




July 2023

# Key - Down Under

The International Morse Preservation Society

  
VK2FDU  
FISTS: 9610  
Courtesy At All Times

  
FISTS Down Under Inc.

  
ZL6FF  
FISTS: 9600  
Accuracy Transcends Speed



Vale Pat Pavey VK3OZ SK

## 2022-2023 Committee

<b>President</b>	<b>Chris VK3QB</b>	Vk3qb(at)Hotmail.com
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Phil VK3VB</b>	Ppavey(at)bigpond.com
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Derek VK3KX</b>	
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<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Chris VK3QB - acting</b>	
<b>Committee</b>	<b>Graeme VK5GG</b>	

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

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

### Recommended FDU calling frequencies (MHz)

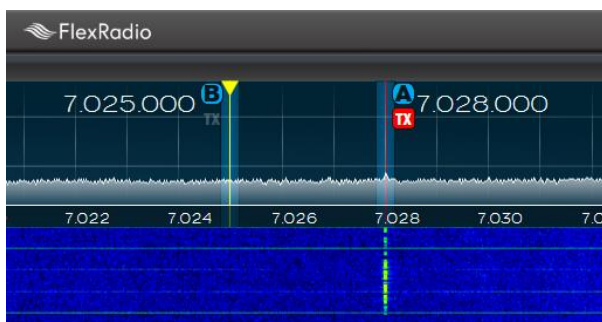
1.818      3.528      7.028      10.118      14.058      18.085  
21.058      24.908      28.058

## FDU Calling frequencies

Many members in VK and ZL hang out on the frequencies listed above which are also on our "About us" page.

<http://www.fdu.org.au/about-us/>

During the day (at least on the East Coast of VK) it seems we have two popular frequencies on 40m. 7.025 and 7.028MHz. Or 7.030....



As many of us are either retired or working from home these days there tends to be a fair bit of day-time activity – so spin the dial, have a listen.... BUT... put out a call also.

Night-time... 3.528Mhz.

**W**elcome to our July newsletter.



A special thanks to Chris VK1CT who has offered to author some word puzzles. I certainly think the first one in this edition is great and I'm keen to hear your feedback. Hopefully this will become a fun and regular part of the monthly newsletter.

Again I've been snowed under with work lately, so haven't had a chance to properly fill the Upcoming Events calendar this month. Please keep an eye on the FDU Facebook page and Discord for regular updates (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/349974226381281>). If you have anything to add for future months, please email me (or your favourite committee member), and we can include it in the July newsletter.

Please keep the content coming and the feedback, even just a quick email with a photo of you and your gear to share.

*Ben VK2JA – Editor*

## Upcoming Events – July 2023

**Saturday 15 July 0800Z – 1400Z (6pm – midnight AEST)** – Trans-Tasman Low Band Contest. 160, 80 and 40m with SSB, CW and Digital.

<https://www.wia.org.au/members/contests/transtasman/>

**Every Friday night** – FDU QSO Party on or around 3528kHz and 7028kHz. 2100 EST (1100z). Call or answer CQs and make QSOs, long or short, fast or slow.

<https://www.fdu.org.au/fdu-qso-party/>

The new **Question Time Net** will begin 20 minutes prior to the QSO Party every Friday.

[Zoom Session from about 1030Z \(2030 AEST, 2230 NZT\)](#)

The QT Net is all about learning and having fun, and the purpose of Zoom is to make it an easy learning environment where you can talk, ask questions or get help as the net progresses. See the QT net web page below for the Zoom information.

<https://www.fdu.org.au/question-time-net/>

**29 - 30 July** - RSGB IOTA Contest. Another contest good for newcomers - the link below is geared this way with lots of useful information about the IOTA contest and starting up with contesting in general.

<https://www.rsgbcc.org/hf/information/iotahelp.shtml>

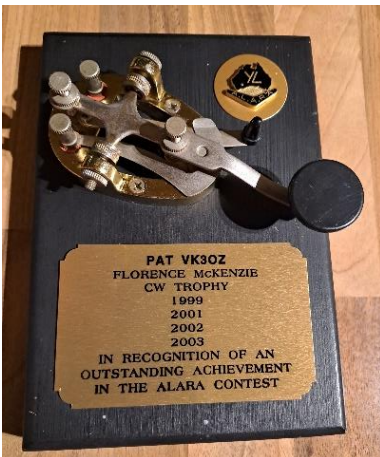
## Patricia Pavey VK3OZ (FDU #9070) 3-5-1944 to 11-7-2023



It is with sadness that I report the passing of Pat Pavey VK3OZ; long time FDU member, CW operator, friend to many, and mother to Phil VK3VB, Peter Jnr, Patsy, and Paula.

I first met Pat in 1984, following a QSO with her eldest, Phil (at the time VK3PMJ). Being about the same age, Phil and I became friends, worked on common radio projects, and joined Pat and Phil's Dad, Peter (SK) at the local radio club (FAMPARC). With two very active amateurs in the Pavey household, Pat succumbed to the hobby sometime around 1990 – I think her view was “if you can't beat them, join them”. I also recall something about the television being “out of service” whilst Phil and his Dad were busy on various radio projects.

Pat and Peter Pavey (VK3VB SK) immigrated to VK in 1976 when Phil VK3VB and his siblings were young kids. Pat and Peter enjoyed the hobby and were very active in education, exams, and the local club scene.



Pat was an active member of ALARA, Gippsland Gate Radio & Electronic Club and, of course, FISTS Down Under for many years. She was a regular fixture on the 80m Early Bird Net and encouraged many amateurs to learn and develop Morse Code skills. Since her passing there have been messages from amateurs recalling Pat's support in helping them master the code.

I recall Pat attending many club events and being very active in some of the more challenging activities, including the 18km hike to the Wilsons Promontory Light House for the International Lighthouse Weekend – not once, but twice! I was fortunate to have a friend send me a photo of Pat operating the key at the Lighthouse in 2018.

In more recent years, Pat's operating was limited to the Early Bird Net on 80m.

Pat moved into Aged Care earlier this year. The tower and beams were dismantled a few weeks ago at the Tooradin QTH, and I've received a number of emails and phone calls from amateurs asking what happened to the radio tower landmark (Peter and Pat moved to Tooradin in 1986) as people head past on the South Gippsland Highway.



Pat passed away peacefully after a short illness on Monday 11 July 2023. On behalf of committee and members I extend our condolences to Phil VK3VB (#20002) and his family.

Vale Pat VK3OZ SK.

73, Chris VK3QB (#9085)

President FISTS Down Under

## Notes from the President

Hi everyone, and welcome to what's proving (at least in the southern states) to be a cold, windy, and wet start to Winter.

Aside from the usual update, information, and articles I wanted to touch on a few topics this month.



The first is the new Question Time Net. If you haven't participated or aren't sure what its all about, visit our website. If you still have questions, try listening in one Friday night first, and as always, feel welcome to send me an email with any questions or suggestions. The net is a great way to build and develop skills as well as being a bit of fun.

The QSO Party continues to attract a core group of members and participants. To help maintain rhythm and momentum, might I suggest that once you've established a QSO with someone, engage in a little conversation. Don't be too concerned about using callsigns on every over... you'll find the conversation flows easier and you'll also exchange information more quickly and get more QSOs in your log.

When you're ready to complete your over, finish your message and simply use one of the following "end of over options" in place of the full callsign exchange.

"tnx bob for rpt = btu k" (btu is "back to you" and "k" ends your tx.

Or

"ur name agn pls? k"

You get the idea.

The other station could respond with a simple "r" to signify "received" or "QSL" and then move on with their transmission.

The most important thing you can do is get on-air, have fun, and build your skills through regular QSOs. And don't be afraid to ask the other station to repeat anything you may have missed, or to QRS.

Catch you 'round the bands

73, Chris VK3QB (#9085)  
FISTS Down Under President

## Building a simple rechargeable battery pack for portable ops



When it comes to powering a low power output radio in the field, there are several options. These include using the internal battery pack (if your radio has one) or an external power supply such as eight AA batteries, 12v SLA (sealed lead acid), or lithium-based cells. There are reasons for and against the most suitable type, depending on the situation. Will you be hiking up a mountain to deploy your radio, or will you just be taking it from the car and setting up on a picnic table?

For most situations where I have operated QRP portable, a power supply consisting of three 18650 lithium-ion cells has worked very well. The 18650 (generally pronounced 'eighteen-six-fifty') cell is called that because it is 18mm in diameter and 65mm in length. It is similar in shape to an AA battery, just larger (photo 1). An 18650 cell has a nominal voltage of 3.7v, but 4.2v when fully charged.

Three 18650 cells in series provide up to 12.6 volts, which is in the safe operating range for most radios. An exception to this, for example, are the older versions of the Mountain Topper QRP radios where a maximum of around 12v is recommended by the manufacturer.

I have previously written about the 18650 supply I made up for my Yaesu FT817, which was published in this newsletter in November 2018. I am still using the same cells that I described in the article. They are the Keekpower brand, rated at 3500mAh. These cells include a built-in protection circuit (over voltage/ over discharge), which increases the overall length to approximately 70mm.

One of the easiest ways to make up a battery pack of three 18650 cells is to use a commercially available battery holder (pictured here). Most come with wires, so it's easy to just solder on a plug that fits your radio. I added Anderson connectors to mine. As the supplied wires are quite thin, I have used an elastic band to hold the Anderson connectors against the battery holder to limit movement of the wires. While this arrangement has worked well for the past few years, I have recently made some improvements.



Firstly, I wanted the Anderson connectors to be permanently affixed to the battery holder to reduce the chances of the wires breaking off from the connectors. Hot-melt glue solved this problem nicely. Secondly, I wanted to be able to switch the battery on and off, particularly for my QRP Labs QCX mini radios which don't have a power switch. So, I added a small slide-switch, and this was also attached to the battery holder by hot-melt glue. Soldering the wires to the switch was a bit fiddly, but the result is that I now have a switched power supply and it retains its small form factor.

As the circuit-protected 18650 cells are longer than ordinary ones, they are a snug fit in the battery holder. To assist with removal, I drilled a hole near each positive terminal of the holder. These 12mm diameter holes allows a finger to ease the cells from the holder.



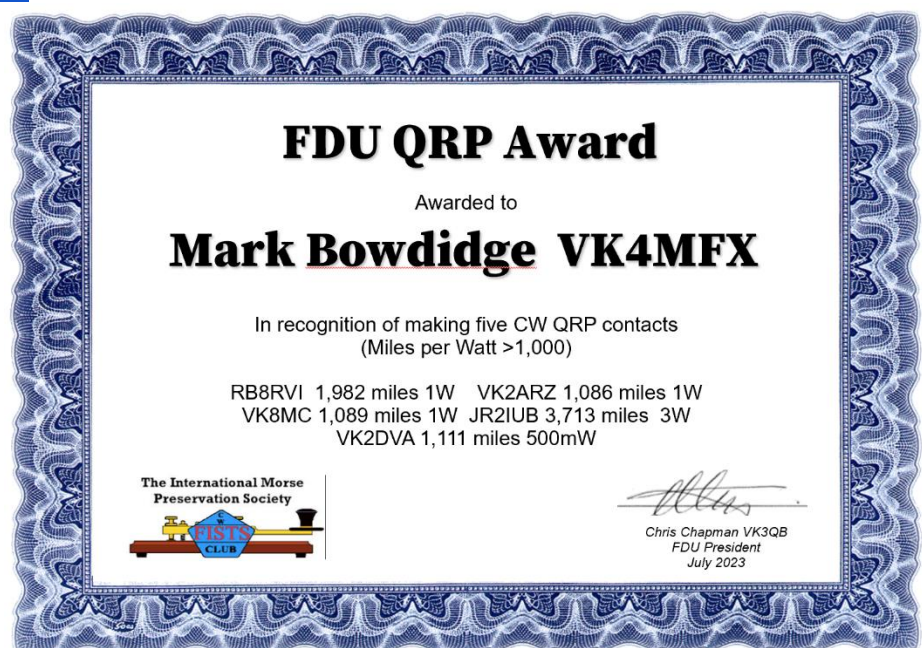
A further modification that I'd like to make is the addition of a fuse. Although the chances of shorting the battery pack are small, accidents do happen. As I want to keep this battery pack as small as possible, conventional fuses such as glass or blade types are just too big. I think the solution is a surface mount fuse. I'm looking into this and will provide an update down the track.

Chris VK1CT FDU #9057

## FDU QRP Award

Congratulations to Mark VK4MFX for making some great QRP contacts and being awarded the FDU QRP Award. Each QSO must meet a miles/watt hurdle. Read more here and give it a go. Try for some endorsements like a single band application. You can read more here

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



## Worked VK/ZL Award

Work every call area VK1 through VK8 (DXCC VK Entity only - VK9 and VK0 are excluded from this award.) and ZL (North & South Islands)

### Rules:

1. You must make at least one QSO with each of the following using CW:
  - a. call areas VK1 through VK8 and
  - b. ZL (North Isl) and
  - c. ZL (South Isl)
2. A valid contact must include the exchange of callsigns, signal reports, location, and names as a minimum. For ZL you must include QTH or confirmation of the station's Island (North or South). For VK you must provide QTH of station worked to confirm their state of operation (noting VK now has callsign mobility)
3. Valid bands are 160 – 10m
4. You must operate within the limits of your licence qualification.
5. Categories:
  - a. Category A – unrestricted
  - b. Category B – QRP (5 watts)
  - c. Category C – QRPp (1 watt or less)
6. You can apply for endorsements – worked all VK/ZL per band
7. There is no time limit on QSOs you can include in your application, other than all QSOs must be on or after 1 July 2023
8. All operation is to be conducted in the spirit of Amateur Radio and FISTS Down Under
9. FISTS Down Under Committee may make reasonable enquiries to confirm the validity of claimed contacts. The applicant will cooperate with such enquiries.
10. The FISTS Down Under Committee reserves the right to reject an application.

### How to apply:

Email your log to [vk3qb@hotmail.com](mailto:vk3qb@hotmail.com) and [ppavey@bigpond.com](mailto:ppavey@bigpond.com)

The following formats are acceptable:

- Photo or scan of a paper log
- Digital format (excel, word, ADIF)
- Photo of QSL cards to accompany a log sheet

A statement in your email that you have complied with the rules and spirit of the award.

If you have any questions, please contact the committee.



## Norfolk Island VK9NT – 17m stint and the Elecraft K4

*Reprinted from QTC Magazine*

**Norfolk Island, 19 March. 0927 UTC, local time +12 hours, 17m**

Following a late dinner, I settled in behind the Elecraft K4D – my first real session and 17 metres appeared to be showing some life. CW was the mode. Begali Adventurer was the paddle. Scotch and ice was the drink.

My K4D arrived about 10 days before we left, so other than some basic orientation, I hadn't really used it in anger.

I had a great run over seven hours with two 30-minute breaks. Almost 600 QSOs. Starting at 0927utc (2127 local time) with G4HVC.

The run was mostly EU (Europe) with some NA (North America) at random intervals. There were also two 5 – 10 minute periods where I thought the band had closed... and then without warning, the next wave of callers appeared.

I tried to maintain a rate of between two to three QSOs per minute at 23 - 27 WPM. Nothing earth shattering but steady enough to maintain control and accuracy. Now and then a familiar callsign and a quick exchange of pleasantries. A nice variation to the standard "<callsign> 599 tu" format.

With no apparent rhyme or reason there would be a short opening into NA, then back to EU. As expected, a few VK but only one solitary ZL peppered the log. Conditions were good. I rarely needed to seek clarification of callsigns and signals were both strong and steady.

No AF other than EA8 and only four into SA – both tricky paths from Norfolk Island.

Constant. Consistent. And the pileups were manageable. The waves were quite measured – there wasn't too much of a frenzy. I was surprised that I was able to maintain a reasonable rate over an extended period.

At 1127 utc I took a 30-minute break.

### **Some observations about the K4.**

Lovely tight filters. Very sensitive. Very nice audio and even with the filters closed tight there wasn't the inherent ringing that I hear in other popular amateur receivers. The silent TX/RX switching reduces operator fatigue. The user interface is intuitive and easy to use. All the knobs and buttons are well laid out. Backlit keys would be nice - a small LED bar-lamp sufficed.



*VK9NT continued...*

Patrick VK2PN brought his K3 and K-Pod... he was asleep so I borrowed the K-Pod – nice. Now I've ordered one.

### **Back at 1203 utc and EU continued**

By 1350 utc I started getting JA and more east, but still plenty of EU

Finished at 1628 utc (4.28 am local time) Alan VK6CQ was still hammering away on the FT8 station.

I had a bit of a chat and debrief with Alan for an hour to decompress and hit the sack just before sunrise.

And don't discount a resonant vertical with 24 radials. If you worked us on 17 metres, that's what we were using. It worked really well.

73, Chris VK3QB & VK9NT  
FISTS #9085  
CW Ops #2949

### **NZ news and NZ CW net**

The NZ net is on 3535.0 kHz at 9pm NZT Mon-Fri

[Read the latest edition of the NZ Net Newsletter](#)

NZ Net News is the fortnightly newsletter of the New Zealand Net.

If you would like to subscribe, please [contact ZL1NZ](#).  
<https://zl1.nz/about-amateur-radio/new-zealand-nets/nz-net/>

**Suffering QRM/RFI?** Check out [www.qrm.guru](http://www.qrm.guru) for hints n tips, case studies, education, and on-line support.

We're not finished yet...remember I promised you a word game? Keep reading...

## Word Scramble

### INVENTORS (electronics / radio)

MOH									
AELST									
REFTSO									
HLKSCYO									
OLAVT									
ARNLKFNI									
IDNEOS									

Unscramble the words to reveal the mystery inventor in the shaded squares.

Solution in next month's newsletter (or send your answer during the QSO party)

*Thanks to Chris VK1CT*

That's a wrap for this edition. Please email us with your feedback, questions, ideas and articles for the next edition, or even just a photo.

73, es c u on air from the FISTS Down Under Committee.

Chris VK3QB, Derek VK3KX, Phil VK3VB, Graeme VK5GG es Philip ZL1PSH

July 2023