

International Morse Preservation Society



KEY NOTE



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<http://www.asel.demon.co.uk/fists-hq/> or <http://www.smartgroups.com/vault/fists/>

OFFICES

QSL Manager: M0AVW

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AWARDS MANAGER: G0FRL

12 Cavenham Grove, BOLTON, BL1 4UA

PRO: G4YLB. J.A. Welsh

3 Minster Cresc, DARWEN, BB3 3PY

CONTEST MANAGER: M0CLO

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NETS

Sunday QRS 0900 (loc) 3.575 2E0AJS

US 0100Z on 14058

Tues: GX0IPX/P 1930 ON 3.558 (+/-)

Net Control G3HZL

DX 14/21/28.058 on the hour for 15mins

Pse keep watch on all Novice allocations

UK Net Controls use GX0IPX/P

SUBS: UK £5.00, EEC £7.00. Others £10.00. Your renewal date appears on the mailing label and your anticipation would be much appreciated.

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All outgoing QSLs to M0AVW (address on banner).

All UK members send stamps and labels (no envelopes necessary) to the appropriate sub-manager as below:

M or 2 calls (Except for Wales) M0AYI. 7 Tynedale Terrace, Annfield Plain, STANLEY, DH9 7TZ.

G0, GM0 etc (Except GW0). G3JRY. 3 Rochford Cresc, BOSTON, PE21 9AE

G3, GM3 etc (except GW3). G0UQF. 2 East St, Darfield, BARNESLEY, S73 9AE.

G4, GM4 etc (Except GW4). M5AAQ. 6 Central Ave, SHEPSHED, LE12 9HP.

G2, G5, G6, G8 (Except for Wales) and **ALL** special (GB etc) calls to M0BPT. 38 Wheatley St, WEST BROMWICH, B70 9TJ.

All members in Wales. GW0SGG. 14 Heather Cresc, Sketty, SWANSEA, SA2 8HE

EU/DX Members: IRCs or UK Banknotes to M0AVW. Eurocheques, Girocheques or \$US bills to HQ. Club will provide envelopes.

GREETINGS

Chaos reigned here at 119 during March. Ivy spent near a week in dry dock whilst whilst they hacked bits of her away in the search for a suspect cancer, yours truly has been decidedly under the weather and although the bands were excellent, spent more time keeping warm than operating.

During the month, we have had a few resignations, generally due to a shift of interest but one members said he was sick and tired of being hounded off the QRP frequencies by FISTS members. Now over the past several months, I have had a tendency to check 7030 periodically and unless I have been particularly fortunate, I have heard absolutely nothing like this. I have however heard CQ QRP on 7028 or even 7027. On these occasions, most QRO stations would seek space elsewhere rather than be accused of causing deliberate interference. Could this be a case of not being aware of ones own TX frequency or is it perhaps indifferent calibration of a home brew receiver? Do we have some stations simmering over FISTS activity on 7028 convinced that this activity is centred on 7030? Would we still be accused of improper conduct if we called on 7026 but still managed to break through an indifferent receiver's front end which was tuned to 7030? If you wish to work the gang on 7028 and you are using QRP then please make your intentions clear. CQ FISTS de <CALL>/QRP.

We have been over this same ground so many times and still someone cries 'foul'. I can only look forward to the day when the 40M allocation equates with that in the US where (apart from Canadian SSB stations who seem to have been granted unlimited spectrum) there is sufficient space for relatively trouble free QRP operation.

AGM

We have scheduled this for 1930 on Monday, 23rd April. A little late this time due to various factors and also, the venue is changed to the Swan Hotel. This is about 500 yards lower down from the previous watering hole.

QRS CONTEST

Our EUCW wide QRS contest begins 22 April. I do hope it does not tie up the bands since it is for a full week but unless we try these things, we can never know. The full rules were of course published last month and I know that many EUCW clubs are champing at the bit so it looks like being a lot of fun. Possibly a handful of you will be entering in a competitive spirit but I would encourage you all to send in logs even though you only take part for the fun of it. It will be a great help to our Contest Manager, Keith, M0CLO.

RSGB TEST SERVICE WEEKEND

The time is drawing nigh for this very popular weekend organised by the RSGB Morse Test Service. This being the 15th Anniversary.

QRV 12/13 May/01, participating stations can be identified by their GB0 calls, usually signifying the county i.e. GB0IOW (Isle of Wight). The chief examiner will adopt the call GB0CW and his deputy GB0MTS.

A minimum of 27 stations are anticipated to be active over the weekend and the Anniversary Certificate will be available for contacts with at least 10 of the above calls. Cost of Cert is £2.50 (cheque or PO made out to RSGB), \$5.00 OR 6 IRCs.

Applications to: G4HNF, 116 Reading Rd, Woodley, RG5 3AD and please note that QSLs are not required to claim the award which is also available to listeners.

Activity will be concentrated in the 40/80m bands and to encourage newcomers, the team will be QRS in the novice CW segment of 80m.

Most of you will be aware that the event is not a contest and examiners will be happy to reply at any preferred calling speed. Use any type of key, dive in and enjoy a super friendly weekend.

AWARDS

Bob has asked me to remind you that ALL awards are £2.00 each and a reminder that this now includes the Century Award. He continues to receive claims with not even the return postage included and points out that the cost and effort required to send out a Century award is no different than for any other certificate. His address is on the banner.

WISDOM FROM WALES

Bill, GW0SGG, addressed the question of using a mechanical bug for QRS. His answer is affix an insulator choc-block on the end of the vibrator. Make sure when fixing it with a screw (or

screws) that it does not touch any other part of the key. Hold the key in the Dot position and adjust trembler to send a good long string of consecutive clean dots.

There have been many answers to this question over the years of course. My own was to mount a significant chunk of lead onto a croc-clip and try to strike a happy balance between the normal weight position and the added weight since QRS operation was usually only a temporary requirement; the advantage being that the position could be easily adjusted for a (admittedly narrow) speed range. Wasn't too successful though since the trembler needed to be adjusted for such a large speed difference but for those with a 'spare' el-bug, the change could be made permanent.

WHERE HAVE ALL THE SPACES GONE?

Whilst the bulk of the gang sent tolerably well during the SKW week, I did receive some criticism of members whose spacing left something to be desired. There was the usual crop of horse owners giving the name of their 'NAG' and it was suggested that sufficient of these 'howlers' could be encountered to constitute the basis of a book.

There were a few choice ones and to site them would be to point a finger but please keep a careful watch on those spaces. The fault is usually with characters following a terminal 'dah' though not always and sometimes, a space was introduced where there should have been none such as NNMA (CQ) or EEER (IF). MA becomes Q whilst 'AND' is frequently PD.

Out of the SKW, I challenged a station whose call began with DAAIO (yes, an accented A) as a pirate. Following a good deal of head scratching, this was finally broken down to DL2.

You don't believe me? Listen on the bands for what would seem to be a commercial station calling "FV FV". This is just plain sloppy sending and CQ should NEVER sound like that.

THE ETERNAL QUESTION

"What is the best key to buy?" Oddly enough, I still get this one thrown at me and probably will until they finally plant me. There is no such thing. You can pay an arm and a leg for some beautifully crafted piece with a glass dust cover and a special spot to dump your chewing gum. It feels great until one day you happen upon a piece of mid-thirties el-cheapo junk that fits you like the proverbial glove.

Here at HQ, there is deep and lasting love affair going on between my-self and a piece of NATO/RN brassware with a battleship grey casing. I love it but not many others do. Some time ago though I got my hands on a piece of maritime kit whilst visiting a friend in Pittsburgh. It was just the bare bones with bush bearings and the contacts (originally at least a quarter of an inch long) had been burned down to stubs through a lengthy period of keying a cathode. Trouble was that it belonged to a collector but Oh! the feel of that key. It was the last word.

Don't be in a hurry. Insist on trying each key and do not be satisfied until you get that very positive feeling that 'this is the one'. It may be a Kent (though I doubt it), a Shure or one of those superb Swedish gadgets but one thing is for certain, at sometime or another you will find it pushed into second place by a piece of non-descript gear that doesn't look worth a second glance. Be warned!

CHANGE OF CALL

Peter, G0TCF, has modified his call to GM0TCF following a QSY to Galashiels. Doesn't say if he is QRV yet but doubtless there will be a length of wire going up somewhere. With the thinning of the blood and the everpresent risk of chilling winds up the kilt, many Scots try to do the reverse and QSY to England to get out of the fridge so this makes something of a change.

I would remind our newly licensed members to be wary of such modifications by checking the suffix rather than the whole callsign because this frequently trips up the unwary. We have one member for instance who periodically changes from GW to just plain G when his narrow boat takes him outside the realms of the little red dragon though one wonders what should happen if he moors up with one half in Wales and the t'other in Cheshire??

A QUESTION OF HISTORY

Eric, G3LPS, seeks information on when the Call Book was first introduced in the UK.

Co-incidentally, he comments on a few members who respond to a CQ call with KN rather than K opining that KN should only be used AFTER a contact has been established. It is logical really. If the CQ was answered by more than one station and the caller responded to a different one then the KN is clearly not in order.

It is important to establish communication first. I have had CQs returned with long strings such as "Nice to hear you agn Geo = it has been a long time de <CALL>" which sort of begs the assumption that others are unlikely to reply. Most though are less assumptive with a simple "Hw Geo? K" but I would prefer that communication was confirmed in the first instance.

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SMARTGROUPS

Confusion reigns in some quarters. The listings posted on the site (www.smartgroups.com/vault/fists/) are in two flavours. Primary one of course is the dB III+ though ALLFISTS is also converted to a text file. The latter is copied as a .TXT file in Standard Delimited format but since the fields NUMBER, PREFIX and SUFFIX are 'tight' (the data tends to occupy the full width of the field) you will end up with no spaces and it looks a little confusing when displayed in a text editor. The best way to view these is to choose the dBase version and download the database viewer which is available on the same page.

This is a DOS programme which goes back many years but Windows will handle it from a DOS prompt. Use the command DBV.EXE -W <FILE> assuming that the dBase file is in the same folder. The addition of '-w' ensures that the display is in a scroll rather than a record view. Navigate to the top of the column you wish to search (<HOME> always takes you to the top of the file), press 'S' or 's', enter the string you want to find and it's as easy as that. I have also included a text file with these destructions which can be viewed in NotePad or any other text editor.

There is also a further file called 'DBFEDIT' should you wish to make amendments as well as viewing the data and this has an in-built help file.

The .DBF files are compressed and converted to a self extracting format which will open them fully. Be aware of the destination though when doing this and modify it if you wish to decompress to a different folder than the default.

NEW MEMBERS

| | | | | | |
|------|--------|-------|------|--------|--------|
| 7760 | G3LPH | Ted | 7761 | SWL1 | Dick |
| 7762 | M5AMG | Ryan | 7763 | JE1TRV | Atsu |
| 7764 | M0NZA | Robin | 7765 | M0CUQ | Graham |
| 7766 | F5VGY | Hans | 7767 | 9A2WJ | Deki |
| 7768 | G4AQZ | Geoff | 7769 | M0TRV | Trevor |
| 7770 | 2E0RAF | Hill | | | |

THE SWANSEA RALLY

Bill reports that it was better attended than anticipated and although falling below its peak of a few years ago was on a par with last year and registering some 700+ visitors.

Traders from as far afield as Devon and Warwickshire exhibiting, must have considered the rally worth attending. 18 members signed in at the FISTS stand, all with most encouraging comments and Bill thoughtfully acknowledged the kind hospitality of the Swansea ARS.

WHAT HAPPENED TO HONESTY?

Members have always been encouraged to give accurate reports

even (and indeed especially) in contest conditions. When you are chasing a report from a DX station it does absolutely nothing for you when your 5W to a random wire evokes a report of 599 and the target is running a kilowatt to a multi-element yagi and is shifting your S-meter needle to 7. Contests are great for evaluating the efficiency of your antenna but there hardly seems any point in offering other than a true report.

This was brought home to G3KSU during a couple of the RSGB cumulatives on 80m and 599 apart, he was frequently asked to repeat the details. He is drawn to the conclusion that the only 'honest' contests these days are those using QRP where 559 seems to be about the norm.

Are we frightened of offering a 'true' report for fear of offending someone? There would seem to be a small group of individuals (G3ZQS is included) who are seemingly causing deep offence. If a signal is chirping like some sexy sparrow then my report will likely be something like 597c. I will try to inform just how prominent the chirp is based on first a 500Hz and then a 250Hz filter. This is surely of far more value than a fictitious 599. The TX is cold and we find that on a 250Hz bandpass, the start of a reply is out of band. Shift to 500Hz without moving the VFO. If your contact is still outside the bandpass then he has a heck of a problem. Tell him! This way he will wait for a reasonable warm-up period before trying another QSO and if, by luck, he encounters another 'honest' report, he will be able to assess just how critical the warming up session is.



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GX5IPX

G4PDJ. Chris is curious about the position of GX5IPX with regard to number and points value. I brought this to the attention of Bob, G0FRL, who suggested that an earlier number could be allocated. This is easy enough of course but there seems something improper about re-assigning the number from a Silent Key (I still shudder a little when using G3ZQS and quoting FISTS 0002) and other numbers are there to be reclaimed should this be required. It is therefore easier to allocate a completely new number to the call and in this case, following 2e0000, have assigned the number 7778 to GX5IPX. This means of course that as a club station, Chris's fist is worth 3 Century points. Hope this clears up the konfxn. Hi.

THE STRAWBERRY BASKET

Well, I am still at a loss to understand which combination of key-presses caused the wipe-out which occurred last month so I'm keeping my fingers crossed now.

G0WYW. David is cautious about answering CQ calls which are at a speed greater than he is able to copy and (wrongly I would say) assumes that computers are being used. This is in fact rarely the case until you get beyond the realm of 40-50 wpm because HSC members and many others take pride in the fact that they can converse at speeds within this range. If you recognise the call as FISTS then respond at your own speed - if the member is worth his salt, he will reply accordingly. G4MLW. A note of caution in Ians' letter. Do not be complacent about your own abilities. After a QSY, he went back to the old abode in order to remove antennas and fixtures. Working 30 feet up, he had removed three of the four pairs of angle brackets when a 'Rawlbolt' sheered causing him to take a short cut back to ground level. A

patio table luckily intervened and he was rushed to hospital with serious head injuries and was fortunate not to lose an eye. The parameds are still pondering how he managed to avoid far more serious injuries especially if it had been an angle bracket and not the more benign patio furniture which interrupted his descent. Be careful out there people. G3VRU. I got 5 pages from Eric which under normal circumstances would have been reduced to just one. Eric however has severe visual problems and needed to use a heavy marker pen and what would otherwise equate to a 72pt type face. Met up with a kindred soul in the shape of Derek, G3DOV, during which notes were compared and mutual sympathies exchanged. Eric extends his apologies to the kind folks who sent him QSL cards and trusts they will understand that he simply cannot reciprocate since the 'bingo' pen hardly lends itself to the job in hand. G3KSU. Alan's love affair with QRP was touched upon earlier and reading, one gathers the impression that the Scots are more likely to possess 'decent' receivers than their G counterparts. At least, Alan finds them responding to his calls more readily than the some folks across town but he promises to see what he can do about getting an antenna aloft. In the meantime, his thanks to all who took the trouble to decipher 'the weakest signal on the band'. PA2DGR. I am still waiting for a more detailed description of the antenna which Hans is using and comprises two 6M fishing rods helically wound and mounted at 90 degrees to each other. Meanwhile, the German Army Radio Van (unimog, 1958) is completely resored and the Rhode/Schwarz transmitter plus Siemens receiver enjoy a new lease of life. He depends upon this set up for 80m activity so if you hear him, let us hope he didn't forget to put on the handbrake. G14CFQ. Hi Gary. The Junkers JU-88 is an excellent piece of engineering but note the earlier item about choosing your straight key. The wooden base and cavity of the Kent he finds off-putting. G3IUC. Regular QSOs with Chrliie, G4PTU who hails from Blackburn and not a million miles from Darwen. These two may be found 'putting the world to rights' most weeks. A hint: For those interested, Boyes store in Scarborough are (at least at the time of his writing) flogging those fancy Radio Clocks - seek Rugby time sigs for reference - which were previously around the £70.00 mark for just £3.99. GM2AOL. Sam bought a Paragon from G8KW in the 80's and it has since developed a fault which has left him with only the LF bands and 10M. Following two attempts at surgery by two individual companies (both of which resulted in very short-lived cures) he turned to Ten-Tec who were not prepared to offer parts. During this period, his antenna system went belly up so he is now planning to be back QRV with a new rig and antenna. Hope we will soon be hearing sweet sounds emanating from Dundee Sam. G3CWW. Yes Tony, The prime cause of a sudden reduction in numbers is due to the reluctance of a large number of US members to renew on time each month. Nancy has no option but to mark them as defaulters following which, they come back in steadily, restoring our numbers and augmenting the batches of new members which I get from her a couple of times a month. Infuriating. The list was at one point up to 17 pages but that was in the days when Nancy was not so quick to 'cull' so a lot of it was dead wood. Fear not. Our numbers still grow. At the present moment, Nancy is circulating the US gang and since they outnumber us by a large factor, it would be better to apply their recommended WARC spots. I concur re. nets. They do get kind of congested and waiting for your two pennyworth is somewhat akin to watching paint dry. Hi. M5AJJ. Ray confesses that his call may be heard on SSB or under G8VDD on VHF. However, he is waiting to take up the his Fathers' call of G2CD shortly though he may also be heard as KB7SGV when in the US.

THE IN-BOX

G3KSU. Alan looked in on the ARRL cw contest (17/18 Feb) and found the bands packed with strong CW sigs. This time, many of them really were 599. Managed 28 States on 10m running 2 watts with a mag-loop. Odd how the bulk of US stations are prefixed 'K' rather than W or N. G0JJQ. Wayne, having fettled his antenna started to hear sigs on 80m again. Radio is not deaf after all - just a cattle trucked antenna. Pleasure to work G0GSY with a nice long chat. Came town to Wayne's speed - what a gent! GM4HYF. George had an overnight stay in hospital recently with a suspect heart attack though it would now appear to be angina. Caused a 'miss' for the February white stick tape

but he placed February and March on opposing sides of the tape. MEGS he tells me is to apply for affiliation so will look forward to that George. **GM4ELV**. Dave is huntin' for a power lead for the HW7. If any member has a spare then he would be most obliged. His eye-sight is not good enough to read the schematic. **GW0VMR**. Patrick worked Kostas, SV1DLS on 15M and was happy to record 559 for his 3 watts but after tidying up the log noticed that he had forgotten to PLUG IN HIS ANTENNA so the only thing connected to the rig outlet was an ATU. Would be interesting to know what sort of ATU performs like this. Hi. It is normally connected to an 80m dipole, vertical or endfed but just in case the worst happens, a 20m loop is concealed underneath the wall paper via an open wire feeder (plant labels). ATU seems to be a rats nest of 10m tubing and croc clips with a couple of variable caps which can be configured as CLC/LCL/CL/LC. The indoor ant works well from 30 to 6M and he would recommend it to anyone short of space - well either that or build his ATU which seems to work just as well. **OZ1HQG**. Ryan retains this call but may also be found as OZ0RS. New QTH with G5RV (so as not to spook his new neighbours) but more to come I suspect. <oz1hqg@qsl.net>

G4ZPY

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US EVENT FOR D-DAY MEMORIAL

From Stan, K4UK, I learn that a special event call WW2DDM is to be activated from 6/10 June commemorating the dedication of the D-Day Memorial in Redford VA.

Stan does not give details of times/frequencies however but more information is available from the web-site: <www.qsl.net/w4cfr/> and special QSL cards will be issued for contacts.



And here is K4UK who recently celebrated his 70th. birthday. Also shown is G0FSP at Ft Myers, FLA..

WANTED

Jerzy, SP3DG, would like to build a QSK rig around the Russian 2Y745. Anyone got a suitable circuit?

QSL CARDS

I am rapidly running out of the stock material for the original (yellow) cards and am hesitant to re-order because I have purchased an A3 ink-jet printer which will permit me to produce a much more attractive card. Shall have to ask a little extra to cover the ink since we will not be getting too many out of a pack and re-coop the cost of the printer but it will be minimal (perhaps £1.00 per order) whilst offering a more colourful QSL on

white 160gsm board.

The reverse of the card has been simplified and will be pre-printed by a local printer at very favourable cost.

G3TUX

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MEMORIA

The Spalding Club has acquired the call of G400 (it's founder) for use as its Special Event Call. Jim, G0NTR asks me to publicise this to ensure that the call is not categorised as a pirate when active.

ACTIVITY FROM FLORIDA

The photograph on this page arrived courtesy of G0FSP who spent over three months basking in the Florida sunshine. During his stay, he managed to work some 200 members (mainly on 10m) with a string-bag quad which produced a 599 for 5 watts report from GM.

ACTIVITY FROM SV5

Carl GW0VSW, will be active as SV5/GW0VSW from the island of Rhodes, June 16-30th. Activity will be mainly CW on all bands 40-10 meters. Operation should be around 0500 and 1600 UTC family permitting. The rig will be an IC706 with dipole antennas. Look for Carl on the IOTA and QRP frequencies. QSL via homecall. Looking a wee bit far ahead for this one of course but perhaps a sticky note on the rig would be in order?

FINALE

Does anyone know the source of the data tfc arund 10.120? This appears in short bursts following a regular period of silence. No idea what it is but it is very wide band and strong enough to throw the S-meter to near maximum.

From 0000z on 14 April to 2359 on 15th, the US Coast-to-Coast event will produce club stations on the bands 80/10m (except for WARC). Awards available for:

A minimum of 5 Clubs — Bronze Certificate

For contact of 10 Clubs — Silver Certificate

For contact of 15 Clubs — Gold Certificate

Should be quite a few 3-pointers to be found over this period but otherwise, no QSLs required and DX applicants should submit their claims with \$6.00 US to:

N7GSU, 24142 SW Peavine Rd, Mc Minnville, OR 97128-8368.

Again, my apologies for the late distribution of this letter. As I mentioned, we have had a few problems here and the results of the tests on Ivy indicated that urgent surgery was necessary. She will be going in to dry dock on the 2nd April for the removal of what is strongly suspected to be a malignant growth. This has put me into quite a tizzy but indications are that there should be no real problem since the growth has been spotted at quite an early stage.

As I write this, the trees are showing leaf, Magpies and Crows are going into the construction business and the squirrels are playing their annual game of catch-me-if-you-can. Sadly, no song birds are in evidence right now which gives me cause for concern since round here, the tits are usually prominent and nuisance though they may be, there are no starlings.

Have a smashing month people. Enjoy this beautiful spring weather and if time is available I will be active during the QRS contest.

73/88 es stay sober

Geo.