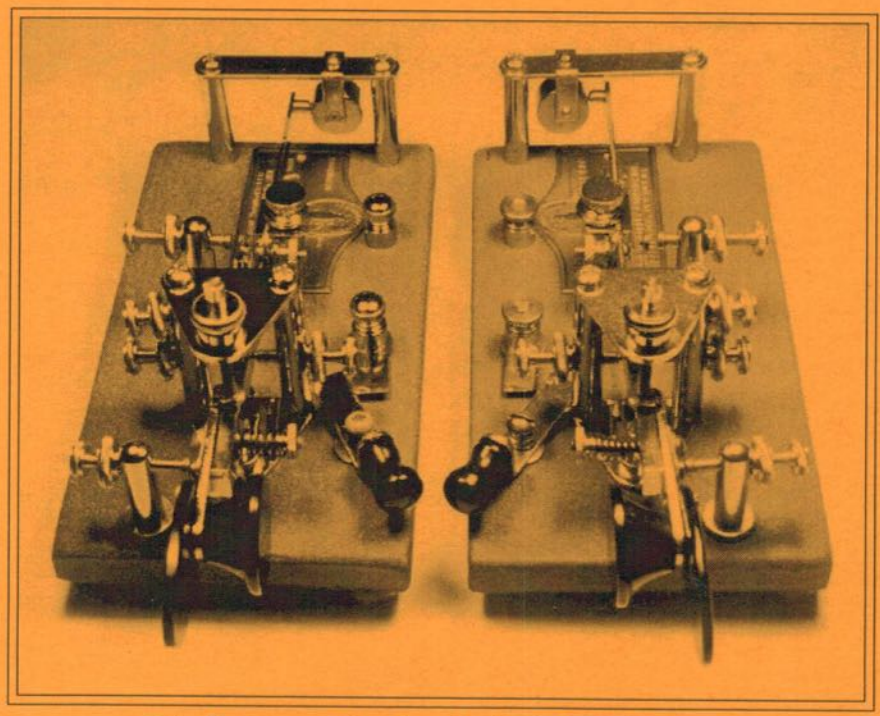
Flying the flag for Morse

Number 39 – April 1995

Morsum Magnificat

The Morse Magazine



Right & Left-Handed Vibroplex Bugs

Flying the flag for Morse

Morsum Magnificat

ISSN 0953-6426

EDITORIAL AND SUBSCRIPTION OFFICES:
Morsum Magnificat, 9 Wetherby Close,
Broadstone, Dorset BH18 8JB, England.
Phone/FAX: Broadstone (01202) 658474;
International +44 1202 658474

MORSUM MAGNIFICAT was first published as a quarterly magazine in Holland, in 1983, by the late Rinus Hellemons PA0BFN. Now published six times a year in Britain, it aims to provide international coverage of all aspects of Morse telegraphy, past present and future. MORSUM MAGNIFICAT is for all Morse enthusiasts, amateur or professional, active or retired. It brings together material which would otherwise be lost to posterity, providing an invaluable source of interest, reference and record relating to the traditions and practice of Morse.

EDITOR Geoff Arnold G3GSR

CONSULTANT EDITOR Tony Smith G4FAI
(13 Morley Road, Sheringham, Norfolk NR26 8JE, England. Phone: 01263 821936)

 Printed by Hertfordshire Display plc, Ware, Herts

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS:

	UK	*Europe Airmail*	*Rest of the World Airmail*
1 Year:	£12.00	£12.75	£15.50
2 Year:	£22.50	£24.00	£29.50

Payment by Access, Eurocard, Master-card or Visa is also accepted; quote your card number and expiry date, checking that you have written them clearly and correctly.
Overseas cheques, etc., must be payable in Sterling and drawn on a London Clearing Bank.
Please add £2 for transfers via Girobank International, Bootle, UK.
Make all cheques payable to 'G C Arnold Partners'.

Subscribers in North America only can make payment in US Dollars to our subscription agents there, Wise Owl Worldwide Publications, 4314 West 238th Street, Torrance, CA 90505-4509, USA. Make checks payable to Wise Owl Worldwide Publications.

RATES:	*Airmail*
1 Year:	$26.50
2 Year:	$50.00

For VISA or MASTERCARD orders via Wise Owl, call (310) 375-6258. Best times to call: week-days 9am to 9pm Pacific Time, or week-ends 9am to 6pm Pacific Time. If renewing your subscription by mail, please send them the reminder you received. If 'phoning, tell them you are renewing, and which was the last issue you had.

All subscription copies are individually mailed directly from the UK

NOTE: Surface Mail is becoming increasingly slow and unreliable, and we can no longer guarantee delivery of subscription copies by this method.

ON OUR FRONT COVER
Right and left-handed Vibroplex #6 Lightning bugs.
Photo/Collection: Dave Pennes WA3LKN

Comment

I MUST ADMIT that, when typing the article on the close-down of US Coastguard station NMN which appears on page 36 of this issue of *MM*, I was close to shedding a tear. Having listened to NMN's broadcasts myself during my time at sea, it seemed a particularly poignant report. I hope that the equipment and the skills which have stood the test of time at NMN and many other W/T stations ashore and afloat are not to be thrown willy-nilly upon the scrap-heap.

I well understand all the wondrous things which computers and satellites are bringing to mankind (and the not so wondrous things, too). However, just because someone has a computer, and perhaps a laptop and a personal electronic organiser too, that person would be foolish indeed to throw away all his pens and pencils and his last scrap of paper.

I am sure that we Morse enthusiasts can be relied upon to carry on using and honing our skills, but the relentless discarding of W/T by the professionals continues to worry me whilst the world remains such a precarious place.

On another matter, I have to announce that all our stocks of kits for the W3NQN CW Filter have now been sold. Under the auspices of the G-QRP Club, Ian D. Wye, New House, Hook Road, Amcotts, Scunthorpe, South Humberside DN17 4AZ, is holding stocks of components for several filter designs from Ed Wetherhold W3NQN, and is happy to receive enquiries from Europe.

Readers elsewhere should contact Ed Wetherhold direct at 1426 Catlyn Place, Annapolis, MD 21401 - 4208, USA, enclosing a US dollar bill to cover his expenses.

Geoff Arnold

STOP PRESS!

NZ Government Seeks Change in Test Rules

The Government of New Zealand has decided to propose the deletion of RR 2735 in Article 2 of the Radio Regulations at the next World Radio Conference (WRC95) to be held in Geneva in October. RR 2735 contains the current requirement for competence in Morse code by radio amateurs wishing to operate on frequencies below 30MHz.

In a letter to NZART, New Zealand's national radio society, the Ministry of Commerce has advised that even if this move is successful there is no intention to change present licensing policies or the Morse code requirement in the foreseeable future. There will be a fuller report on this matter in the next issue of *MM*.

Contents

2 News
5 *Radio Bygones*
6 Reflections from Uncle Bas – 22
8 Calibrating the Speed Control on your Electronic Keyer
10 Military Morse Training USA
12 What Happened to TOPS?
14 *MM* Back Issues
16 Commemorating E. T. Krenkel
24 Showcase
26 A Morse Filter/ Digital Decoder
27 *MM* Binders
28 First High Speed Telegraphy World Championships
32 News extra
34 Info Please!
36 NMN (Chesapeake) Closedown
38 MM Bookshelf
39 Readers' ADs
40 Code in the Head
42 Your Letters

Advert Index

9 The QRP Component Co.
15 Derek Stillwell
33 G4ZPY Paddle Keys International
48 FISTS CW Club
48 G-QRP Club

News

United States Coast Guard Abandons HF CW Service

USCG Master Station 'Atlantic/NMN' ceased Morse code operations on 1 April 1995. Arrangements have been made for a special certificate to be issued to those copying its historical final message.

NMN was the only military station on the East Coast of the USA still working CW on the HF bands, broadcasting weather and navigation bulletins and daily code practice.

Coast Guard CW stations NMC (San Francisco) and NMO (Honolulu) also closed down on April 1.

(Information from W5YI Report)

See also the report of NMN's closing-down signals on page 36 of this issue

GB2IWM on VE and VJ Day

To celebrate VE Day the Duxford Aviation Society Radio Section will be operating GB2IWM on CW from the Imperial War Museum's Duxford airfield on Saturday and Sunday, May 7 and 8 (VE Day) signing /VV as a suffix, subject to no official objection being received.

The primary purpose will be to contact resistance groups who operated in Europe in WWII. On the hour a call will be made for resistance group stations in numerical order. The serial number will be allocated by GB2IWM according to the order in which the intent to participate as a resistance group is received. If contact is not made the call will be repeated at the next hour.

The station will be operational from 0700 hours on each day on provisional frequencies of 7.007MHz, listening on 7.010; and 14.007MHz, listening on 14.010. The station will be open to all when the scheduled calls are completed.

An SSB station will also be operational on 3.770MHz, listening plus 3kHz, for contacts with all other radio amateurs.

It is planned to operate the same stations on the same frequencies on VJ Day (August 15), using the suffix /VJ again assuming there is no official objection. The object will be to contact as many amateurs as possible who were in the Far East during the war with Japan. Interested persons are being asked to contact GB2IWM to make themselves known in order that priority can be given to them on the day.

Special QSL cards will be used for contacts made on all these days and all contacts will be acknowledged via the bureau.

(Information from Duxford Radio Newsletter, *journal of the Duxford Radio Society.)*

World QRP Day

June 17 is designated annually by the International Amateur Radio Union as World QRP Day. Many QRP stations will be heard using typical power levels from 5 watts output down to milliwatts. High power stations are asked to avoid interference to these QRP stations – or better still, to reduce power themselves and join in the fun!

AGCW-DL QRP/QRP Party

All licensed amateurs and SWLs are invited to participate in AGCW-DL's CW-only QRP/QRP Party to be held on May 1 from 1300 to 1900 UTC, on 3.510–3.560 and 7.010–7.040MHz.

Classes: A = 5 watts output maximum (or 10 watts input); B = 10 watts output maximum (or 20 watts input); and C = SWLs.

Call: CQ QRP. Exchange: RST+QSO Nr/Class. Example: 579021/A.

Scoring: QSO with own country = 1 point; QSO outside own country = 2 points; QSO with class A station counts twice; Each station may be worked only once per band; SWL logs to show both callsigns per QSO heard plus at least one complete report.

Multipliers: Each DXCC country worked = 1 point for each band. Total score: QSO points x Multipliers.

Logs: To be sent to Antonius Recker DL1YEX, Hegerskamp 33, D-48155 Munster, Germany, postmarked not later than 31 May 1995.

Results: obtainable by sending a self addressed envelope plus 1 x IRC.

(Information from Activity Group CW, Germany.)

AGCW Activity Week 1995

AGW-DL invites all licensed amateurs and SWLs to participate in the AGCW CW-only Activity Period from 0000 UTC May 29 to 2400 UTC June 5, 1995. Use only hand keys, semi-automatic bugs or electronic keyers. No keyboards, or electronic code reading devices!

'Contest-style' QSOs do not count. Only QSOs with exchange of reports, QTH and names of operators qualify for scoring in this activity.

Scoring: QSO on HF with more than 5 watts power = 1 point; QSO on HF with QRP (5 watts or less) = 2 points; QSO on VHF/UHF bands = 2 points; Complete QSO reported by SWL = 1 point.

Logs: To include callsigns, date and time (UTC), band used, QTH and operator's name of station worked. A declaration must be made confirming acceptance of the rules and the power used. SWL logs must include the calls of both stations in a QSO and at least one RST report from the QSO, plus band, date and time of the QSO.

Awards: Participants with at least 30 points will receive an award.

(Information from Activity Group CW, Germany.)

New Home for Collection

The February 1995 issue of *The Old Timer's Bulletin*, journal of the Antique Wireless Association, Inc., announces that a new room has been built in the Annex to the AWA Museum, to house the key collection of the late Louise Ramsey Moreau W3WRE, author of the recently reprinted series 'The Story of the Key' *(see MM Bookshelf page in this issue)*. The museum's key/telegraph

collection now numbers nearly 1500 pieces.

The Museum, located at Village Green, Rts. 5 & 20, Bloomfield, NY, is open 2–5pm on Sundays from May 1 to October 31, also 2–4pm on Saturdays and 7–9pm on Wednesdays from June 1 to August 31 (closed holidays). Admission is free. The Museum telephone number is (716) 657-6260.

New Telegraphy Club Formed in Finland

The OH-Telegraphy Club (OHTC) was formed in June 1994 by a number of active Finnish CW enthusiasts with the aim of developing and spreading QRQ (high speed) CW operation in Finland. The President of the club is Seppo Niemispelto, OH6VR.

The club-station's call is OH0-9ABD and this is active on Saturdays, between 1600–2000 UTC, on 14.060MHz and 3.535MHz. As 14.060MHz is also a generally recognised international QRP frequency, operation on this frequency by OHTC members (unless they are also working with low power) may cause problems for QRP enthusiasts in other countries as well as in Finland.

OHTC sked frequencies and times are 3.535MHz on Wednesdays and Sundays at 1700 UTC, using telegraphy speeds of 30 wpm or higher. Participants are asked to key as cleanly as possible, using BK or QSK (full break-in operation).

Non-members are invited to call in to these skeds and after some contacts to ask a member to send them a recommendation for OHTC membership. Two-way 'test' CW-contacts at a minimum speed of 30 wpm, and lasting a minimum of 30 minutes, are required to obtain such recommendations.

A minimum of four recommendations is required, including two from Finnish members of OHTC. To achieve membership of the club, the recommendations received should be sent to the Secretary of OHTC, Janne Karresuo OH6LBW, Timonviita 3, 60150 Seinajoki, Finland.

Applications should include a declaration that the applicant has not used a computer, decoder, encoder or keyboard to read or send CW during the qualifying 'test' QSOs. To cover costs, enclose $5.00, 40 fimk, or 10 x IRCs.

(Information received from OH6LBW.)

Apologies

In MM38 we made two inexcusable errors. We reported the date of the death of Harry A. Turner W9YZE, world hand-key champion, as 21 December 1944. This should have read 21 December 1994.

We also reported that the Morse Enthusiasts Group Scotland (MEGS) would be celebrating the 104th birthday of Samuel F.B. Morse on April 27. This of course should have referred to 204th anniversary of the birth of Prof. Morse.

For Your Diary

Notice of some of the radio-related events in both the amateur and vintage fields being held during the first half of 1995. For collectors of telegraphy bits and pieces, there are often items of interest on sale at these meetings.

*The 4th **National Vintage Communications Fair** will take place in the **Pavilions Hall** at the **National Exhibition Centre**, Birmingham on **Sunday, May 14**, and is open from 10.30am to 5pm.

*The 26th **National Radio Rally** at **Elvaston Castle**, near Derby, will take place on **Sunday, June 11**.

Also on **June 11**, the **Royal Naval Amateur Radio Society Annual Mobile Rally** will be held on the Sports Field, **HMS Collingwood**, Fareham, Hants.

*On **Saturday and Sunday, June 17/18** a new computer and radio rally will be staged at **Bletchley Park**, in the grounds of the former Top Secret government code-breaking and intelligence centre. Entrance to the rally will be included in the normal price of admission to the Bletchley Park Museum.

Plans for the event include many exhibits of special interest to the vintage enthusiast.

The MM/RB team will be in attendance at each of the above shows marked with an *.

More News on page 32

Reflections from Uncle Bas – 22

Working at PCH

by Bastian van Es PA0RTW

WHEN I ENTERED the gate of Scheveningen Radio/PCH, on the first day I was employed there, I was confident I had sufficient knowledge and experience in sending and receiving Morse signals.

I was wrong! After being tied to a Philips BX925 receiver by the cord of a headphone for several days, copying hundreds of messages, I realised I was just a beginner despite having served quite a few years at sea as a radio officer. Just imagine, EVERY day, EIGHT hours of continuous sending and receiving. It was hard for a normal human being to endure!

Every Dot and Dash Counted

As an amateur, it's easy to make QSOs of thirty minutes or more, and a bit of QRM does not bother you. Let's be honest, the S-report is all that really matters and as long as you get the quintessence of the story you have a nice day and everyone is happy.

Not so at PCH. Every dot, every dash counted. Every word, whether plain language or code, had to be correct and this accuracy had to be maintained day and night. A moment of inattention was out of the question.

You might wonder, who can check on your activity and accuracy? That was easy. When I worked there we had a director who was in full control of his staff. He had a normal looking telephone in his office, but this had been changed a bit and he could dial each and every one at the operating tables. That way he could listen to all the traffic coming in and going out without being heard by the radio operator.

He did this quite frequently and nobody knew beforehand who the next victim was going to be – until they received a note in an envelope inviting them for a personal visit to his room. It happened to me a couple of times; there I stood trembling before the high almighty.

He behaved like an actor on stage, speaking loudly. 'Thursday, 1400 hours, your sending was faulty, messy. Saturday, 0300 hours, you did not listen to the southern sector.'

Kaapstad Calling In Vain!

The latter complaint needs explaining. For reception purposes PCH used dipoles, one for east/west traffic and

another for south/north directions. With a switch on the operating desk you could use which one you wanted. However, since the vast majority of messages were received from the east/west direction, and there were hardly any from the southern part of the globe, it is obvious what happened – you didn't bother about switching aerials very often.

etc. Not so at PCH. The top brass had decided that the station's Morse keys had to be screwed down on the tables and enclosed in little copper boxes through which just the knob protruded.

The boxes were locked with a little key and it was absolutely forbidden to borrow this from the technical department in order to adjust the tension screw

Uncle Bas at PCH in 1961

As a consequence, ships near Kaapstad (Cape Town) had to call for hours before being heard by Scheveningen Radio and many complaining letters were received. And you can easily guess who got the blame for this! Need I say that this director, a man who passed away a long time ago, was not exactly the staff's favourite!

Standard Keys

On foreign coast stations the operators were allowed to use their own keys, such as sideswipers, Vibroplex, elbugs, or the contact gaps. Adjustments had to be standard and no fooling around.

Things Were Different at Sea

I had to get used to this mentality because at sea things were so different. On board ship one had complete freedom and no surveillance whatsoever. You had to get weather reports and signals, and send an occasional cable to the owners. And when this was done properly nobody bothered you at all.

At PCH things were a bit different. There was, for instance, no wastepaper

basket. Every piece of paper in the radio room had to be numbered and signed by the operator. We couldn't even use scrap paper. There was a blank space on the right side of each log page which could be used but it was absolutely forbidden to tear it out. As a matter of pride (ludicrous though it was), no radio officer would use this space in case it was taken as proof of his inability to copy Morse signals properly!

Wherever people work, however, they do create waste such as cigarette ends, wrappings from sweets, chocolate bars, sandwiches, etc., and unofficially the right hand lower drawer of the operating desk was used for this material. The other drawers, though, were empty and had to stay that way.

Looking back, my conclusion is that it was an interesting period and I learned quite a lot. But for me, with my rebellious nature, it was not easy to endure.

MM

Calibrating the Speed Control on your Electronic Keyer

by 'Anon'

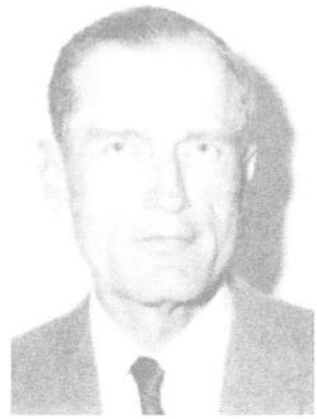
USERS of home-brewed electronic keyers may wish to use this simple method of calibrating the speed control. Hold the paddle over to make a continuous stream of dashes, and count the number of dashes made in 5 seconds. This is the approximate speed of the keyer in words per minute. In practice it might be more accurate to count the number of dashes made in 10 seconds and divide by 2 (or in 15 seconds, divided by 3).

The reasoning behind this test is as follows. The standard word for measuring code speeds is 'PARIS'. If this is written out in code symbols, then taking the dot as the unit of time it will be seen that PARIS occupies 50 units, including 7 units following the end of the word before the start of the next. So if the keyer is running at n wpm, this is equivalent to $50n$ units per minute.

If the keyer now sends a stream of dashes at m dashes a minute, this is equivalent to $4m$ units a minute (allowing one unit between each dash). Thus $50n=4m$, or $n=m/12.5$. That is, the speed in wpm equals the number of dashes a minute divided by 12.5, which is very nearly the number of dashes in 5 seconds.

Military Morse Training USA

TM 11-459, TO 31-3-16 International Morse Code (Instructions). Sept. 1957 Summary of instructions



by Wm G. Pierpont N0HFF

THIS MANUAL TEACHES code methods, military lettering, touch typing, use of straight and semi-automatic keys and radio operator training. All students are to be taught to copy by hand up to 18 five-letter (random character) groups per minute and to copy with typewriter at speeds above this.

For copying by hand, standard practice sheets are provided containing groups of five squares, with five such groups per line, two lines being together, one above the other, with four pairs of lines forming a cluster and three of these per page. One character is to be filled in for each square.

Student progress is to be closely monitored and regular scheduled testing carried out. To qualify at any given speed the student must receive without error for three consecutive minutes out of five; and send by hand key continuously without error for two consecutive minutes during a three minute test.

Phonic System

The emphasis is on audible code, composed of short and long pulses of sound – to be thought of in terms of **dits** and **dahs** (never as dots and dashes), whose combinations form the letters of the alphabet, numerals and punctuation marks. These dits and dahs are not to be counted, but the peculiar sound and rhythm of the various combinations must be memorised.

The phonic or sound system is used so that the student will think of the signal at all times as a pattern of sound. He must constantly try to hear each signal as a complete and distinct unit of sound until recognition is practically instantaneous and he is able to copy it as fast as he can print it.

Code-voice

The code-voice method is used in the beginning, up to a speed of five

groups per minute. The signal is first given, then three seconds later it is named. One to two seconds later the next signal is given, and so on. Initially the signal and its name are given twice and copied on the practice sheet. Then they are given singly, without identification.

After several lessons of these doubles and singles without individual identification, mixed character groups are introduced. Procedure signs (prosigns) are introduced after all letters and numerals, at an average of one per twenty-five signals. In all receiving practice, characters are sent at the 20 PARIS-groups per minute rate to discourage any attempt to count dits and dahs. This is slow enough to make the signal recognisable as one sound unit, and fast enough to prevent the character from falling apart.

Adjusted Spacing

The space between characters is adjusted to the desired rate, gradually being decreased as recognition becomes almost instantaneous. The code-voice practice consists of twenty-four hours of instruction, i.e., twenty lessons of twenty hours total and four hours of orientation, military printing, discussion, etc. A typical lesson consists of three runs, one of doubles, one of singles, and one of five groups per minute (examples cover seven pages). When a student is able to copy solid at a given speed he should be tested and his papers graded.

Sending

Sending practice begins as soon as a student qualifies in receiving at least five groups per minute, and about one third of total practice time should be spent in sending. Instructions are given on key adjustment and handling. Special attention is given to sending 3, 4, 6, C, 1, 2, H, 5, Y, and V. Periodically a student is to record his sending and listen to it.

Progress Monitored

Record keeping is emphasised so that progress and problems can be evaluated.

Typical errors noted are:

(a) Dotting errors, i.e., confusing H and S, B and D, V and U, as speed increases.

(b) Copying too close, i.e., starting to write before a character is completed – wait until a character is finished.

(c) Advancing to next speed too quickly. If a student cannot copy at least one third of the material correctly it is too fast yet for him.

Expected Results

Graphs are provided of typical cumulative hours required to pass tests at various speeds. These are based on four hours practice a day and are representative of 200 students. A few men cannot qualify at 25 gpm even after 500 hours of practice. Physiological factors are suspected. (It is not clear from the manual if a speed of over 18 wpm is required of all students.)

Advanced students should be able to copy through an interference background of other signals. Background music or other rhythmic sounds should be used to aid the training of high speed operators. These do not distract, but rather relieve the tedium and help typing rhythm.

The above is a summary of the contents of this TM.

What Happened to TOPS?

by Tony Smith G4FAI

THE NAME OF THE TOPS CW CLUB is still familiar in the world of CW even though it ceased to be an active club some years ago. In fact, *MM* still gets requests from readers seeking information about this organisation and asking how they can join it.

These enquiries are presumably prompted by the fact that the annual TOPS Activity Contest each December is still in existence – managed autonomously by Helmut Klein OE1TKW. This raised an interesting question. If TOPS no longer existed, how was it that a TOPS contest was still being held? I decided to try to find out more about this once-famous club.

I discovered that it was founded in 1946 by the late Phil Evans GW8WJ and G6AQ, under the auspices of the World Friendship Society of Radio Amateurs (WFSRA). This latter organisation no longer exists although apparently it was quite well-known just before and after WWII. *(If any reader has information about WFSRA, please contact me, address inside front cover).*

Aims

The motto of TOPS was WHERE FISTS MAKE FRIENDS. The aim of the Club was 'To bring together all Amateurs with a love of CW – and to foster the use of CW by newer Hams.' At first it was intended only for UK amateurs, but as existing members sponsored new members CW enthusiasts from around the world began to join. The first non-UK members were ON4BV and PA0LUT.

The Rules of TOPS defined the Club's aims in more detail:
'The TOPS CW CLUB (also known as TOPS CLUB or just TOPS) is designed to band together those interested in CW operation. To attempt, by example, to improve CW operating standards and encourage International Friendship amongst CW operators. None of these aims shall imply animosity towards other modes of operation.'

15 WPM Requirement

Membership was open to holders of valid transmitting licences provided that they had:

> 'Proved in QSOs with TOPS members the ability to operate at a minimum speed of 15 wpm – with good manners and courtesy towards others.

'A transmission technically beyond reproach.
'Been proposed by at least one fully paid-up member of TOPS and accepted by the club as a whole.' (i.e., no written objection had been received within 28 days of the publication of their calls in the club's newsletter *QMF*).
'Paid the current entrance fee and annual subscription.'

Short-wave Listeners were accepted as Associate members on production of either 6 QSLs from members, confirming CW reception of those members, or Proficiency Certificates issued by ARRL, VERON or RNARS for 15 wpm or over.

The Club was governed by a Committee comprising the President, Secretary and 4 members.

In accepting membership, members were expected to adhere to the IARU Band Plan operating in their area. Disregard of this requirement could lead to expulsion from the club.

Activities & Newsletter

The Club had an annual TOPS Activity Contest on 80m open to ALL amateurs which, as mentioned above, still exists today. According to the Club's literature, TOPSFESTS were held for a number of years at various venues; Contests were held at one time between TOPS and FOC. The Club had two Awards for members only, and two which were open to any amateur. There were two club nets a week, and the club call was GW6AQ, specially reissued in memory of TOPS' co-founder, G6AQ.

The TOPS Newsletter, *QMF*, began in 1948 and continued until 1980, when its editor, TOPS co-founder and Hon. Secretary, Phil Evans GW8WJ, was unable to continue publication.

End of the Road

At that time, membership of TOPS was just over 600, world-wide. From then on, the Club, in effect, just faded away. Perhaps the final blow was when Phil Evans reluctantly decided that as it was no longer an active organisation TOPS should discontinue its membership of the European CW Association.

I was Chairman of the EUCW at that time and accepted the Club's resignation from the Association on the understanding that in the event of TOPS reverting to its former status it would automatically resume its membership of EUCW.

Phil Evans, GW8WJ/GW6AQ, became a silent key on 29 August, 1990. He was a lifelong supporter of CW and QRP operating who never used more than 10 watts on any band using his personal call of GW8WJ, although with the club call, GW6AQ, he used powers of up to 150 watts.

In an obituary in *Morsum Magnificat*, Gus Taylor, G8PG, a one-time President of TOPS said 'In his passing, we lose a man of strong views who gave much to the CW operating movement.'

Loss of Communication

As well as being TOPS' Secretary, Phil Evans was editor of *QMF*, which he produced with considerable help from his wife. Sadly, she died in 1974 and Phil then struggled single-handed to keep the Newsletter going until it finally

ceased publication in 1980. It was this loss of direct communication with members that appears to have been the main reason for the demise of TOPS.

The advance publicity sheet about the continuing TOPS Activity Contest circulated by Helmut Klein OE1TKW directs enquiries about TOPS to Chris Hammett G3AWR who, although never an official of TOPS, has tried at various times to stimulate interest in reviving the club.

Chris continued the TOPS nets on Sundays and Wednesdays for some years after the club closed, but eventually gave them up due to lack of support. I asked him for his views on the possibility of TOPS ever reviving.

Offers Welcome!

He says, 'Efforts to reactivate the Club in this country have been unavailing. However, should any ex-members or prospective ones wish to try to do so they would have my support.

'Practically all the enquiries I have received concerning TOPS have been from Europe, with a few from further afield. I see no reason why anyone, either inside or outside Europe, should not be involved in trying to revive TOPS.

'Of course new rules would have to be formulated and officials appointed. I think the most important point would be the regular issue of a Newsletter to help cement relations between members.'

So, if any ex-members or prospective members of TOPS, anywhere in the world, would like to try to reactivate this once-prestigious CW organisation, please contact Chris Hammett G3AWR, 48 Hadrian Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 9QH, England in the first instance. And of course, if you have any success be sure to keep *MM* informed about your progress!

(Thanks to Chris Hammett for providing much of the above information from literature originally published by TOPS CW CLUB. Further information or memories of TOPS from readers will be welcome for publication in 'Your Letters'. In particular does anyone know if the name 'TOPS' has any special significance or meaning?)

MM

Commemorating

the 90th Anniversary of the Birth of

E.T. Krenkel

(From* Radio *magazine, Moscow, December 1993)

ERNST THEODORE KRENKEL! It is perhaps difficult to meet men, especially of the older generation, who did not know this marvellous man of destiny. Distinguished radio operator of our time; Arctic explorer, a member of many historical polar expeditions including the famous drift in the Arctic Ocean on station North Pole-1; active amateur radio short wave enthusiast, and for twenty continuous years President of the USSR Radiosport Federation.

For over a quarter of a century E.T. Krenkel was a member of the editorial board of our magazine *Radio* and we often published his articles. By word and deed he helped to solve the problems of the development of amateur radio and radiosport.

RAEM, E.T. Krenkel's callsign, was known to short-wave enthusiasts all over the world, and each one dreamt about meeting him on the air via amateur radio.

It seems appropriate here to cite the words of English short-wave enthusiast Tony Smith G4FAI, who wrote ten years ago in his letter to the editorial staff of *Radio* magazine:

'It is one of the fine things about amateur radio that it brings together people with a common interest and friendship transcending national boundaries, language, and other differences. It is even more remarkable that within our hobby some stand out, like Ernst Krenkel, to attract the respect and admiration of fellow-amateurs around the world. He has an honoured place, both in the history of his country and in the history of world-wide amateur radio.'

In connection with the 90th anniversary of the birth of E.T. Krenkel, the editorial staff approached Ernst Theodore's son – Theodore Ernstovich Krenkel to ask him to write about his father in *Radio* magazine.

These are his recollections.

My Father...

In the summer of 1956, RAEM returned to amateur radio after an eight-year interval. Father was then 53 and I was 16. I well remember the day when he switched on his transmitter, and transmitted a call 'CQ, CQ'...

The equipment in his working place on the veranda of his country-cottage

RAEM in his shack in 1958, apparently using an AR88 and Junker key, with a BC-610 transmitter in the background

was well in the spirit of his tradition: equipment magazine under his arm, alarm clock and key screwed to the table. His antenna was a 'long-wire' – a simple piece of long wire.

Generally speaking it must be said that all his life father was a 'strictly CW man', i.e. a radio operator who worked only on the key. Having trained as a radio operator for 20 years, he regarded phone operation coolly and it was impossible to change his mind. He loved to narrate a polar fable, how as a radio operator on remote polar stations for 20 years, he went mad on hearing human speech by radio for the first time.

He sat up for radio stations deep into the night when it was especially interesting for him. He did not like to hurry things and for this reason he did not take part in contests when he had to transmit his number quickly to a colleague and hurry to establish communications with the next. On such days, usually on Saturday and Sundays, father switched off his radio set with regret saying that he couldn't stay on the air to work 'such a mess'. He exchanged QSL cards in a very conscientious manner and was a reliable correspondent.

Dismissed by Malenkov

The year 1948 was retained in father's and all of our memories. This was the year of our struggle with 'cosmopolitanism'. At that time, on the personal instructions of the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party, G.M. Malenkov, he was expelled from the Central Radio Club of USSR, where

he was chief of the Club Soviet, and was relieved of his position as Head of the polar stations of the Northern Sea Route Administration. At the same time he was forbidden to work on the air. This was a terrible blow, since he was deprived of his most favourite work.

It must be said that all the Papanin four *(i.e., the members of the North Pole-1 expedition. – Ed.)* were subjected to persecution: they took I.D. Papanin away from Head of Northern Sea Route Administration (NSRA), P.P. Shirshov ceased to be Minister of the Navy and E.K. Fedorov was taken from the post of Head of the Hydrometeorological Service of the Red Army.

Help from Bulganin

To support his family, father started work as a lecturer for the Society of 'Knowledge'. He appeared in Moscow and its suburbs with lectures about the North Pole and the work of a radio operator on a drifting-ice station. He lectured several times a week in any weather.

After the duration of his stay in such a suspended status father was appointed director of a small radio plant, thanks to the help of A.N. Bulganin. From 1951 he was Chief of the laboratory of the Automatic Radiometeorological Station (ARMS), then from 1969 Director of the Institute of Hydrometeorological Making Industry, in which he worked until the end of his life.

In spite of being busy father found much time and attention for his amateur radio work. On becoming President of the USSR Radiosport Federation, he continually participated in the work of the IARU, representing our country, looking after the maintenance of its interests. After his return from abroad by train I often joked: 'You are our Hiram Percy Maxim'...

Sense of Humour

For his participation in the North Pole expedition as part of the famous four with Papanin they awarded father, as well as the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, an academic doctor's degree of Geographical Sciences, which he regarded highly sceptically, jokingly observing: 'What kind of doctor am I? I am a medical assistant of Geographical Sciences'.

In fact, a sense of humour and personal modesty were distinctive features of his character. Probably, in his time like many others, he had outgrown 'star disease', but I was born later and as far as I can remember I never noticed any recurrence of that disease in his behaviour.

Father was a great lover of funny stories and collected them like Yuri Nikulin now. Usually, on finding another 'bearer' of humour, he would open the door of his study, saying 'come on in and tell me some jokes.' His many friends and comrades told me that he himself was a story teller and wonderful company – they liked his graphic, measured speech with easy French style pronunciation. Whatever he was speaking about, his speech was always interesting, clear and memorable.

Summit of Career

The expedition to the North Pole was the summit of father's polar career which

began as far back as 1924. On 21 May 1937 the expedition landed at the North Pole. The legendary drift of station NP-1, which was watched by the whole world, lasted 274 days.

At the beginning of 1938 the ice floe they were on began to move quickly into the Greenland Sea, and the icebreaker *Ermak*, which was supposed to go to assist the courageous explorers, was found to be undergoing major repairs in Leningrad. Incidentally, this gave grounds for Stalin to reprimand Otto Schmidt the Head of the Northern Sea Route Administration – 'Schmidt is a very risky man', and that meant the end of Otto Yulievich's polar career. Indeed, in the autumn of 1938 they appointed I.D. Papanin as Head of NSRA in place of Schmidt.

(NSRA was responsible for organising all Soviet Arctic exploration, including the NP-1 expedition. – Ed.)

The Papaninites were taken off the ice on 19 February 1938 and on 21 February they changed places at sea to board the icebreaker *Ermak*. On arrival in Leningrad in early March they were unexpectedly delayed. It was simply explained: on 14 March 1938 the sentence of Bukharin and Rukov [i.e. 'victims' of the February 1938 'Show Trial'] was carried out and, on instructions from above, it was decided to postpone the ceremonial reception for 3–4 days.

Presentation to Yuri Gagarin

Father's writer-friend, Vladimir Lidin, said of Father: 'There are people by whom the path of mankind is measured as a landmark.' The personal courage and heroism of the members of the expedition to the North Pole compels us to think of them with enormous respect.

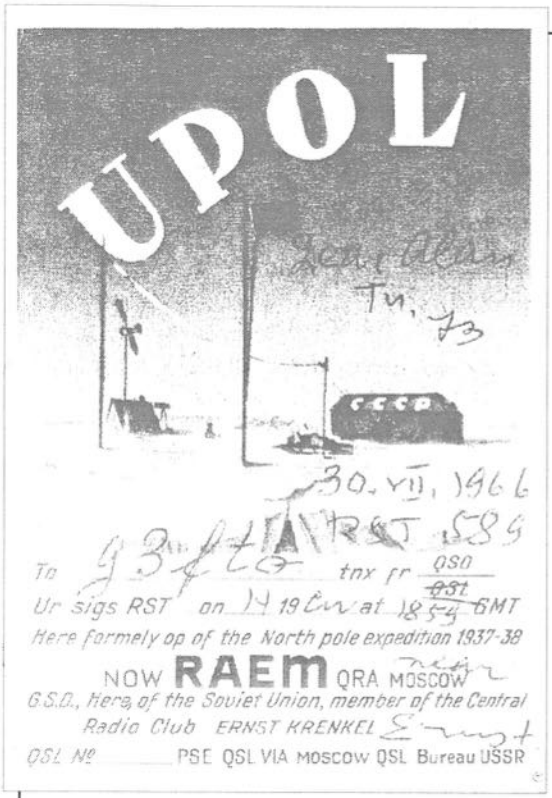
Ernst Krenkel conferring an honorary diploma upon Yuri Gagarin, for the first Space-Earth communication on VHF

Indeed, the four intrepid Russian men were the first 'cosmonauts', as cosmonaut Aleksei Leonov called them one day. And it is no coincidence that in 1961 'polar cosmonaut' Krenkel, as President of the Radiosport Federation, presented an honorary award to Yuri Gagarin for the first Space-Earth communications on VHF.

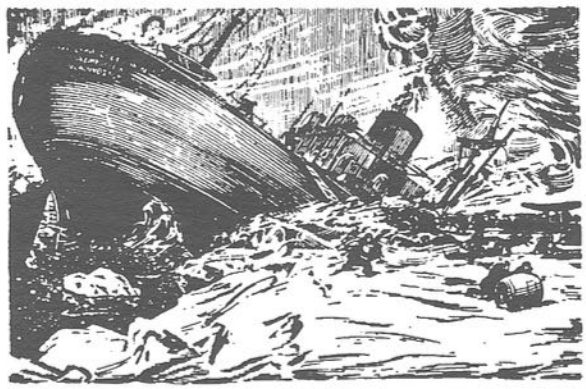
But I would like to come back to father's polar career and some pages of his biography. Readers of this magazine will be interested – especially in his youth.

Pete, Help This Fellow!

In 1921 he joined a course in Moscow for radiotelegraphists. On finishing this he worked at the Lyubertsy receiving station. At that time he met a student who in summer-time had



Illustrations from the front and back of Ernst Krenkel's unique QSL card depicting: (left) station North Pole-1, and (below) the scene when the Chelyuskin *sank in 1934*



RAEM was the call of S/S Cheluskin smashed by ice in the Polar sea in 1934. I was there the chief operator. Since then RAEM is my personal amateur call. Mail address: Ernst Krenkel, Chapligin street, 1/A, Moscow, USSR.

Г 313460 6/VI 1960 г. Типография ГЭИ. Москва, Шлюзовая наб., 10. Зак. 237.

worked two months probation on a port tug in Leningrad. His stories interested father. Soon he set off to Leningrad with a letter which the student had handed to him. On a scrap of paper his new acquaintance wrote to an operator-friend: 'Pete! Help this fellow. He's a good chap and knows his job ...'

At father's funeral, in December 1971, I noticed in the crowd a very elderly man who brought a small bouquet of violets. It was the man who had given my father his 'start in life'. So the circle completed itself.

'God Knows Where'

In Piter a radio operator said to father: 'Do you see that yellow building with a spire on the other side of the river? That's the Admiralty. I was there yesterday. An expedition is being formed to go to the Arctic Ocean to relieve a party of men on some island or other. They need a radio operator urgently, but the pay is small and he'll have to go off for a full year to God knows where...'

The island turned out to be Novaya Zemlya and 'God knows where' was the Polar Observatory at Matochkin Shar Straits, which now bears the name of Ernst Krenkel.

It was the second relief of the winter party – from 1924 to 1925 – which father took part in. The selected party was well mixed. There were participants of the Krondstadt mutiny and even two German seamen from the cruiser *Magdeburg* which was sunk in the Baltic during the first world war. They had a spark transmitter at the station and they still did not think whatever about short-waves.

Impostor

After returning from his winter stay and service in the army in autumn 1926, father already not only knew about short-waves but had an official amateur radio callsign – EU2EQ. At this time he planned to carry out his dream – to 'send' on short-waves from the Arctic. But how? And here is the result of father's 'adventurist' trait of character – he became an impostor!

He arrived in Moscow at the representative office of the Nizhny Novgorod radio laboratory pretending to represent the Hydrographic Board. He made the acquaintance of the laboratory's director, Bonch-Bruyevich, who offered to provide him with a 300-watt transmitter for carrying out experiments in the Arctic on behalf of the Board.

Then he went to the Hydrographic Board in Leningrad, where they knew him as a good radio operator and offered his services as radio operator of the Polar Geophysical Observatory (PGO), for the winter of 1927/28.

In addition he laid down the condition that he transport a short-wave transmitter there on which to operate as a radio amateur in his spare time. The deed was done. So in October 1927 an amateur radio station with the callsign 'PGO' showed up on Novaya Zemlya.

Whilst unloading stores, by an oversight, the ship's boat with all the short-wave equipment was carried out to sea. Father, without a moment's hesitation, threw himself into the icy water and salvaged the equipment. After that experience he did not like the cold and as a professional polar explorer was unable to endure even a small open window.

Record Contact with the Antarctic

Father's third winter stay was on Franz Joseph Land in 1929. An expedition set off there on the steamer *Sedov* with Captain V.I. Voronin under the leadership of Otto Schmidt. It was to land the polar explorers at Quiet Bay.

It was father's first meeting with Otto Yulievich Schmidt and was to determine his future life. From the very beginning they formed a mutual respect and, from father's side it can be said, a complete trust in all Schmidt's Arctic plans while admiring him as a learned and elder companion.

On 12 January 1930 father established world record long distance short-wave communications from Quiet Bay with the American Admiral Byrd's Antarctic expedition. He was already a well-known short-wave enthusiast by the time he returned from his winter stay and the Society of Radio Friends invited him to be the Head of their Central short-wave section.

On the Graf Zeppelin

Father was not able to stay in one place long. In 1931 he flew as a radio operator and member of the Soviet group with the International air expedition on the dirigible *Graf Zeppelin*. Next year he took part in the expedition on the steamer *Alexander Sibiryakov*, which completed a through navigation along the Northern Sea Route from Archangel to the Pacific Ocean for the first time.

1933 came. An expedition was prepared on the steamer *Chelyuskin*. Its purpose was to show the possibility of navigation along the Northern Sea Route in an ordinary boat which had some strengthened plating along the water line of the hull. Otto Schmidt, the leader of the expedition, appointed father as chief radio operator.

Heroes of the Chelyuskin

The *Chelyuskin* epic occupies a special page in father's life. As is generally known, on 13 February 1934 the *Chelyuskin* was crushed by compressed ice and sank 144 miles from Cape Wellen. 104 people were stranded on the ice, including 10 women and 2 children. They managed to rescue a two-month supply of provisions, sleeping bags and tarpaulin tents. So 'Camp Schmidt', as father called it in his first radio message, was formed in the Chukchi Sea.

It is clear that without reliable radio communications it was impossible even to think about organising the rescue of the Chelyuskinites. Here the skill of the expedition's radio operator assumed major importance. By 13 April 1934 the fliers A.V. Lyapidevsky, V.S. Molokov, S.A. Levanevsky, N.P. Kamanin, M.V. Vodopyanov, M.T. Slepnyov and I.V. Doronin managed to bring the members of the expedition back to the mainland.

These fliers became the first Heroes of the Soviet Union. RAEM, the call-sign of the *Chelyuskin*, was awarded to my father as his personal amateur callsign.

Talking with Sanders

In the summer of 1935 father set off to a new winter stay as Head on Cape Olovyanny. Other members of

the winter stay were the meteorologist B.A. Kremer, radio operator A.A. Golubev and mechanic N.G. Mekhrengin. In the course of the winter stay he offered to serve on another polar station on Domashny Island, 200 kilometres further north. Permission was received and together with Mekhrengin he was taken there by aircraft.

This winter stay lasted five months and proved to be very arduous. Both men fell ill with scurvy, and after V. Chkalov's safe landing on Udd Island (the station on Domashny Island transmitted weather reports along the route of the flight) sent a radio message for Schmidt in Moscow:

'The supports of both engines are affected by corrosion. We are talking with Sanders.'

His humour was 'black'. Interpreted in normal language, the radio message reported that the legs of the polar winterers were finally being crippled by scurvy. And the phrase 'talking with Sanders' recalled the fate of the mechanic Sanders who died from scurvy on the Sedov expedition. Father joked that they had two legs between them. In order to somehow keep in shape they dragged themselves 200 metres to the opposite end of the island where they kicked an empty tin can with their healthy legs and then returned.

One of father's legs was crimson and one could quite easily dip a finger in it, such was the disease of scurvy. Characteristically, father never transmitted any SOS signals. And in life too. On 1 September 1936 the *Sibiryakov* approached Domashny Island with a new crew of polar explorers.

A Full Life

My father was a restless man. Hardly recovered from scurvy, he started to prepare for the expedition to the North Pole, NP-1. After returning from this expedition he was appointed Head of NSRA polar stations and worked in that position until 1948.

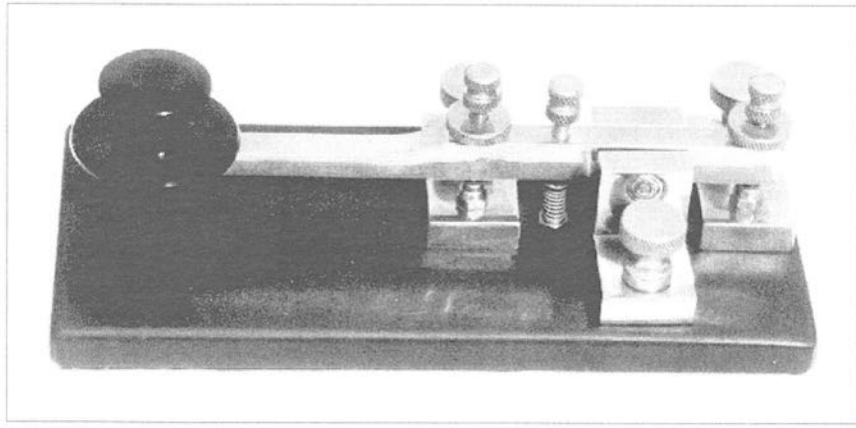
In the middle of November 1968 father headed the voyage of the scientific research ship *Professor Zubov* to the shores of the Antarctic. To the great satisfaction of short-wave enthusiasts, his RAEM/MM callsign appeared on the air. The first pages of his book *RAEM is my Callsign* were written then. *(Reviewed in MM6, p.22. – Ed.)*

Father lived a full life – full, but not long. He died 16 days from his 68th birthday. In Novodevichy cemetery where he was buried, a granite headstone stands on his grave, shaped like his callsign – RAEM.

T. Krenkel
Moscow

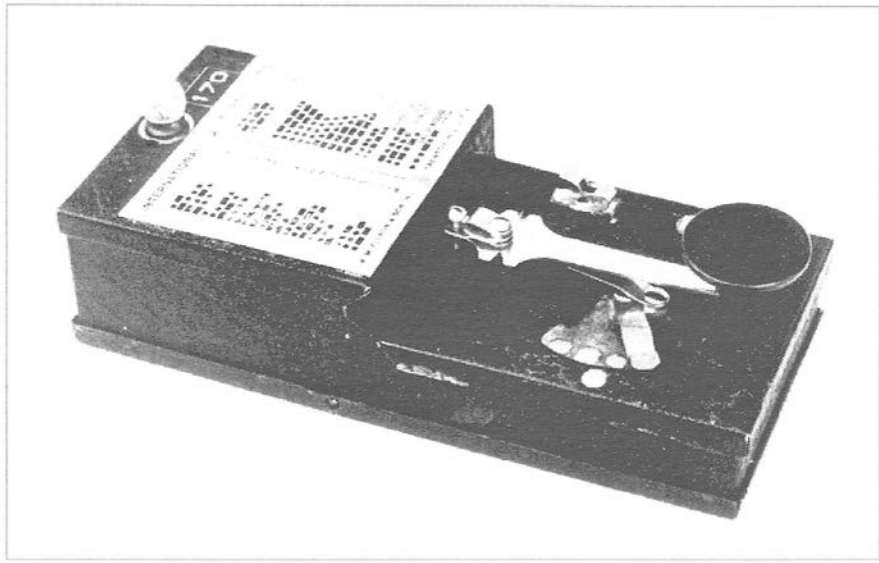
Edited and adapted for* MM *from an article in* Radio *magazine, Moscow, December 1993. Original translation by Mike Hewitt G4AYO. Most readers who know about Ernst Krenkel, RAEM, will be surprised to learn from this article that he was forbidden to operate on amateur radio from 1948 to 1956.* MM *will welcome receiving readers' recollections of contacts with RAEM, or other memories or information about this well-known and highly respected Russian CW operator

Showcase



Photo/Collection: Wyn Davies

G.W. Key



Collection: John Elwood WW7P. Photo: Ray Nelligan

Novelty Morse practice set by M.M. Fleron & Son, Inc., Trenton, NJ.
Switch position 1 = Morse oscillator. Switch position 2 = Cigarette lighter!

Reproduction Vibroplex Upright by Dennis Goacher, G3LLZ. Built from the patent drawings reproduced in the Vibroplex Collector's Guide *(available from MM Bookshelf. – Ed.), and from pictures in several magazines. The base is made from three separate steel parts, welded together and machined to size. The main body is cut from 3/16in steel plate (by hand) and the pendulum stops and screw mountings are silver soldered on. Both parts are powder epoxy stoved for hard wear. The two parts of the operating mechanism are shaped by hand from brass plate. The other brass parts are formed from stock sizes of rod material. The finger pieces are made of wood, one of teak, one of kingwood. The steel screws are blackened with gun blue. Dennis reports 'As keys go, I do not like this one. The action feels wrong somehow, although it may be partly due to my interpretation of the pictures. It does, however, show how an upright key could work, which was what I intended.'*

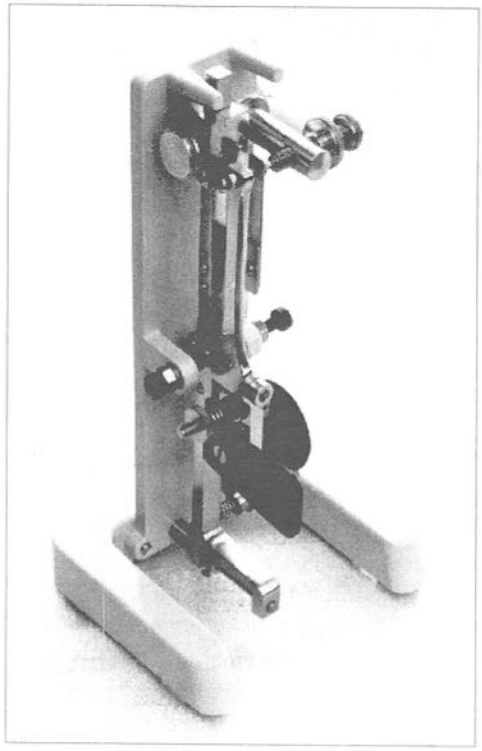
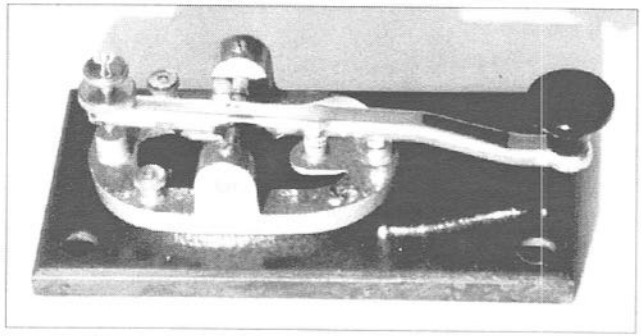


Photo: G3LLZ



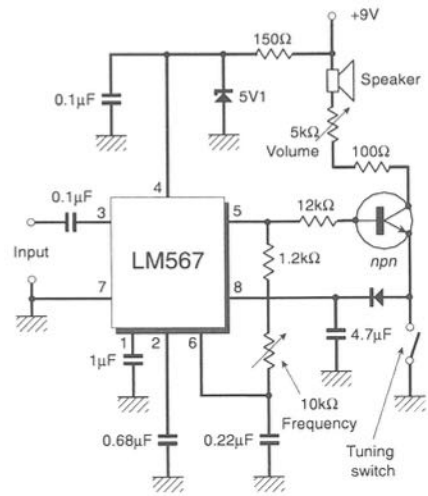
Photo/Collection: Wyn Davies

French Dyna training key

Featuring keys and other collectors' items of telegraphic interest.
If anyone can add to the information given please contact
Tony Smith, 13 Morley Road. Sheringham, Norfolk NR26 8JE

A Morse Filter/ Digital Decoder

by Gary Bold ZL1AN



IF YOU HAVE A COMPUTER with Morse reading software, how do you interface it to the receiver? My interface is shown here. If you don't have a computer you can use it as an audio filter (for which it was originally designed) or you can use it for both at once. Thus it has something for everybody.

This was first published in *Break-In*, June 1980, as 'A Phase-locked Loop CW Filter' (I only used it as a Morse interface later). Instead of the usual linear band-pass audio filter it uses an LM567 tone decoding chip. There is nothing to align and no critical construction steps. For a full description see the original article. Here's an outline.

Critical Threshold

The input signal (to pin 3) comes from the receiver phone jack or the ungrounded side of the speaker (see Footnote below). The 567 has an internal (squarewave) oscillator with frequency controlled by the 'frequency' pot. When the incoming signal is above a critical threshold, and within about 7 per cent either side of the oscillator frequency, a phase-locked loop inside the chip acquires lock and the 'lock detect' output (pin 8) goes logical low.

This pulls the emitter of the transistor low, which enables it to switch the internal oscillator waveform (conveniently appearing at pin 5) through the speaker-volume control combination.

On good signals you can use low audio gain so that it won't lock on background noise. Hence, since nothing is heard until the loop locks, only the audio Morse triggers the loop and all background noise vanishes! This is quite startling when you first hear it.

Tuning

It's a little trickier to tune than a simple band-pass filter. First, tune the receiver for your favourite audio beat

note. Close the 'tune' switch. This routes the oscillator waveform through the speaker regardless of the lock state. Adjust the 'frequency' control until the 567 oscillator's frequency and the audio Morse frequency coincide. Open the 'tune' switch. Adjust the receiver volume until satisfactory locking occurs.

This has several advantages. First, you can choose the audio frequency you want to hear. The signal applied to the loudspeaker is a squarewave. This is easier to copy if, like me, you're in the habit of walking around the basement while listening to the other guy's over.

Since the digital logic level appears at pin 8 ('mark' is 'low') this can, at the same time, be used as input to a Morse-decoding computer. I connect pin 8 straight to an input pin of the user port on the Commodore C-64. (I really should buffer it, but it's never blown the computer up. It's bypassed for RF at the computer with 0.01µF). It works okay up to at least 55 wpm. It's simple, cheap, easy and it really works. Try it!

Footnote

The sensitivity of LM567 chips seems to vary and some need an uncomfortable volume level to lock if you take the input from directly across the 'speaker terminals. I eventually inserted a 3:1 step-up transformer between the 'speaker and the chip input which improved things a lot. A simple op-amp buffer with a gain of 5 or 10 would be better still.

(From 'The Morseman' column by Gary Bold, in Break-In, *journal of NZART, September, November and December 1988.)*

First High Speed Telegraphy World Championships

AS ANNOUNCED IN MM38, High Speed Telegraphy Championships will be held in Hungary in October 1995. The venue will be Siofok, Lake Balaton. The organiser of this event is the Hungarian Radioamateur Society (MRASZ), on behalf of IARU Region 1.

The following is a brief summary of the revised rules for the championships, adopted by the IARU Region 1 High Speed Telegraphy Working Group last year. Of necessity many details have been condensed or omitted, and this summary should not be treated as an official description of the HST championships.

Those interested in participating in the championships should obtain a full copy of the rules from their national IARU-member society:

World or European Championships

The event is provisionally designated the 'First HST World Championships', and all IARU member-societies world-wide have been invited to participate. The rules stipulate, however, that for the competition to have 'World' status competitors must attend from at least three continents. Otherwise, it will be designated as the 'European Championships' – providing that competitors from at least five European countries participate in the championships.

It is of interest to note that at the last IARU Region 1 championships, held in Belgium in 1991, some 65 participants, aged between 12 and 72 years took part from 9 different countries. If there is sufficient additional response from countries in IARU Regions 2 and 3 this time it could result in an extensive and very prestigious occasion.

Teams and Categories

Each national team may comprise up to twelve members, representing six categories. There shall be no more than two team members within each category as follows:

'Seniors' (males older than 20 years).
'Senior YLs' (females older than 20 years).
'Juniors' (males up to 20 years).
'Junior YL' (females up to 20 years).
'Old Boys' (males 45 years or older).
'Old Ladies' *(sic)* (females 40 years or older).

Each team will have a designated Team Leader who, if also a competitor, must be at least eighteen years of age. A

Trainer, Interpreter, and HST International Class Referee, serving as a member of the International Jury, may accompany each team.

Tests

The Championships comprises seven tests:

(a) Reception of letter messages.
(b) Reception of figure messages.
(c) Transmission of letter messages.
(d) Transmission of figure messages.
(e) Reception of mixed text messages.
(f) Transmission of mixed text messages.
(g) The radioamateur practising test, based on the RUFZ callsign receiving program devised by DL3DZZ.

Speeds

Letter and mixed text reception messages are sent at a progressively increased speeds starting with '100 marks/min' for letters and '150 marks/min' for figures, with competitors withdrawing as the speed becomes too high for them. Messages may be recorded by hand (using any symbols desired) or by typewriter. Messages copied on contestant's own paper must be recopied on official forms after a test.

For transmission, either straight or electronic keys, single or twin-paddle (adjusted to a dot/dash ratio of 1:3), may be used. Each message transmitted will comprise 50 groups of five letters, figures or mixed text as appropriate to the test.

A competitor has ten minutes in which to transmit three messages in tests (c), (d) and (e) at the highest possible speed. No points are awarded for transmitted messages not completed within the ten minute period allowed. Up to three errors and ten corrections are allowed, resulting in a reduction of the final score by a formula specified in the rules.

Radioamateur Practising Test

The RUFZ callsign copy program requires competitors to make two attempts at receiving 50 callsigns (and typing them back onto the computer keyboard), and the best attempt is taken for scoring. The overall best performance scores 100 points and other entrants are scored proportionately lower relative to the 100.

Individual Awards

The title of Individual Champion in each of the six categories of the contest is awarded to the competitors with the highest scores calculated as follows:

(1) Reception (sum of scores for the three reception tests).
(2) Transmission (sum of scores for the three transmission tests).
(3) Radioamateur Practising Test (score gained at the best attempt).
(4) Total of the above scores.

In the case of a tie, a result will be judged on the best result for transmission of messages. The winners of each category will be awarded the title of 'World Champion' or 'European Champion' as appropriate and will receive Gold Medals and Certificates.

Those gaining second and third places will be awarded Silver and Bronze Medals respectively, plus Certificates. Those gaining 4th – 6th places will be awarded Certificates.

Team Awards

The position of the National Teams in the championships shall be decided by the total points scored by a maximum of six team members (i.e., those having the best scores in each of the six categories. The team gaining first place will win the title 'World Team Champion' or 'European Team Champion' as appropriate. The team will be awarded a Cup and a Certificate and all members of the team will receive Gold Medals and Certificates.

Teams gaining second and third place will be awarded Certificates. Members of the teams will receive Silver and Bronze Medals respectively, plus Certificates. Teams gaining 4th – 6th places will be awarded Certificates.

Entering the Championships

The organising society (MRASZ – Hungary), has invited all national IARU-member societies to participate in the championships.

The rules state that 'Each competitor shall have a radio amateur or SWL licence, and agreement of his/her national society to take part in the contest.' Anyone interested in joining their National Team for the HST Championships should therefore contact their national society to find out what arrangements it is making to select a team or send other competitors.

If a national society decides not to send a National Team or other competitors, then applications to participate in the championships may be made by (for example) representatives of a CW Club, with the permission of the national society.

Costs

MRASZ reports that competitors will be accommodated in an AA category hotel with single, double or three-bedded rooms as required.

The cost per person will be US$400, which includes 'everything from day of arrival until the contest day 3 – excursion day 4 – contest, announcement of results. Dinner, day 5 – departure.'

Laszlo Weisz HA3NU, President of the Hungarian CW Group (HACWG), reports that the accommodation 'will be in a three-star hotel at a price equating to about 80 DM per day (full board).'

The rules state that 'Participating Societies shall bear the travel expenses of their teams to and from the place of the Championships, and the costs of accommodation and board during the event', but presumably this provision would not apply to non-team entries.

Further Information

Further information will be reported as and when it is received from MRASZ.

If any reader attends or takes part in the Championships please send a report of your experiences to Tony Smith as quickly as possible afterwards so that details can be included in an early issue of *MM*.

Our thanks to Klara Lendvai HA5BA, IARU Region 1 HST Coordinator, for providing* MM *with the Rules of the HST Championships, and to Laszlo Weisz HA3NU, member of the HST Working Group, for additional assistance in preparing this report

Comment on the HST Championships

The IARU Region 1 High Speed Telegraphy Working Group, which organises the championships, consists of 11 members, namely DL3DZZ, EA5AR, F6IIE, HA3NU, IN3VST, LZ1FN, OE1JJB, ON6NL, UA4FBG, YO3FU, Z31WW plus the IARU Region 1 HST Coordinator, Klara Lendvai, HA5BA.

MM understands that MRASZ sent official invitations to all European IARU-member societies to nominate additional members to join the Working Group and received little response. There was particular disappointment that the United Kingdom did not nominate a member, but the Radio Society of Great Britain states that it has not received such an invitation. *MM* hopes to report further on this matter in the next issue.

The RSGB has confirmed that it will not be entering a team in the HST Championships. The way lies open, therefore, for representatives of appropriate clubs, or any individual radio amateur, to enter the championships to represent the UK, as mentioned above. Perhaps FOC, FISTS, G-QRP, RAFARS, RNARS or RSARS members might be tempted to take up the challenge?

Enquiries about possible participation in the HST championships by such competitors should be addressed to Peter Kirby G0TWW, General Manager, Radio Society of Great Britain, Lambda House, Cranborne Road, Potters Bar, Herts EN6 3JE.

The RSGB has never entered a team in the HST Championships and perhaps the Society should take a more positive attitude in supporting this important IARU event. Part of the problem may be that formal notification from the organising society comes too late to make any realistic attempt to find suitable representatives on a national basis before the closing date for entries.

The way round this problem could be a national contest held a year in advance so that national champions can be found to represent the UK at the international championships in the following year, either as a team or individually.

There is no tradition of high speed contesting in Britain so simply asking if anyone would like to 'have a go', which is what has happened up to now, is unlikely to produce many volunteers. Organised national championships, however, perhaps requiring progressive levels of achievement ranging from 'beginners' to 'experienced' to 'exceptional', might begin to create a new breed of speed contesters anxious to develop and improve their skills, with championship honours their ultimate aim. Such activity might also stimulate more interest in amateur Morse and give it a higher profile within the hobby.

There are plenty of amateur operators in the UK capable of high-speed sending and receiving who, with such encouragement, might well decide to take up HST contesting. I don't know how other countries

select their competitors for the IARU championships but this could be the way forward for countries that have not previously entered the championships.

Readers' letters commenting on the above suggestions, or providing further information about how HST competitors are selected in countries outside the UK, will be very welcome for publication in 'Your Letters' in *Morsum Magnificat*. If there is a significant response, copies of letters received will be forwarded to the RSGB.

Tony Smith G4FAI

News extra

British Key Makers – Info Please!

It has been suggested that MM should prepare and publish a list of makers of British Morse keys over the years, including additional information where available. Would all readers who have any information about key manufacturers please send it to me. For a start, look at every key you own and send me whatever information you can find on it, e.g., makers name or initials, year, reference number, etc. Please write it down exactly as found on the key – and please write clearly!

Also send me information from other sources you might have, books, articles, makers' leaflets, etc., including specialist uses of keys if known, and any available information about the makers themselves, including their original addresses.

Send every snippet you can find, no matter how small – it will all build up into something useful, and don't worry that someone else may have sent the same thing! I will start with information which has already appeared in *MM* or is awaiting publication and will put everything on computer. It will be a long-term project but hopefully a comprehensive list will eventually emerge of use to collectors, researchers or others interested in Morse telegraphy.

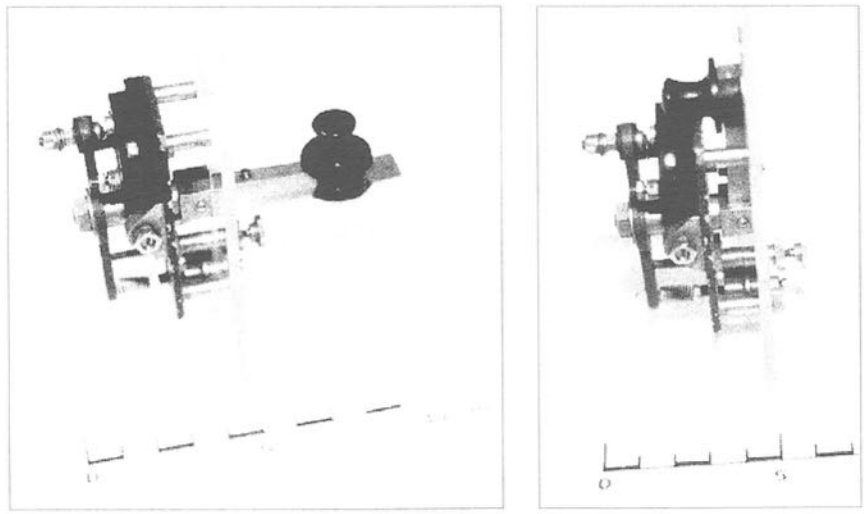
Of course, if someone is already working on such a project I would be delighted to hear from or collaborate with them!

Tony Smith

Help available

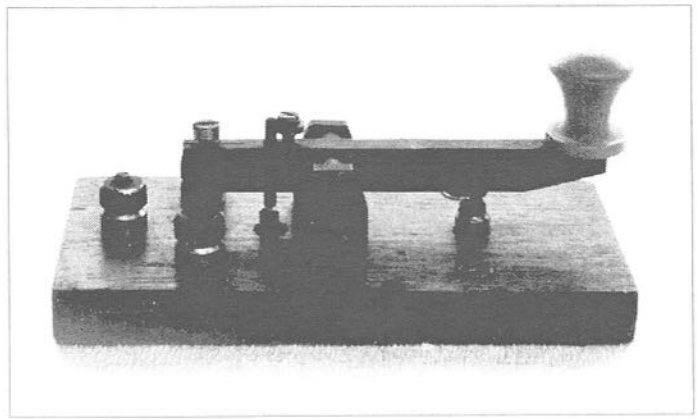
Readers whose KEYS WT 8 AMP need attention may like to know that Ron Ray G3NCL, has developed an extended G-clamp to press out corroded bearing pins, irrespective of type. He has various spare parts available and may be able to help in getting damaged keys back into use again. Contact Ron at 54 Gladstone Road, Chesham, Bucks HP5 3AD, or leave a message on his answerphone 01494 776420.

Info Please!



Photos/collection: Henri Jacob F6GTC

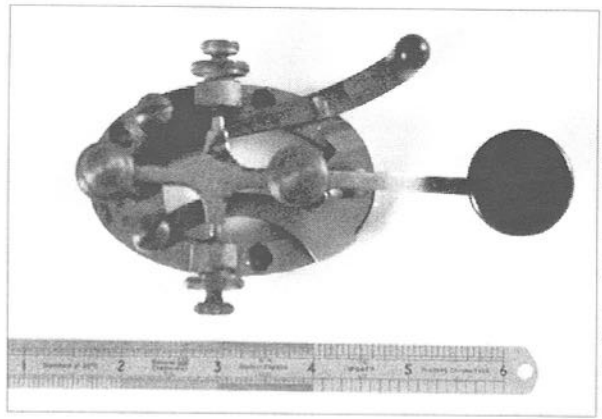
Front panel key, mounted on Plexiglass to demonstrate installation. Key retracts into assembly (right) when not in use, possibly for transportation? No markings on key. Info wanted



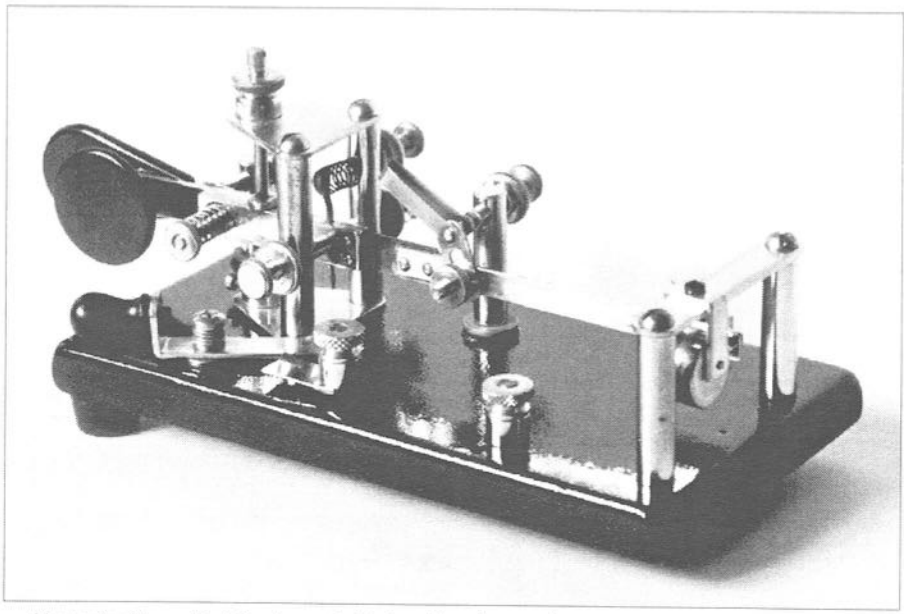
Collection/Photo: Dennis Goacher G3LLZ

Unknown key. The knob appears to be original and the base is hollow. Info wanted

Key marked:
TELEGRAPH KEY 1A
H AT & T CO.
and on the shorting switch:
WESTERN ELECTRIC.
Info wanted



Collection/Photo: John Pears G0FSP



Photo/Collection: John McGinty G4GZQ

Unmarked bug. Paddle shape indicates Lionel manufacture (J36?), but base plate has holes in position for fixing Vibroplex name plate rather than Lionel plate. Is this possibly a key made up from parts of two different keys? Any comments please?

Readers require further information on the keys, etc., featured here.
Please write to Tony Smith, 13 Morley Road, Sheringham, Norfolk NR26 8JE
if you can help.
All useful information received will be published in MM *in a later issue*

NMN (Chesapeake) Closedown

by Geoff Williams
(Radio Officer, Ret'd)

MIDNIGHT MARCH 31 marked the end of yet another international Morse station – NMN. There can't be many radio officers or radio amateurs either past or present who have never heard the station on callband or, if at sea, listened avidly for the late-night shipping forecast and navigational warnings in Morse. But with the advent of more advanced technology, the writing was no longer on the message pad but on the wall as, some weeks prior to the dreaded day, NMN was sending the following:

```
CQ DE NMN QRU IMI NMN
WILL QRT ALL CW OPS AT
010001Z APR 1995.
STATIONS WISHING TO
QSO NMN FOR THE LAST
TIME CAN CALL FM
312300Z MAR TO 010001Z
APR. AT 010001Z APR 95
A FINAL MSG WILL BE
BCST ON 16976/17281.5/
8471/5870KHZ.
```

Personally I found the deadline was an anticlimax. NMN on callband was quite clear in the UK on 5870 and 8471, with the 5's repeating a previous request for survey information together with an update of ship/shore voice frequency changes, whilst 8's remained on callband hoping to hear simplex calls at the same time. Any signals on 16976 and 17281.5 were not audible in the UK, but there may well have been activity on these frequencies from the daylight areas.

However, at 312320Z WTEW began its calls to NMN regardless, and was eventually acknowledged at 312338Z when there was a brief interchange of 'good luck' signals. Between long periods on callband. NMN heard WYCQ and sent it down to 8343 for 73s.

At 312352Z, KRNJ contacted with a weather OBS and at 312356 NMF (Boston) exchanged goodbyes and that was it until the following message at 010001Z on 8471kHz (hand-sent at 24 wpm).

```
CQ DE NMN = 010001Z APR 95 FM COGARD CAMSLANT
CHESAPEAKE VA/NMN TO ALL =
USCG NOW CLOSING DOWN CONTINUOUS HF CW WATCH
CEASING ALL MORSE CODE OPS IN THE HF BAND.
AS WE CONCLUDE OUR WATCH WE WISH THE MARITIME
COMMUNITY FAIR WINDS AND FOLLOWING SEAS. WE ARE
PROUD OF OUR TRADITION AND LONG STANDING SERVICE TO
THE MARINER ON MORSE CODE BEGINNING IN 1901 WITH
THE REVENUE CUTTER SERVICE EXPERIMENTING WITH
WIRELESS AS A MEANS TO COMMUNICATE ON LAND AND SEA
TO THE FIRST MORSE CODE RADIO INSTALLED ABOARD
CUTTER GRANT IN 1903. OUR ORIG COMMS MISSION WAS TO
RCV DISTRESS ALERTS. BUT SINCE 1901 THE CG HAS
FAITHFULLY AND DILIGENTLY LISTENED FOR TRAFFIC
RESPONDING TO HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF CALLS FM
MARINERS IN NEED OF ASSIST OR RPTG WX NAV OR SAFETY
INFO. OVER THE YEARS WE HAVE PROVIDED MARINERS WITH
URGENT SAFETY AND NAV WARNINGS OVER HF CW AND RCVD
VESSEL LOCATION UPDATES FOR THE AMVER SYS. WE WILL
FEEL A SENSE OF LOSS WITH THE PASSING OF CW.
THE NEED FOR OPERATORS WITH SENSITIVE EARS AND A
FAST PRECISE KEY WILL BE REPLACED BY COMPUTER
MODEMS AND AUTO ALARMS. THE SPECIAL EMOTION AND
EXCITEMENT ENJOYED BY CW OPERATORS CAN NOT BE
DUPLICATED AND THE CHILLING SOS SIGNAL WILL NEVER
BE REPLACED [?] BY A CG UNIT. BUT CW HAS RUN ITS
COURSE AND WE NOW LOOK FWD TO SERVING YOU ON THE
NEXT GENERATION OF COMM SYSTEMS VIA THE GMDSS.
FM ALL CG TELECOMM SPECIALISTS WE BID YOU 73.
WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT.
SIGNED CG CAMSLANT = DE NMN SK
```

This was followed by several anonymous weak-signal 73s. The above message was also repeated on 5870, ending at 0023Z on 1 April 1995.

The possibility that an emerging Third World nation may perhaps soon be in a position to zap the satellites (on religious grounds?) has obviously never been considered. Stand by your BFOs chaps! ***MM***

Bookshelf

A mail order book service for selected telegraphy and radio titles. The letters *MM* or *RB* followed by a number after each title indicate the magazine and issue in which a review appeared.

The prices quoted for each title are inclusive of postage and packing, the first figure being for despatch to UK addresses, the second for despatch to the rest of Europe by airmail or elsewhere in the world by surface mail. Airmail rates for the rest of the world on request, or if you are using your credit card we can ship by air at your instruction, simply adding the difference in postal cost to your bill.

SEND YOUR ORDER TO:

G C Arnold Partners, 9 Wetherby Close,
Broadstone, Dorset BH18 8JB, England

Payment accepted by Access, Eurocard, Mastercard or Visa (quote your card number and expiry date), or by cheque, draft or postal orders. Overseas cheques and drafts must be payable in Sterling, and drawn on a London Clearing Bank. Credit card orders also welcome by phone or fax on 01202 658474.

MAKE ALL CHEQUES, ETC., PAYABLE TO G C ARNOLD PARTNERS

RECENT ADDITIONS to the Bookshelf

Story of the Key
In response to popular demand, the long-awaited reprint of this popular *MM* series from 1987–89 by Louise Ramsey Moreau W3WRE, plus the listing of US Telegraph Instrument Makers 1837–1900, published in *MM* in 1992.

60p, 5¾ x 8¼in, softbound
£3.95 (UK): £4.25 (Eur/Sur)

McElroy Chart of Codes and Signals
A 9 x 14-inch colour reproduction of this sought-after poster from the 1940s.

£10.65 (UK): £10.99 (EU States) [both inc. VAT]: £9.35 (rest of world)

EARLY RADIO – in Marconi's Footsteps
by Peter R. Jensen
A unique book, combining history with a present-day travelogue, plus technical descriptions of some of the earliest radio equipment, with working drawings and detailed instructions for building reproductions.

176p, 11 x 8¼in, hardback
£28.00 (UK): £28.75 (Eur/Sur)

TELEGRAPHY BOOKS, etc. *Detailed descriptions of the titles listed below available on request*

Introduction to Key Collecting by Tom French *(MM17)* ..... £6.75 (UK): £7.05 (Eur/Sur)
Vibroplex Collector's Guide by Tom French *(MM17)* ..... £9.75 (UK): £10.25 (Eur/Sur)
Bunnell's Last Catalog (with commentary) by Tom French *(MM23)* ..... £4.85 (UK): £5.05 (Eur/Sur)
Railroad Telegrapher's Handbook by Tom French *(MM22)* ..... £6.75 (UK): £7.05 (Eur/Sur)
McELROY, World's Champion Radio Telegrapher by Tom French ..... £14.70 (UK): £15.40 (Eur/Sur)
The Telegraph by Lewis Coe *(MM31)* ..... £19.10 (UK): £19.80 (Eur/Sur)
History, Theory & Practice of the Electric Telegraph by George B. Prescott ..... £12.75 (UK): £13.65 (Eur/Sur)
The Story of the Key by Louise Ramsey Moreau *(MM38)* ..... £3.95 (UK): £4.25 (Eur/Sur)
McElroy Chart of Codes and Signals *(MM38)* .... £10.65 (UK): £10.99 (EU States) [both inc. VAT] : £9.35 (rest of world)

RADIO BOOKS

Early Radio – in Marconi's Footsteps by Peter R. Jensen *(MM38)* ..... £28.00 (UK): £28.75 (Eur/Sur)
Deep Sea 'Sparks' by Olive J. Carroll (MM37) ..... £17.90 (UK): £18.50 (Eur/Sur)
Dawn of Australia's Radio Broadcasting by Philip Geeves ..... £3.95 (UK): £4.40 (Eur/Sur)
Discovering Vintage Radio by Peter Lankshear ..... £4.15 (UK): £4.65 (Eur/Sur)
Communications Receivers – the Vacuum Tube Era by Raymond S. Moore ..... £15.00 (UK): £15.85 (Eur/Sur)
The RACAL Handbook by Rinus Jansen ..... £13.00 (UK): £13.75 (Eur/Sur)
The Golden Age of Radio in the Home by John W. Stokes ..... £17.50 (UK): £18.00 (Eur/Sur)
More Golden Age of Radio by John W. Stokes ..... £25.00 (UK): £25.50 (Eur/Sur)
Radio! Radio! by Jonathan Hill ..... £28.50 (UK): £29.50 (Eur/Sur)
70 Years of Radio Valves & Tubes by John W. Stokes ..... £21.00 (UK): £22.00 (Eur/Sur)
History of the British Radio Valve to 1940 by Keith R. Thrower *(RB22)* ..... £16.25 (UK): £17.00 (Eur/Sur)
Comprehensive Radio Valve Guides, in five books:
No. 1 (1934-1951); **2** (1951-1954); **3** (1954-1956); **4** (1956-1960); **5** (1960-1963) ..... Each £2.95 (UK): £3.25 (Eur/Sur)
Or, the set of five books: £14.00 (UK): £15.50 (Eur/Sur)
Radio, TV, Industrial & Transmitting Valve Equivalents ..... £2.95 (UK): £3.25 (Eur/Sur)

Readers' ADs

FOR SALE

TWO KEYS ZA 34835, as used in Type A Mk.3, Type B 3 Mk.II (B2 set), and other WW2 SOE W/T sets. Price $75.00 each (plus $5.00 shipping outside Continental USA). US military thigh keys, J-45 and 'Electrovoice' from Vietnam era, also USN Flameproof. Large list of telegraph items – $3 refundable. Dr Joseph Jacobs, 60 Seaview Terrace, Northport, NY 11768, USA, 'phone (516) 261-1576, fax (516) 754-4616.

WANTED

BACK ISSUES of *Morsum Magnificat*, Nrs 1–19 and 22, 23, 25, & 28, or copies of *MM* articles referenced in the 2nd edition of the ARRL book, *Morse Code the Essential Language*. Milt Bramer N6MB, 4161 Shady Glade Drive, Santa Maria, CA 93455, USA.

TELEGRAPH EQUIPMENT, especially Wheatstone receiver and perforator, Baudot transmitter and perforator, and Single Needle instrument. Can be collected in the UK. Exchange items (telegraphy, telephony, radio) available. Fons Vanden Berghen, Lenniksesteenweg 462/22, B-1500 Halle, Belgium. Telephone:
Office 010-32-16-38.27.21.
Late evening: 010-32-2-356.05.56.

OLD TELEGRAPH KEYS, any age, any condition. Herman Brauckmann, Louis Couperuslaan 10, NL 2343 DZ, Oegstgeest, The Netherlands.

EXCHANGE

OFFERED FOR TRADE for straight keys. Not for sale. Two J36 by Lionel (no name plates); two Vibroplex Originals, grey base; Vibroplex Champion, black base; Vibroplex Lightning, black base; BK50 Dentsuseiki bug; BK100 Hi Mound bug; Ham Key Model HK-1 paddle; Brown Bros Model BTL-A paddle; Kent twin paddle; GW straight key. Wyn Davies, Pen-y-Maes, Halcog, Brymbo, Wrecsam, Clwyd LL11 5DR, Wales. Tel: 01978 756330.

VERY RARE RAAF Bathtub Keys, boxed. Would like to exchange with other collectors. Stephen Smith VK2SPS, 7 Mitala Road, Newport 2106, Sydney, Australia.

KEYS, SEMI-AUTOMATIC KEYS, sounders, and other telegraph items available for exchange. Wish to trade Australian Pendograph vertical bug for the Vibroplex one of similar design. List available on request. David R. Pennes, 4607-C Santa Cruz Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46268-5354, USA.

HAVE DUPLICATE COPIES OF *MM* Nrs 1 to 26, all mint condition. Would like to exchange for any interesting key. John Francis G3LWI, 3 Nightingale Close, Bembridge, Isle of Wight PO35 5YP, England. Tel: 01983 872192.

OTHER

INTELLIGENCE CORPS COMRADES ASSOCIATION. The East Coast Branches are currently conducting a recruitment drive. If you are a serving or past member of the Corps, or had wartime attachment to it and wish to continue associations in the hope of meeting past Comrades, please write for details of branch meeting places and dates. Very informal and convivial gatherings, no age barriers. J. Hackett, Hon. Regional Secretary, 12 St Mary's Grove, Tudhoe Village, Spennymoor, Co Durham DL16 6LR.

Code in the Head

by John F. Davidson KA0NPN
(ex VE5GL, VE7GL)

LEARNING THE CODE IS NO PROBLEM. The problem is how you learn it! Most old-timers learned it the wrong way, and even today the teaching methods might be improved. Let me offer my credentials for teaching code. First of all, I learned it the wrong way, of course, in the mid 1930s. I picked up the alphabet and numerals plus normal ham punctuation and then hit a plateau at about 8 wpm.

I was told that this was normal, and I could get over this with continued practice. Eventually I did, and passed the 10 wpm code test in Canada and was assigned the call VE5GL. I operated for a couple of years, until September 1939, when we were closed down due to World War II.

Shortly thereafter, I was teaching physics in an RCAF school in Vancouver, when the brass discovered that I held an amateur licence. I was immediately assigned the job of teaching code to the incoming airmen, several of whom had been told that they couldn't learn code!

I inadvertently hit upon a teaching system that worked! I didn't know why at the time, but I do now after forty years of teaching at all levels from kindergarten through Ph.D. Our record of teaching success is shown by some thousands of airmen who took the final exam, and every one of them scored 100%. We never did have a single error in copying – on the final!

First Step

In the introduction to the class on our first meeting, I asked the men to write down the letters as I dictated them. Then I simply spelled out 'M-O-R-S-E C-O-D-E' in plain language. When I found out that nobody had made any errors, I promised them that they would pass the code test. All we were going to do was change the name of the letters.

Instead of 'M', that letter was going to be 'Dah-Dah', etc. At no time did we allow, or even admit, the existence of dots or dashes. To prevent the students from breaking down the letters into their component parts, the letters were sent at approximately 25 wpm, but for copying practice, they were spaced – well spaced in terms of time, poorly spaced in terms of good code.

So-called 'recognition runs' were made from time to time, where the student was not expected to copy, but just listen for 'oddball' letters. For example, during the first half-hour session, the class was taught the dit sequence from E to 5. After half a dozen runs, with the five characters well spaced, a 25 wpm run of the letter S was presented with the occasional I or H inserted. The students' job was to pick out the 'oddballs' in the run, both letter and number. Five half-hour sessions were needed to teach the characters needed

In subsequent lessons, the drills always contained some 'oddball' speed passages, and the students liked them very much. After the alphabet had been learned, every session ended with an exam. We used the official examination form, and conducted the test just as the final would be given.

They scored their own tests, and deducted 5 points for each error. Scores typically ranged from minus 125 down to minus 350 or so. They kept a graph of their progress, and we had marvellous celebrations when students got up to zero!

Sneaky

Speed was picked up, of course, by merely shortening the spaces between letters, and this was quite insidious. So much so that I sneakily sped up their daily exams and other speed tests. I'd tell them, 'Okay, let's try 6 wpm.' Then, I'd send the passage at 7½ or 8.

We had them copying 12 and 13 wpm while they believed it was 8! They were supposed to leave us at 8 wpm, but all were capable of 15, and most were up to 20 in 30 hours of instruction time. By the way, we started the programme with one hour every second day, and changed to a half hour each day for five days a week. That was the programme, and now after many years, I know why it was successful.

We proceeded directly from sound to letter. No intermediate interpretation was permitted. The fast letter speed forced the beginner to go from sound to letter. The code was sent too fast for a beginner to break the letter down into its components. Since it was a training programme that did not require thinking or analysis, short sessions at frequent intervals were preferred over longer, less frequent sessions.

The plateau, which apparently still occurs with some students who are learning the code, is the result of interpreting the sound as something other than the letter itself. For example, 'Di-di-dah-dit' is two dots, a dash, and a dot, and that is an F. Counting the elements takes time, and one can do this at slow speeds, but it becomes very tough at 8 to 12 wpm. This is why the plateau occurs at this level, and the plateau persists until one learns, letter by letter, to go directly from sound to letter.

If you first learned that 'Di-di-dah-dit' is merely another name for F, then the phone or speaker just spells out the words for you, and your limitation is your writing speed. As I said in the beginning, learning the code is no problem!

Reprinted, with permission, from the ARRL Instructor's Newsletter, *December, 1982.*

Your Letters

Readers' letters on any Morse subject are always welcome, but may be edited when space is limited. When more than one subject is covered, letters may be divided into single subjects in order to bring comments on various matters together for easy reference

55

In *Morsum Magnificat* Nr 38 (page 41), Dr Marin Zurn notes that the use of '55' as an operating signal 'came up after the war', but he offers no explanation as to how this came about.

A feasible, although controversial, explanation was offered to me some ten years ago by the late Evert Kaleveld. I published this in 'Technical Topics', in *Radio Communication* June 1986 (also in *Technical Topics Scrapbook 1985–89*, p.107, published by the RSGB, 1993.) While this was challenged by a few readers, none was able to offer a more convincing explanation.

To quote the original item: 'Evert Kaleveld, PA0XE/DL0XJ, a wartime Dutch underground operator, has raised a topic which is, perhaps, strictly operating practice rather than technical but nevertheless is one that surely needs airing.

'He notes that although the origins of such abbreviations as 73 and 88 stretch back to the 19th century American telegraph codes, the German-originated 55 (often listed as 'viele erflug' (i.e., 'much pleasure') seems to be of quite recent origin, having first been listed in the German *QRV* journal of February/March 1947. Today it is very widely used in CW contacts, not only by German and Austrian amateurs.

'But why 55? Could it be, PA0XE surmises, that in the immediate post-war years, when all operation by German nationals was covert, that some misguided humorist took a secret delight in simply modifying the 'HH' (Heil Hitler) abbreviation that had been virtually obligatory for German amateurs from 1933 right up to May 1945 (Yes, some Germans were permitted to operate as amateurs throughout the war under the supervision of an SS general.) He simply added an extra dit to the four dits of each H and so created 55.

'HH was listed in the *Signal-buch für den Funkverkehr* published in Vienna in 1941. This also listed 73, 88, and even the little-used 99, but had no trace of 55. Evert stresses that if, as he believes, 55 was a "black joke" it certainly does not mean that those German amateurs using 55 today have the slightest idea that unbeknowingly they may be perpetuating a Nazi salute.

'Personally, I suspect that HH may indeed be the origin of 55, and since the idea was first put to me I for one have stopped using it!'

Pat Hawker G3VA
London SE22

With reference to the letter about '55' in *Morsum Magnificat* Nr 38 (p.41), please find hereunder my views on this matter.

To my mind, 55 must have originated within the German language area, i.e., Austria, Switzerland, Germany, since for a German it is self-explanatory, i.e.:

- in 'code', (I wish you) viele Punkte (= many points)
- in plain language, (I wish you) much success.

The German word 'Punkt' (plural Punkte) has several meanings, including

- dot (dots and dashes)
- point (score point: QSO points x multiplier points = total score).

So, if I send in Morse ····· ····· I actually send 'many' dots = 'many' points (i.e., the maximum possible score) = much success. No other digit combination within the range 0–9 yields so many dots (points) as 55.

So far, I have never used 55 myself, probably because I am not a contester at heart, and prefer DXing. I am at a loss, however, to see the reason for so much ado about such a playful nothing.

Gerhard Paul DF6SW
Bortlingen, Germany

RAF Operators

Regarding the letter from Geo Armstrong G0LIU, I was in RAF Signals from 1940 to 1950 and as I remember the trades terminology it was like this:

The Group numbers referred to trade skill (and pay) levels – Group I was the highest.

Wireless Operators (Group II) were trained in Morse code, operating procedure and technical maintenance. Wireless Operator/Air Gunners (WOP/AG) received some of the W/Op training, as did Pilots and Navigators.

Wireless Operator Mechanic (WOM) (Group I) was an upgrade from W/Op and received more technical training. I believe this was introduced after the outbreak of WWII.

Wireless Electrical Mechanic (WEM) (Group I) was the *crème de la crème* and was normally an ex Boy entrant or aircraft Apprentice (a regular) and very well trained in W/T operation, radio maintenance and electrical maintenance.

Radio Mechanic (Group I) was a trade designation for people who were previously working in electronics in civilian life, and some of them were very well qualified. I remember one instructor at Cranwell who would say 'Anyone well skilled in ...whatever... come out and teach this lesson.' I upgraded to WOM at Cranwell and several Radio Mechanics (or were they Radio Operator Mechanics?) were in the class. We had a ball teaching each other and it worked out very well.

Radio Operator, I am not sure about but I think this was, in effect, an R/T Operator. There were also Radar Ops and Radar Mechanics.

I joined as a Wireless Operator after showing that I could send and receive code and answering a skill-testing question 'If V = IR what does I equal?', but I had to train through Blackpool and Compton Bassett before being posted to 70 Group.

I upgraded to WOM and took over 546K Mobile Signals Unit in 2nd Tactical Air Force. Soon after D-Day I took over 5025K Special Mobile

Signals Unit (250 watts of FM no less) until we disbanded after VE-Day. My only regret was that I had a seven-digit number (1184024) – the guys that got respect had a six-digit number.

G0LIU's letter sure awakens memories!

Bob Eldridge VE7BS
Pemberton BC, Canada

Reading Visual Signalling

In his letter about RAF Operators (MM38, p.46), John Worthington asks about lamp reading speeds.

One of the requirements to graduate from the ROM (Radio Operator Mechanic) course was to be able to copy Morse visually. I think it was only 5 wpm. The school had built wooden towers around the base for this purpose. I hated that part of the course. It was midwinter, no heat, and temperature around 5–10°F. (This was in South Dakota!).

In MM20, p.37, Gus Taylor refers to 12–15 wpm at sea. On page 40 of the same issue, the editor mentions a speed of 'something like 18 wpm.' In MM21, p.44, Wyn Davies writes about operating Aldis signalling lamps at up to 20 wpm. I have just visited a naval recruiting office where there was a signalman on recruiting duty. He told me that light reading speeds are up to approximately 20 wpm, but that he, personally, couldn't read them that fast.

I agree with John Worthington when he says 'Surely the persistence of vision effect in the human eye would limit the reception speed.'

John N. Elwood WW7P
Phoenix, Arizona, USA

Commander Meade's Method

I wonder if others learnt the rudiments of the Morse code by 'Commander Meade's Method'?

I found this method in a book while starving and freezing aboard an ancient yacht moored on the Norfolk Broads during the winter of 1939–40; and it gave me a head start when joining the RAF as a trainee WOP/AG early in 1940 at the age of 18.

This method used a series of words, each commencing with the appropriate letter to be learned, having an appropriate number of long and short syllables, e.g.,

A... A HOY
B... BOUN TI FULLY
G... GRACE FULLY
Y... YEAR LY YULE LOG, etc., etc.

I have always considered the good old Commander may well have saved my life as I was taken off the WOP/AG course and posted to Y Service at Chicksands Priory, Bedfordshire, where I spent over four years intercepting German military traffic and using both straight and bug keys to control our D/F outstations.

I will never forget the look of sheer disbelief on the faces of visiting US top brass as they noticed us using bugs made from flexible steel inserts from a local landlady's corsets, the speed being increased by sliding a couple of heavy steel nuts inwards from the far end of the flexible arm.

After taking a conversion course on Japanese Morse a number of us were posted to India and were there until the end of the war. What a contrast there

was between learning International Morse and the 4-alphabet Japanese code!

I would be interested to know if others remember Commander Meade's Method.

Jack Barker, Surbiton, Surrey

(... and MM would be intrigued to know how you managed to get the steel inserts from your landlady's corsets! – Ed.)

Neglected Exclamation Mark!

Both the International and American Morse codes once included the exclamation mark. According to the 1911 *Encyclopaedia Brittanica* (volume 26, p.516), in the International code it was – – · · – –, and – – – · in the American code. No more! Somehow that wonderfully expressive punctuation mark dropped out of the standard Morse codes. *(It was deleted from International Morse, and the signal reassigned as 'comma' by the Cairo revision, 1938, of the International Radio Communications Regulations. – Ed.)*

Pity! The absence of an exclamation mark is especially perplexing since the currently-recognised International code includes such obscurities as a paragraph marker (· – · – · ·) and an underline (· · – – · –). CW conversations would be much more fun if we could say 'Absolutely!', or 'Sorry, I missed your question. My dogs keep barking!', or 'Your sideswiper sounds gorgeous!'

Let's start right now to restore the exclamation mark! First, we have to agree on a standard. I think · · · – · would do just fine. Right now this signal is used only at the beginning of a transmission, meaning 'understood'. Since an exclamation mark always follows a statement, there should be no confusion.

To my knowledge, that Morse combination is not used for phonetic characters in any language. Interestingly, · · · – · has already been implemented for the exclamation mark on the AEA multimode data controllers and optionally on those made by Kantronics.

Probably the best way to tackle this problem is to start using · · · – · on the air. Eventually, the ITU will discover that the exclamation mark is in common usage and officially restore it as Morse character.

J. Bruce Prior TA2ZO
Ankara, Turkey

(Many amateurs use 'HI' in the absence of an exclamation mark, but a laugh is not always a substitute for an exclamation! Readers views on Bruce's suggestion are invited. – Ed.)

Amateur Morse Test

I studied the articles on Morse in MM38 very carefully. Having been a radio operator in the merchant navy I am still, and always will be, very much interested in telegraphy. This does not mean, however, that I have closed my eyes to recent technological developments. The reasons given in the articles for maintaining the CW requirement for amateur operation below 30MHz are, in my opinion:

- A stubborn clinging to the past.
- A repetition of the same clichés over and over again (i.e., advantages of simple home-made equipment, CW overcomes difficult situations, distress situations, etc., etc.)
- No recognition of recent developments.

The people in command, such as chairmen of radio clubs in the various countries, secretaries, members, are without exception over 50 years old, probably older. These gentlemen grew up with Morse and see no reason whatsoever to change the rules. As a consequence everything remains the same.

ORACLE in New Zealand has tried to break this reign, but every effort will be in vain. In Holland the same ideas have come up but were quenched before they came in the open. In Israel and Spain similar noises have been heard, but after the first sounds nothing further has been heard.

I am not against the use of CW. On the contrary. However, this mode is absolutely old-fashioned and should not be part of the amateur exams. This does not mean we should forget about it and stop using it, but for a modern radio examination it should not be required any more.

One might as well request an explanation of a crystal receiver. And regarding the fear that the bands will be swamped by an extra inflow of amateurs, I can only say, if this happens, 'the more the merrier'.

Amplitude modulation is something from long ago, but recently a group of YOUNG Dutch amateurs have started weekly QSOs on Sunday mornings on 3.715MHz. AM knowledge is no longer required for exams but there is still an interest in it. Latin is spoken by NOBODY, but people are still studying it.

I could go on and on, but I cannot change the rules. Who can?

Bastian van Es PA0RTW
Alphen/Rijn, Holland

(Whilst it may once have been true that there were no radio club officials under the age of 50, judging from my own contacts it is certainly not so any longer. – Ed.)

Congratulations on an excellent article concerning the question of the Morse test for frequencies below 30MHz and the stance of the IARU.

It will still be a moot point for some time to come, with strong arguments coming from both sides, some valid some not, depending on the individual's point of view.

Should we dwell on the demise of Morse in commercial circles and expect this to percolate down to amateur radio, or do we still say 'proficiency in Morse code is a requirement for radio amateurs who wish to have access to frequencies below 30MHz', irrespective of what the professionals do?

I won't go into the various arguments, which everyone has heard before, but my conclusion is 'KEEP IT AS IT IS'.

George Ford G0MHC
Hartlepool, Cleveland

Distinctive Tone

With reference to the comments about the tone digit in the amateur signal report by VE7BS (MM37, p.47) and GW3COI (MM38, P.42), T9-ham-stations with some chirp are sometimes given 'T8' or less by their well-meaning counterparts who hear 'something odd' in the signal received. But T8 or less signifies various levels of modulation or an AC component in the signal.

When there is chirp or key clicks, a letter can be added to the three-figure

report, but the possibility of its use can easily be overlooked because it is not always stressed in the RST-reporting sections of ham-radio textbooks.

In the above case RST could be 599C (C for 'chirp'), or in the case of key clicks 599K. In more than 98% of CW-stations nowadays, however, the X signal (very stable, as if crystal-controlled) has in fact become redundant.

This raises a few questions:

1. Has the 'fourth symbol' code ever included more than the presently known 'C', 'K' and 'X'?
2. Were spark signals ever characterised by a similar code to indicate that the spark gap should be adjusted, or something done about the HT/resonance of the whole spark transmitter circuit?
3. In former times did 'QRI' (How is the tone of my transmission?) answered by QRI 1. good; 2. variable; 3. bad, represent the 'T' of today's RST, or did it refer to spark transmissions and/or the above mentioned 'fourth symbol'?

Monika Pouw-Arnold PA3FBF
Mijdrecht, Holland

(According to the RSGB's Amateur Radio Operating Manual, *third edition, 1985, the RST code was due to W2BSR so it is an amateur-only system. The Manual lists 'D' for 'drift' as an additional 'fourth symbol' code. QRI is in the 1938 UK* Handbook for Wireless Operators *as 'Is my note good?' (Answer) 'Your note varies'. It is not, however, in the 1923 Handbook where 'QSB' means 'Is my tone bad?' (Answer) 'The tone is bad' or 'Is my spark bad?' (Answer) 'The spark is bad'. Other relevant signals of 1923 are 'QSW' 'Must I increase the frequency of my spark?' (Answer) 'Increase the frequency of your spark', and QSX 'Must I diminish the frequency of my spark?' (Answer) Diminish the frequency of your spark.' These meanings for QSB, QSW and QSX are also in the list of Q-codes from 1912 which can be found in the* Morsum Magnificat Q&Z Codebook. *Can anyone add to this information in answer to Monika's questions? – Ed.)*

Clandestine Key

Regarding David Combs 'unknown' key on page 40 of MM38, this key appears on page 65 of Dave Ingram's *Keys, Keys, Keys* as 'reportedly used in the Indian Telegraph Service'.

I have some of these keys marked ZA 34835 and have heard that the key was also used in WWII British Spy Radio Mk.3 Type A. Can you confirm?

Dr Joseph Jacobs
Northport, NY, USA

(John Elwood, WW7P, has reminded us that details of this key were provided by John I. Brown, G3EUR, in MM6. It was designed in 1942 to be a standard item in the range of SOE sets, and in the following years several thousand were made by Multitone Ltd, London. A flex-pigtail was added soon after first production to reduce 'key-bounce' caused by anode current passing through the hinge-screw. The key was made for the series of SOE W/T sets designed by John Brown, which included the Type A Mk.II and Mk.III, and Type B Mk.II. These were used by SOE (1942–45) in various forms, the most well-known being fitted into suitcases. It seems very unlikely that the key was used in the Indian Telegraph Service! – Ed.)

L.S. Brach Type 262 Key

This key, illustrated in 'Showcase' MM31, p.24, appears to be the same key as the US Signal Corps J-3 key.

Larry Nutting's book, *J-Series Telegraph Keys of the US Army Signal Corps* (page 5), has this description. 'Key type J-3: Telegraph: Adjustable, folding; British style, tension spring extends from lever through wood base. Lever: Brass with black finish. Specs: Dwg RL-D-289. Mfrs: L.S. Brach Supply Co., Newark, NJ.'

As the base of the J-3 is stated as wood, the ebonite base version in MM31 may be a civilian model.

John N. Elwood WW7P
Phoenix, Arizona, USA

CW World Recordman

Reading the report on page 5 of MM38 about the death of Harry A. Turner, W9YZE, and his long-standing Morse code record, reminded me of a QSL card I received many years ago from Daniel N. de Brito, PY1DB, of Rio de Janeiro who was born in 1901.

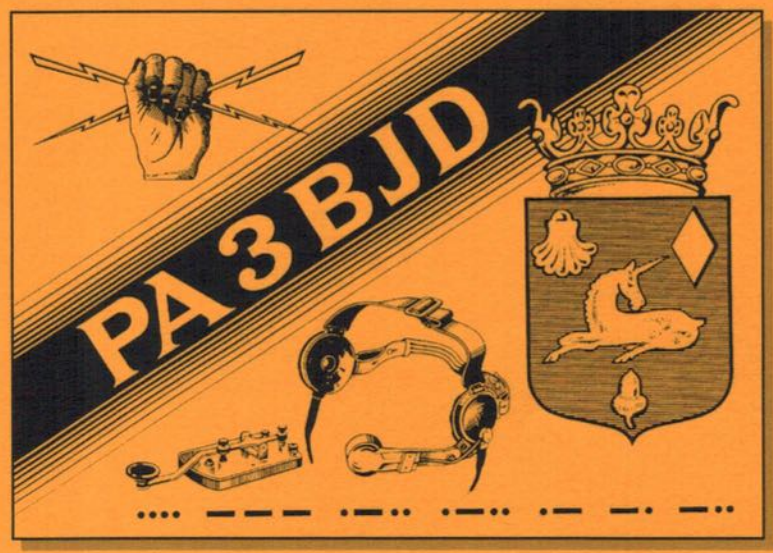
On his card is printed 'CW World recordman 65 WPM COPY ONE HOUR ENDURANCE SINCE 1934'. I wonder if others have heard about this claim/ record and can provide further information about it?

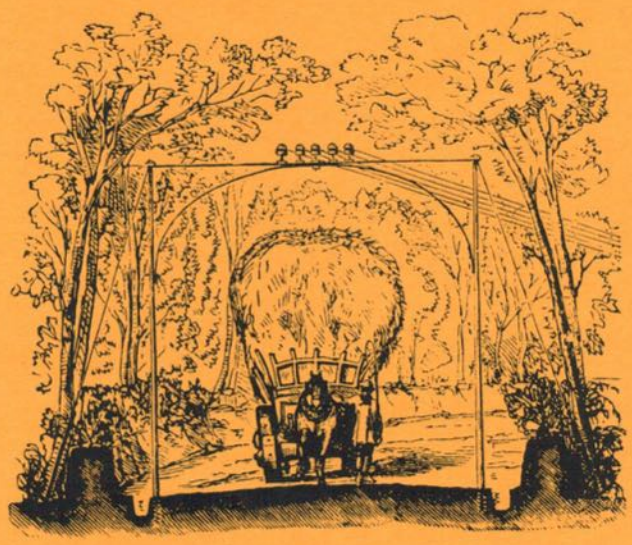
Bill Rennison G3BOK
Kirton, Suffolk

(See page 4 for a correction to that report on Harry A. Turner. – Ed.)

Morse QSLs

A series of reproductions of QSL cards with a Morse theme





Trees form a great barrier to the erection of a line of telegraph, and their interference is one of the main points to be guarded against in the selection of the route. When however it is impossible to avoid them, and when permission to lop the branches where necessary cannot well be obtained, the arrangement indicated here is sometimes adopted.

Two poles are erected, one on each side of the road, and stayed or strutted, as may be required; between these is fixed a bar of iron supported by an arch, as shown, and into it the insulators are fixed. In this way the middle of the road, which is the part least liable to be affected by the branches, is obtained. The wires should be doubly bound and soldered at each insulator, so as to prevent their running back, and thus to reduce to a minimum the danger of an accident occurring from a broken wire.

From Telegraphy *by W.H. Preece (Engineer-in-Chief and Electrician, Post Office Telegraphs) and J. Sivewright, 11th Edition, published by Longmans, Green & Co. in 1895*