



The International Morse Preservation Society.

STRAIGHT KEY WEEK 2008 RESULTS.

Welcome.

SKW 2008 can be hailed as a success story for 2008! Since taking over the office of Activity coordinator. This year has been the best so far for log entries, and, by far the amount of members who came on and supported the event was well in excess of my expectations. The amount of non-members too who have appeared in many logs is very heartwarming. SKW this year has conjured up a lot of interest amongst non-members and members alike! Long may it continue!

Before we get on with the all important results table. Lets look at reports and comments from participants, who by all accounts enjoyed their SKW 2008 Activity!

Peter.G3JFS from Plymouth, who kindly made operational, FISTS Club Station GXØIPX. Number 0001. Fred. G3VVP also in Plymouth, made operational another FISTS Club Station MX5IPX. Number 7778. These calls were worth 5 points. Also you may have heard me with GX3ZQS FISTS 0002. Special thanks to Fred And Peter for their kind offer of manning the calls for the week.

From Peter. G3JFS

SKW 2008 report .

For the SKW this year I operated as GXØIPX to give members the chance to work #0001 and to give the club some publicity. These objectives were achieved, I think, as after a busy week of brasspounding, the log had a total of 222 contacts with stations in 39 different countries and 6 Continents. 143 of these were with 69 different members in 10 countries – VK3, VE1, G, OH, PA, I1, GI, GM, W, and GW.

As was to be expected 80m was the best band for member contacts and the log shows a fair spread in old and new Fists numbers. It was a little sad to hear of stations who did listen but were afraid to transmit because they didn't think their Morse was good enough. Can I suggest that anyone in this situation should try to find a local station – ideally one you can talk to on say 2m – to help them build up confidence. Congratulations are due to the novice operators who did pluck up courage to make contacts, sometimes in very bad conditions.

Conditions have not improved and the higher bands were often dead. 80 m suffered a lot with noise/qrm from a wide band digital signal centred on 3556.5 which made it difficult to work below 3558.

Static was another problem in the evenings and especially so on Wednesday when I was receiving with 12-18dB of rx input attenuation and still getting S9+ static crashes.

I put out lots of CQ calls on the other bands but got very few answers from anyone, member or non-member, except Erkki, OH7QR who seemed to be 'camped out' on 14058 waiting to pounce on any members who appeared on frequency. He got the highest number of points from me - closely followed by Peter, G4LHI. Transatlantic propagation was really poor and although I did work a few members in the US and Canada the contacts were very difficult. Having given up hope of working a down-under member I was pleased to find David VK3FGE at 0719z on 7 MHz on Day7 – in fact I worked him twice as he called me 30 minutes later for some info.

Like the last time I operated as GX0IPX I had many complimentary remarks such as:

'I am so pleased to work your club station'

'It is great to hear #0001 active again'

'I respect your organization for supporting Morse'

'Thanks for your patience with my slow Morse'

'I must find a straight key for next year'

'I have enjoyed all the activity'

I think a lot of people enjoyed the week.

73 Peter G3JFS #8985

Many thanks to Peter for his concise report and excellent effort in SKW. Both for activating FISTS 0001 and his excellent work rate.

Our next report from an entrant who needs no introduction Peter. G4LHI.

Hello Robert,

I attach my claim & report on a very interesting and extremely active SK Week, it was so nice to find so many members active, new members, I worked five, and old members, that I had not worked for a considerable time.

I just have one comment regarding the rules, if I was fortunate enough to have a “pile up” I obeyed the rule and passed over the baton on my fifth QSO to the other station. I was sorry to say this rule was not always complied with by some stations. Apart from that it was a very enjoyable week.

I must take this opportunity to thank the “National Club Stations” for their extremely good effort, especially Peter, GX0IPX who I managed to work on each day. Rob, GX3ZQS, twice and unfortunately Fred, MX5IPX, just the once, but I’m sure they were all active but I was not about at the right time? Thanks a lot guys

I managed 143 QSO's for a total of 301 points. Of these four were NA, including Stan, K4UK. My EU stations were Erkki, OH7QR, Piet, PA3AFF, and Jan, OK1NR.

Very pleased to find Eric, G3VRU, on the band, but unfortunately was only able to work him once, but guess the one and a quarter hour chat should qualify for more than two points hi!. Sorry I missed you the rest of the week Eric.

I must say a big thank you to all who took part in the SK Week this year, both members and non members, I got 15 one pointers, and who knows perhaps some of these may be joining us as members next time?. So many thanks to all for a very enjoyable week.

I did advertise the Ladder on Sunday during the week, but not many takers, guess the SK Week tired you all out hi!, don't forget also the WARC Band Challenge is an on going event all year!

That's all folks, so keep bashing the brass and see you all in the next event.

73/88 de Peter G4LHI # 2219

An excellent report and summary Peter. It was an active SKW!

And from Mike. G4NCU.

Hi Rob,

Here is my log for the SKW.

Once again, the SKW has come and gone, but what fun. It was great to see so many members active this year, quite a few new members and, indeed, some members of long standing in the club that I had not worked before; so it seems the SKW was a great success and long may it continue.

I was very pleased to catch you a couple of times with the HQ station. The SKW gives me a chance to brush up old skills on a straight key which is hard work but, somehow, more rewarding than using my paddles at 30 wpm. Hi Hi.

Regards, 73

Mike G4NCU.

A real pleasure to hook up with you Mike. Conditions were, shall we say marginal, at times but very good to meet up with members who I'd not met with before, and of course renew old acquaintances whom I not worked for sometime.

From Piet. PA3AFF

Hello Robert,

Here is my log for straight key week 2008. My intention was to make each day at least one QSO with another Fists member. At the end of the week I reached a total of 35 QSO's. My intention came true! Thanks for all the good activity from Fists club stations. Sorry, I missed GX3ZQS on Sunday evening.

From Wednesday onwards I had continuous terrible QRM on 80m, very broadband signals from 3552 up to 3558 kHz. That was the reason I had to give a 489 report to the very active station G4LHI. My score in SKW 2008: 75 points.

Some statistics from my side:

- Average QSO duration was 9 min (max. 16 minutes. Min. 3 minutes)
- 80% of my QSO's were with an UK station
- 80% of my QSO's were with Fists members
- 23% of my given reports were 599
- 31% of my rcvd reports were 599

One can conclude that the type of exchange during SKW is far away from the traditional 5NN contest reports!

- On 80m all my SKW QSO's were in the range from 3554-3561, with a very sharp peak around 3558. On Sunday evening 2138Z GX3ZQS and GX0IPX were both in QSO and their frequencies were within 1 kHz apart. Maybe in future a range from 3550 till 3560 can be specified to avoid everyone to select 3558 as working frequency.

- 91% Of my QSO's I made were on 80m. Guess the skip from PA to UK is difficult on other bands.

I'm interested to get an general overview of the activity on the specific bands used. Maybe also for inter-UK contacts 80m is the favourite band.

I enjoyed the SKW. I'm looking forward to next event.

My station: TS130V running 15W into Zepp ant, 6m up. Hand Key: J47, WW2 US Army.

73 de PA3AFF. Fists #445.

The statistics from Piet are very interesting. He asks for a general overview of the activity on specific bands used during SKW.... Over to the participants. Perhaps you'll send a statistical overview on bands used during SKW? Which I'll publish in a forthcoming Brasspounder for people to peruse! I can be reached via the usual channels.

Fred. G3VVP. Operating MX5IPX during SKW. Sent this wonderful article for inclusion.

An event like SKW can mean different things to different people. To the more competitive members it could mean a challenge to be met and conquered, preferably by winning. To the non-competitive it could mean a chance to renew old friendships over the air or maybe make a few new ones. To the nervous or inexperienced it might be an opportunity to build confidence by having short QSO's to a known format and not getting lost in long rag-chews. This is a tale of what it meant to me.

On the evening of Day 4, Wednesday 10th, a very strong noise appeared across the Fists working area on 80 metres blocking out almost all signals. Deprived of my CW fix, the next day I went on air in the morning. Unusually I choose to try 40 metres, hook in the analyzer, tweak the balanced atu for R=50, X=0 and SWR 1.0 on the read out and fire up the rig. 50 watts of unmodulated RF zip up the extra wide ladder line and fly off the doublet, not a single watt measured coming back down. Despite the then thread on the Reflector about non-specific CQ's I call CQ Fists SKW de MX5IPX. On the second call a reply from GM3SWK somewhere in Scotland. I send a greeting, thanks for the call, the recommended exchange and pass it back to him. His reply puts my S meter bar graph way up into the red above S9 and the AGC clamps the Rx gain down so hard there is no noise, even between words. After the conditions we have experienced recently this is a contact to dream about. From the beginning it is obvious that he is not part of SKW so I sit back in my chair and listen to Alex in Portree on the ISLE of SKYE chatting away about his time working at the RN Hospital in Plymouth. Unfortunately, after two lengthy overs each, his station Manageress requires his services so we have to cut it short and sign off.

Flushed with the success of this QSO another CQ Fists SKW was launched netting an instant reply from PA0FAW in the Netherlands. His S7 signal was only about half an S point up on the noise but perfectly readable so once again I pass it across and relax into my chair. About halfway through his over it dawns why his call is familiar, he often posts to Fists Reflector. Panic, I need details for the log and he is well into the exchange, what has he sent so far??. grabbing my pen I scribble 5nn 5nn Fred Fred Arnie, (just about caught up now,) Arn, edge of the page drop down a line, hem 9858 9858 day 5 SKW. Great, got it! Now I can relax and reply, "R R tnx arnie qsl all info-----etc.

Just as he replies again I look down at the pad in case more notes are needed.

A loud CLANG as the proverbial penny drops, Arnie is not his name, it's a misread of his QTH Arnhem, and he did not personalise my report, his name is Fred just like mine. My next over contains a rather red-faced apology then we sign. So, what did SKW mean to me?

How about SOME KIND of WALLY !!!

So 'be of good heart ye Newbies' even seasoned Old-timers (or should that be Alzheimer's) can mess up on air with half the world listening. What a great hobby !!!!

73 all, cusn, keep pounding, Fred G3VVP (aka MX5IPX at the time)

An excellent article Fred. again, prompting comments from me at the foot of this results page.

From John. GORDO.

Hello Rob.

Enclosed my entry for SKW 2008. First time I've put in an entry for SKW and it was good fun! I found it most interesting to find out what keys were being used by others in the event...

73. John. G0RDO.

Hello John. Glad you found time to join the fun. I always notice that people dig out their trusty vintage/ex military keys for the event. G3JFS with his 1947 Raymart speed key and G4NCU who uses (I believe a ex military WW2 Tank key)

From Derek. M0DRK.

Hi Robert

What a great SKW it has been, so many active members to be worked. Many thanks to all stations who gave me points. Sorry I just couldn't make it with GX3ZQS but thanks for trying. Condx were very bad much of the time.

73. Derek.

Such a shame you couldn't make it! I'd managed to receive your exchange of information when you disappeared into oblivion. Lets hope next time, we'll be more successful. As a matter of interest. IK2RMZ heard me in QSO with Erkki. OH7QR. Sadly the station manager called him for lunch and the opportunity was missed! (Hi)

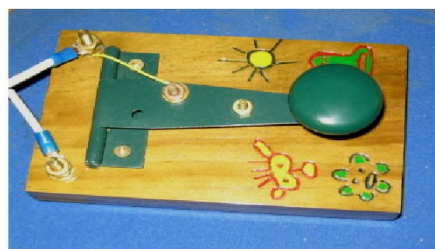
And from Stan K4UK

Rob:

Attached is my log for the Straight Key Week. Used the same home-made key that Hector, NP4FW sent me last year. It is the one he built using a hinge. I think I had sent you a picture of it.

Keep pounding the brass.

73, Stan - K4UK



As ever Stan. Pleasure to have you participate. If anyone has not seen the home-made key that Stan uses, made by Hector. NP4FW out of a gate-hinge. Here it is.

From Ray. G4MSN.

Robert

Please find attached my first ever log for the SKW. All QSO's were on 80m using my TS530SP running 5W QRP or 40-50W QRO to an end-fed. It was good to hear so much activity and be able to work so many members.

73. Ray G4MSN Leeds

Pleasure to have you on board Ray. Always good to hear that members are enjoying the activity, and more importantly, meeting members on air!

From Errki. OH7QR.

The SKW was very pleasant experience. It was great to hear so much activity on the bands. I was lucky to catch eight new Fists numbers. I also met some old friends I hadn't heard for a long time. 14 MHz was the best QRG in my QTH. I managed some QSO's on 7 and 3.5 MHz too. The QRM station on 80M is also quite strong here. (S8 to S9). Thanks to you for your great work with our logs.

73. Erkki. OH7QR

Thanks for your kind words Erkki. Nice to hear that you've found it to be a pleasant experience!

And from Tony. G3ZRJ.

Hi Robert

Please find attached my entry for SKW 2008, I regret that I was unable to devote as much time to SKW as I did last year. I was pleased to give out some points.

Vy 73

Tony G3ZRJ FISTS 7727

Glad you could find time to get on Tony, nice to meet you with GX3ZQS.

From Jimmy. G3HBN. Who comments;

Here is my contribution to SKW 08. I'd forgotten what fun it was! All contacts above were made using either a J37 WWII key or a COLLINS Brass Hand key of ancient production. It was very good to hear so much activity on 80 but I felt it was a shame the other Bands weren't in much of a useable condition for inter G working. This is the first log I have submitted for some time because of moving house. Jimmy Bolton G3HBN 1199

Pleased to have you back on board Jimmy. Condx were "Marginal" but we look forward to an improvement in due course....

I've heard from Bryan. GØGSY. Who tells me that he enjoyed SKW. Bryan works unusual shift patterns and I'm in great admiration of him when I find out he loses sleep to come on air and enter into the activity! He comments "I enjoyed working the members, quite a good turn out this year! Condx a bit poor. On the last day, not much activity on HF"

And Jack. G3HEL Fists 1663 in Plympton. Who I managed to work twice with GX3ZQS. Wrote to say; "I must comment on the conditions on 80m. What with QSB and QRN of which I have an endemic level 8/9db. QRN that is, it was pretty grim.(5 TV's next door, all switch mode) But I can't complain though! They let me put one leg of my dipole on their washing line pole! Hi!"

That concludes the reports of the activity for SKW 2008. All that's left for me to do is show the results table for this year.....

Before I do. I'll pick up on a few points raised and comments;

SKW 2008 has been a great success! With 22 logs received, and so many members appearing in logs! Thanks must go to the hard work and effort of Fred. G3VVP (MX5IPX) Peter. G3JFS (GXØIPX) who both found time to publicise the event through their channels. As you may have heard, the activity was mentioned in Radcom, and I believe on the GB2RS News bulletin. (This would account for the significant amount of NM's in entrant logs....

A member emailed to comment on the amount of activity during the week... His comments "What is it about SKW that gets people on the air?" how does one answer that. But I think Mike. G4NCU sums it up in his comments with his report... " The SKW gives me a chance to brush up old skills on a straight key which is hard work but, somehow, more rewarding than using my paddles at 30 wpm. Hi Hi."

Looking back at the writings of members in their reports. Jimmy. G3HBN "I'd forgotten what fun it was" Erkki. OH7QR "SKW was a pleasant experience. It was great to hear so much activity on the bands!" Ray. G4MSN echoes Erkki's words... John. GØRDO "First time I've put in an entry for SKW and it was good fun! I found it most interesting to find out what keys were being used by others in the event..." The comments from Peter. G3JFS (GXØIPX) Especially the one that said "I must get me a straight key for next year"

One downside for me? The words of Peter G3JFS, who heard that stations listened in on the activity, but were too bashful to become active because of concerns with their CW Speed and ability! To them I say "That is the whole ethos of our society! to welcome all to the ranks of CW whether they are complete novice/many years of experience, or seasoned professionals" Activities like SKW and the FISTS/EUCW QRS Party are here to allay your fears and join the novice/experienced-seasoned professionals on air! Without any concern that you're out of your league" Next year I hope you'll come on and join us!

And an upside! Peter reports that congratulations are in order for the novice operators who did

come alive to make contacts in sometimes bad conditions! Indeed they are! Congratulations for taking the plunge!

Which leads me on to G3VVP's excellent article. Fred says it all, "Newbies" have nothing to worry about, we all make mistakes and bog ups! I'm sure that every member of our society, many with over half a century of experience would admit to making many foul ups on air! No-one will think any less of you! a wry smile from your QSO partner as he listens to you compose yourself and carry on. We've all been there. G3JFS makes a very valid point about finding a friend from your local club who will go on 2m with you to gain confidence. Our motto as a society reads; "Accuracy transcends speed, courtesy at all times" I hope that many of us will never lose sight of this motto when we're on air! So, don't be bashful, come on air and join in, ok, you'll be a little concerned, but the person at the other end will know you're feeling that way and do his utmost to put you at ease! The thing to remember is, "We all had to learn and start somewhere"

SKW I hope, heralds a turning point where we as a society can put CW "En Vogue" yet again to the amateur community after the requirement has ceased to be needed by the majority of administrations.... I'm sure that you'll all mark the dates for SKW 2009 in your diaries. And bear in mind the other activities we provide during the year to promote our chosen mode of operation. I'm working on the new 2009 activity calendar as this goes online. It will be posted on here, on the FISTS EU News group. And in the final Keynote of the year.

As a matter of interest. I received a log from a non-member, OK1ARO. Mila in Prague. Who enjoyed the weeks activity. Lets hope next year he'll be with us sporting his own FISTS number!

All that's left for me to do is publish the results! Thanks to all who supported the event. There wouldn't be a "Straight Key Week" without you!

| POS | CALL | POINTS | POS | CALL | POINTS |
|-----|----------------|--------|-------------|----------------|--------|
| 1* | GX0IPX (G3JFS) | 373 | 16 | G3ZRJ | 54 |
| 2* | G4LHI | 301 | 17 | G3HBN | 53 |
| 3* | G4NCU | 207 | 18 | G0MRH | 50 |
| 4 | G3HEL | 147 | 19 | G4LMW | 48 |
| 5 | G0GSY | 139 | 20 | GX3ZQS (M0BPT) | 44 |
| 6 | OH7QR | 128 | 21 | 2E0TEK | 28 |
| 7 | G3HAL | 110 | 22** | OK1ARO | 28 |
| 8 | M0DRK | 109 | *INDICATES | AWARD | WINNER |
| 9 | IK2RMZ | 106 | **INDICATES | NON | MEMBER |
| 10 | PA3AFF | 75 | | | |
| 11 | G0RDO | 74 | | | |
| 12 | G8XGQ | 71 | | | |
| 13 | K4UK | 59 | | | |
| 14 | G4MSN | 57 | | | |
| 15 | MX5IPX (G3VVP) | 57 | | | |

Another year. Another SKW comes to a close, I hope that you'll all join us next year in what I hope is becoming a date to remember in your activities planned for 2009 and beyond!

73. MØBPT.