

Overseas Telecommunications Veterans Newsletter

Registered Address
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Bankstown NSW 2200

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A Happy and Healthy New Year to All our
Readers

Autumn Social

Red Room

The Bowlers Club

Time: 12 Noon

Friday 28th March 2014

RSVP to Pres. Peter Bull

president@otva.com

Call or SMS 0411 260 542

ABC Studios Visit

Tuesday 8th April.

Early bookings necessary

neilyakalis@optusnet.com.au

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Oh! to be a ships radio Officer

Notes for your diary!

Friday 13 June 2014:

Annual General Meeting

Office Bearers 2013-14

President: Peter Bull

president@otva.com

Secretary: Will Whyte

secretary@otva.com

Treasurer: Vacant

treasurer@otva.com

OTVA WEB Site:

www.otva.com

Annual Fees of \$10.00 per annum fall due on 31st May each year.

Enduring fee of \$50 gives you lifelong membership.

Contact for payment details :

treasurer@otva.com

Fellow Members of the OTVA

Well another Christmas has come and gone. I hope that you all had an enjoyable one, with plenty of presents and good will. I hope that you have not already broken your New Year resolutions.

In 2013-2014 your committee has successfully grown the membership of the OTVA by attracting some younger members and rejuvenated the enthusiasm of some members who had let their membership lapse over recent years. In this regard Enduring Membership has been a successful strategy to increase membership.

We, the Committee of the OTVA, seek the support of all of its members but especially those younger members to consider offering their services as Newsletter Editor and Treasurer. Henry Cranfield has graciously performed the role of Editor since Bob Emanuel's resignation in early 2013 but he cannot continue to perform the role in 2014-2015. The same applies to Bernie White who has been performing the role of Treasurer since the resignation of Alex Ebert in late 2012.

Your Editor needs your stories. The lack of new and interesting stories threatens our ability to maintain the OTVA Newsletter so please take time out of your very busy lives to remember your good times in OTC and write them down on paper or on your computer and send them to me for review and possible inclusion in future editions of the OTVA Newsletter.

We are still receiving a trickle of magazines in support of the project to build a library of Transit and Contact magazines and your committee shall soon make the decision to either stop the digitisation process and burn DVDs for distribution to interested members or continue building the library.

The use of email and the OTVA web site continues to stimulate interest and promote OTC-related issues, telling the story of OTC and the history of telecommunications in Australia

Unfortunately the Committee of the OTVA has been unable to gain the support of Waverley Council to install a plaque at the site of the landing on Bondi Beach of the Compac Cable.

We have also been unsuccessful in our efforts to gain the support of the Minister for Communication in the Federal Government, Malcolm Turnbull, to publicly recognise the anniversary of the Opening of the Compac Cable by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the inaugural telephone call between the Prime Ministers of UK, Canada, NZL and Australia. It would appear that history is of less importance than The Future. A very knowledgeable person once said that it is hard to know where you are going when you do not know where you have come from along the way.

Warmest regards,

Peter Bull

Some thoughts to ponder on?

ABILITY

Is what you are capable of doing?

MOTIVATION

Determines what you do?

ATTITUDE!

Determines how well you do it?

**OTC Veterans ABC TV &
Radio Studio's Ultimo.
Outing Date: Tuesday 8th
April, 2014**

Please RSVP your interest to me in joining us for this outing to get an indication of numbers for our group. Also please advise me if you would like to join us for optional lunch so I arrange group tables.

Email neilyakalis@optusnet.com.au

Phone home 98050749

Mobile 0414 228516

Tour Cost: \$6.50

Seniors Concession rate.

Meet: 9.40am in lounge area of the front ground floor foyer ready for 9.50am sharp start time. Tour is about 1.5 hours for our group which will probably be split into 2 smaller groups. Our tour is likely to include a visit to a digital TV studio, a news studio & a control room. You must wear covered footwear.

Transport Arrangement:

Make your own way to the ABC Studios from Central Station. It is a 10 minute walk from Central Station to the ABC's main entrance at 700 Harris Street Ultimo. Alternatively from Central Station take the underground pedestrian tunnel all the way to the rear entrance of the ABC (heading towards Haymarket).

There are a number of bus stops on Broadway & George Streets within five minutes walk of the ABC. The Light Rail stop is close by in Haymarket. Seniors \$2.50 PET tickets are accepted on it.

Website:

<http://www.abc.net.au/tours/ultimo/>

A-One Cafe Entrance from inside Foyer



[Readers may not know that Ken Howe was an engineer on the previous ABC studios in Forbes Street commissioned in 1958/9 and your editor was responsible for the construction of all the control desks and Motor Uniselecto programme switching installed there. It was the first ABC completely stereo installation and there is a fine photo of same in the Ultimo control room.]

**Graham Gosewinckel-
1930-2013**

Our thanks go to Cyril Vahtrick for the following tribute to the Late Graham Gosewinckel who is well remembered by those who had dealings with him.

I have come out of my temporary hibernation to inform you of Graham Gosewinckel's passing on 22 November. Graham would have been one of the very first people in OTC to qualify for the original criterion of 25 years' service in overseas telecommunications for OTVA membership.

As I remember it, Graham started as an overseas telegram messenger in AWA in 1944 at the age of 14. He studied in his own time to receive radio technician qualifications and when OTC took over from AWA in 1946, he was posted as a technician to the international receiving station at Rockbank in Victoria.

With mounting interest in radio technology, Graham undertook an extensive part time study at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology ending up with a Diploma of Radio Engineering in 1954. He was appointed as Grade 1 Engineer in OTC head office in Sydney.

Here he joined with OTC's only other Grade 1 Engineer, Ron Flood who had just graduated as an engineer from Sydney University on an OTC cadetship. Despite the already extensive experience which Graham had had in Rockbank, the "powers that be" decided that they both needed on-site experience at the new OTC receiving station at Bringelly. It so happened that the station building at Bringelly contained upstairs two bedrooms plus amenities (no doubt to take care of extra staff called in special emergencies). Graham and Ron took to this life with gusto and they were generally known in OTC circles as the "gay bachelors". I have to say quickly that the 1950' terminology was a little different from today, as it was not too long before they had found two very attractive young ladies whom they soon married.

Graham soon took over the reins in running Bringelly and to the rest of the staff, he became indispensable. Ron ended up with an "outdoors" job where he was Ron MacDonald's assistant in erecting and testing the massive high frequency rhombic antennas both in Bringelly and the transmitting station at Doonside.

Not long after I joined OTC in 1954 as a Senior Engineer, I requested that our Grade 1 engineers should be given roles in Head Office to enable them to deal with broader issues which we were rapidly facing in technology developments. Our big assignment up to that point had been to prepare our new technical resources to meet the expected high international telecommunications load expected to

ensue from the Olympic Games in Melbourne in 1956.

With the Games successfully behind us we found ourselves wrestling with the new service of international Telex. Existing submarine telegraph cables, covering the distance required to reach Australia, could not practically deal with the 50 baud speed required of international Telex, leaving it to the High Frequency Radio services to look to accommodate this need.

At a British Commonwealth Telecommunications Conference held in London in 1955, it was agreed that Commonwealth Partners would adopt a new standard for international telegraph operation incorporating a facility for "error correction" on radio telegraph circuits. This system was developed and manufactured by Cable and Wireless and was known as TED (telegraph error detection) using a new 7-unit telegraph code.

OTC soon found out that this TED system could not be used for Telex and we decided unilaterally to adopt the alternative system endorsed by all the European countries for telex. I recommended that we send Graham to Europe to sort out the kind of equipment we would need for Telex operation on HF radio. By now as a Grade 2 Engineer, this was a big ask for Graham but he successfully confronted the German Siemens complex which produced for us their electromechanically designed error correction system which allowed OTC to introduce our highly successful international telex service.

Almost immediately, there was a rapid demand for telex, requiring expansion of OTC facilities. We had read about attempts to transform this electromechanical system, with its punched tape mechanism, into a fully electronic system. Again, Graham was dispatched to Switzerland to evaluate a new system being developed by Hasler. Although crude by to-day's standards, the Hasler system embodied basic electronic computer technology and, on Graham's recommendation, represented OTC's first

entry into computer technology. The new system performed well.

While OTC was catching its breath, the era of repeated submarine cables was quickly upon us, soon making the HF radio systems obsolescent. In addition, while our COMPAC cable system was being established the new medium of Satellite communication was emerging. Graham and Ron Knightley joined me in constant visits to Washington DC during the early formative stages of establishing INTELSAT. After the first successful series of INTELSAT satellites were established, Graham and I took the view that the further development of satellite communication technology should not be left only to the “rocket science” people in INTELSAT management who really had no interest in telecommunications. We put forward a proposal that future satellite planning should be directed towards global telecommunications needs and not just to how make bigger and bigger satellites.

There was some reluctance to this concept from the space technology people but we eventually persuaded INTELSAT to establish a telecommunications planning committee to advise INTELSAT on future requirements. Graham was appointed as the inaugural Chairman of this planning committee and, with the first series of INTELSAT satellites (INTELSAT VII) being designed to these criteria, this opened up a new era for satellite communications planning and development.

With satellite technology and economics firmly established, Australia turned its attention to the possibility of having a satellite system to cover the vast expanses of the outback. In due course a task force was appointed to report to the government on a domestic satellite communication system.

OTC General Manager Harold White was given leave for twelve months to head up this task force. Two important additional members appointed from OTC to the task force were Graham Gosewinckel and Dick Johnson. To cut this story short as it departs from international communications, the

Government adopted the recommendation to establish a national satellite telecommunications system to be known as Aussat.

Graham was appointed as the first Chief Executive of Aussat, a position he served with distinction, gaining the award of AO. He retired from this position and settled in a property in Avoca. He was 83 years old when he died.

Adelaide Radio – VIA It's History

The following items are excerpts from a history of Adelaide Radio by Paddy Wilkinson a former staff member (1978-1993) who has graciously given us permission to use same. The full history may be seen on the OTVA Blog. (ED)

Adelaide Radio first opened on 1st October 1912 with the call-sign POA (Post Office Adelaide), which was later changed to VIA. It was the sixth coastal radio station built in Australia and the last of the capital city stations. The station was located on Grand Junction Road, Rosewater about 2 km from Port Adelaide. Power for operation of the plant was provided from the 400-volt town supply stepped down to 200-volts at 50Hz. No standby power plant was provided.

In 1914 Adelaide was one of a network of 19 coastal stations reaching right around the continent including stations at Broome, Darwin, Thursday Island, Cooktown and Flinders Island.

In order to provide staff to operate stations as they were commissioned throughout the country a notification of vacancies appeared in the Commonwealth Gazette of 30th December 1911. It called for positions of assistant operators 5th class in the Clerical Division.

Requirements were that applicants must be:

- Capable of working at 25 words per minute, send and receive Morse code.
- Possessed of a general knowledge of precedents in working radiotelegraphy as contained in the Handbook for

Wireless Telegraphists issued by the British Postal authorities.

- Possessed of an elementary knowledge of the working of internal combustion engines.

Later, positions were advertised for staff in The Professional Division for Engineer-Operators. A position of Engineer Operator Class F for Adelaide was created and advertised in the Gazette of 3rd July 1911.

A staff of three operated the facilities between 8.am. Midnight traffic to and from the State telegraph system as well as time signals was handled via tie lines linking the station with the Adelaide General Post Office and the Observatory.

The Wireless Telegraphy Act was amended on 6th September 1915 to enable administration of the Act to be transferred to the Navy Department. Effective from 1st October, the Coastal Radio Service was organised on Naval lines and under naval discipline. The local VIA staff were taken on Naval strength. The Officer-in-Charge was given the rank of Commissioned Telegraphist, the next in charge, classified as Warrant Telegraphist, and the others became Petty Officers. The positions, which the staff occupied, in the Radio Telegraph Branch of the Post Office were abolished under the Commonwealth Public Service Act. The Officer-in-Charge was also Radio Inspector in South Australia for the Navy and was frequently called upon to investigate unauthorised stations or suspicious signalling. On 11th November 1918 Warrant Telegraphist E.H. Smellie who had taken up duty as Acting Officer-in-Charge of VIA on 1st December 1917 led a procession of 100 naval personnel on a victory celebration march in Adelaide.

The Royal Australian Naval Radio Service was disbanded on 28th October 1920 and on the following day staff were transferred back to the Post Office. From 27th October 1920 the Postmaster General's Department resumed control. The Post Office took immediate steps to plan for upgrading of facilities. Tube type transmitters had by then become readily available and decision was made to replace

inefficient spark systems. Specifications had been drawn up for new facilities to be provided and funds set aside. However, in 1921 a proposal that Amalgamated Wireless (A/Asia) Ltd. take over the Coastal Radio Service in the Commonwealth was under consideration and a decision was made to defer the upgrading work until the question of Government policy had been settled.

The Coastal Radio Service had been far from profitable. In 1920/21 revenue for AdelaideRadio was only £988 while the cost of operating and maintaining the station amounted to £1943. Throughout Australia the network was operating at a loss of some £60,000 per annum. (*How many times through the years have we heard that song played ?*)

In 1921 the Regulations were amended to include requirement for ships over 1600 tons on the Australian Register to carry wireless telegraph equipment.

In 1922 an agreement provided for the transfer to AWA of the operations of the Coastal Radio Service and for the company to develop services to overseas countries. The company was to take over all radio stations operating at the time excepting those wholly controlled by the Department of Defence, existing personnel of the Government radio service were to be taken over by the company, pension rights and retiring allowances being preserved. Control by AWA of VIA Adelaide was effective from 8th May 1922

When AWA took over the station, VIA was operating a continuous commercial ship service with time signals at midday and midnight S.A. standard time, and weather forecasts. The original spark transmitter was still in service and the receiver comprised a Commonwealth standard type with a wavelength range of 200 to 20,000 metres for tube or crystal detector.

Broadcasting stations 5CL and 5DN were both in operation by 1925 and station listeners were increasingly complaining of interference from the spark transmissions. On 4th October 1925 an ICW transmitter was installed which greatly improved the efficiency of transmissions from VIA but

also cleared up the complaints when spark transmissions ceased on 22nd October 1925.

In 1963 a new coast station centre was established at McLarenVale some 40km south of Adelaide on a site of about 66 acres. The rapid industrialisation of the Rosewater area had increased electrical interference to the point where a move to a new site became imperative. The time was opportune too, to increase the power of the main transmission and to provide added and more modern facilities. The McLaren Vale site was chosen because it was within reasonable distance of Adelaide; it was protected by land barriers unlikely to be developed industrially and therefore relatively immune from electrical interference and the site was adequate for all transmission and reception facilities as well as for future expansion. The station was the first of a new style in Coastal Radio Service facilities. Five new houses of attractive design were built in the McLarenVale district to accommodate staff.

The first contact McLaren Vale made was with the "Maltara". This was then followed by contacts with the "Troubridge", Neptune Island lighthouse and the "Orion". The Orion was on her final voyage before being retired after 28 years service. At the time of contact the Orion was some 960 km west of McLarenVale.

Mr. Hugh Taylor, who sent the last message from Rosewater, started in radio in 1916 when he was trained at Sydney Naval Station. He spent some 18 years at sea. He joined the Island Radio Service in New Guinea in December 1936 and VIA staff in 1942. While in New Guinea Mr Taylor served at Rabaul Radio and was there when the Rabaul volcano erupted in 1937. Transferred to Manus Island in 1938 and with a handful of European men remaining made a precarious escape ahead of the invading Japanese army in early 1942, taking with them radio equipment previously hidden at remote points on the island. On making landfall at Bagabag Island, north of Madang, was informed by PortMoresbyRadio that the Japanese were

in control of Madang and they should proceed to Bogajim, south of Madang, and then trek on foot 300 miles inland to Mount Hagen. This order was duly obeyed and Mr Taylor manned remote radio stations en-route.

By the mid 1980s most new ships were fitted with radiotelex and/or Satcoms and the VHF Seaphone service became automated, fax machines became part of the furniture in all offices and operator workload just dropped off. By the early nineties most of us did not bother to plug in our morse keys unless a ship called on 500khz which was a very rare occurrence by that time.

Adelaide Radio closed at Midnight, 31st of January 1993. John McGregor, the longest serving operator, sent the final signals from the station.



Staff members at closing ceremony holding individual plaques presented by the Cruising Yacht Club of South Australia.

From left to right:

- John McGregor
Retired.
- Fred Reeve, Manager Retired. Sadly, Fred passed away in April 2000
- Paddy Wilkinson
Moved within Telstra and retrained.
Retired August 2000
- Rhonda Hunt, Admin Retired
- Klaus Hagedorn
Transferred to PerthRadio/VIP
- Max Smith, full time to university
- Dave Herbert, Retired

These staff greatly appreciated the functions in their honour presented by the Cruising Yacht Club and the Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron

Other staff who have worked at VIA since 1963 either fulltime or relieving and are not already mentioned in the text include:

- Mr G Denson
- Mr F E Jacvides
- Mr R Imrie
- Mr D Mace
- Mr T J Mackey
- Mr B M Bradley
- Mr O Langley
- Mr P Dowd
- Mr D B Meldrum
- Mr N McCarthy
- Mr R M Inwood
- Ms D Hicks
- Mr S Marshall
- Mr J Taylor
- Mr M Miller
- Mr P Gilkes
- Mr R Boyden
- Mr O Winterton
- Mr D Moore

I extend apologies to any others whose names I may have overlooked.

I would like to relate an amusing incident that occurred during one winter sched. I had spent about 10 minutes broadcasting gale and storm warnings for South Australian coasts and ocean waters. It was also the practice to send warnings issued by the Perth bureau because South Australian weather originates from the west. After I had finished the warnings I called for any ships that wished to report in. One of the fishing boats came up on 4mhz. "AdelaideRadio this is Jolly Roger - myself and two other boats are sheltering in Western River Cove on the north coast of Kangaroo Island. We heard your warnings but thought we would doublecheck. When we eased our noses outside the first wave took us so high we could see you over there in McLaren Vale so we turned right around and ran for cover, over". My reply suggested they had made a very wise decision. It was something similar to "If you were smaller

than the Queen Mary then you should not be playing outside today."

(Name of the fishing boat has been changed.)

Oh to be a ship's Radio Officer?

By Henry Cranfield

In mid- 1971, I was transferred from Ceduna to the position of Manager, Guam and was told to use up some of my accrued leave before taking up my new position. So we decided to go by ship. The only vessel available was the MV Eigamoya, owned by the Nauru Government. It was built in Germany as a passenger (6) / cargo ship with a special heavy-duty crane to lift moorings for the boats carrying the local exports which was phosphates in bulk. It was due to depart Melbourne in September for Guam via Brisbane, Port Moresby, Lae, Madang and then Guam and we (Barbara plus 2 children) were the only passengers. So we drove to Melbourne via Adelaide by the coast road and stayed with Barbara's relatives in Melbourne until departure.

We left port Melbourne in the evening and sailed up the coast and at breakfast the next morning we were off Sydney. As we were finishing breakfast, the Purser came and said, "the captain sends his compliments and asks "Do you not work for OTC?" "Yes" I said. "Well we are in trouble, as our radio is off the air and do you mind having a look at same?" So after breakfast I went to the radio room with him to find the Radio Officer passed out and the circuit breaker feeding the transmitter blown. This was reset only to find a few blown fuses as well.

Replacements were found in a cupboard and further investigation revealed the wrong aerials plugged in to the transmitter and 2 valves in the transmitter blown. These were replaced and the transmitter switched on and seemed Ok as was the receiver. By this time we were nearly off Newcastle so I tuned up 6280 Khz and called Sydney

radio. Blue Easterling answered me and remembered my voice and asked what I was doing so I told him. So we sent the Captain's traffic by voice and told him I would give him a position report in the afternoon. All went well until the R/O woke up, staggered into the radio room, tripped and sent the emergency 500 Khz off. So! Another call to Blue at VIS to fix that up. In Brisbane they put the R/O ashore and got a new radio officer.

Meanwhile, my fame had spread and the Chief Officer asked if I could look at the radiogram/P.A system in the saloon. This proved easy, as a valve had died and they had a spare in the radio room. Next the Chief Engineer asked if I knew anything about crane controllers as they had one unserviceable. They had a handbook (Written in German) and a spare circuit card which when plugged in worked. Water had got in and corroded the first card due to the cover not being screwed down tightly. A toothbrush and some Metho cleaned it up and we dried it out. My next effort was the radio aerial distribution system to all the cabins. This consisted of a whip on the roof of the bridge which fed a distribution amplifier.

The output of this fed other amplifiers for each deck with an RCA type socket in each cabin. It appeared that the first amplifier's input transistor had blown. So they got my tool box out of the hold and I had a Japanese Transistor which when used as a replacement it worked! When we reached Madang the captain put on a party for us and any friends from Madang we cared to invite! Thus a little bit of luck and knowledge and to be willing to try helps?

Memories!

Our thanks to Peter Bull & Bill Davey for the following memories.

Peter Puck:

I recall a story about the time Peter Puck (I think?) had a party and mixed chlorine powder and brake fluid in an empty can of Coca-Cola and stood it in his backyard with a metal projectile on top of it.

The idea was to impress the guests at the party with his chemical engineering skills. Unfortunately the can fell over at the critical moment and the projectile went through fibro wall of the garage. His problems were compounded when his wife explained that her father had parked his expensive car in the garage to avoid it getting damaged in the street. The projectile has gone through the outer skin of the front door of the car and lodged itself in the internal door.

Jack Creswick:

Jack was telling me about a time when he needed to spray paint something but didn't have an air compressor. Being both cheep and the master of innovation, Jack built his own air compressor using a vacuum cleaner and a beer keg, with assorted hoses and pipes etc. This did the trick well until one day....Jack turned the "air compressor" on to build up pressure but got caught up doing something else. He realised something may be wrong when he heard the "air compressor" pump labouring in the garage out the back of his house. He rushed out to the garage in time to see the beer keg looking like a beach ball. Next there was an almighty explosion. Jack, being a good Catholic, thought he had arrived in heaven as he woke up with extremely bright light and snow falling all around. After a few more minutes he said he realised he was still in the garage, the bright light was the sun and the "snow" was in fact the remnants of the Fibro roof floating down to the ground. Looking around further, he noticed the Fibro wall cladding was also gone, as was the "air compressor" (beer keg). The keg had apparently left a trail of destruction across his yard, through the paling fence, hit the neighbour's hills hoist, which was now at an acute angle, and come to rest against their far fence.

All of this would have been a bit of a laugh for Jack had his wife not been due home in about an hour. He said he got the garage wall cladding on but didn't get the roof done until her next day at work.