

**Newsletter of the Australian / New Zealand chapter of the International Morse Preservation Society
February 2018**

Editor: Bill Kirkwood #15215

VK1FWBK email: vk1fwbk@gmail.com

VK Secretary / Administration: Garry Cottle #14151

VK2GAZ email: vk2fdu.auz@gmail.com

ZL Administration: David Allen #14195

ZL4LDY mail: dave.blindsight@gmail.com

Newsletter Distribution: Derek Dawkins #14125

VK3KX email: dfdawkins@optusnet.com.au

FDU Web site: www.fdu.org.au

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1765058520392148/>

Recommended FISTS calling frequencies (MHz):

1.808	3.528	7.028	10.118	14.058	18.085
21.058	24.908	28.058			

LETTER CHASE words for February are: *QUERTY, ELECTRONIC, SOLDER, and GRAHAM*

(Rules and Info on our webpage)

oooooO0000Oooooo

From the Editor: Bill VK1FWBK #15215



Welcome back everyone! January all but done and dusted as I type this. I hope you all had an enjoyable Festive Season. This month I celebrate my one year anniversary of gaining my Foundation Licence, and my New Year resolution with respect to this hobby – is to upgrade! I hope everyone has a most rewarding 2018 and please please keep the photos and articles coming in! ***I need YOUR articles and photos desperately !!***

ZL Administration

As previously advised, Nigel Hardy ZL2TX #9040 has stepped down from the position of FDU ZL Administration. On behalf of all members of FISTS Down Under I wish to express our appreciation to Nigel. The position has been very difficult to fill, but I am delighted to announce that David Allen ZL4LDY #14195 has volunteered for the position of ZL Administration. Thankyou Dave! Your story is special – and I will allow you to tell it.

ZL Administration FISTS DownUnder



"I've been a life long CW user. In fact, I decided to get my ham license in order to have a use for the code skill I earlier acquired.

That license has continued to inspire me to find other ways to communicate.

Worked for a few years for different radio reading services in the States before immigrating to New Zealand in 2002. Since 2013, I've been running a business called Blind-Sight with my partner, Paula Waby.

I am currently serving as the Southern Regional Councillor in NZART, and enjoy rag chews and the occasional contesting, primarily using the CW mode."

Dave Alen ZL4LDY #14195..

Again Dave, thankyou!

oooooOooooOooooo

Welcome to our new members :

Brett Dawson VK2CBD #15222. Brett has provided a few words about himself:

" I am married, with three children and live in Cooma, NSW. I work as an RF system design engineer, mainly in emergency services land mobile radio. I have been licenced since 1985. I have mainly been interested in VHF bands and above for many years, including 23cm moon-bounce, all with no interest in CW. It was moon-bounce that prompted me to try to do something about my almost non-existent CW skills, and got me interested in HF again as a way of practicing CW. Although I'm not active in moon-bounce now I am still keen to better my CW.

Karen Boskos VK2AKB #15221 Karen has also kindly provided some background information including some photographs:



“ Name here is Karen, QTH Kulnura, located 100 km’s NW of Sydney. I was first licenced in December 2001, starting with VK2HKB, VK2YKB and finally VK2AKB on 28 June, 2002. My rig is the Yaesu FT DX 5000 MP with the Bushcomm BBA-1KCF broadband dipole. I’m a member of ALARA and active as news editor and lecture co-ordinator with the Central Coast Amateur Radio Club (CCARC) which hosts the annual ‘Wyong Field Day’. I’ve attached a recent photo from our CCARC Xmas Party and one of my rig & tower

73 & 88

Karen VK2AKB #15221 “



Thanks for your stories Karen and Brett - Welcome! Now the pressure is on all new members to follow suit! 😊

Change of callsign notification

Clinton Wright #14189 has advised that his callsign has changed from VK2LCW to VK2CKW

Subscriptions: List of members whose subs become due in February and March 2018

February: ZL2ASQ, VK3CVF, VK4AAN, VK7MA, VK2PN, ZL1AAR, ZL2AKW

March: VK4FQ, ZL2EA, VK2GAZ, VK6RR, VK3KAA, VK4WY, VK2JDR, VK3EO, VK4AAL, VK4FIAA, VK4FJGS, VK5BUG, VK6QW, VK7SM, ZL1BOP, ZL3TU

We ask that you keep an eye out for your callsign in the subs section and treat that as your reminder for you to pay your subs.

Our website http://www.fdu.org.au/join_renew.php has all the details for making payments. Don't forget that if you are paying your subs **to include your callsign**. **Please do not send cash in the post** as this causes problems for us in banking.

UNKNOWN ZL DEPOSITS!!

Nigel – the outgoing ZL Admin has advised me about a couple of deposits in the FISTS Bank of New Zealand Account that can't be linked to a name or FDU number.

16th October 2017 0002 4217 1085 \$25.00

16th October 2017 0002 4217 1087 \$45.00

Both these deposits were made on the same day, have no identification and are unknown. Will ZL members please check on payments and advise your new ZL Admin David #14195 with details of Call Sign and member number. Thank you.

All members please note that Bank deposits MUST include YOUR NAME AND CALL SIGN for reference purposes, not your account number.

oooooOooooo

FISTS would like to thank the following members for their generous donation included with their subscription; **Arthur VK2ASB #9082, Richard VK3AGQ #14155**

oooooOooooo

From Our Members

Tony VK3CAB #15204

This article was originally published 'NERG NEWS', the newsletter of the North East Radio Group and is reproduced with their permission in the spirit of encouraging co-operation between radio organisations.

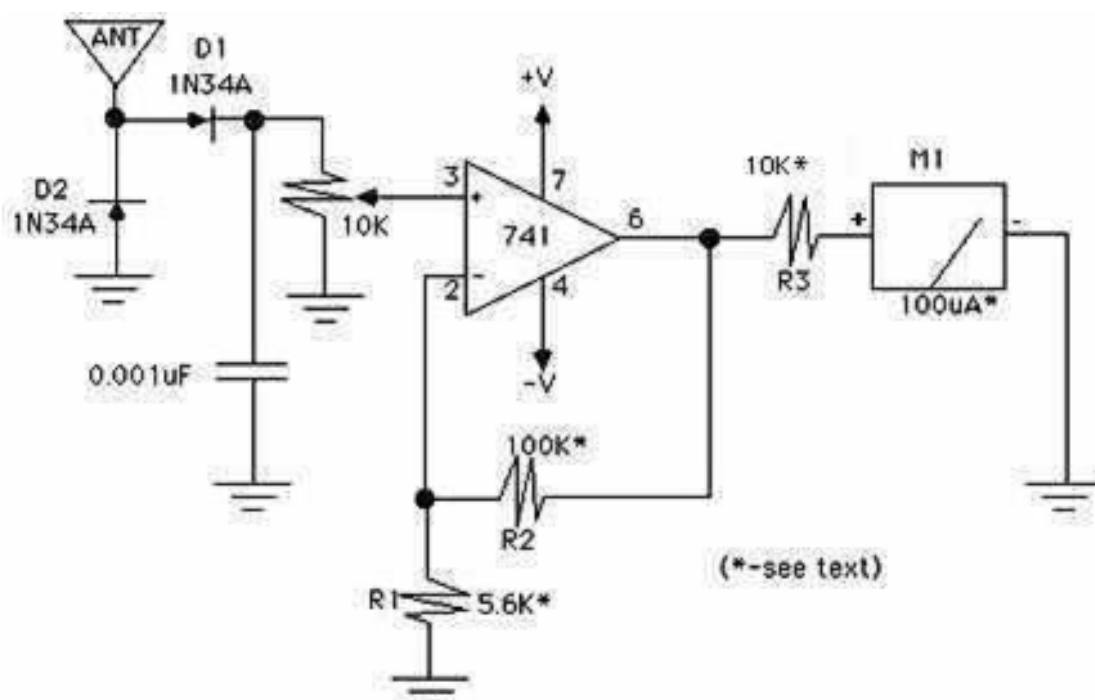
An Op-Amp Field Strength Meter

I like working QRP, I like working CW and I'm growing to like working portable, although 'like' is probably too strong a word to describe my present appreciation of portable work. I like activating Parks for WWFF and I have a dismal record of failure when it comes to activating SOTA Peaks but I like a challenge and portable, CW, QRP operation embodies a whole lot of challenges. When you're working from your home QTH you have a pretty good idea of your equipment's performance and how everything should sound. For example when I'm setting up at home on 40mts and if I'm getting S1 QRN instead of S7 its a pretty fair bet that I have forgotten to switch in the antenna. However working portable throws all that foundation knowledge out of the window!

I believe that any Amateur Radio operation is a compromise between what is desirable and what is achievable and this is really brought home to you when when you try to set up in a paddock. The ground is usually uneven and either marshy or granitic, there are trees where you don't want them, members of the public walk into your exquisitely installed inverted V tie-offs even though you have located them in places that can only be accessed with a machete and mother nature throws at you a whole realm of revenge seeking wild life. But with diminishing enthusiasm you press on, discover that you have connected your antenna matcher in the wrong way round, and that the ominous cracking sound was when you trod on your freshly sharpened pencils but still you progress and start operating. Your SWR is sort of acceptable and the background QRM/N is around S2. Now that S2 is a bit of a worry. You are not that far from civilisation and its noisy LEDs, wall chargers and fridges but you might be far enough away to get away from modern life's QRN. On the other hand getting S2 QRN, when you might be expecting S5, could well mean your antenna system isn't very good. One way to test it out is to start CQing. After fifteen minutes of fruitless calling you realise something might be amiss.

I think there are three reasons why people don't come back to your call: one your signal isn't going up the antenna, two, the conditions preclude them hearing your signal and three, they don't want to talk to you. Other than changing band here isn't much you can do about reasons two and three but reason one is always a teaser. I used to take an ancient Micronta CB SWR/Field Strength Meter (FSM) into the field with me to measure the Field Strength but with 5 Watts on 40Mts you needed a hand held magnifier to detect an almost imperceptible flicker of the needle. Obviously an amplified FSM would be the go.

I searched through the internet and at www.qsl.net/kc6wdk/QRP/fsm.htm turned up an article describing an 'Op-Amp Field Strength Meter'. Part of the circuit follows:



I cannibalised the Micronta CB SWR/Field Strength Meter for its meter and diodes and built the circuit on a piece of Vero board. The original article provides a table for R3 shunt resistors that will be required to zero meters of different sensitivities but fortunately my meter showed a little + deflection with the 10KOhm shown in the circuit. (Its good to show a small positive deflection as then you know if the power switch has been left on!) The whole thing, including the two 9V batteries, was housed in a cast aluminium project box but it could equally well have been fitted into a box made up from soldered copper clad PCB. The design called for 18 inches of wire for the antenna and this was taken through a hole in the side of the box. I always put a tightly applied wire tie on a cable when I'm taking it through the side of a box to act as a strain relief.



So to test it out. I wound up the gain and keyed a 2mt hand-held and the needle flashed across the dial in a most satisfying manner. I moved it out of the workshop, keyed the hand held again and got a half scale deflection. I put it in the garden about ten metres away but in line of site and keyed my 817 on 40mt with 5 W. Nothing happened, so I quadrupled the length of the antenna to almost 2 metres and started to get readings.

The next day I took it on a WWFF activation of the 'Pauline Toner Butterfly Conservation Reserve, VKFF-2175' and laid out its antenna wire on the ground beneath the length of a leg of the inverted V antenna. I got a very satisfying meter deflection every time I spoke into the microphone proving that something was going out into the ether.

In conclusion making it was a simple, low cost, project that once and for all answers the practical question 'I wonder if I am getting out'.

Tony VK3CAB

Thank you again Tony – these articles of yours are very informative and I am sure extremely useful for many of our members!

Key of The Month



Many thanks to David Dunn G3SCD/VK3DBD # 3756 and Life Member for this fascinating story featuring one of my favourite keys, The Navy Flameproof key. I was going to write my own story about the Flameproof as this was the first key I ever used and was fitted to the RAAF aircraft when I joined in 1975 and learnt my CW using these keys. (I now have 6 of them in my expanding collection of straight keys!) but, on to David's story which is far more interesting than anything I could come up with!!!

It was late in 1945 I think, the long 6 year war had ended, my father who had served in the Fleet Air Arm as an airframe mechanic had been posted to Australia and enjoyed the warm climate and many relative luxuries of the East Coast and the Pacific regions without the strict rationing of food and essentials in England. Although he would much rather have been at home with his family.

At last he was "demobbed" and if my memory serves right it must have been approaching Christmas when his homecoming occurred. I was just 9 years old and my younger brother just 5. Of course, the world was very new to us youngsters and the horrors and affects of the hostilities were just part of the life we were used to. From a very practical family, the seeds of interest had been sown in all things mechanical and especially to me, electrical, made me quite excited as apart from his kit bag full of intriguing items he had a wooden (issued) toolbox which held the tools of his Naval trade. Tools far better and more up to date than the reasonable collection we already had. Perspex scraps, taps and dies, pop rivets, phillips-head screwdrivers...All new to me. All this, mostly lease-lend stuff, was given away to ex-servicemen. Everything was DIY in our household -I knew no other way!

One item which may to some extent may have changed my life, was a Morse key obviously liberated likely from a B17, or one of the airplanes Dad had worked on during his time aboard carriers, was a US Navy Flameproof key. In addition to that was a "toy" Morse trainer set made by the Australian firm "Buzza" which enabled us to connect a suitable wire between the two units in different rooms and send the dots and dashes as printed out on the card affixed to the base of each. It was a slow process and of course probably the wrong way to learn but the code had always fascinated me. Those were the days of children's stories about secret agents and of course Scouting for Boys which as an avid reader of almost anything, I read and re-read.

The Buzza set I feel I gave away some years ago but the Flameproof key is still in my possession and perhaps partly, because of its origins, but mainly because it is a pleasure to use, it must rate as my favourite (straight) key. I have a fairly good collection now and there is no doubt that others come close to that too... and then there are paddles too, but that is

another story. I tend to use the pump key when I feel slightly tired, or hands are cold. It seems more automatic to me to make my own dots and dashes rather than leaving it to an electronic keyer.



Thank you Dave – I must agree with you about what great keys these are. I'm not sure if they were ever fitted to B-17 or other US Bomber as the only keys I have been able to associate with US-built WWII bombers is the J-37 style key. I bought my first Flameproof 12 months ago and I did a lot of research on them. Certainly, their origin is with the US Navy and they date back to the war - so I would guess your Dad's time on carriers may have had something to do with it and hence they are referred to as Navy Flameproof. They were predominantly designed for aircraft use, however there was a shipboard version for signalling lamps. They were of course in use by the RAAF in Neptune and Orion aircraft as well as the HS-748 aircraft used for airborne communications training during the late 1960s through to 1976 when CW was sadly phased out...
 Bill (Editor)

oooooOooooo

That's all for February folks! Like to see more next month? Then that is up to you! Welcome to our new members, thank you for the contributions of articles and photos, and also for the nice feedback I have received in recent months. I appreciate your positive feedback, and if there is room for improvement I welcome any constructive comment! Suggestions are always welcome. Your input does not have to be technical – it can be about something you have learnt/ things you wish you had learnt, how you learnt it – your first DX, anything. Please share your CW experiences here with like-minded people. But I do need more for Keys of The Month!

de Bill
 VK1FWBK #15215

