

# BRASSPOUNDER



March 2010 (Issue 48)

Welcome to the March edition.

Not too much to report this month, I guess its the aftermath of EYAW 2010; and everyone is taking time out to recuperate and get prepared for EUCW QRS 2010 hopefully...

As I write this, its not long after returning from the 48th Norbreck Castle Rally in Blackpool; where myself, M0BMN, M0CDL and G3ZOD attended. What became obvious to me whilst listening to both members/non members at the show; was just how much CW is becoming once again of interest to amateurs of all ages. Both comments from more mature amateurs who said that they wished that they'd continued with CW after getting the pass certificate; and from newer entrants, who were also full of interest and expressed a wish to learn the mode to enhance their enjoyment of the hobby. We were all kept busy throughout the day answering questions from members and prospective members. Gra. G3ZOD has produced a brief overview and images of the rally, these can be seen on the FISTS website.

[www.fists.co.uk](http://www.fists.co.uk)

Lets look at your reports/comments received this month from participants..

Firstly, from Bill; GOBAK who comments

Hi Rob,

Please find attached my Ladder Log for March 2010.

I had a fantastic afternoon session on the 14<sup>th</sup> March, it seemed like one station after another giving me 17 points. How things can change.

The afternoon session on the 28<sup>th</sup> gave some weird conditions. The bands were in a terrible state. I realised very early on that 80 metres was dead so I decided to give a shout out on 40 metres. I had around 4 stations reply to my cq call, the strongest was G14CBG with a super 579. I sent my thanks for the call, name qth and signal report and passed it back. The qsb had taken his signal from a 579 to unreadable so no exchange was managed. I sent a quick qsb please try again, still nothing. The

band had gone dead on me, from 3 or 4 stations calling to no reply to my continued cq call. Sorry to G14CBG if you are reading this.

I decided to try a call on 80 metres just in case the band had improved. M0PIE Bob in Huddersfield returned my call. Not a million miles from Leeds but anyway 2 points on the Ladder, cheers Bob. After clearing with Bob, nothing on 80 metres. I spent the rest of the session switching bands trying for some contacts.

I managed to work 2 new stations for me, G4LJU and G0TLU both on 40 metres. In all a disappointing afternoon session for me and I was sure glad I had decided not to use qrp for the Ladder this year. The 28<sup>th</sup> afternoon session gave me a total of 11 points, I hope the evening session was better for those members who can manage to work that.

Here at the G0BAK, the evening session is a non starter with having our 18 Month daughter in the next bedroom to the shack. In all I have found March to be good for radio with some good openings on 20 and 17 metres. I know 15 and 10 have also been open at times. Lets hope this is the sign of the conditions improving and I hope to work many more members before the end of the year. Best wishes to you Rob and all Fists Members.

Bill, G0BAK

Thanks for your report Bill. I notice recently on the news group that people have commenting on band conditions; lets hope that things do improve throughout the year.

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And from Derrick, G3LHJ who comments;

Hi Robert.

Here's my log for the first time on the "Ladder Activity" sessions, very much enjoyed, It was nice to say Hi to a few guys I had not worked for over 14 Years and also getting used to the slower speeds on my keyer Hi.

Hope to cu in the April sessions. Enjoyed the read of the Spring KN.

73 Cul de Derrick G3LHJ. Fists 14558

Good to have you on board for the ladder Derrick, really pleased you've managed to catch up with some old aquiantances too!

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From Jeremy. G0AZR.

Hello Rob,

The first Sunday was a real washout for me for some reason.....I struggled to make any QSO s at all.

So I sat for both sessions on the 28th (albeit after my 60th birthday party the night before, a couple of weeks early I know...but a party no less).  
As usual I thoroughly enjoyed it.....and nice to meet Piet, PA3AFF for the first time.  
Of course I just had to work a YL again...so I still think I should get a YL bonus.  
Conditions were fair at my end...really struggled to pull Ray, G4MSN out of the murk for some reason (Norwich beat Leeds the previous day so I apologised).  
All QSOs on my newly acquired, and long awaited Junker key !!!!

Jeremy  
G0AZR  
14553

Hello Jeremy. Well, you certainly are seeming to be adept at finding the YL op's when you're on air! how do you do it? (Hi) congratulations on reaching your 60th, and I'm sure you'll enjoy using your Junkers key.

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From Colin, M0XED

Hello Rob

Please find attached a log detailing my humble efforts whilst participating in the ladder of Sunday, 28th March 2010, which actually represents my total for the month. I got off to a good start at 14:05z with a 15 minute QSO with Erkki OK7QR but from then on it was a different story, though I admit to being distracted by the chance of a couple of QRP - QRP QSO's. So in total, two QSO's from the afternoon and one from the evening!

I could hear Darren G0OTT from time to time so expect he has done quite well. Speaking more generally, I appreciate that members must work extremely hard to copy my (almost) 3W KX1 signal, especially under current conditions, so grateful thanks to all for your patience. Time for a K2 perhaps....

73 Colin M0XED  
FISTS 14573.

Welcome aboard Colin, thanks for your report, as commented earlier, lets hop that conditions improve throughout the year.

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And from Peter. G4LHI.

Hello Robert,

I attach my report & claim for the March Ladder Activity, I was fairly pleased with my score, very many thanks to all members & non members that once again in spite of poor condition, made this another very enjoyable & interesting event. I managed 23 QSO's for my total of 45 points this month, working just the afternoon session, but did manage to earwig on the evening of the 28th & conditions seemed to be very much better & heard quite a lot of activity, well done chaps & look forward to seeing some big scores this month?? Very pleased to work an old friend who used to live

fairly local to me & used to join in our weekly practice sessions until he went to live in PA land, thanks for the QSO & points Andy, PA1SOP, & also nice to work another old friend, Piet, PA3AFF, a regular Activity contestant, lets hope we hear more from you both again during the years activities. That's all for now folks, see you on the next one, in the mean time please take care & have fun on the key.  
73/88 for now de Peter G4LHI # 2219 & Jean once again says thanks for your kind wishes.

Good to hear from you Peter, once again, thanks for your report and overview. Nice to hear that you've managed to meet up with Andy and Piet once again.

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Piet, PA3AFF joins us too for the first time this year. Welcome Piet..

Dr Rob,

Here is my first entry for the Ladder Activity 2010. I was able to be present in all 4 timeslots in March, and send my best two. Happy to have worked several (new) members with high numbers. Also pleased to work 2E0JCY. I heard him the first day calling CQ, but he couldn't read my signal.  
Score 22 points.73. Piet, Schaft, Fists 445. Pwr 15W into Zepp ant.

Always a pleasure to hear from you Piet, and good to hear that you're meeting new members, look forward to receiving future logs from all the new additions this month.

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And from Darren, G0OTT, who comments;

Hello Rob,

I only managed to get onto the ladder events on the 28th March.

The band conditions were pretty poor with QRN and QSB. Still, I managed to work some members and non members over the bands.

Managed to muster up 21 points by switching through the bands, nothing heard on the bands above 20m.

I did put out a few CQ's on 10m and will try again next month

Regards. Darren. G0OTT.

Good to hear from you Darren. Lets hope next month is a better one for you. I admire your resolve (And others) for hopping around the bands during activity times.

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And from Phil, M6PHL.

Hello Rob,

Please find attached my Log for the March Fists Ladder.

Very good to work you all again including a few members not worked before.

Conditions on 80m being very difficult during the afternoon session on the 28th

March made things very interesting, QSB wiping out several attempted contacts.

I hope even more members will join in during the year.

All the best. And 73 to all.

Phil

M6PHL

Fists 14543

Good to hear from you once again Phil. Glad you're finding the ladder activity interesting.

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From John. 2E0JCY

Hello Robert,

Please find my log for the march ladder attached. I managed to work a few members again this month and was pleased to meet Ian G6TGO and Piet PA3AFF for the first time.

Regards John 2E0JCY #13253

Hello John. Piet also comments that he was pleased to meet up with you for the first time.

Always nice to hear about members meeting for the first time. I hope its the first of many contacts for you both.

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From Derek. M0DRK

Hi Robert, Here attached is my log for the March Ladder, many thanks to those stations that gave me points again. Nice to work Piet PA3AFF again, this time on the Ladder. Take care Robert, see you next month, 73 for now. Derek M0DRK.

Good to hear from you again Derek. Lookforward to hearing from you next month. Regards to yourself and Mollie. (Yes I did get time to consume an easter egg or two, very enjoyable too! Hi.)

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From Ray G4MSN.

Hi Rob. I attach my results for March. Conditions did not seem to be that good, especially on the 14<sup>th</sup> - so resorted to running 30 watts. Worked a few more new members plus Bill G0BAK again who is always 599 with me as he's only about 5 miles away - thanks Bill.

I also managed to work K1TG, my first US member, on 18 MHz (with 100W) on the 6<sup>th</sup> March so things could be looking up.

73 Ray G4MSN.

Good to hear from you Ray, and congratulations on your first 18MHz FISTS NA Member in the log of G4MSN. I get the feeling that many are waiting for the sunspot cycle to improve.

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From Erkki OH7QR, who comments;

Hello Robert,  
Please find attached my ladder-log for March.2010. I had a pause from radio but now I am back again. I'm sorry to have missed the "Exchange your age week". Next year I'll try to be more precise, HI.

73 and tnx

Erkki OH7QR, fists 8318

Good to hear from you Erkki, many missed hearing you during EYAW but we all look forward to hearing you next year.

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Finally. From Gra. G3ZOD with his report and some fine input this month!

Hi Rob.

## **Soldering BNC Plugs**

Regarding my previous question about soldering BNC plugs, I received the following from Keith G0SXG FISTS #1138:

I have just read one of your articles in Keynote in which you ask for advice in soldering the pin of BNC plugs.

I have done lots of these, though many years ago, and agree that they are fiddly things! I prefer the ones without the holes since, whether one uses it or not for applying solder, one can't avoid getting excess solder on the outside of the pin shoulder which then prevents assembly of the close-fitting parts. So I encourage the use of the hole-less pins.

You are quite right to try to avoid removing some strands of wire as this always makes the joint weaker and is generally troublesome. You need three hands, as you've discovered, I'm sure, so the use of a small bench vice or mole-grip is advised. The method I used is as follows.

The trick is two-fold:

1. After heating the shoulder of the pin, apply a little resin-cored solder to the top opening and let it flow to the bottom. Avoid filling the whole tube.

2. After preparing the wire end, dip it well into some soldering flux then twist it into a straight shape as you would normally do. This will remove any excess.

Heat the pin-tube to melt the solder then, whilst still applying heat, push the wire carefully into the tube, right to the bottom. Remove the heat immediately, holding the wire still while it cools.

The small tin of flux that I bought fifty years ago is till a quarter full, but all I can find on Maplin's web-site today is a "Flux Dispensing Pen": Order Code: N63AA at £7.99.

<http://www.maplin.co.uk/Search.aspx?criteria=solder%20flux&source=15>

## Activities Logs

For some time I've been using a Windows program that reads my electronic logbook, finds the eligible log entries, checks member numbers, works out points and creates logs in the preferred M0BPT Activity submission formats. I thought it would be useful to extend it and make it generally available, so I put a copy on the web site in time for the end of Exchange Your Age week:

[http://www.fists.co.uk/members/software/FISTSLogConverterSetup\\_1\\_0\\_0.zip](http://www.fists.co.uk/members/software/FISTSLogConverterSetup_1_0_0.zip)

It will read ADIF (.ADI) files (most logging programs can create these) or Ham Radio Deluxe Access (.MDB) database files. As it needs to know FISTS numbers, all that's necessary to do is include them somewhere in the logbook Comments / Notes like this:

FISTS 54321

e.g.:

Running 5kw dipole fists 54321 terrible chirp

It will work for **\*ALL\*** the activities in the 2010 Activity Calendar

[http://www.m0bpt.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/activity\\_calendar\\_2010.htm](http://www.m0bpt.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/activity_calendar_2010.htm) so no excuses for not submitting logs to Rob!!

## Key Note 1!

Thanks to Vince G0CVH #48 we now have the first ever Key Note (dated October 1987) available on the web site. (Strictly speaking of course it wasn't called Key Note back then!)

<http://www.fists.co.uk/docs/keynotes/Key%20Note%20October%201987.pdf>

## Points

Regarding extra points for QSOs with YLs, with the different languages involved it's not always possible to be sure if the other operator is an OM or YL. So it would be necessary to ask and, of course, in the politically-correct and litigious UK we would no doubt be at risk of prosecution for discrimination! YLs and OMs could be allocated different ranges of numbers or have the entries annotated OM or YL in the member lists, but that would no doubt also be regarded as discrimination!

Seriously though, I have been thinking that the points a station is worth should relate to their rarity. This is to encourage contacts with HQ stations outside the UK. So, I have had a look at the proportions of HQ members. Here are the DXCC countries that have 1% or more of the membership (there are many more at less than 1%):

Country	Members
G	70.9%
GM	4.6%
GW	3.9%
D	3.5%
I	2.5%
PA	1.9%
GI	1.4%
ON	1.3%
EI	1.0%
F	1.0%

Even GM, with the highest proportion next to G, is less than 5%. So my suggestion is that G callsigns (i.e. G, M, 2E) should be worth 2 points and other HQ DXCC countries should be 3 points. This begs the question of points for members from other "chapters"; I'd suggest they should be 2 points.

## Ladder

**Sunday 14th:** the afternoon was very quiet from my point-of-view - perhaps people were taking a break as EYAW finished the previous day? I did hear John 2E0JCY on 80m but extremely weak. In fact he was about the same strength as on 6m, but with the noise level on 80m it was impractical to have a contact.

In the evening I was delighted to meet up with Piet PA3AFF #445 for the first time. Piet is of course a very active member and also one of the key contributors of Key Notes to the web archive. This session was also notable for finishing with an 85 minute chat with Wally G3GXQ!

**Sunday 28th:** I couldn't spend much time on the air, but was pleased to meet up with Peter G4LHI and Erkki OH7QR on 20m for the first time this year.

73 de Graham (Gra) G3ZOD FISTS #8385.



Thanks for your input this month Gra. I was interested to read your thoughts on the awarding of points. I'm a little concerned that, it could create a playing field which may cause an individual to ignore another member(s) call to concentrate on looking further afield for extra points. This is purely an observation and thought on my part, but I'd be interested to hear what others think.

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And the latest on the awards from G3ZOD.

## Awards

Congratulations to Milan OK1KW #4827 who has earned his Millionaire Award along with his 2 and 3 Million endorsement stickers!

Congratulations go to Milan for this fine effort.

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Here is the latest ladder table.

CALL	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTALS	PWR
G4LHI	31	38	45										114	QRO
G0BAK	21	29	28										78	QRO
G0AZR	8	29	21										58	QRO
M6PHL	13	15	28										56	QRO
M0DRK	11	22	20										53	QRO
G0OTT	0	19	21										40	QRO
G3ZOD	8	16	11										35	QRO
OH7QR	16	0	15										31	QRO
2E0JCY	0	14	14										28	QRO
G3LHJ	0	0	28										28	QRO
G4MSN	0	11	11										22	MIX
PA3AFF	0	0	22										22	QRO
GI4CGB	6	4	10										20	QRO
M0GGK	7	0	0										7	QRO
M0XED	0	0	6										6	QRP

A few comments from me before closing BP for another month; firstly. I've decided to abort the GOHGA VHF Activity owing to lack of support. Only one member has taken up the challenge, and that is G3ZOD. I thank him for his support over the last three months. Sadly it has not found approval by the membership. Although interest seemed quite strong at the suggestion of the activity.

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Secondly. I must remind you of the FISTS sponsored EUCW QRS Party 2010. Dates of operation are; **Monday 26th April 2010, 0001 UTC, to Friday 30th April 2010, 2359 UTC.**

Full rules to be found here

[http://www.m0bpt.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/activity\\_calendar\\_2010.htm](http://www.m0bpt.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/activity_calendar_2010.htm)

I hope you'll be able to find time to participate and submit a log, bear in mind that there is also a QRP section. Here's some images of Ray, GØEML with his EUCW MRM (Most readable Morse) Award for 2009. Also take a look at a recent gift..Lucky man! Thanks for sharing these with us Ray.





At a request from me; G4LHI has sent me an image showing him with his EYAW Certificate for 2010. Thanks Peter.





Thats all from me for another month. So till next time.

"Keep well. Keep pounding Brass"

73. MOBPT



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