FISTS DOWN UNDER
Newsletter April 2013

**Editor & QSL Manager for ZL: Nigel Hardy, ZL2TX,
P.O. Box 15078, Otaki 5542, New Zealand. - Tel: 06-364-6339**

**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**

**QSL Manager for ZL6FF: Nigel Hardy, ZL2TX at address above.
QSL Manager for VK2FDU: Chris Thompson VK2CTN at address above**

**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.

NEW MEMBERS

This month we welcome **ZL2LN- Barry Davenport #14159** from Motueka at the top of the South Island. Barry joins us through his success in winning one of the FISTS Down Under Prizes for the N.Z.A.R.T. Straight Key Night 2012 (See below) Barry is well known to those of our members who take part in the occasional 80 metre CW activities in New Zealand.

We also welcome **VK4FJGS- Jason Schlenker #14160** from Rockhampton, Queensland.

And **VK3EO-Thomas Brownstein #14161** who lives in Swan Hill on the Murray River, Northern Victoria, some 336 km north of Melbourne.

We hope to publish personal profiles of Barry, Jason and Thomas in a forthcoming edition of the newsletter.

MEMBERS' NEWS

Thanks to the following members for donations received recently – **ZL2IH-Ian #9027; VK6QW-Bill #14106; ZL1AAR-Gwynne #9028; ZL1CDX-Turner #9048; ZL1AYQ-Jim #9602 and VK4ZW-Ray #9681**

Following the publication of pictures of his birthday celebrations, **ZL2AOH-Ralph #1073** received a number of congratulatory messages from members. Ralph says many thanks to you all and especially **K4UK-Stan #2934** who produced special birthday QSL cards and **JO3HPM-Nao #15008** who sent Ralph a commemorative Japanese tea cup. Nao says that The characters on the cup read - "Celebrating 90 years old, Ralph-san." He also says that the fruits decorating the cup (cantaloupes) are believed to protect a person from illness. (*So far, so good, said Ralph!*)

At the recent Central Victoria RadioFest, **VK3UX-Drew #9118** was delighted at being asked to do the judging of the Homebrew Competition. He expressed amazement at the number and quantity of entries, which he described all as all being good.

Drew said it was a daunting task to examine all the models carefully and read their helpful documentation. (TNX to WIA News)

OTHER MEMBER'S NEWS

M0VAW-Arthur #9861 and his XYL from North Norfolk, have been visiting their son in Wellington. While here Arthur has been using his Yaesu FT-817 QRP rig to make a few contacts as ZL/M0AVW. In addition to an on air QSO, Arthur met **ZL2AOH-Ralph #1073** for an enjoyable coffee break at the national museum Te Papa. Arthur also arranged contact with ZL2AIM-Ian #9083 and took part in the Commonwealth Contest.

HOUSEKEEPING

Here is the latest renewals list. Please check whether you are listed and if so, please forward your renewal subscription.   Please let us know if you are wrongly listed, want a replacement renewal form, or generally have any queries.

Renewals due by 30 April 2013; **some are overdue**: -   **9066 - 9067 - 9069 - 9070 - 9072 - 9075 - 9097 - 9118 - 9566 - 9601 - 9602 - 9620 - 9663 - 9673 - 14105 - 14116 - 14117 - 14118 - 14119 - 14121 - 14134 - 14136 - 14137 - 14138 - 14139 - 14140 -**

TRAWLING THE WEB

This YouTube video is a French TV news item featuring a 102 year old active Morse operator - http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=J6GvFzBdYaE

The results of the 25th Anniversary year Prefix Awards have been posted to the FISTS USA website. http://www.fists.org

"The Morse Crusade" – yet another organization for the promotion of the code - http://www.themorsecrusade.g5fz.co.uk/

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

These are some of the CW contest/event offerings inApril 2013, most of which will be of more interest to our northern hemisphere readers. Thanks to WA7BNM Contest Calendar **http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html**

RSGB 80m Club Championship, CW	1900Z-2030Z, Apr 1
LZ Open 40m Sprint Contest	0400Z-0800Z, Apr 6
SP DX Contest	1500Z, Apr 6 to 1500Z, Apr 7
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Apr 10 and 1900Z-2000Z, Apr 10 and 0300Z-0400Z, Apr 11
JIDX CW Contest	0700Z, Apr 13 to 1300Z, Apr 14
SKCC Weekend Sprintathon	1200Z, Apr 13 to 2400Z, Apr 14
EU Spring Sprint, CW	1600Z-1959Z, Apr 13
Georgia QSO Party	1800Z, Apr 13 to 2359Z, Apr 14
Hungarian Straight Key Contest	1500Z-1700Z, Apr 14
Holyland DX Contest	2100Z, Apr 19 to 2100Z, Apr 20
ES Open HF Championship	0500Z-0859Z, Apr 20
CQ Manchester Mineira DX Contest	1200Z, Apr 20 to 2359Z, Apr 21
YU DX Contest	2100Z, Apr 20 to 1700Z, Apr 21
Run for the Bacon QRP Contest	0100Z-0300Z, Apr 22
SKCC Sprint	0000Z-0200Z, Apr 24
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Apr 24 and 1900Z-2000Z, Apr 24 and 0300Z-0400Z, Apr 25
Helvetia Contest	1300Z, Apr 27 to 1259Z, Apr 28
QRP to the Field	1500Z, Apr 27 to 0300Z, Apr 28
Florida QSO Party	1600Z, Apr 27 to 2159Z, Apr 28

SHACK VISITS

Last month we said we would be publishing an illustrated article that we had received about a member's shack, and here it is We said that we hope to make shack visits a regular feature. The response to our request for articles on members' shacks has been underwhelming. So please let us know how and where you operate. If you aren't sure how to go about it, just send us your notes and we'll knock it into shape for you. Add photos of course.

THE TRUTH SHALL OUT – OR – THAT PICTURE OF MY SHACK.
By ZL2AIM-Ian #9683

I am sure you all have had photographs taken of you in your shack. Just have a look at QRZ.com and you will see that a high percentage of the pictures are of the operator in front of his pristine shack. It doesn't matter if the shack is a huge room full of radios in matching consoles, or whether it is one rig in a corner shelf. But generally speaking the shack is spotless and everything laid out with military precision. I wonder if that is always a true reflection of one's shack.....

Well let's start off with a picture of my shack;

Well I think it is pretty neat. All the equipment well laid out and easy to get at all my keys and paddles etc.

Top shelf left to right is an inverter when I just need a bit of power when it goes off – living in Hikuai means the power does vary a lot and we have our fair share of outages. Next comes my TenTec 1340 QRP rig and next to it a TenTec ZM2 ATU. On its right is my OHR 100A 80m QRP rig along with its digital dial. Then comes an OHR 100 w dummy load. Then a speaker and two power meters.

2nd shelf down (L to R) The tiny Altoids tin with an 80m Tx RX inside (Pixie II). Then comes a Yaesu Dummy load / Wattmeter, and sitting next to it an Ameritron AL811 linear. To its right are my Kenwood clock and then a single miniature paddle and a South African military Jardillier straight key.

3rd shelf down. (L to R) A Galbraith paddle which is connected to my IC703+. Then a LDG M-1000 meter on top of a LDG AT-1000 Pro II Autotuner. A Kenwood speaker and above it an Icom IC-R75. Next comes the Icom 706 MKIIG with an Icom speaker on top.

Desk top. My laptop with HRD software. Then A Vibroplex paddle for my TS570S which is on a bracket hanging from the shelf above. Next to the Vibroplex is a Czech straight key and behind it a Junker PO straight key, Under the TS570s is a Elecraft K2/100 along with its KAT-100 ATU. The other Vibroplex is connected to the K2 and the Bencher paddle is for the Icom 706 MKIIG. Finally the NATO straight key is for the 706. Behind it you may see my CMOS keyer which I use with the 706 as it does not have a memory keyer. Above the Bencher paddle is a IC 2725 VHF UHF rig.

But if I were honest, I would have to tell you that my shack does not normally look like that. I had to give it a tidy up before taking that photograph. No, my fellow Fist members, my shack genuinely looked like this; ▸▸

◂◂ Meanwhile behind the scenes......And to make matters worse if you look behind the shelves you would see;

Now that is a real tangle of 12 volt power cables, speaker cables, key and keyer cables, antenna cables and goodness knows what else. However, I do know what is what and all the DC power is fused. I keep all my rigs and accessories earthed to the frame of the shelves and that in turn goes straight out the window to two long earth spikes.

I have found over the years that it is important to be able to get behind the rigs to enable me to change any connections with ease. I am an inveterate fiddler so I need that access!So there you are – my shack as it really is. I was wondering if fellow CW operators have noticed pictures of other stations with their Morse keys on their desks. I bring this up, as I believe that for non CW operators that having a Morse key displayed on your desk is a status symbol. I know of many operators who have pictures of themselves with a Morse key in hand and have never sent a Morse character over the air in their lives! So if my theory is correct, think what it would to do Fists membership if we could convert all those non CW operators to CW regular users! Just a thought.........Ian ZL2AIM.

STRAIGHT KEY NIGHT – 2012

The category winners in the NZART Straight Key Night in November 2012 were: -

Extreme QRP Section – **ZL3GIL-Gilbert #14102**

Open QRP Section – **ZL1AJ – Jack #9095**

Open QRO Section – **ZL2LN Barry Davenport**

For this event we award FISTS Down Under prizes; a certificate and a year's subscription for each category winner. All three will receive a certificate. Jack and Gilbert will have their membership extended by 12 months and Barry will be invited to join us with a year's paid up membership.

More space in my shack de ZL2AIM Ian Fists #9683

I have four HF CW rigs that I use on a regular basis. Each of those rigs has a paddle and/or a key attached. This takes up a lot of space on my working surface. The reason I had each rig fitted with a key or paddle was that I don't like fiddling around the back of my rigs to plug or unplug a key or paddle whenever I feel like a change.

I read in an article in a recent QST magazine about a station that fitted very neatly into a small alcove. I noted that the station had a small box for distribution of his paddle and keys to his rigs. The idea of more space suited me so I decided to build a small box with sockets for my various rigs/ key paddle combinations. Luckily I found all the bits and pieces in my junk box so the cost was nil.

The original article showed that the station had sockets mounted on the box for input from paddles and keys as well as sockets for connections to each rig. I bypassed the second set of sockets and just soldered a shielded cable from the front sockets on the box to the plug for each socket on each rig. I anchored those cables by tying a knot at the rear exit of the box. I used a nice thin very flexible ultra thin shielded cable that I had in my junk box. For the straight key cable, I just tore this cable down the middle to make two separate straight key cables. I used mono sockets for the dedicated straight keys and stereo sockets for the paddles or key/paddle combinations.
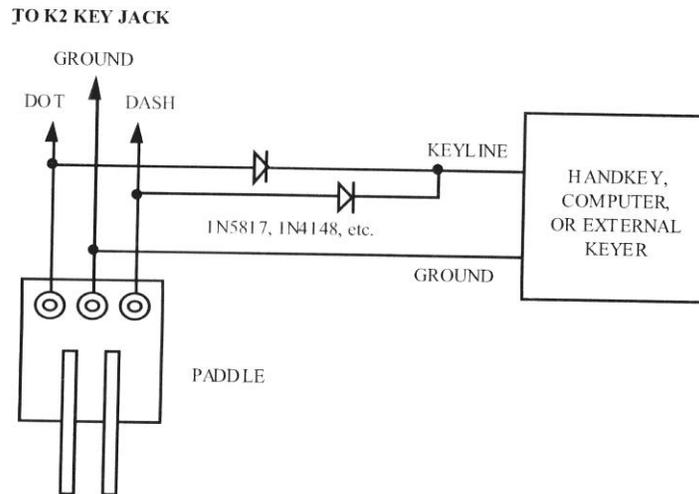
The cable I used was a treasure to find – I didn't know I had it in my box. I always thought it was just ripcord and was pleasantly surprised to find that it was twin core shielded cable, with each wire shielded. I suppose in future I should read the labels....

It is lightweight cable and very soft and subtle. The braid is not woven as in RG58 cable and is parallel with the insulated wire.   It is perfect for wiring of keys paddles and speakers.

The Icom 703 and 706 have only one socket for paddle / key and you have to select from the Icom rig menu if you are choosing to use a paddle or a straight key. The Kenwood TS570 has two sockets – one for a paddle and one for a key. I like this idea as I can quickly change from a paddle to a key should the occasion arise. Whilst the Elecraft K2 has only a single socket on the back for a key or paddle it can also be setup to work with both key and paddle plugged in at the same time. Elecraft has published it in their K2 manual as follows; "If you wish to connect a handkey, external keyer or computer along with a keyer paddle, you can use the K2's "auto detect" feature. Simply connect your external keying device to the DOT and DASH lines through two diodes as shown in the picture below, along with the keyer paddle. Be sure you have selected **INP PDLn** or **INP PDLR** in the menu.
When you connect the keying devices in this way, you can continue to use the paddle as usual. "

They give as an example using 1N5817 or 1N4948 diodes. I soldered the two diodes between the paddle socket and the key socket and it works great.

The above pictorial I have taken from the Elecraft K2 manual.

OK I now have more space on my working bench for my laptop and some papers. The disadvantage is that I have only got out one paddle and one straight key. But let's be honest, you don't need those 5 paddles and 4 straight keys on your desk at one time! I have put the other paddles and keys safely away in a cupboard and can take them out when needed. At the moment my choice is a Vibroplex paddle on chrome base and a Czech straight key.
I have had about 35 DX qso's with the Czech key. I am getting used to it and it is now the only straight key on my working surface. So having only one straight key on the desk has forced me to use it which is a good thing!
I have since tidied up all the cables at the rear of the distribution box and it all looks a lot neater. Ian ZL2AIM Fists#9683