

**Newsletter of the Australian / New Zealand chapter of the International Morse Preservation Society
Spring 2019 Edition**

Editor: Bill Kirkwood #15215

VK1MCW email: editor@fdu.org.au

VK Secretary / Administration: Garry Cottle #14151

VK2GAZ email: vk2fdu.auz@gmail.com

VK Treasurer: Chris Chapman #9085

VK3QB email: vk3qb@hotmail.com

ZL Administration: David Smith # 9067

ZL2WT email: zl2wt@outlook.com

Newsletter Distribution: Derek Dawkins #14125

VK3KX email: dfdawkins@optusnet.com.au

FDU Web site: <http://www.fdu.org.au>

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

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

CW Practice Sessions: Michael's VK2CCW #14198 CW Practice Sessions are available on the [Club website](#)

Recommended FISTS calling frequencies (MHz):

1.808	3.528	7.028	10.118	14.058	18.085
21.058	24.908	28.058			

From the Editor: Bill VK1MCW #15215



Welcome to the September/ Spring 2019 edition of your FISTS Down Under newsletter. Do I sense a murmur of “and about B time!!”? You already know why I moved this to a quarterly newsletter. In the Winter edition I was perhaps less than subtle with my hint that more members making up that 75% who said that they were happy to contribute to the newsletter could, you know, back themselves up. Sadly, nothing has changed. So, in the absence of new names (bar one – thanks Tony!) to my very short list of contributors, the FISTS Down Under newsletter will continue in its current, quarterly format. Ladies and Gents – this is YOUR newsletter – please help me to make it so!

Thanks to those who have provided feedback on the Winter edition...All feedback received is welcome and I am happy to say that we have only received positive comment so far. However, ALL constructive feedback is welcome.

The FDU Committee is striving to make your FDU experience more enjoyable and we are indeed looking at some changes and improvements. We are all volunteers supporting a hobby we love.

Bill VK1MCW #15215

Editor

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Silent Key

It is with sadness that we pay tribute to the founding member of FISTS Down Under – Ralph Sutton #1073. We have been provided with a tribute to Ralph from our FISTS UK partners.

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**Ralph, ZL2AOH, Fists #1073**, died age 96 on 22nd June 2019. He was honoured with Life Membership of Fists Down Under 2016. This was in recognition of setting up FDU in 1998 and the following 17 years as administrator of this successful chapter. He spent a year in Japan in 1996 accompanying his wife, Gwenda who was teaching Esperanto. He obtained a licence and among the contacts made, he became firm friends with Mack, JE1CLH. This friendship continued to this day with mutual family visits and twice weekly skeds on 20m.

Ralph learned Morse Code at the age of 11 as a boy scout. He would become a ship's officer, and saw service with convoys during the war. His main use of Morse was with visual signalling for security reasons, radio only being used in dire emergencies. He continued in the Merchant Navy for a few years until he joined the Royal New Zealand Airforce in charge of marine operations. It wasn't until his retirement in 1990 that he obtained his amateur radio licence. He started to operate in 1991 after moving to the 12th floor of a 13-floor apartment block where he had a dipole on the roof. His love of Morse Code blossomed and became his main mode of operation, culminating in setting up FDU. He continued to operate right to the end.

I had my first QSO with Ralph in 2001 on 20m. These continued and when we visited New Zealand in 2003, he, along with Nigel ZL2TX, arranged a Fists get together and visits to other Fists members as we toured the country. We enjoyed our holiday so much that we returned again the following year to see more of the North Island. We again had great hospitality from Ralph and friends. Fists hospitality continued on our visit to Japan in 2009. But for Ralph, we would not have visited Mack, JE1CLH. Mack has an impressive station and lives in a classical Japanese house. When in Tokyo, Manabu, JE1RZR came from the suburbs to see us. Since then we have had regular skeds and we were delighted to have him visit us when on a business trip to Edinburgh. We were also delighted to have Ralph stay with us for a few days while Gwenda attended an Esperanto conference. Without Fists - none of this would have happened.

Thursdays and Sundays will now seem empty. QSOs with Ralph have been more difficult recently due to poor propagation - and radio noise pollution. I am blessed with a quiet location, but Ralph was suffering from the all too common local noise. I could hear him, but he had trouble with my signal. We then reverted to Skype where we enjoyed half hour chats right up to the end. Mack and I have been able to continue the skeds even in poor conditions. Ralph used to enjoy listening via Skype - making the most of old and new communication techniques. I will miss Ralph greatly - a true friend!

**Dave, G3KMG, Fists #124**

Ralph's contribution to our newsletter leads off the "From Our Members" section.

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### Membership Subscriptions:

List of **VK members** whose subscriptions become due in September, October and November 2019.

**September** VK4EI/VK4SWE, VK2GZ, VK4CC, VK7AD, VK4BJS, VK6GX, VK5PF/VK5BJE, VK3GDM, VK3FLYS, E51AND

**October:** VK3CGB, VK5ATU, VK4IL, F05MD, VK4ARC, VK4PP, VK7HW, VK2FK, VK3TUX, VK4FRMZ

**November:** VK2ASB, VK3KX

We ask that you keep an eye out for your callsign in this section and treat that as your reminder for you to renew your FISTS membership.

Our website, [http://www.fdu.org.au/join\\_renew.php](http://www.fdu.org.au/join_renew.php) has all the details for making payments. Don't forget that when you are paying your subscription to **include your callsign**. Please do not send cash in the post as this causes problems for us in banking. \* *Remember we are not seeking donations with your subscriptions.*

**Thank you!**

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**Position Vacant IMI Position Vacant! STILL!** I again look back to our survey early this year. Despite so many members suggesting that they were keen to be more hands-on and involved with FISTS Down Under, the enactment (Walk the Walk) of that commitment has not been forthcoming. So, I am again advertising, appealing, BEGGING someone to step up to the position of **FDU Contest Manager**

This is a very simple task running just one (1) contest per month throughout the year.

If you would like further details, please contact Garry VK2GAZ #14151 on 0466 090 152 or email [vk2fdu.auz@gmail.com](mailto:vk2fdu.auz@gmail.com)

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## FDU Contests

For the past 2 years the Club has run its monthly contest with much the same format. They have been run in the evenings for about an hour or so and usually either on 80 metres or 40 metres.

The same 10 or so individuals usually participate, and things have progressed relatively smoothly for that time.

I thought that maybe the evening contests have not allowed others to join in, so just for a change, the September Contest / Event will be conducted a little differently. Many of the participants in the current contests are avid portable operators either in WWFF Parks or SOTA or both and so the September Contest / Event will be run over a 6 hour period and is designed to encourage Club members and others to go portable.



Source Wiki - Public Domain

The idea is simple, just get a Flight of the Galahs (FOG) number, go portable on the 22nd September, make as many contacts as possible between 0000 and 0600 UTC and have some fun. Those who want to stay home (Sloths) are catered for as well.

For the full details on this different Contest / Event go to the Club website for all the details:

<http://fdu.org.au/contests.php>

**73, Garry VK2GAZ (#14151)**

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## Contest Results

Full results of the *FISTS Down Under Inc* club results can be seen on the Club website:

<http://fdu.org.au/contests.php>

### COME JOIN IN THE FUN OF OUR MONTHLY CONTESTS!

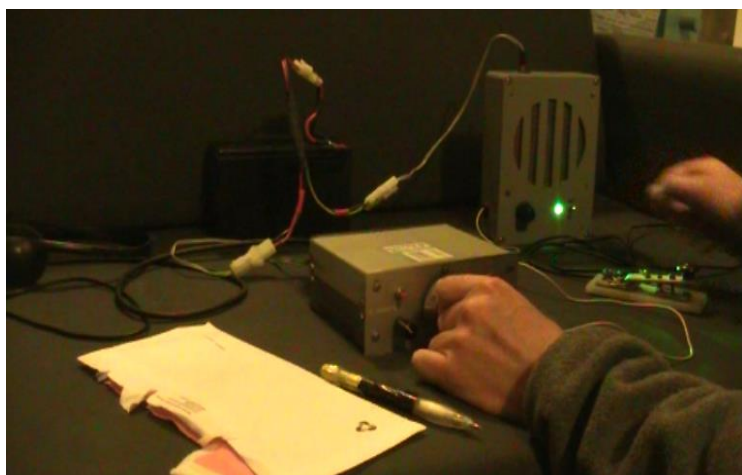
#### Keys Contest



The Club's **Keys** Contest was run on Friday night the 14th June 2019 and one of the many operators who joined in was Peter VK3YE.

Peter logged 6 contacts, all QRP and scoring 12 points. He was operating on his home brew rig (pictured) and describes his rig as:

Some unusual CW-specific features about this rig (for something very simple) include split frequency and full break-in. The tx is independently adjustable with the knob on the bottom left. The top left button is the spot button to zero beat the tx to incoming signals on rx. The main control is the rx tuning (3 kHz range around 3530 kHz). Split frequency is done with two variable capacitors and a relay to switch between them (tied to the t/r relay).



You set any tx/rx offset you like - high side or low side (provided it's within the 3kHz coverage) so you can dodge interference and optimise it for your audio filter.

Peter VK3YE has produced a video of his part in the contest which can be viewed at:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fN\\_abBtQJG4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fN_abBtQJG4)

Come join in the fun of the Clubs' monthly contest!!

**Garry VK2GAZ #14151**

**OoooOOOOOooooo**



## New Members

Welcome to our new members:

**Ben Koh** VK6XC #15242

**Ian Cook** VK6DW #15243

**Les Oldroyd** VK2LES #15244

**Andrew Perry** VK2PEZ #15245

**Allan (Al) French** VK3FAAF #15246

**Introduce yourself!** As is the case for EVERY member, and especially NEW members, you are encouraged to send me a photo and short background – especially your CW story. Not compulsory – but it is good to know the face on the other end of the key! In my case, perhaps not – It is entirely up to you.

**Andrew Perry VK2PEZ #15245** writes

"I'm relatively new to the world of amateur radio. I got my foundation licence in 2015, joined the local club and did a little playing on 2m on the local club net. Later some SOTA on 40M.

In 2018 I upgraded to my standard licence, followed straight afterwards with my advanced licence.....Following this I decided I'd like to learn CW. I've done some practice using an app on my android phone and tablet, and in January made my first CW contacts. I recently learned about FISTS from an email on the VKZLQRP mailing list and decided to join up and get involved to hopefully progress my CW.



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## From our Members

From Ralph Sutton #1073

### **An article I wrote for a Japanese amateur radio magazine about radio experiences in Japan in 1995-**

In early 1995 my late wife Gwenda received an invitation to go to Japan to teach Esperanto to someone in the small town of Shirotori in Kagawa prefecture, Shikoku Island. The arrangement was that she would teach for one year and that I would be able to accompany her.

Before leaving New Zealand, I researched the amateur radio scene, corresponding with some hams that I had worked and visited a New Zealand ham that had visited Japan several times.

I obtained the necessary forms and made an application for a Japanese licence through JARL. I hoped to be able to operate on a visitor's permit. Although I did not take my HF equipment, I packed my ICOM W2E dual-band handheld. I planned to purchase a suitable HF rig if and when I got my Japanese licence.

The gentleman, to whom Gwenda was contracted to teach Esperanto, had at one time held a licence but he is no longer active. However, he kindly introduced me to the local ham scene. I visited JA5PUL, Sing Sano, who lived in an historic house in the nearby town of Hiketa. Sing is a DXCC honours member. I was also introduced to JR5KQP Toshio Tanaka, who was the chairman of the local club, East Sanuki Family Radio Club.

I received a reply in May 1995 that my application for a Japanese licence had been rejected, as there was then no reciprocal agreement between Japan and New Zealand. I studied the documents and noted that there was a reciprocal agreement between Japan and Australia. I had earlier held an Australian licence when I attended Scout Jamborees in Australia. I decided to try to have that licence re-issued and sent off an application to the Radio Frequency Service in Melbourne. After a long time, I had not received a reply, so I sent a hurry-up letter. I received a prompt reply accompanied by my licence for VK3FDW. A short time later I received the original copy of the licence that had been sent by sea mail.

I sent my new application to JARL HQ in August with a photocopy of the Australian licence.

The local club made me very welcome and I was invited to take part in several activities such as an open day on the Shirotori anniversary day, an emergency communications exercise and a junk sale. We had no language in common but managed to get on very well together. They are a very friendly and generous group of people.

I travelled to Tokyo several times, of course visiting the electronics Mecca of Akihabara. On the second visit I called at the JARL HQ and received a great welcome. There I met the President of JARL Shozo Hara JA1AN. Fred Johnson ZL2AMJ was there in his capacity of Chairman of the Region 3 Administrative Committee, so it was interesting to catch up with another New Zealand ham. I also met with other members of the Region 3 committees.

At the same time, the annual JARL Ham Fair was taking place at a large convention centre close to the downtown area. I arranged to meet there Haruto Murofushi JA1BMA whom I had worked on the air. The fair was an enormous event with thousands of visitors. Visiting the manufacturers' stands and the numerous clubs stands with a big range of second-hand equipment, occupied a whole day.

I also visited Osaka and of course went to the electronics area in Nippombashi. It is not as extensive as Akihabara of course, but interesting, nevertheless. I also visited ICOM HQ where I arranged to get a replacement leather case for my W2E handheld.

Another trip was made to Seoul, Korea where I met a couple of hams and was taken to their electronics market. There was equipment on display from Korean manufacturers that we do not normally see in New Zealand.

In November I eventually received my Japanese licence with the call 7J5AAN. My first QSOs with this call were made from the QTH of JR5KQP. I studied the available HF equipment. I decided that it had to be self-contained with an integral power supply and tuner, so that it would be easy to set up a station. The rig that met the specification and that was within my budget was the ICOM-736 that had recently appeared on the market. I negotiated with Denka Centre in Takamatsu the prefecture capital some 40 km from Shirotori. They had to make a special order as the normal versions on sale in Japan were hard wired for the Japanese band plan that is considerably more restrictive than the New Zealand plan. I also purchased a Diamond multi band dipole antenna and a Himound HK-902 key. Denka Centre added an ICOM SM-20 desk microphone and headphones. So, I was fully equipped to get on the air. I was able to suspend the antenna at about 3.5 metres above ground. A friendly neighbouring builder gave me a copper earth rod that was easily inserted into the sandy soil. I dug in about 500 grams of salt to help make a better ground. Fortunately, immediately above the rod was an air conditioning unit that leaked condensed water, so a good earth was maintained at all times. It was early December 1995 that I eventually was up and running. Between then and March 1996 when we returned home, I made over 500 contacts in 35 countries, principally using CW. For a while I had a daily sked with Bill Hamer ZL2CD now SK (FISTS #9004.) I only managed one New Zealand SSB contact from Shirotori, with Barry Stewart ZL2RR, the NZ QSL manager.

I attended the annual meeting of JARL Kagawa and received a great welcome. I had worked from New Zealand two of those present - Masayo Matsumoto JA1AYC, a JARL councillor and Mitsui Kunikata JH5PLN who handed me a QSL card for our contact. I was asked to say a few words that Masayo translated.

Late on the night of 17 January 1996 when working 80 metres I was called by Makoto Kamada JE1CLH (FISTS #9012). We had a very long CW chat and arranged to meet on the air again a week later. Since then Mack and I have maintained almost weekly skeds, all in CW. Just before leaving Japan I accepted Mack's invitation to visit his home and there I had the pleasure of meeting his family. At the same time, at Mack's place I also met Jonathon Hanes 7J1AWL/KC7FYS whom I had earlier worked on the air. From Mack's shack I had an enjoyable SSB round with several members of my home club. Since then Mack has twice visited me in New Zealand.

I remember my Japanese amateur radio experiences with pleasure. I only wish that I had received my licence earlier in my stay.

**Ralph Sutton**

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From Chris VK1CT #9057

**In response to David's - ZL2WT, article in the Winter newsletter.**

Thanks David ZL2WT for your article on sidetone. Here are my thoughts on the questions you raised.

**What is the best frequency for a CW sidetone?**

600Hz to 700Hz is good for me.

**Are there circumstances when you need to change the frequency of your sidetone?**

Not really, unless it's not to my liking.

**At what audio level should the sidetone be in relation to the signal being received?**

Whatever is comfortable, but usually lower than the volume of the incoming signal. If I'm listening to a weak signal, I will probably have headphones on and may reduce the sidetone volume to allow my hearing to better 'tune in' and not have my ears blown off when I transmit with the normal volume sidetone.

**Are there times when it is preferable to turn the sidetone off?**

Yes. I often send CQ using one of the memories in my Elecraft K3 and set it to beacon every 60 seconds or so, especially during evenings on 80m. This allows me to do other things in the shack while waiting for someone to answer my CQ. When I have the rig operating in this fashion, I turn down, or turn off, the sidetone. This way I can listen to music or watch a YouTube video without hearing my CQ calls in the background. However, I have been caught out by this once or twice. When I've had the music or video volume too high, I have missed hearing a reply to my CQ. I only noticed the caller when I happened to glance at my Elecraft P3 visual display and saw their signals!

**Do you use any other method to monitor your sending? A second receiver? An oscilloscope? A recording device? A light emitting diode? A tone oscillator?**

Most modern radios have an LED which lights up when transmitting. This includes my K3 and FT817. When I have my K3 sending beacon CQ calls with the sidetone off, I can see when I'm transmitting by seeing the red TX light flashing in sync with the Morse. If I have the sidetone off, I simply rely on the TX light if I just want to send QRL? This is me being lazy and not bothering to turn up the volume of the sidetone, HI. But I wouldn't rely on the TX light (and no sidetone) to send normally. It might be an interesting exercise to try though.

Chris VK1CT #9057

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From Garry GK2GAZ #14151

### **QRPGuys Mini No Tune 80m-10m End Fed Half Wave Antenna**

*QRPGuys Mini No Tune End Fed Half Wave Antenna is designed as a mini, highly portable 80m-10m end fed half wave wire antenna, easily set up as an inverted V, horizontal, sloper, or in the case of higher frequencies, a vertical radiator. Your feed line is essentially the counterpoise, so a separate one is not necessary if you want to keep weight down.*

Above are the first couple of sentences from the QRP Guys website explaining their Mini No Tune EFHW Antenna matching unit. It is tiny, its overall dimensions are 3" x 2" x 3/4" (old school) and weighs only 1.50oz.

As with all QRP Guys kits this is a top-quality item, has all stainless steel and brass hardware and very easy to assemble. It is rated at 10 watts which is more than ample for QRP operation.

Of course, there is always a downside and with the Aussie dollar being what it is, this cost me \$52.24 including post, but I had \$50.00 worth of fun putting it together.



73, Garry VK2GAZ #14151

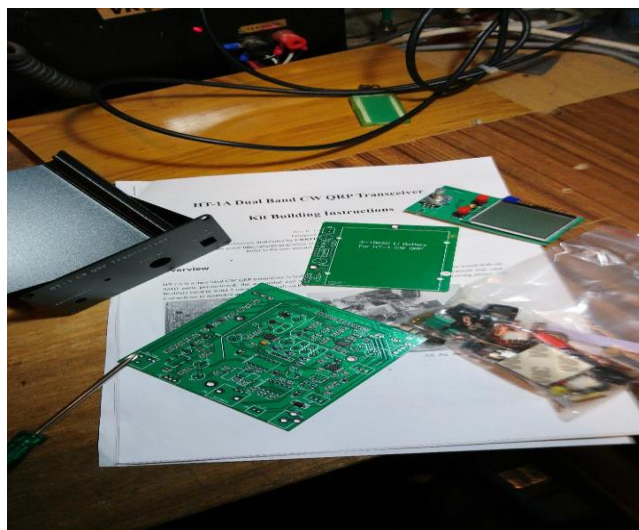
From Tony VK3TP #15204

### **Building the CRKits HT-1A, 5Watt QRP Transceiver**

A bit of background.

I really enjoy assembling kit radios and I have made a number of them including 2x Pixies, a Twofer, 2x QRP Labs QCXs and China Radio Kits (CRKits), 2x KNQ-7As and a CRK-10A. I had a hankering to build something else and after a bit of research my decision came down to either getting a QRP Labs QSX or a CRKits HT-1A. The earlier released QRP Labs 5W QCXs are a multi featured CW radio with all sorts bells and whistles. I built two but eventually managed to strip the copper tracks off both PCBs by having to replace the finals so often. In my opinion they are fragile. For a long time QRP Labs have promised to release a multi-mode, multi featured 5W replacement for the QCX with the designation QSX. Although promised for November 2018 at the time of writing the QSX radio is not yet available. Concurrently China Radio had been offering a range QRP kits – KNQ-7As and CRK-10As amongst others (both of which I think are now out of production). Their kits could be described as workmanlike and robust. A more recent offering from CRKits is the HT-1A. The HT-1A is a pretty basic 5W CW, 20/40mt, DDS controlled transceiver that can also receive CW and SSB signals from 5.6MHz through to 16MHz. It is certainly without the multitude of features offered by the QSX but based on my previous experience with their kits it could be expected to be easy to construct from quality components, have a supportive construction manual, be robust and work first time! As the QSX and HT-1A kits would be about the same price in Australia (and the QSX isn't available yet) I ordered a HT-1A. It cost Au\$224.

#### **The Kit**



A peculiarity of ordering from CRKits is that they don't acknowledge receipt of the order, the only indication I got that they have received the order was an email from PayPal saying they had made the payment. About ten days later a rather knocked about parcel arrived but fortunately the bubble wrap packing had been sufficient, and the contents were fine. The kit comprised a black powder coated, extruded aluminium two part case, screen printed and bored case end plates, the DDS assembly (a VFO for want of a better title) and two PCBs: the

main board and a second board to which you could attach rechargeable batteries and which had the circuitry for an LM386 audio amplifier. The main board had been populated with a mass of surface mounted components but the through the board components and other hardware were in plastic bags inside the case. The double sided through plated PCBs were of very high quality with clear component locations and part numbers. The hardware was also of a high quality. For example, the BNC antenna connector was die-cast metal rather than the plastic ones normally supplied with kits. The Construction Manual and Operator Guide are available on the CRKits website for download. If

you have had experience of kit building the Construction Manual was pretty good but a first timer might find there was insufficient basic information. If you have wound toroids before you know that the number of turns equals the number of times the wire passes through the middle of the ring, but the instructions just said 'L1-10 turns', 'L2-12 turns'.

I always check the components and hardware against the parts list and where possible check the physical value of the component with a multi meter. I then stick them end-on into styrene foam and write their values on a strip of masking tape running along the edge of the styrene foam. No dramas there but I am nowadays finding it difficult to decipher the number of rings on some of the resistors (that's where the multi meter is handy). When soldering I used a fine tipped Weller 20W iron and 1mm resin cored solder. The component legs were clean, and everything flowed nicely. The only tricky bit of the construction (which shouldn't have been, but I made it tricky) was the installation of Transformer T1 - a toroidal transformer with eight and two windings. I advocate 'always leave the legs on a toroidal transformer as long as possible as it makes them easier to insert' but I didn't heed my own advice and, as I was to discover later, managed to install T1 in the wrong orientation i.e. 90 degrees out!!!

Construction was straight forward, took about three to four hours, and everything fitted together nicely.



When power was applied (it operates on 9 -15 Volts) the screen lit up and white electron noise came out of the speaker (I had rigged up an externally amplified Walkman speaker but there is provision for an internal speaker or 8 Ohm stereo headphones). While fiddling with the receiver I was able to monitor a CW QSO on the 40Mt band. The radio has a 'program knob' on the front that adjusts the tuning rate and the incremental tuning. There are also two red buttons. One marked M/V/SAV is used to access the VFO, or Memory, or Save and a host of other functions and the other marked R/T/SPD controls the RIT and the keyer speed etc. Pressing these buttons in sequence or for an extended time accesses other features. Learning which button does what is character building, and I didn't find the 'User Manual' particularly enlightening. There is also a volume knob on the front which can be connected to

control either the internal audio amplifier or an RF amplifier (or with the addition of a second variable resistor you can control both).

Although the audio side of things worked the transmitter didn't!

When keying the transmitter, I was getting a low level of RF on the station receivers which confirmed the oscillator and 1st amplifier were working, but I was getting nothing from the output

IRF510 FET. A couple of radio colleagues looked at the board and saw that I had connected the T1 output toroidal transformer incorrectly. Fortunately, I was able to remove the toroid without difficulty and suck the solder out of the plated-through holes. I then ran a 0.8mm drill through the holes to make sure everything was clear and re-soldered the toroid the right way around. Then, on keying the transmitter with 14.3V input, I was getting 4W of RF at the antenna, so everything is working. Initially I had no successful contacts, but I wasn't getting contacts on my 100W rigs either. However, in the last few days I worked some VK5s (I'm in Melbourne) and Lord Howe Island with the 4Watts.

Today I decided to make the necessary alterations to get the onboard LM386 amplifier going. This involved installing a small speaker and drilling 24 'sound holes' in the roof of the case. This was probably the most taxing part of the whole construction as the aesthetics of the job required the rosette of holes to be symmetrical and any errors would be obvious. (I drew the layout geometrically with compasses on adhesive paper and drilled the holes from inside the case. I'm moderately impressed with the result.)

Am I happy with the rig? - Yes! I think it will be a useful CW rig for portable operation. At 60mA with the backlight on (and 45mA with it off) the receiving current draw is low. On transmit the current drawn is 0.8A this means that operation from a LiPO battery is a practical proposition. Weighing around 400gm its reasonably light. It looks durable.

While building the kit I did a quick count of my QRP capable transceivers. I currently have six that are working. (And a box full of busted ones!)

I really don't need another QRP CW transceiver, but it was fun building it.

More information on this and the other China Radio Kits can be obtained from [www.crkits.com](http://www.crkits.com)

**Tony VK3TP (#15204)**

Thankyou Tony!!!

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**Another from Garry VK2GAZ #14151**

### **Streaking**

In July 2019 I signed up for Dry July, which meant I would not be drinking any alcohol for the month in support of the Dry July cause which In my case, any funds raised went to the **Chris O'Brien Lifehouse**.

What has this to do Streaking? Well only that a 'Streak' can be defined as something which happens or is done over a period of time without a break. So, my not drinking for a month was, for me, a Streak.

You might well ask what has this to do with Amateur Radio and in particular Morse Code?

Well it all started back in March 2017 when the **VK QRP Club** introduced their **10 Day QSO Award**, the idea is to make a **CW QRP** contact over any 10 consecutive days. I thought, this should be easy and of course fell flat on my face after about 2 days. Not being one to give up, as the **FISTS Down Under Inc. Awards Manager**, I introduced the **FISTS 5 Day CW QSO Award** - 5 days must be lots easier than 10 days and so the journey began.

I used several rigs during my Streak, they were the **FT-817**, **QCX** both on 80 and 40 metres, my **HB-1B** QRP CW transceiver, and of course my delightful **IC-7300** wound right back to 4 watts according to my trusty **MFJ-971** tuner.

Now running QRP at the transmitter end is not all that difficult, it's the poor operator at the other end, trying to decipher my tiny signal in the noise, who deserves all the praise. Many a time during the Streak the poor operator at the other end, after many attempts at trying to make out my signal would say **SRI NO CPY 73**. I thank all those dedicated men and women who put in the hard yards in answering my CQ calls, without you the Streak would have been over much sooner.

For the two awards mentioned above the rules state your contact cannot be prearranged, like a regular sked or the like. I abided by these rules for the entire Streak. However, I did take advantage of the hardy operators who put themselves on the line to activate **SOTA** peaks and **WWFF/VKFF** parks. One such stalwart is **Gerard VK2IO** who was activating **WWFF** and **VKFF** parks in VK5 and VK8 for most of June and July as my log below attests.

I must admit, I am luckier than most, in as much as I am retired and have the opportunity to spend a good part of the evening calling CQ and listening for contacts. For me the best time to call CQ was around 0600-0700 UTC on 40 metres, although quite a few of my contacts were on 80 metres at various times and I even snuck in a few contacts on 20 metres as well.

A Streak like this is certainly not solely dependent on someone calling CQ until they blue in the face, to be successful it relies on other operators being there, listening and being prepared to answer a CQ call. Nothing is more delightful than calling CQ and having a complete stranger answer your call.

With all the best of intentions and effort, a Streak like this must eventually come to an end. So it was with my Streak. After a flurry of contacts during the **FISTS Dry July** contest (how ironic) my time came to an end. My Streak started on 02 June 2019 and ended on 21 July 2019. After 50 days, with at least one contact on each day, and a total of 92 contacts, my Streak came to an end.

Will I start another Streak? Well maybe not straight away, however I will certainly be there calling CQ and hope you will return my call. Now, I am no speed operator, 12 to 14 WPM is about my style and I would love to have a contact with you. I, like a lot of operators don't expect you to chat for hours, just a simple short exchange of reports and maybe a weather report or your QTH and sign off. If you hear me calling CQ please say hi.

Why don't you have a shot, 5 consecutive days with a QRP CW contact can't be all that difficult, the Award Certificate is certainly worth the fun and effort.

**73, Garry VK2GAZ #14151**



## Log of Garry VK2GAZ QRP "Streak"

| #  | Date      | Callsign  | Name    | UTC   | RST<br>(Received) | RST<br>(Given) | Freq.    | Mode | Power   |           |
|----|-----------|-----------|---------|-------|-------------------|----------------|----------|------|---------|-----------|
| 1  | 02 Jun 19 | VK1CT     | Chris   | 03:13 | 559               | 559            | 3.522    | CW   | 4 watts |           |
| 2  | 03 Jun 19 | ZL2IFB    | Gary    | 06:16 | 579               | 579            | 7.015    | CW   | 4 watts |           |
| 3  | 04 Jun 19 | VK3FDT    | David   | 06:40 | 559               | 559            | 7.015    | CW   | 4 watts |           |
| 4  | 05 Jun 19 | VK2DSL    | Shaun   | 06:39 | 569               | 599            | 7.015    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 5  | 06 Jun 19 | VK2CCW    | Michael | 11:51 | 549               | 599            | 3.528    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 6  | 07 Jun 19 | VK3XU     | Drew    | 06:11 | 569               | 599            | 7.015    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 7  | 08 Jun 19 | VK3PF/QRP | Peter   | 00:38 | 559               | 559            | 7.035    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 8  | 08 Jun 19 | VK3PF/QRP | Peter   | 05:42 | 579               | 599            | 7.032    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 9  | 08 Jun 19 | VK5PH     | Paul    | 05:56 | 579               | 559            | 7.032    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 10 | 09 Jun 19 | VK7CW     | Steve   | 01:06 | 319               | 339            | 7.032    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 11 | 09 Jun 19 | VK1MCW    | Bill    | 01:18 | 239               | 339            | 3.532    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 12 | 09 Jun 19 | VK5CZ     | Ian     | 01:47 | 579               | 599            | 7.027    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 13 | 09 Jun 19 | VK3CAT    | Tony    | 01:56 | 559               | 559            | 7.032    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 14 | 10 Jun 19 | VK3ARH    | Allen   | 00:22 | 559               | 559            | 7.032    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 15 | 10 Jun 19 | VK2IO/5   | Gerard  | 00:45 | 549               | 559            | 7.032    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 16 | 10 Jun 19 | VK3ARR    | Andrew  | 02:07 | 559               | 549            | 7.023    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 17 | 10 Jun 19 | VK2IO/5   | Gerard  | 04:36 | 579               | 539            | 7.032    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 18 | 11 Jun 19 | VK3CQC    | Peter   | 06:12 | 429               | 579            | 7.012.4  | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 19 | 12 Jun 19 | VK1MCW    | Bill    | 11:18 | 559               | 599            | 3.528    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 20 | 13 Jun 10 | VK1CT     | Chris   | 09:15 | 559               | 559            | 3.529    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 21 | 13 Jun 19 | VK2IOW    | Patrick | 11:36 | 559               | 579            | 3.528    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 22 | 14 Jun 19 | VK3TP     | Tony    | 11:06 | 239               | 559            | 3.523    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 23 | 15 Jun 19 | VK1DA     | Andrew  | 01:56 | 579               | 579            | 3.532    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 24 | 16 Jun 19 | VK2IO/5   | Gerard  | 00:44 | 539               | 419            | 7.028    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 25 | 16 Jun 19 | VK2IO/5   | Gerard  | 09:11 | 579               | 599            | 3.524    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 26 | 17 Jun 19 | VK2IO/5   | Gerard  | 06:17 | 579               | 599            | 7.028    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 27 | 17 Jun 19 | VK2IO/5   | Gerard  | 09:50 | 569               | 559            | 3.524    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 28 | 18 Jun 19 | VK2IO/5   | Gerard  | 00:40 | 579               | 599            | 7.028    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 29 | 18 Jun 19 | VK2CCW    | Michael | 11:27 | 579               | 599            | 3.528    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 30 | 19 Jun 19 | VK5CZ     | Ian     | 04:05 | 529               | 529            | 7.032    | CW   | 5 Watts |           |
| 31 | 20 Jun 19 | VK3TP     | Tony    | 01:31 | 589               | 599            | 7.032    | CW   | 5 Watts |           |
| 32 | 21 Jun 19 | VK2KJJ    | Joe     | 23:33 | 559               | 559            | 3.528    | CW   | 5 Watts |           |
| 33 | 22 Jun 19 | VK2IO/5   | Gerard  | 00:05 | 359               | 559            | 7.149.50 | CW   | 5 Watts |           |
| 34 | 22 Jun 19 | VK2JDR    | David   | 03:37 | 229               | 539            | 7.028    | CW   | 5 Watts |           |
| 35 | 22 Jun 19 | VK2IO/5   | Gerard  | 03:48 | 569               | 579            | 7.028    | CW   | 5 Watts |           |
| 36 | 23 Jun 19 | VK2IO/5   | Gerard  | 00:01 | 529               | 229            | 7.028    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 37 | 23 Jun 19 | VK1MCW/P  | Bill    | 01:38 | 239               | 339            | 3.532    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 38 | 24 Jun 19 | VK4TJ     | John    | 07:05 | 579               | 589            | 7.028    | CW   | 4 watts |           |
| 39 | 25 Jun 19 | VK2IO/5   | Gerard  | 00:06 | 549               | 559            | 7.028    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 40 | 26 Jun 19 | VK2IO/5   | Gerard  | 00:01 | 579               | 579            | 7.032    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 41 | 27 Jun 19 | VK3AXH    | Ian     | 06:26 | 589               | 599            | 7.015    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 42 | 27 Jun 19 | VK2IO/5   | Gerard  | 06:39 | 579               | 599            | 7.026    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 43 | 28 Jun 19 | VK4RT     | Bob     | 06:39 | 449               | 579            | 7.015    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 44 | 29 Jun 19 | VK2IO/5   | Gerard  | 00:01 | 549               | 559            | 7.028    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 45 | 29 Jun 19 | VK3PF/P   | Peter   | 04:32 | 519               | 449            | 3.528    | CW   | 4 Watts |           |
| 46 | 30 Jun 19 | VK2IO/5   | Gerard  | 00:02 | 579               | 579            | 7.028    | CW   | 4 Watts | VKFF_0782 |

|    |           |            |        |       |     |     |        |    |         |            |
|----|-----------|------------|--------|-------|-----|-----|--------|----|---------|------------|
| 47 | 30 Jun 19 | VK2IO/5    | Gerard | 03:19 | 539 | 589 | 7.028  | CW | 4 Watts | VKFF_0788  |
| 48 | 01 Jul 19 | VK2IO/5    | Gerard | 01:09 | 519 | 539 | 7.014  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 49 | 01 Jul 19 | VK8HW      | Chas   | 07:15 | 449 | 589 | 7.024  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 50 | 02 Jul 19 | VK2IO/5    | Gerard | 09:29 | 529 | 559 | 3.524  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 51 | 03 Jul 19 | VK2TP/QRP  | Tony   | 06:38 | 559 | 559 | 7.015  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 52 | 04 Jul 19 | VK2IO/5    | Gerard | 01:27 | 219 | 229 | 14.044 | CW | 5 Watts | VKFF-0866  |
| 53 | 04 Jul 19 | VK2IO/5    | Gerard | 09:15 | 229 | 559 | 3.528  | CW | 5 Watts | VKFF-1738  |
| 54 | 05 Jul 19 | VK5CZ      | Ian    | 05:47 | 559 | 559 | 7.028  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 55 | 06 Jul 19 | VK3PF/P    | Peter  | 02:53 | 579 | 559 | 7.032  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 56 | 06 Jul 19 | VK19AUS    | John   | 06:46 | 599 | 599 | 7.028  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 57 | 06 Jul 19 | VK2IO/5    | Gerard | 11:11 | 579 | 599 | 7.014  | CW | 5 Watts | VKFF-0813  |
| 58 | 07 Jul 19 | VK2IO/5    | Gerard | 00:05 | 529 | 549 | 7.028  | CW | 5 Watts | VKFF-0819  |
| 59 | 07 Jul 19 | VK3AIG     | John   | 06:45 | 559 | 559 | 7.015  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 60 | 07 Jul 19 | VK2IO/5    | Gerard | 06:54 | 559 | 559 | 7.038  | CW | 5 Watts | VK5/SE-017 |
| 61 | 08 Jul 19 | VK2IO/5    | Gerard | 00:41 | 529 | 569 | 7.028  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 62 | 09 Jul 19 | VK2IO/5    | Gerard | 01:25 | 569 | 579 | 7.023  | CW | 5 Watts | VKFF-1057  |
| 63 | 10 Jul 19 | VK5IO/5    | Gerard | 09:39 | 579 | 599 | 3.528  | CW | 5 Watts | VKFF-2252  |
| 64 | 11 Jul 19 | VK2IO/5    | Gerard | 00:01 | 529 | 539 | 7.032  | CW | 5 Watts | VKFF-0360  |
| 65 | 11 Jul 19 | VK2IO/5    | Gerard | 04:28 | 579 | 599 | 7.028  | CW | 5 Watts | VKFF-1105  |
| 66 | 12 Jul 19 | VK2IO/5    | Gerard | 00:06 | 579 | 559 | 7.028  | CW | 5 Watts | VKFF-1757  |
| 67 | 12 Jul 19 | VK1MCW/QRP | Bill   | 11:02 | 339 | 559 | 3.522  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 68 | 12 Jul 19 | VK2JDR/QRP | David  | 11:07 | 559 | 559 | 3.521  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 69 | 12 Jul 19 | VK1CT      | Chris  | 11:12 | 579 | 559 | 3.527  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 70 | 12 Jul 19 | VK7RD      | Bob    | 11:16 | 579 | 579 | 3.526  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 71 | 12 Jul 19 | VK3QB      | Chris  | 11:25 | 559 | 579 | 3.520  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 72 | 12 Jul 19 | VK2ASB     | Arthur | 11:31 | 599 | 599 | 3.510  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 73 | 12 Jul 19 | VK2KJJ     | Joe    | 11:38 | 589 | 599 | 3.524  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 74 | 12 Jul 19 | VK3BYD/QRP | Warren | 11:46 | 559 | 559 | 3.524  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 75 | 12 Jul 19 | VK7CW      | Steve  | 11:58 | 559 | 599 | 3.528  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 76 | 13 Jul 19 | VK2IO/5    | Gerard | 23:59 | 559 | 559 | 7.032  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 77 | 14 Jul 19 | VK2IO/5    | Gerard | 00:17 | 559 | 559 | 7.032  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 78 | 14 Jul 19 | VK3ARH     | Alan   | 06:06 | 579 | 579 | 7.015  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 79 | 14 Jul 19 | VK3TP      | Tony   | 06:19 | 569 | 579 | 7.015  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 80 | 15 Jul 19 | VK4GSF     | George | 05:50 | 569 | 579 | 7.015  | CW | 4 Watts |            |
| 81 | 15 Jul 19 | VK2IO/5    | Gerard | 09:40 | 569 | 539 | 7.023  | CW | 5 Watts | VKFF-1769  |
| 82 | 15 Jul 19 | VK2IO/5    | Gerard | 11:01 | 579 | 579 | 3.519  | CW | 5 Watts | VKFF-1769  |
| 83 | 16 Jul 19 | VK2IOW     | Pat    | 11:20 | 429 | 599 | 3.528  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 84 | 17 Jul 19 | VK4TJ      | John   | 03:07 | 559 | 559 | 7.015  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 85 | 18 Jul 19 | VK2IO/8    | Gerard | 01:19 | 519 | 339 | 14.044 | CW | 5 Watts | VKFF-0505  |
| 86 | 18 Jul 19 | ZL1BBW     | Gavin  | 03:48 | 579 | 599 | 14.029 | CW | 5Watts  |            |
| 87 | 19 Jul 19 | VK5CZ/QRP  | Ian    | 03:14 | 529 | 539 | 14.030 | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 88 | 19 Jul 19 | VK4VXX     | Greg   | 03:22 | 559 | 599 | 14.036 | CW | 5 Watts | VKFF-0701  |
| 89 | 20 Jul 19 | VK3AFW/P   | Ron    | 01:03 | 539 | 559 | 7.032  | CW | 5 Watts | VK3/VN-030 |
| 90 | 21 Jul 19 | VK3ARH     | Allen  | 00:43 | 579 | 589 | 7.015  | CW | 5 Watts |            |
| 91 | 21 Jul 19 | VK1MCW/2   | Bill   | 02:34 | 539 | 559 | 7.032  | CW | 5 Watts | VK2/ST-039 |
| 92 | 21 Jul 19 | VK1CT/1    | Chris  | 03:22 | 599 | 579 | 7.033  | CW | 5 Watts | VK2/IL-001 |

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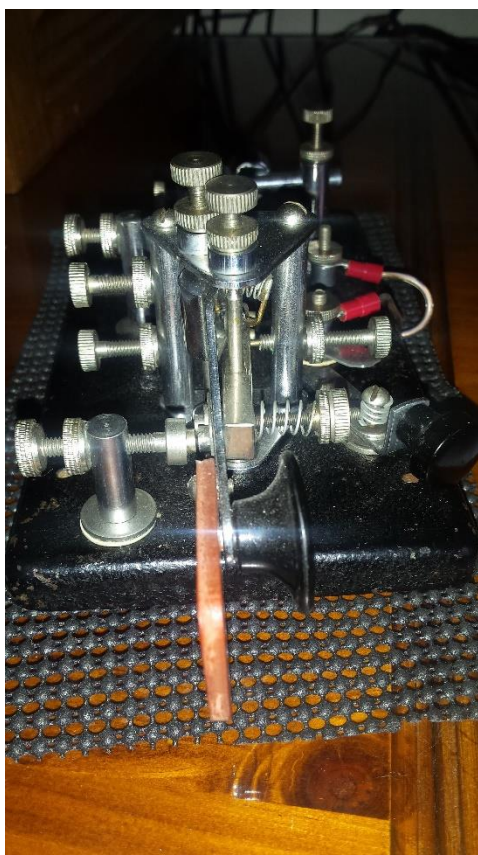
## Key Moments

Steve VK7CW # 14164

### *The Buzza Automatic Key No. 100 double lever (pivot) bug*



I was extremely lucky enough to purchase this key a few years ago from a fellow ham in Canberra. The key was manufactured by a company called Buzza in Sydney, NSW, and comes with its own box and wedge cable. It is called a double lever key but in actual fact it is a double pivot key. One pivot and arm for the dash and one for the dots.



This key will send from about 12 wpm up to about 27 wpm as it has been fitted with a slower dot spring. It is also fitted with a shorting lever. It sits at my operating position



and I use it for slow speed CW QSOs. It is a very capable key and fun to use, is extremely robust, and built like a tank. The base is extremely heavy and does not move on the desk at all. It is very smooth and one of my favourite keys, and is one that I would never let go. These keys do not have a serial number and the only information is that they were manufactured sometime during the Second World War. There is some information to be gained from the internet on these keys and there is an excellent article to be found in the UK FISTS Key Note newsletter of April 2015, which can be found here: <http://fists.co.uk/docs/keynotes/kn0415a5.pdf>



If you can find one of these keys on the second-hand market be sure to snap it up as quick as you can, as they are quite rare.



73 de Steve VK7CW

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Bill VK1MCW #15215

### **The SQ9KFQ Midi Straight Key**

*"Every now and then I have to do something else, because monotony kills my imagination. Just take a piece of brass and without plans, sketches give in to the imagination. This time he was born."* Robert Sadurski SQ9KFQ March 2018



Back in about April this year I spied a beautiful key on the Facebook Group *CW Bugs Keys & Paddles*. It is the Midi Straight Key, a magnetic hand made by Robert Sadurski SQ9KFQ from Poland. I just had to have one! Robert makes these keys in his spare time – Fortunately for me, when I contacted him, he said he had one that he had just completed – right place right time – and the price is very reasonable. Inside 10 days the key was connected to my IC-7300. I am understating things when I say it is a very nice straight key with a heavy solid brass base, thus very stable and very smooth action. The photos say it all.



The only thing I thought could be improved was the rather shallow (height) knob as seen in the above photograph.

In this photo you can compare the knob with the Begali Blade on the left.

Robert explained that he designed it that way to retain its compact size (to reduce shipping costs) but also as it is a magnetic key, something about the weight on the lever. This was a very minor design issue which, given my collection of keys, I knew that it could be easily fixed without impacting the looks or operation of the key. Some of you may recall that I returned from the 2019 Wyong Field Day with a slightly tired old



Hi-Mound straight key that needed a new knob. I was easily able to buy an OEM knob online. Thread size (4mm) being the same, I fitted the newly acquired Hi-Mound knob to my new SQ9KFQ mini straight key, and the action was not altered at all, but the knob was very much better suited to my large thumb!!



*My Wyong Take-Home*

So, with that success I ordered another Hi-Mound knob – so that now both keys are fully functional.



One other minor observation and, **NOT** a criticism....Robert does not apply a clear lacquer to his brass keys – so, if you like shiny brass keys, you do need to give them a wipe down and polish every now and then – unless you love a bit of patina!! Fancy needing to polish a Polish key.



## Technical Detail

MIDI STRAIGHT KEY

Length 98mm

Height of 55mm (*but mine is 65mm with the Hi-Mound knob fitted*)

The solid brass base is 20mm thick by 50 mm width. The base sits on four soft rubber adhesive pads

Weight 1KG

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=488187294921096&set=pcb.1956435687805496&type=3&theater&ifg=1>

I have stopped prowling eBay for “old” keys – as I have plenty. Unless something which is extremely rare and has some tangible link to Australia gets my attention, then my next key purchase will be another new, non-Commercial, hand-made straight key. Watch this space!

Bill VK1MCW #15215

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## In Closing

One of the highlights of this newsletter, in my opinion, is the opportunity to welcome five new members to the VK Chapter. If you have recently joined and I have overlooked you, I apologise. Feel free to send me a short story about yourself for the next edition. A growing membership is very reassuring, but it is not enough. I again urge each of you to consider what **you** can do to promote our hobby, and CW in particular. With over 110 FDU members in VK alone, plus our ZL partners, the airwaves should be full of CW – yet our call frequencies (listed in this newsletter and on the web page) are devoid of CW signals 90% of the time. Even when I look at the RBN, there is an almost complete lack of VK and ZL calls appearing on any of the popular bands. Regardless of the lousy RF conditions that plague our hobby, where is everybody? Whether it is the short contests we promote, or those going portable on VKFF or SOTA, there isn't much FDU CW happening on air!

## Let's change that!

Ladies and Gents – I implore you to GOTA!! Get On The Air – and then write to me and tell me about it! Tell me about your best CW DX, best CW moment - worst moment. Give me some CW to write about!

Oh, and when engaged in a rag chew with someone, ask if they know about FISTS? Email them afterwards and send them a link to our web page or FB page – or even send them a copy of our newsletter.

**de Bill**

**VK1MCW #15215**



Picture: Roger McDonald