent article Colin, the amateur spirit comes to the fore once again, a total outlay of 50p! Dare I ask if anyone can beat that? Touching on the subject of /p operation, I recollect a story (And I've seen the images to back it up) of a couple of resourceful amateurs who were entering a 2m activity /p, and, to save dismantling the beam for transportation; one bright spark had the idea of lowering a G2BCX 12ele ZL special and attached pole through the open sunroof of an Austin Princess and proceed to the operating site with the passenger holding the beam and pole steady! And, yes; you've guessed it, they couldn't resist making a few contacts on the way! I wonder what our traffic police would make of such antics in todays world? I'd be pleased to hear of any other recollections for inclusion in BP. With images if you have them.

On to the 2nd article from G3ZOD

Hi Rob.

Ladder

On the 9th May, I failed to get on 80m for the afternoon Ladder session because I couldn't hear anything. Now, while this is not unusual given my antenna (!), on this occasion there was not even any noise from it. Receive on other bands was fine and also transmit on 80m was working okay. I took the top off the transceiver (9 bolts, sigh) to check but nothing obviously wrong. While I had it open, I took the opportunity to make a modification to one of the PCBs that I've been meaning to do for some time.

On putting it all back together, disaster! Now the transceiver wouldn't work at all. This turned out to be due to forgetting to reconnect an internal coax cable, so solved that one. However, I'd got no further with the original "no receive" problem on 80m.

After the session (of course) I had an inspiration. There is a button that switches between the main antenna socket and a second, receive-only antenna socket and it works on a per-band basis. Sure enough, I must have accidentally pressed the button on 80m. Argh!!

Getting on 80m in the evening session with a working receiver didn't help though as the propagation wasn't yielding any signals at a workable strength.

8th/9th May was also the [EUCW Fraternising Party](#), which I had a go with on 20m. I didn't realise before that there is a club ranking as well as individual ranking. As it's just a 2 hour session on a Saturday and a 2 hour session on a Sunday, next year I think it would be fun to have a concerted FISTS club effort and see if we can achieve a decent FISTS score.

The 23rd May Ladder sessions were more successful on 80m - as well as meeting up with Peter G4LHI #2219, I managed contacts with Jerry G0AZR #14553, Pol G3HAL #8367 and Mike G0AXE #361, all three for the first time this year.

Speeding Up and Slowing Down

I also heard David M0TUB #14528 during the 23rd May evening session. I had contacts with him in September last year. I was startled to hear him going around three times the speed from last year. David tells me he does an hour of practice every day - it's certainly paid off - very well done. He has also achieved an [RSGB Morse Code Certificate of Proficiency](#) and is shown here being presented with it by Morse assessor Albert G3ZHE.



Sometimes it's good to slow down too. I had a series of skeds on 6m with John 2E0JCY #13253 in March on 6m. John is an extremely marginal signal with me, barely above the noise. I was quite surprised that even a small speed change from 12wpm down to 10wpm made copying much more reliable ... it just goes to show, eh?

Gordon G4ZPY Retired

I was wondering recently about adding a link on our website to [G4ZPY's website](#) and decided to email him to see if he was still making keys and paddles. He replied saying that he was retiring and in the process of making his very last ever set of paddles. Good for Gordon that he can get time to go on the air himself, but a shame for the rest of us that there will be no more of his excellent work available.

6m

I see I made it to 69 out of 81 in the April 6m monthly [UK Activity](#)- that's very pleasing given the indoor antenna and CW-only as the UKAC activity is almost exclusively SSB. This is a big improvement over March, where I came last (84 out of 84) with just one solitary QSO (big thank you to Ian G6TGO #14556 or else I would have been "out for a duck"!).

As we're now in the thick of the sporadic E season on 6m, I've been spending a little time there (okay, a lot!). It's fairly rare to meet up with FISTS members on VHF, so I was very pleased when called by Steve G3OAG #6043 and was able to have a chat (Steve is fairly local to me).

Going Bananas

Speaking of 6m, I felt the need for a second indoor dipole so last week I made one up using a supermarket price tag from a bunch of bananas (there's my bit of recycling), some nuts, bolts, solder tags and an insulated BNC socket. The insulated BNC sockets are great for this because they have two solder tags on, making it much easier to connect to the "outer" than conventional BNC sockets when fitted onto plastic. On the other hand, they're hard to find at a reasonable price. Together with a coax choke (around 5 turns with 6 inches diameter), the new dipole is working fine and is great for stringing up indoors to the nearest picture hook or curtain rail!

From this:



To this



National Coastwatch Institution

Look out for the article "National Coastwatch Institution" written by Ian G6TGO #14556 and published in the June 2010 edition of RadCom (the Radio Society of Great Britain's monthly magazine).

Website

I've now added a page dedicated to remembering [silent key members](#). Thanks to Peter G4LHI for helping me with this. If anyone would like to provide information, please let me know. It's nice to have some words and, if possible, a photograph - I'm not keen on the one line name / callsign style of entries we see in RadCom - it seems a sad way to remember friends.

It's great to see some new CW / QRP kits available from [Kanga Products UK](#) (which was re-formed earlier this year), including extra bands for the Foxx-3 transceiver, Sudden receivers and other small items. Although there are many renowned kits from [Walford Electronics](#), the Kanga Products fit a niche for lower budget, less

complex fun projects. They've also been visiting some rallies, offering the opportunity to avoid delivery charges.

The [G-QRP](#) club is also now offering a [40m Sudden receiver](#) with a case made from PCB.

Finally, a reminder that the web site has recent FISTS news on the [homepage](#) and also available via [RSS](#). On average there are a couple of items added per week. If anyone has items, please let [me](#) know. I prefer topics that are relevant to HQ members - this would probably not include the numerous contests and nets in the USA and elsewhere - but I'm open to suggestions.

73 de G3ZOD #8385

Well, that about wraps up this edition of BP. Again, many thanks to all for their input and contributions, I look forward to receiving many more in the future for inclusion.

All thats left to do is publish this months results table....

CALL	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTALS	PWR
G4LHI	31	38	45	33	31								178	QRO
G0BAK	21	29	28	29	19								126	QRO
G0AZR	8	29	21	22	23								103	MIX
M6PHL	13	15	28	19	18								93	QRO
M0DRK	11	22	20	15	7								75	QRO
OH7QR	16	0	15	24	13								68	QRO
G0OTT	0	19	21	21	0								61	QRO
G3ZOD	8	16	11	16	8								59	QRO
G3LHJ	0	0	28	20	0								48	QRO
2E0JCY	0	14	14	19	0								47	QRO
GI4CGB	6	4	10	14	8								42	QRO
M5ABN	0	0	0	16	20								36	QRO
PA3AFF	0	0	22	0	8								30	QRO
M5FRA	0	0	0	14	10								24	QRO
G4MSN	0	11	11	0	0								22	MIX
G4CMZ	0	0	0	18	0								18	QRP
M0GGK	7	0	0	0	0								7	QRO
M0XED	0	0	6	0	0								6	QRP
PA1SOP	0	0	0	4	0								4	QRO

Quite some movement in positions in the ladder table this month.

I've changed internet and telephone provider during the last month, the transition didn't go as smoothly as predicted; (Does it ever?) So if anyone did send a log for inclusion and it has not been shown for this month, I will allow an amnesty, so please send it in with next months effort.

I am busy with the EUCW QRS Party results, which will be published on this site in due course. This year has produced a much better interest. Once again, members have been nominated for the "Most readable Morse" Award (MRM) but have not submitted a log which discounts them from receiving the award; such a shame, lets hope next year they will submit a log, no matter how small.

Till next time, keep well, "keep pounding brass!"

73, M0BPT

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