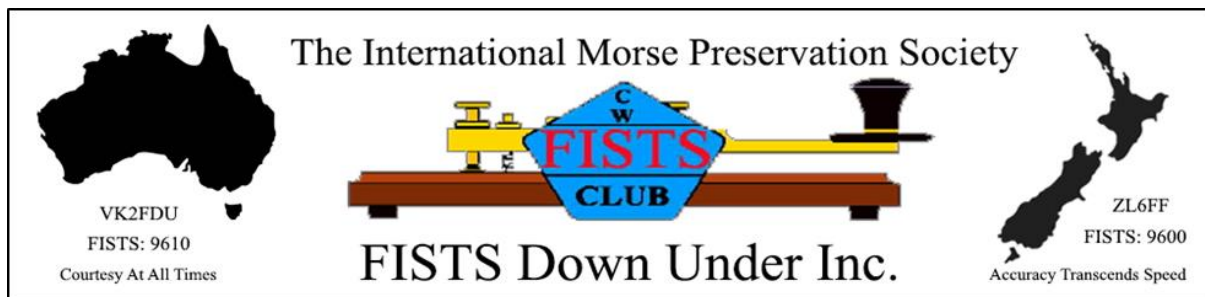


August 2024

Key - Down Under



August is filled with ham radio activities!

Committee

President	<i>Vacant</i>	
Vice President	Derek VK3KX	Dfdawkins (at) optusnet.com.au
Secretary	Pete VK1AAF	
Awards and ZL Llason	Philip ZL1PSH	zululima1psh(at)gmail.com
Newsletter editor	Ben VK2JA	Hit "reply" on any newsletter email
Facebook moderators	Philip ZL1PSH and Derek VK3KX	

 <http://www.fdu.org.au>

 <https://www.facebook.com/groups/349974226381281>

Recommended FDU calling frequencies (MHz)

1.818 3.528 7.028 10.118 14.058

18.085

21.058

24.908

28.058



August is a jam-packed month for amateur radio activities. Even if you're not a contester, you can use these events to improve your skills, whether it be listening only, or having simple QSOs.

Welcome to our August newsletter. It's been a while since our last edition. These newsletters are primarily to share what members are doing in the world of CW and radio, so please hit reply to the newsletter to email and send me some photos and/or a couple of words about what you are doing. Even if it's just a photo of your shack and key.

I hope you find some interesting articles and activities in the following pages. There is certainly plenty to participate in, so... put on your headphones and spin the dial, check out parkspeaks and get out your key for some easy practice, or put out a CQ.

Ben VK2JA – FDU Newsletter Editor

Vice President's Message

I hope this mid-winter message finds you all well. And I mean that with some feeling, as I know some of our members are having health challenges and that may well be a reflection of the advancing age of those of us interested in the art of CW. I hope practicing and using the code brings you some pleasure in your time as you relax.



I am reminded this issue of the breadth of experience of Fists members and wonder how we can best share that with each other. Although I have been licenced for just on 50 years this year I still consider myself inexperienced in CW, and if you catch me on air I am sure you will divine that pretty quickly. Some members however have been using the code regularly for 50, and more, years and carry the Knowledge with them deeply. If newcomers can connect with these 'old timers' (can't believe I used that expression) then I am sure they will progress in the art more quickly than they could ever do on their own.

But how to do that? We have a mentor scheme in FDU but it has never had any great patronage. Perhaps it sounds too grand? I would suggest that first you should get your sending and receiving up to at least 5 wpm (as novices did back in the day), any of the online resources or Apps can help you there, and then plan to get straight on air, start swimming! At that stage regular on air practice is the key (see what I did there?) and you need a partner to practice say, weekly. You should also listen in on 7025 and 7028 kHz where the most regular activity occurs. I really think you have to be able to at least receive on 40 meters to have a path to on-air activity.

To find an on-air partner I suggest just popping a message up on our Facebook page noting the area you need a contact in and see if someone helps out. As for you more experienced OMs, please respond if you see one of these requests!

So warm up the shack heater, get practicing and I hope to hear you all on air soon.

73 Derek VK3KX

Upcoming Events

20-27 August - YJ0VK DXpedition 2024 (Vanuatu). Further info in the newsletter.

24 – 25 August - ALARA contest
<https://www.alara.org.au/contests/>

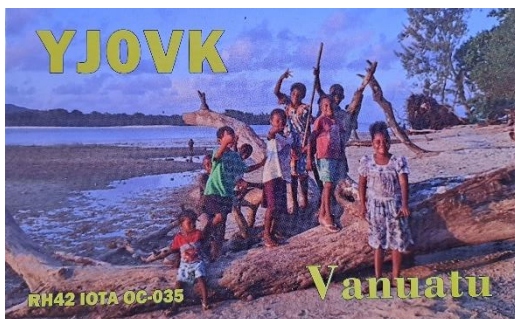
Every Friday night – FDU QSO Party on or around 3528kHz and 7028kHz.
<https://www.fdu.org.au/fdu-qso-party/>

Join us for the FDU QSO Party every Friday night! We gather on or around 3528kHz and 7028kHz, starting at 2100 EST (1100z). Whether you prefer to call or answer CQs, this is your chance to engage in QSOs of any length and at any speed.

Make sure you're in the FDU Facebook group for updates and results (even though it's not a contest, we keep a tally of contacts made).
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/349974226381281>

Every Tuesday night – CQ QRS net – see below.

Going Troppo Again - YJ0VK DXpedition 2024



FDU member Chris VK3QB (#9085) is heading back to Vanuatu 20-27 August 2024. The team enjoyed the QTH and experience so much last time (April) they've decided to head back for a week. The team comprises four CW operators this time, and I think all four of us are FDU members ... and CW will be our main mode.

Olgierd VK5XDX (Oly on CW) is a mad keen 6 metre buff so he'll have an ear open on the dedicated K3s station connected to a 4-element beam. The rest of the team, Luke VK3HJ, Patrick VK2PN and Chris VK3QB will be ready to support Oly with any magic band openings.

The rest of the time we'll be busy on the HF bands, only going as low as 40m. During downtimes we'll run an FT8 station to keep digital operators happy and get YJ band slots filled. We'll use a 40m doublet via a (soon to be collectable) MFJ962 balanced tuner, and about 50 metres away on the beach a DX-Commander, Expedition model, courtesy of Callum at DX Commander. This configuration proved very effective last time, with antenna separation and opposite polarisations minimising inter-station QRM.

If you're a FDU member pls let us know and say g'day. We are always happy to stop for a quick chat (if the pileup isn't too crazy), but probably QRS a little. DXpedition speed will be 25-28WPM but our conversational copy is closer to 23-25WPM. Of course, we'll QRS to match your speed if you want more than a "599 tu" QSO.

We look forward to hearing and logging as many FDU members as we can - even if you don't need YJ, pls give us a yell and say g'day.



More details on our qrz page or follow us on Facebook... search for "YJ0VK 2024".

73, Chris VK3QB #9085

WIA 40m band plan submission

We strongly encourage all CW operators to put in a submission to the WIA's request for feedback on their 40m bandplan proposals, which adversely affect CW operations.

Submissions are due by September 6. Email your feedback to tac@wia.org.au

Below is a summary of the WIA's proposal (summary by Phil, ZL1PSH), and response by Chris, VK3QB, to the WIA's request for feedback. I hope you will read both the summary and Chris's response, make your own view, and send feedback to the WIA.

Key takeaways from the WIA proposal *(by Ben VK2JA):*

- **CW operators lose out big time** with the WIA's proposal – also noting that they are proposing to limit us to an area which US Novice and Techs don't even have access to!
- They have taken a **one-month sample period from ClubLog** to substantiate most of their assumptions on spectrum usage, which is too short a sample period and too small a sample as ClubLog does not get broad enough usage over the modes in VK to give an accurate picture. Choosing one month will heavily skew any data, even if ClubLog did capture every single QSO worldwide for the period.
- While a bandplan is simply that – a plan, not a binding or mandatory agreement or legislated restriction – following agreed bandplans is important, and the publication of a bandplan which reduces the CW-defined areas will lead to greatly increased use of these areas by other modes, **interfering with CW operations.**
- Given that band plans aren't mandatory, the very **best chance of achieving international harmony is to have something that is simple**, recognising existing activity and integrates as much as possible with current band plans.

Summary (by Philip ZL1PSH)

On July 9 this year, the WIA's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) released a 12-page consultation paper [1] that proposed three options for changes to the 40m band plan of the IARU's Region 3. The aim of the changes is three-fold: to reduce the inconsistencies in existing band plans, to create a more harmonised global 40m band plan, and to ensure each mode has a fair share of the available spectrum based on current activity.

The TAC would like feedback from national societies and individual hams on the three options. Groups of hams could also give feedback. Page 11 of the paper has eight questions that could be answered when providing feedback. I have reproduced the eight questions in the Appendix to this article. Email your feedback to tac@wia.org.au. The deadline for feedback is September 6, 2024.

In the rest of this article, I give a summary of some salient points in the paper.

Measuring the current activity

The merit of the three options depends crucially on how accurately the current activity is measured. The authors measure the activity in two ways.

Channel by Channel

The amount of spectrum required for data modes is estimated channel by channel. This method leads to the following estimates

- FT8. A total of 9 kHz consisting of 3 kHz for the main channel and 3 kHz for each of two DXpeditions.
- FT4. Just 3 kHz.
- WinLink and similar Store and Forward/Mailbox based activity. A total of 10 kHz is suggested.
- Ad Hoc data – PSK/RTTY/Olivia/JS8Call etc. A total of 8 kHz is suggested.

The above estimates sum to 30 kHz.

Using Clublog

The authors' second way of measuring the activity is to use the logs on Clublog for April, 2024. An analysis of these logs led to the percentage of activity for each mode given in the table below.

Mode	Clublog activity proportion
CW	15%
SSB	13%
FT8	60%
FT4	7%
Data (other)	5%

Overall Spectrum Use

The Clublog activity percentages in the table above were used to estimate how much of the 200 kHz in the 40m band should be allocated to each mode. These estimates took into account that a single transmission for different modes require different bandwidths. The table below gives the estimates and is a condensed version of the table given on page 6 of the paper.

Mode	Clublog percentage	Bandwidth for one transmission	Proposed 40m band allocation
CW	15%	400 Hz	25 kHz
SSB	13%	3 kHz	145 kHz
FT8	60%	50 Hz	30 kHz (all data)
FT4	7%	83.3 Hz	
Data (other)	5%	400 Hz	
Winlink	NA	500 – 2700 Hz	

The authors note the estimate of 30 kHz in the above table for data modes is the same as that estimated using the channel by channel approach. They conclude from this that “this adds weight to an argument that data modes are currently being starved of clean spectrum”.

The Three Options

The paper has a written and pictorial description for each of the three options. The pictorial descriptions are coloured band plans and can be found on page 10 of the paper.

Option A

The authors describe this option as “an evolutionary path from where the current band plans are today.” The option was obtained by using the traditional approach to band planning except the proposed band allocation in the table above was used.

The authors list five possible disadvantages of Option A.

Option 2

The authors describe this option as “very much revolutionary rather than evolutionary, and as such has taken a very different approach to band management with different emphasis being placed on different outcomes.”

This option assumes some cooperation from contests managers. The authors list two possible disadvantages with this option.

Option C

The authors describe this option as “more about adopting the status quo into the band plan, while balancing the amount of allocated spectrum based on mode activity demand.”

The option accommodates the existing WSJT activity. The authors list two possible disadvantages of this option.

Final Remarks

All three options will mean changes to the amount of spectrum available to CW operators. I encourage you to provide feedback on the proposals to the TAC. Groups as well as individual operators could provide feedback.

References

[1] <https://www.wia.org.au/newsevents/news/2024/20240709-1/index.php>

Appendix

The eight questions on page 11 of the paper are the following.

Q1. Do you agree that there is merit in seeking to globally harmonise the amateur service 40m band plan?

Q2. Do you agree with the way the different quantities of spectrum for different modes has been determined? If not, please suggest alternative models that can be considered for making the assessments.

Q3. Do you agree that more should be done to protect EmComm frequencies particularly from contest activity?

Q4. Do you agree that the proposals to separate out contesting and other traffic types are suitable and would be acceptable to contest organisers?

Q5. Do you see merit in separating DX SSB activity from local communications activity (including local nets) etc?

Q6. Do you consider it appropriate to consider the “SSB” segment as a “Voice” segment, and thus in the future when digital voice modes become more prevalent, that they should rightly belong in the SSB segment alongside SSB operators, or is there a need to consider a separation of the “Voice” segment into analogue and digital voice?

Q7. Do you think the band plan should be more or less prescriptive about individual sub-modes within an operating category? (i.e. should the band plan specifically separate/designate WSJT, PSK, RTTY, Winlink and other data communications types?) Or is sufficient to name it the data sub-band, perhaps with a couple of indicative centres of activity for core activities named?

Q8. Is there anything else you would like to comment on regarding this discussion paper or other concepts or ideas that haven't been mentioned that you feel should be considered?

A suggested realistic response from a CW operator

Suggestion from the editor: If you agree with Chris but don't have time to write your own response, he's happy for you to use his words or adapt with your own.

Send your submission to tac@wia.org.au. The WIA needs feedback that there are plenty of people who feel this way.

Q1. *Do agree that there is merit in seeking to globally harmonise the amateur service 40m band plan?*

Yes. But it must be collaborative and simple. In my view, the WIA's method is flawed, and the options are too complex and restrictive. Simplicity is the key to global (and local) harmony.

Q2. *Do you agree with the way the different quantities of spectrum for different modes has been determined? If not, please suggest alternative models that can be considered for making the assessments.*

No. Table 3 is non-representative, and the logic used to create this data unclear. The sample period is too short, and the representative data will not align with typical usage. Especially for CW.

Counting QSOs does not provide an analysis of frequency spread or spectrum utilisation. The method is not fit for purpose for CW. It results in a misleading assessment of spectrum utilisation and user behaviour.

Further, Clublog is hardly the biggest data source. Other online logging/award services have far greater user bases than Clublog. What was the basis for using Clublog data? Was spectrum utilisation considered?

What was the analytical and statistical reasoning behind the methods employed for this analysis? There appears to be no assessment of actual CW activity, other than gross QSO counts.

Alternatives/Comments:

1. Why didn't TAC consult the ITU Spectrum Monitoring Handbook for industry standards. As this an IARU initiative, the documented method of a global professional body is more robust and holds greater credibility than one month of Clublog data.

2. TAC should have consulted with key stakeholders – especially for CW. TAC could have consulted with CW Ops, FDU and FOC representatives before publishing this paper. All three clubs have very active members here in VK.

3. Experienced CW operators would have identified considerable existing CW activity above 7025. We have FDU and CW Ops calling frequency of 7028, POTA, WWFF and SOTA on 7030-7032 and various other groups (qrp, homebrew etc) up to 7036. Then there's the very popular CWTs from 7028-7043 every Wednesday and Thursday VK time. International CW Council Medium Speed Test 7015-7050 Tuesdays. Many of these groups/users will not move.

4. Many CW operators don't use Clublog. Especially in VK. Clublog is not a credible data source for VK CW. By contrast, digital operators are more likely to use services such as Clublog, LoTW etc.

5. As I understand it, US Tech & Novice operators do not have access below 7025. Was this considered?

Generally, CW operators are very flexible and best placed to adapt to local conditions. This is probably why the existing band plan allows CW across the entire band. CW operators are frequency agile, good listeners, and generally considerate of other spectrum users.

Q3. Do you agree that more should be done to protect EmComm frequencies particularly from contest activity?

No. Its simply not practical. At least here in VK and our region, Emcomm is not well subscribed to; in VK our professional emergency services have stepped up to the mark since the 2009 bushfires. At least in VK2, WICEN doesn't even use amateur frequencies. Some other states provide logistical support to public events which are very limited. There is no national co-ordination.

When is the last time Amateur Radio provided co-ordinated support for natural disaster relief? Professional emergency services now play a far more effective role in providing comms, especially in our part of the world. Regions 1 and 2 (2 especially) has a very different culture and support structure for Amateur Radio Emcomm.

I believe too much emphasis has been placed on Emcomm; certainly for VK and R3. Allocate 15-20kHz in the SSB segment (above 7100) and promote this accordingly. If and when it is required for Emcomm activities, normal traffic should QSY or QRT. This will require all representative bodies, clubs, magazines, news services etc to promote the new arrangements.

Q4. Do you agree that the proposals to separate out contesting and other traffic types are suitable and would be acceptable to contest organisers?

No. That ship has sailed. We just need to live with it. Contesters are competitive. They'll use the full spectrum and as much power as their amplifiers can deliver to get that extra QSO.

Q5. Do you see merit in separating DX SSB activity from local communications activity (including local nets) etc?

No... but you could promote 7200-7300 for local daytime nets. Generally, especially in the southern/eastern states, this segment is clear and only becomes busy after dark with the SE Asian BC stations.

Why is 7200-7300 not even mentioned?

Q6. Do you consider it appropriate to consider the "SSB" segment as a "Voice" segment, and thus in the future when digital voice modes become more prevalent, that they should rightly belong in the SSB segment alongside SSB operators, or is there a need to consider a separation of the "Voice" segment into analogue and digital voice?

Yes.

Q7. Do you think the band plan should be more or less prescriptive about

individual sub-modes within an operating category? (i.e. should the band plan specifically separate/designate WSJT, PSK, RTTY, Winlink and other data communications types?) Or is sufficient to name it the data sub-band, perhaps with a couple of indicative centres of activity for core activities named?

Yes – more or less. Where appropriate specify calling or centre of activity frequencies. It's nice to know where the fishing spots are. It's a moot point for most of us anyway. WSJT sets the standards. Not IARU Band Plans.

Why hasn't IARU Region 3 taken the lead, and why are VK variations not included in the R3 Band Plan? The footnotes don't consider VK variations (160, 80, 40, 30m). Does the TAC believe IARU Region 3 is providing value or leadership?

Q8. Is there anything else you would like to comment on regarding this discussion paper or other concepts or ideas that haven't been mentioned that you feel should be considered?

The proposed options are too complex – they will create more conflict than harmony. From commentary I have seen most people appear unsupportive. I do hope the TAC take this onboard.

Option A – you won't get CW operators to comply. In spite of what your analysis tells you, 25kHz is insufficient for CW activity. Furthermore, there's way too much entrenched activity between 7025 – 7045. This option excludes USA Tech and General operators who are not permitted below 7025.

Option B – Too complex. Too many competing modes 7025 – 7070. This is inviting conflict and confusion.

Option C – This will be more problematic than Option B. Co-existence between CW Contests and Digital modes won't work. And Emcomm? Way too much change. Impossible to implement. Lack of sound operating skills and the vagaries of propagation will render any sharing with Digital modes a failure. This option will result in confusion and conflict.

In addition, 40m propagation and varying reception and transmission capabilities mean many operators will stomp on others, or not hear others, something which happens today anyway. The best chance of success is to make the changes simple and minimalistic.

My view:

7000-7045 (or thereabouts) for CW – respecting WSPR on 7038
7045-7100 for digi with spot (coa) frequencies by mode as appropriate
7100-7300 for voice. (SSB, AM, digi voice). Promote 7200-7300 during daylight hours.
Allocate 15kHz (or what-ever is deemed appropriate) above 7100 for Emcomm.

Thank-you for taking the initiative to consider updates to the 40m band plan.

Chris Chapman VK3QB

FDU Operating Awards

There have been a number of changes and additions to the FDU awards recently. If you like working towards awards, there is plenty of variety to offer, something achievable and something challenging, to suit everyone.

So have a look at the FDU website, and see if any take your fancy. Likewise if you are already working towards these, please take a look to see if there have been any relevant changes.

<https://www.fdu.org.au/awards/>

Morse Headlines – a great learning tool!

News headlines in Morse code – 10-30 WPM

I've tried plenty of online tools to learn and improve my Morse code since I began learning the code about two years ago. One of the more fun online tools is the podcast, "News headlines in Morse code at 15WPM."

This daily podcast is available through several podcast providers - I use the podcasts app on my iPhone - and gives you a quick 5 minute summary of the day's events all in Morse code with a transcription. It comes in 5 versions: 10WPM, 15WPM, 20WPM, 25WPM, and 30WPM.

I'm a loooong way from being able to copy well at 25WPM but will usually listen for practice to all 3 versions - at 25 WPM then 20WPM and then 15WPM.

I am always happy to pick up the stray word at 25WPM and found after listening regularly at 20WPM (not with anywhere near 100% accuracy mind you!) that my copy at 15WPM really improved.

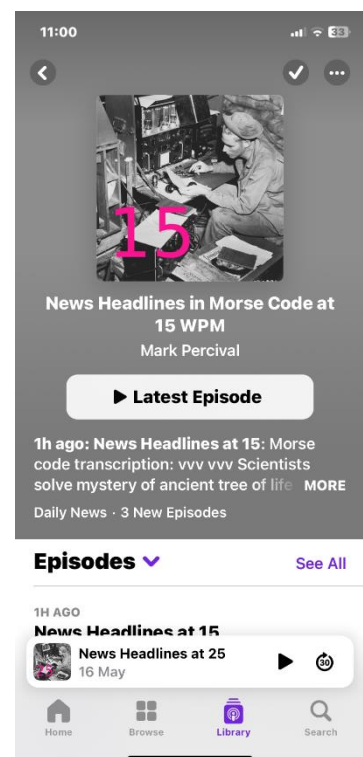
I just listen and don't write the words down so find it a good way to try and improve my head copy - a never-ending task that one!

It's interesting how many words have been regularly repeated in the daily Morse code news recently. So much so, that I've almost been able to recognise the sound of some full words (and numbers) without having to spell out the characters in my head like I usually do. The ones that seem to come up the most lately - unsurprisingly I guess - are Attack, Israel, 2024, Biden, Gaza, Trump, Russia and Ukraine. On a more positive note, I often pick out the word "Best" which I think is a great sounding word in Morse code and one we should hopefully hear more of in the Morse code news!

73

Pete

VK1AAF



Edit: If you don't have iTunes or a podcasting app, you can still listen through your web browser on a mobile device or PC. Just click on your chosen speed link below, and hit the play button in the Apple Podcasts Preview. Or you can Google "News Headlines in Morse Code at 10 WPM" (or the speed of your choice)

10WPM:

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/news-headlines-in-morse-code-at-10-wpm/id1615630558>

15WPM:

<https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/news-headlines-in-morse-code-at-15-wpm/id1533526598>

20WPM:

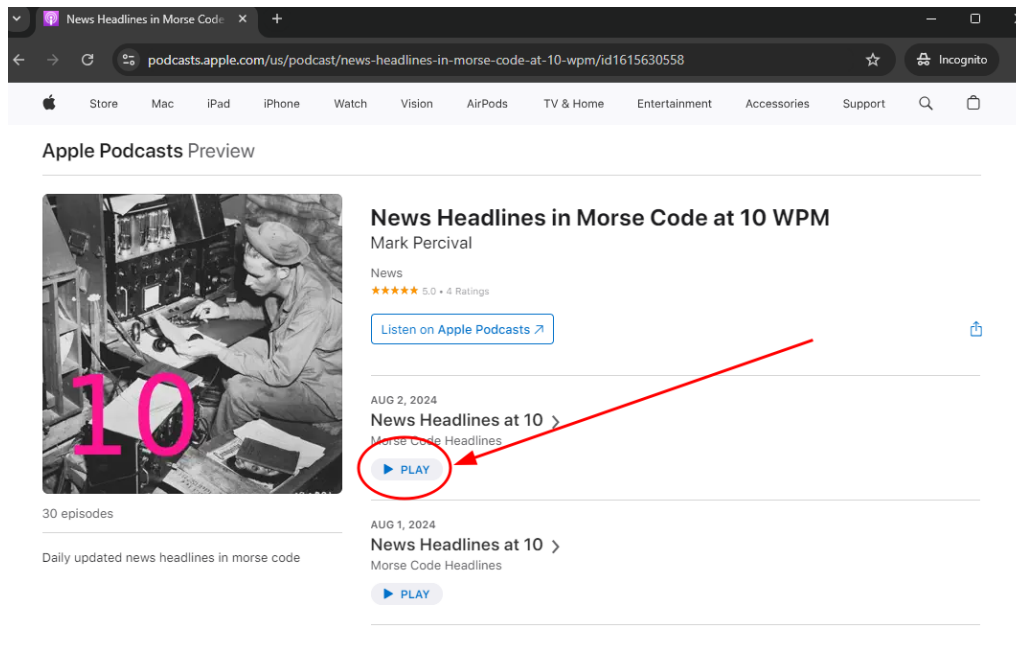
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/news-headlines-in-morse-code-at-20-wpm/id1531399638>

25WPM:

<https://podcasts.apple.com/au/podcast/news-headlines-in-morse-code-at-25-wpm/id1536964268>

30WPM:

<https://podcasts.apple.com/au/podcast/news-headlines-in-morse-code-at-30-wpm/id1656007282>



Got multiple callsigns?

Most FDU members will use just one callsign for FISTS QSOs. This callsign would have been associated with your FISTS member number when you joined FISTS.

If you want to use a second permanent and personal call sign for FISTS QSOs, you should arrange for the second callsign to also be associated with your FISTS member number (if you haven't already). Otherwise, the QSOs made with the second callsign will not be considered for FDU (and FISTS) awards because these awards are for a member number and not a callsign. In addition, other FDU members who had QSOs with this second callsign would be unable to use these QSOs towards awards.

To get the second callsign associated, email a request to Graham G3ZOD at fdu@fists.co.uk and he will update the club records and lists. Once this done, the sum of the QSOs for the two callsigns can be used for awards.

If an FDU member has two callsigns associated with their member number and you have one QSO with each callsign, you can only use one of the QSOs for awards. This follows from awards being for member numbers and not call signs.

Philip ZL1PSH, with much of the information from Graham G3ZOD



NZ NET NEWS

[Read the latest edition - 17 Aug 2024 | Net Tip: QNG | Morse Challenge](#)

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Neil Sanderson ZL1NZ, Net Manager
New Zealand Net (NZ NET)
3535.0 kHz at 9pm NZT Mon-Fri
[Website](#)



Struggling with QRM/interference and noise in your ham radio activities? Visit QRM.guru, for tools, resources and guidance for tackling RF interference. Get any help you need to enhance your radio experience.

Wanted To Buy:

Hi Mound HK-710 straight key.

Contact - Graeme VK5GG email: graememorgan72@hotmail.com

See you on the bands!