



FISTS DOWN UNDER

Newsletter February 2014

Editor & QSL Manager for ZL: Nigel Hardy, ZL2TX,
P.O. Box 15078, Otaki 5542, New Zealand. - Tel: 0-6-364-6339

Newsletter Distribution & QSL Manager for VK: Chris Thompson,
VK2CTN, P O Box 65, Dickson, ACT 2602, Australia

Membership/Awards Liaison: Ralph Sutton, ZL2AOH, 12c Herbert
Gardens, 186 The Terrace, Wellington 6011, New Zealand
Tel: 0-4-473-0847. Fax: 0-4-473-0848

Web Administration: Garry Cottle VK2GAZ, 96 Luttrell Street,
Richmond NSW 2753, Australia. – Tel: 0-2-4588-5429

Address e-mails for all persons above to:
<fists-down-under@ihug.co.nz>
Web site --: www.fistsdownunder.org



SUGGESTED FISTS CLUB CALLING FREQUENCIES

1.808 MHz (160m) – 3.528 MHz (80m) – 7.028 MHz (40m) – 10.118 MHz (30m) –

14.058 MHz (20m) – 18.085 MHz (17m) – 21.058 MHz (15m) – 24.908 MHz (12m) – 28.058 MHz (10m)

Members are reminded that the above frequencies are suggested calling frequencies. If they are busy, it is suggested that once you establish contact with a station, it may be prudent to change frequency down the band, avoiding other calling frequencies of known clubs.

MEMBERS' NEWS

Many thanks to the following members who included a donation when sending their subscriptions – **VK1AI-Greg #9604** and **ZL2TX-Nigel #9040**

Condolences to **ZL2TX-Nigel #9040** on the death of his father, Denis and to **Ralph-ZL2AOH #1073** on the death of his wife Gwenda.

OTHER MEMBERS' NEWS

A joining report on a new UK/EU FISTS member attracted the attention of **ZL2AOH-Ralph #1073**.

TF4M-Thor #16618 was a communications specialist for the United Nations over several missions to some of the world's most dangerous places. Thor's final UN post was to Timor Leste, where he was the first radio amateur to go on the air after the Indonesian province obtained its independence.

Thor's retirement plans were to obtain some land back home in Iceland. Iceland is largely un-forested and the government there was encouraging the planting of trees by paying subsidies to landowners. Thor's other intention was that there should be sufficient land to establish a comprehensive antenna farm

On his repatriation trip, Thor passed through Wellington, New Zealand. He had heard about the extensive antenna farm that was operated and maintained by the Wellington Amateur Radio Club at Quartz Hill. His visit was hosted by Ralph ZL2AOH. His interest was to study the various wire antennas in use on the site. Thor took numerous photographs of the various configurations, rhombic, horizontal vee and wire Yagi. These were subsequently published on Thor's web site of which a link was placed on the Quartz Hill web site www.zl6qh.com.

Thor did achieve success. He now operates from his rural setting with a selection of antennas. His website www.tf4m.com is an Aladdin's cave of photographs of not only amateur radio but of all aspects of Thor's multiple interests, including UN assignments and travels.

FISTS DOWN UNDER EDITOR

Our last edition reported that our long-standing editor, ZL2TX-Nigel #9040 had decided to stand down. Unfortunately a critical paragraph was missed out of the emailed newsletters. Here is the correct item:

After twelve years at the helm of our monthly newsletter "FISTS Down Under", Nigel ZL2TX has decided to retire and provide an opportunity for another member to make their mark. Much of the material is provided through the normal management of the chapter and of course members' articles and photographs are a major feature. So there is not a lot of writing to do; it's mainly arranging it into logical and interesting order and getting it ready for timely publication each month except January. Normally the cut off date is the 25th of each month.

Nigel will remain QSL Manager for ZL6FF and wishes devote a little time writing the odd article which was promised in the distant past. He will also continue to assist Ralph in other areas.

ZL2AIM-Ian #9683 has kindly volunteered to be the new editor. Unfortunately he is currently indisposed, so we hope that he will soon recover.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

These are some of the CW contest/event offerings in February 2014, most of which will be of more interest to our northern hemisphere readers. Thanks to www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html and www.fists.co.uk/activitiescalendar.htm

FEBRUARY 2014	
Vermont QSO Party	0000Z, Feb 1 to 2400Z, Feb 2
Black Sea Cup International	1200Z, Feb 1 to 1159Z, Feb 2
AGCW Straight Key Party	1600Z-1900Z, Feb 1
British Columbia QSO Party	1600Z, Feb 1 to 0400Z, Feb 2
North American Sprint, CW	0000Z-0400Z, Feb 2
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Feb 7
VK/EU FISTS Ladder	1400Z-1600Z and 1800-2000Z Feb 9
YL-ISSB QSO Party, CW	0000Z, Feb 8 to 2359Z, Feb 9
Asia-Pacific Spring Sprint, CW	1100Z-1300Z, Feb 8
Dutch PACC Contest	1200Z, Feb 8 to 1200Z, Feb 9
FISTS Winter Sprint	1700Z-2100Z, Feb 8
NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint	0130Z-0330Z, Feb 12
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Feb 14
ARRL Inter. DX Contest, CW	0000Z, Feb 15 to 2400Z, Feb 16
AGCW Semi-Automatic Key Evening	1900Z-2030Z, Feb 19
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Feb 21
UBA DX Contest, CW	1300Z, Feb 22 to 1300Z, Feb 23
UK/EU FISTS Ladder	1400Z-1600Z and 1800-2000Z Feb 23
High Speed Club CW Contest	0900Z-1700Z, Feb 23

HOUSEKEEPING

In the December 2013 FISTS Down Under the overdues list contained a number of incorrect expiry dates. We have put in a lot of effort to try to remedy the problem. So please check the list carefully. If your number appears incorrectly, please tell us. Otherwise, if your number shows here, please send your subscription promptly.

These are due by **28 February 2014**; some are well overdue: -

**3756-9027-9028-9048-9066-9067- 9099-9118-9136-9140-9613-9620-9622-9623-9626-
9630-9663-9666-9670-9684-14100-14103-14111-14116-14118-14119-14126-14134-
14135-14140-14154-14157-14158**

TRAWLING THE WEB

ZL2AIM-Ian #9682 is spotter for this column. If you have any suggestions of interesting sites, please pass the information to him at <ian.macquillan@xtra.co.nz>.

Bletchley Park's Bitter Dispute Over Its Future - Tensions are high at Bletchley Park between the new management who want a 21st century instalment and the volunteers who want to show the whole story (and get dismissed for doing so). This report [Note: video, with sound] is from the BBC: 'The groundbreaking intelligence work carried out at Bletchley Park during the second world war was credited with bringing forward the end of the conflict. In 2011 the site was awarded a £4.6m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). But Bletchley is currently in the throes of a bitter dispute, between owners who want to create a brand new visitors centre, and volunteers who have been working on the site for years'. -<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5n9eVVtKeA>

<http://z1ham.blogspot.co.nz/2007/11/morse-key-and-paddle.html> I have been lucky enough to find two of these New Zealand made paddles. I think they were made by the Christchurch Branch of NZART and are called the Galbraith Paddle. Look out for them at swap shops and flea markets.

<http://w1tp.com/im3500.htm> Automatic telegraph sets. Imagine learning CW on a 78 RPM record! I tried at one stage to learn CW from a tape but eventually got to learn the first part of the tape by heart and I probably never played the other two tapes in the set. It did me no good in learning the code! I suppose each one of us has their preferred way of learning the code. I learnt it via a computer.

Which brings me to the programme that I used to learn the code. It was called NuMorse and it suited me down to the ground. However, on this page, <http://ac6v.com/morseprograms.htm> you will find all the programmes that you would ever need for you to choose one that suits you. I am not suggesting that you need to learn the code again, but of course you are Elmering someone who is!

You will see near the bottom of the above page that there is a program called Morse Runner. It is an excellent program and you can introduce QRM, QRN, flutter, QSB and even lids! I find it really excellent for brushing up on my reading.

HOARDERS AND COLLECTORS

G3SCD / VK3DBD-David #

Are we really I wonder? There must be more Morse keys gathering dust in collections than being put to the purpose they were intended for.

It is certainly good that the rare instruments - and there are quite few of those- will be preserved for posterity because of their rarity value. Many museums in the world have benefited from gifts of collectors estates.

Like many hams, I have a small collection, not for the sake of value. Many of us enjoy a link with the past and simply like to be associated with the old ways of doing things. And then of course there are new versions of the old, many which in the eye of the enthusiast are a thing of beauty and an example of fine engineering and innovative design.

All too often I go to a Hamfest mainly to have an "eyeball" with folk I have not seen for a while and fully intend not to spend anything; Ha Ha, To date that has not yet happened, there is always some item too much of a bargain to leave, or I am reminded of some part needed to complete a repair which has been sitting on the bench for a year - not quite out of sight- but mostly out of mind. Not for me the clear workbench, those things only exist where there is no activity.

Recently at a local rally in UK I found a vendor offering several Morse Keys in various states and the action of negotiating for any one so often culminates in a bargaining session for a "package deal" to include something you never really needed anyway.

The latest goodies added to my collection were not something I was desperate for, but noticing several keys on offer, just about as the event was coming to an end did seem a good time to buy.

Now the RAF D type keys were used in most Air-force base station locations throughout and after WW2 and possibly long before. This rate high in my esteem. So the sight of two of them in a sorry state simply cried out for a rescue operation. One of these man sized keys complete with the brown Bakelite cover is already in my possession. This somewhat fragile part is easily broken and no doubt many were binned because of that alone. Manufacturing a new cover is not an option I could visualise, BUT - will the latest technology in 3d home printing, which is now a viable process be the solution in future? Cover apart, the quality of the insides has to be seen to be appreciated. One has to moderate renovation against preservation in some cases but this key I was looking at was extremely scruffy, well covered in a layer of time added grime and by no means could one call that patina. I did a deal and came away with two other keys too, the ubiquitous WT8. Now I have several of these and it was no surprise to find that these were different versions of the ones I had. They were made in many countries throughout the world. Called a ZC 1 key in Oceania as they were supplied with the transceiver of that name, a derivation of the 19 Set used in UK and fitted in virtually every vehicle the army had.

Clearly marked WT 8 Mk 3 one of these two keys is mainly of a composite construction, the main arm being of a black plastic looking material, but of course made before the days of plastics as we know it today. I had one some years ago, used it for mobile and /p and leaned heavily on it by accident and broke the arm. The arm was made from apparently laminated layers of Bakelite and a fine metal mesh presumably for strength (or conductivity) My efforts to repair with glue or composites failed and I eventually made a solid new brass arm for it, turning it into an attractive and useful key again. I gave it to a newly licensed ham who seemed to have enthusiastic intentions of taking up the code - to date he never has, One day perhaps - All too often the same story...

.. I digress: The other WT 8 is to me a very unusual one. Apart from the usual black base the rest is all made of brass, not plated as most are and seemed to have some of the original lacquer left in places. I am quite sure this is not one that someone has removed the plating from, there is good evidence it was made that way.

Now it is suitably restored, as always with some feeling for patina where appropriate and it has a place in my little display.

Now the RAF D was a more serious project. But a relatively easy and satisfying one. I completely dismantled it and removed the gunge from each piece. Separating the two layers of the base- which enables the wiring and terminals to be kept out of touch. Even that was full of dirt and grime. Degreaser and warm water worked wonders and after cleaning the brass with fine wet and dry and metal polish in places it was apparent there was no physical damage before assembly all parts were given a coat of suitable clear lacquer.

It is obvious this key was meant for some hefty currents, not a low voltage milliamp job but something made to handle many watts of RF and once the cover was in place, the operators fingers could not come into contact with any metal parts. As far as I know the massive solid silver blocks for the contacts, about 10mm square are unique to this key. The lower one is mounted on a hefty copper sheet, no doubt to dissipate heat and that provides a very slight spongy touch due to the springing and reduces the sound of the metal to metal contact. See photo.

The exposure of the inner workings is no detriment these days- it is an impressive brass pounder. But I will add a photo for interest, of one with the cover on.

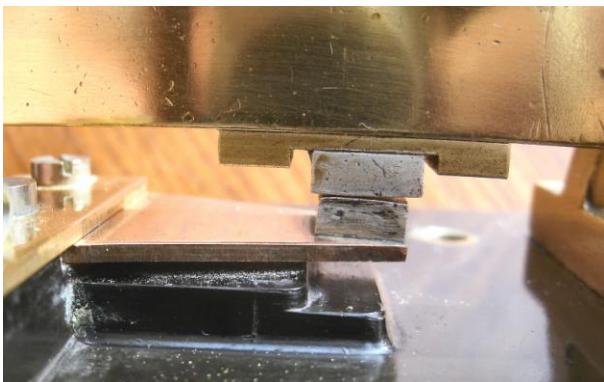
There is something about large keys and one can only echo the saying that a good big 'un usually beats a good little 'un. Only by using one can you be the judge!



Brass WT-8 Nr2 MK8



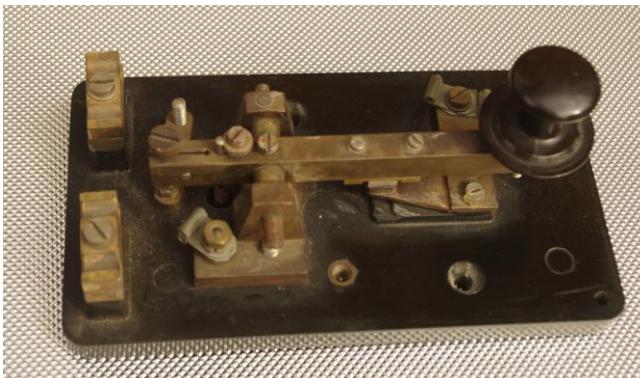
RAF



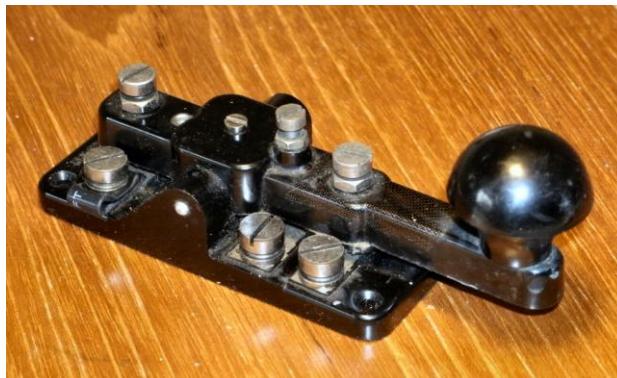
Massive Silver Contacts – fb



RAF D inside – fb



D Key as bought



W8 mk3