

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

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NEW!!!!<<< **FISTS Down Under Sked Page** <http://n8fq.org/sked/index.php?board=fdu> >>>>>>

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 March are: **TRAINER – SENDING – BUGS – CODE**

(Rules and Info on our webpage)

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From the Editor: Bill VK1FWBK #15215



March already! Seriously? Wow. I have been in amateur radio just over 12 months..Time sure does fly when you're having fun! Garry is as per usual forever working on ways to get more people on air (CW of course). The latest to get us all on air - We have our own Sked Page!. Some words from Garry VK2GAZ: *"Many of us participated in the SKCC K3Y event which happened over January, 2018. and we were all impressed with the SKCC*

Sked Page which is run and operated by Mark K7MJG.

Now through the inspiration of Mark K7MJG and the generosity Jill N8FQ the FISTS Down Under club has been given access to Jill's Sked Page Services. It always astounds me how people like Mark K7MJG, Jill N8FQ and many others give so freely of there time and efforts to serve the Amateur Radio family. Just log in, give yourself a user name (eg. VK2GAZ), a password, complete your profile and click on the FISTS Down Under link.

I hope this service is widely used by club members and facilitates more CW activity. "

(The link to FDU Sked Page is located with Club Info above)

Silent Key

The following is courtesy of the WIA notice issued on 23 February 2018..

Jim Linton VK3PC #9679



Date : 23 / 02 / 2018

Author : Peter Wolfenden VK3RV

Australian radio amateurs have lost a stalwart, a man who has dedicated many of his life-long skills and talents to the furtherance of our hobby, Jim Linton, VK3PC.

Of recent years, Jim has had to contend with a few health issues and sadly passed away in the early hours of Thursday 22nd February 2018, at Epworth Hospital, Box Hill, Victoria after a short battle with thyroid cancer. He was aged 71 years. The first appearance of his call sign was in the 1981/82 Call Book.

Professionally, Jim was a journalist with skills in marketing and communications and he willingly applied those skills voluntarily to the furtherance of amateur radio. Jim's lifetime skills were applied over the broad WIA structure, initially within Victoria, later within the Federal and National WIA and indeed internationally, via his involvement with the International Amateur Radio Union.

Amateur radio is a complex hobby, being one of the most regulated and requiring volunteers with the necessary skills to handle the many matters, some of which can be quite complex and have the potential to hinder or restrict our privileges if not quickly and appropriately addressed. Jim, over the years, capably applied his skills to assist in, and often take the lead in many facets of the administration of our hobby.

Joining the WIA as an enthusiastic, teenage, shortwave listener, he soon became involved within the Victorian Division including the Sunday news broadcasts, working his way up to becoming State President and Federal Councilor. Later he became involved with Amateur Radio magazine where he acted in a number of capacities including News Editor and Guest Editor. He also wrote many articles for AR, quite a few were historical in nature, a subject

which interested him and resulted in receiving the Ron Higginbotham Award from the Publications Committee.

AR magazine was not the only involvement Jim had with Federal and National WIA affairs. In 1985 and 2010, he was involved with the 75th and 100th Anniversary celebrations of the WIA. He became the inaugural assessor for the WIA Exam Service for VK3 under the new examination structure. Later Jim took on international amateur radio affairs through involvement with IARU, attending a number of important IARU Region III Conferences. In addition to the responsibilities of the Region III Disaster Communications Committee Chairman.

Jim wanted to see more people involved in Amateur radio. From 2007 he was a WIA Assessor and was actively involved in 196 assessments continuing his efforts to introduce people to Amateur Radio.

Of more recent times, when the new WIA Board took office in May 2017, Jim was asked to remain in the position of Board Secretary to provide some additional continuity in the operation of the Institute while the New Board was 'finding its feet'.

Jim, was one of the WIA's longest-serving office holders. An Honorary Life Member of the WIA and Amateur Radio Victoria and was awarded the WIA's highest honour, the GA Taylor Medal in 2011 and the Chris Jones Award for an exceptional contribution to Amateur Radio and the WIA.

Vale Jim Linton, VK3PC, SK.

Our sincere condolences are extended to Pauline and their extended family.

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Welcome to our new member : Glenn Stevenson **VK2GST #15223**

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

March: VK4FQ, ZL2EA, VK3KAA, VK3EO, VK4AAL, VK4FIAA, VK4FJGS, VK5BUG, VK6QW, VK7SM, ZL1BOP, ZL3TU

April: ZL3GIL, ZL3PAH, VK3OZ, VK4XY, VK5RZ, VK7JB, ZL1CV, ZL2JU

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.

FISTS would like to thank the following members for their generous donation included with their subscription; **Adrian VK5AW #15208, Graeme ZL2APV #14172, Drew VK3XU #9629**

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From Our Members

Derek **VK3KX** is hoping for your help!

CW (No, Spark!)



I received today an AWA Spark Transmitter, type K5394, serial number 59. It appears to be complete and in quite good condition. It has come from the estate of a local Melbourne Ham who had links to the AWA factory through the professional Audio industry. I have no information on it at all and I am hoping some FISTS members may be better informed than I.



I am guessing that it is mid 20s or early 30s manufacture and intended as a 500kHz emergency channel transmitter. It is quite low power at 100W. The spark gap seems to be a stationary but adjustable type. The required power supply is 100V 500Hz. Is this a shipboard standard?

I wonder if any Fists member has ever sailed with one of these? What type of receiver would have been used with it?

Any information would be invaluable to me on this. Ultimately, I would love to find out what ship it sailed in (if any, it may have been a factory spare), what year it was manufactured, and find some documentation for it.



If this could be published in the newsletter, it may bring in some leads I hope. Derek VK3KX

A New Twist on Dipole Traps

TONY VK3CAB

I made my first dipole traps back in the early eighties using the old 'coax coil around a PVC tube method'. To those if you unfamiliar with that method the resonant trap is formed by winding a calculated length of RG58 coaxial cable, around a former of plastic water pipe and connecting it up in a fancy way inside the former. This method uses the inherent capacitance of the RG58 (around 1pF/cm I seem to remember) to provide the capacitance of the trap and the coax conductor and braid to form the inductance. The fancy way of configuring it sees the braid from one end of the trap connected to the centre conductor at the other end of the trap and vice versa. (If your desperate to see this connection method go to <http://www.vk4yeh.com/downloads/coaxial%20traps.pdf>.)

The problem with this form of trap was that it is monster of a device to tune to frequency as you had to make the thing, test it for resonant frequency and then disassemble the whole trap and snip off bits of coax to get it to the desired resonance. Invariably you snipped off too much and finished up with the floor of the shack looking like a licorice packer's nightmare.

There had to be a better way, and I found it at the following site <vk3zpf.com/trapped-dipole-antennas>

In this method you still rely on the capacitance of RG58 coax and a plastic former, but you wind a separate inductance on the outside of the former. The coax 'capacitor' is attached across the lugs of the trap and initially just hangs out of the tube. This makes tuning to resonance much easier. Ultimately the coax will be wound into a coil and slipped inside the PVC tube. The example in the vk3zpf blog uses a PVC former 42 mm in dia. by 60mm long and onto this is wound 15 turns of multi conductor insulated wire. For a 40mt trap the coax is cut 'about 800mm long'. All that is required now is for the trap to be tuned to resonance. And thereby hangs the rub!

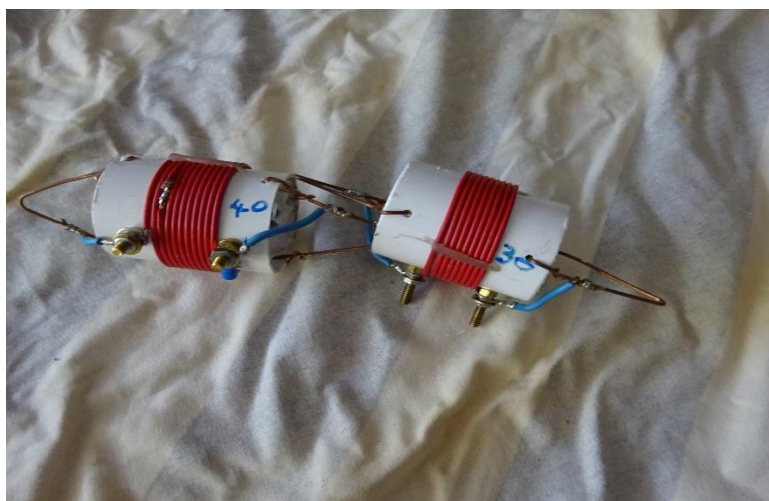
There are two ways I know to tune a trap: one is using a GDO (Grid Dip Oscillator or more correctly nowadays a Gate Dip Oscillator using a FET), and the second is using a signal generator and an RF power meter. Fortunately, I have a home brewed GDO made to a design from a now defunct Australian amateur radio magazine called Amateur Radio Action (Vol. 8, Issue 13 1986).



The way GDOs work is that when a trap is placed near the GDOs coil at resonance the trap draws energy from the GDO circuit and there is a perceptible dip on the instrument's meter. Commercially made GDOs are difficult to use at the best of times while home brewed ones can be particularly peevish. Also the amount of coupling etc between the coil and trap when testing can 'draw' the dipping frequency away from the true resonant point etc. so things may get difficult. I use the GDO in association with the station receiver by setting the Rx to the desired frequency and then tuning the DGO up and down the band until I can hear the click of the DGO oscillator on the Rx.

The signal generator and RF power meter method is described in the vk3zpf.com/trapped-dipole-antennas article so I won't develop it here but unfortunately I have never got that method to work!

OK so you have made your trap and have a length of coax hanging out of the tube. Wind the coax around a bit of dowel and poke all but 60 mm of it inside the PVC tube. Measure the resonant frequency and progressively snip the coax shorter. This should result in the resonant frequency rising. But what resonant frequency should you aim for? The jury seems to be out here. Some advocate resonating the trap at the operating frequency, some (including me) recommend resonating it below the operating frequency (say 200KHz below) while others say it should be resonant above the operating frequency. Do your own research – its the only way you will be satisfied. Continue with your snipping (say initially 12 mm per snip at 40 mts and at higher frequencies trim around 6 or 7mm) and when you get close to your desired resonant frequency trim back the coax's external plastic covering and trim the braid back by 4mm. This is to stop the possibility of arcing between the centre conductor and the braid. When all seems OK poke the end of the coax into the PVC tube and test for resonance. You can get a bit of fine tuning by opening or closing the distance between the turns on the external coil and I found this useful when I had snipped off too much and had gone over frequency. When I was satisfied with the trap's resonant frequency I secured the external turns in position with a bit of hot melt glue and squirt silicon sealant into the guts of the trap to keep the coax coils in place. You can see the strip of hot melt on the 30mt coil and white silicon sealant inside the 40 mt trap. (The picture might lead people to believe that the traps are joined together but of course they aren't and the solder joint on the 40mt trap is the result of running out of a continuous length of suitable wire!)



When I was making traps for higher frequencies I just scaled the external turns back BUT kept the initial length of coax deliberately over-long. By judicious snipping in ten hours I was able to make a full set of pairs of traps resonant for 40mts, 30mts, 20mts, 15mts and 10mts. I don't know how 'lossy' they are but they seem to work OK and no I didn't use them all on the same wire antenna!

I think this is a much easier way to make coaxial traps than the traditional way using the coax for both the inductance and the capacitance.

Remember radio amateurs are expected to experiment and construct as well as communicate. Enjoy!

Tony VK3CAB

P.S. I have found a user and installation manual, thanks to the amazing archives of Ian VK2ZIO!! (check out his Kurrajong museum sometime).

The unit is a WW2 Merchant Marine emergency transmitter for 500kHz (of course). It is powered by a 24V battery running a little 100v 500Hz alternator set. This gives the spark a 500Hz tone. I don't have the alternator set, so power is going to be a challenge.

The spark gap is a 'quenched gap' fixed unit, the big 'clockwork key' on top is for reassembly after cleaning. It has two 10thou gaps in series.

As mentioned I would love to hear from anyone who has experience with one of these, and what 500kHz receiver would have gone with it? Maybe none? Just send SOS and position as the radio room floods?

I intend to get this unit powered up and transmitting into a dummy load one day, after a thorough rebuild and finding a power supply...

73 Derek.

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Key of The Month

Te-Ne-Ke



Always Looking to Learn

My challenge over the years has been to increase my CW receiving and sending speed. There are a few things which I think restrict me to about 15-18 WPM.

They are:

- a. I have difficulty copying and retaining CW in my head,
- b. Hence I have to write down the CW which I receive, I can only write so fast (if it is going to be at all legible for later reading), and
- c. I have always used a straight key.

The first two may be a little more difficult to overcome however, I might just be able to do something about only using a straight key and look at the possibility of a paddle.

The **North Ottawa Amateur Radio Club** are promoting a great little CW paddle called the Te-Ne-Ke (*teeny key*). This is a very sturdy, well made little key which is a delight to use. I know this because after contacting **John N8YQD** the club's treasurer, an order was placed and before too long the little beauty was in the shack. Now there is still a long way to go and if I ever correct my dyslexia I think I have a better than even chance of being able to conduct a reasonable QSO using this great little key time will tell.



All the information you may require concerning the Te-Ne-Ke can be located at:

<http://www.w8cso.org/index.php?page=teneke>

To compliment the Te-Ne-Ke the **QRP Guys** produce a very nice Code Trainer.

The Code Trainer comes in kit form but with only 23 components to fit the kit goes together very quickly and easily.

You can practice receiving code at 5-50 WPM (I wish), it sends random five-character mixed letter, number and punctuation code groups. The send function works as a normal code practice oscillator and accepts either straight key, bug or paddle



All the information on the **QRP Guys Code Trainer** can be located at:

<http://qrpguys.com/qrpguys-code-trainer>

After using both the Te-Ne-Ke and the Code Trainer for a few weeks I might even be getting the hang of it.

73's Garry VK2GAZ

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I must again thank everyone who has kindly contributed articles for the NewsLetter. Please do not worry if your article has not yet appeared – It will! And you are welcome to flash me an email or remind me during a QSO that I have not published it!!

That's all folks!

de Bill
VK1FWBK #15215

