



Roger Cooke G3LDI's Morse Mode

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VK4MIK's morse collection as in July 2012

Morse Mode

Roger Cooke G3LDI has some news from Australia and replies to an E-mail challenging his approach to training c.w. operators. Perhaps it'll be 'Morse Keys' at dawn?



A Happy and 'Morsey' Christmas to all and welcome to *Morse Mode (MM)* – covering the world of Amateur Radio on the key!

Recently, I reported some news from **Mike Patterson VK4MIK** from the Atherton Tableland area in Queensland, Australia. This was in my October column and part of Mike's collection of Morse keys is shown in **Fig 1**.

Mike writes: "I live on the Atherton Tablelands and belong to the Tableland Radio Group and we enjoy going camping and visiting the areas of Northern Queensland and learning its history. We also set up a radio base during these trips and have managed to get out on the various nets using c.w., s.s.b. and digital modes. We also participate in the **International Lighthouse & Lightship Weekend** at Grassy Hill Lighthouse at Cooktown, named after Captain James Cook RN who did some repairs to his ship after finding a coral reef while surveying in the Great Barrier Reef.

"My Morse key, bug and paddle collection has just grown over the years and I both enjoy using them but also learning the history of the various keys.

"We are lucky here in Australia as we have quite a few who enjoy Morse and get on the early morning net on 3.599MHz c.w. each morning to talk in Morse then switch over to I.s.b. at 0630 local time. **Rob Muller Honda VK4ARQ** usually runs it but **Ross Anderson VK4AQ** also takes a turn as does **Keith Searle VK4BKS** when Rob isn't available.

"Thanks very much for your Morse section in *PW* as quite a few of us in Australia enjoy the read and see/hear about what is going on around the world".

Thanks for your feedback Mike!

Incidentally readers, Mike says that all his keys are operational and he is always on the look-out for keys to add to the collection. Also interested in keys is **Lyn Battle VK4EI**.

Incidentally, Lyn lives on Sweers Island in the Gulf of Carpentaria, IOTA OC-227. This is quite rare and she can often be found on the Anza net on 14.183MHz on Friday mornings. Lyn is looking for spare parts for her Clipsal key. I've not heard of a Clipsal, so perhaps you could provide more details please Lyn – and a picture for the column?

Training For CW

As an experienced c.w. operator – of some 50 plus years – I'm always preaching that training and practice are essential before using Morse on the air. However, I received this from **David Rowntree M6DRQ**:

"Given the apparent appetite of those in the hobby to attract new blood, it seems to be counter-productive to suggest, as Roger Cooke did in his 'Morse Mode' column (PW August 2012), that newcomers to the mode should sign up for months of Morse training before venturing onto the air. I suggest that the real situation is this:

"Have a go! It's fun!

"1: All licensed Amateurs, whether beginners, improvers, or experts such as Mr. Cooke, have an equal right to use the spectrum within their license conditions;

"2: Experienced operators, when finding themselves in communication with a novice, might simply slow their pace to match, be tolerant of mistakes, and use the opportunity to explain how much they enjoy CW operation;

"3: If unable or unwilling to do this, they can always sign off, spin the dial,

and find someone else to talk to.

"Mr Cooke says he hopes he has encouraged some newcomers to the mode. On the contrary, I am determined not to let him put me off.

David is correct in what he says in that we all have the same rights to the spectrum. However, saying that somebody who has just passed a Foundation test can be let loose on c.w. with **No** training is tantamount to giving the keys of your car to somebody who can't drive and saying "There you are, go and have fun".

I would suggest that fun would be the last thing he would have without training. If this were to happen with c.w., I hate to think what the Morse would sound like, much less the ability of the 'newbie' to copy anything! I doubt whether an operator is going to stand by for the newbie to use his crib sheet for every letter!

Training is essential, as is a lot of practice. It won't happen in a week or even a month, so please do not look for easy options. There are none! I would encourage you to join your local Club, the GB2CW Morse scheme, learning code from the basics up to around 12w.p.m. at least before even considering going on the air.

I think you must be able to copy in order to ascertain what is happening on the band, to avoid causing grief and QRM to others and to have basic knowledge of procedures, abbreviations and QSO format. This all takes time, learning and practice. Morse is a mode which good operators take pride in using their skills and strive to attain and maintain high standards. For that to happen, training and practice are mandatory – 73 and May the Morse be with you! Roger G3LDI.