



Folio 3

Newsletter

Vol. 3 Pt. 2 Page 130 NOVEMBER, 1985

MEETINGS AND REUNIONS

NEW SOUTH WALES

REUNION
FRIDAY, 29TH NOVEMBER, 1985
TIME: 6 PM

CONFERENCE CENTRE,
4TH FLOOR, OTC HOUSE,
MARTIN PLACE, SYDNEY.

VICTORIA

REUNION & MEETING
FRIDAY, 8TH NOVEMBER, 1985
TIME: 5.30 PM

OTC HOUSE,
382 LONSDALE STREET,
MELBOURNE.

QUEENSLAND

REUNION
TUESDAY, 26TH NOVEMBER, 1985
TIME: NOON

VIB COASTAL RADIO
(Bus leaves Brisbane
Office at 11am)

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

MEETING & REUNION
THURSDAY, 28TH NOVEMBER, 1985
AFTERNOON 2.30 PM

BRAX HORROCKS HOME,
7 MEIGUNYAH AVENUE,
UNLEY PARK.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

REUNION
TUESDAY, 26TH NOVEMBER 1985
TIME: 5 PM

OTC PERTH OFFICE,
22 ST. GEORGE'S TERRACE,
PERTH.

INTERSTATE MEMBERS AND VISITORS WILL BE WELCOMED
AT THESE FUNCTIONS, BUT PRIOR ADVICE OF INTENTION
TO ATTEND WOULD BE APPRECIATED BY THE ORGANISERS,
NOT ONLY FOR CATERING PURPOSES BUT TO GET
CONFIRMATION OF TIMES AND VENUES.



OBITUARY

RANDOLPH HUDSON PAYNE

Though a retired OTC Veteran I still look forward to receiving a copy of "TRANSIT" but the August 1985 edition I could have well done without. It's centrefold announced the sudden passing of Randy Payne, one of our younger Veterans and well-known not only through the Commission's service, but in the world of telecommunications in general. To his wife, Bettina, and his three daughters, Andrea, Roslyn and Sharon go our deepest sympathy.

Expressions of sympathy have been received from all over the world, and nothing I can say here can top what has already been said. The fact that he joined the Commission's service in its inaugural year like so many of us makes his death closer to home, but outside the family the bloke who I feel will count the loss as a major blow will be our Managing Director, George Maltby.

One tribute which has not been mentioned comes from Brax Horrocks, President of the OTVA South Australian branch, who has written to express the sorrow of all the South Australians, remembering that Randy was a son of South Australia himself. He joined the service together with 19 others in 1943, and they were trained in Adelaide under the supervision of Harry Colliver, then transferred to Colombo where they underwent further training to enable them to enter the mid and far-East war zones and re-establish communications where possible. They were joined in Colombo by twenty others who had been trained in Auckland, N.Z. by Bill Craig. Ken Collett and Brian Morrell were both in the team and Brax writes that he has hopes of getting Ken Collett to write an article giving a brief history of this hazardous venture.

Randy arranged a reunion of the teams from Australia and from New Zealand a couple of years ago and was endeavouring to arrange another reunion in Auckland in two years.

The memory I have of Randy is of his stint of Returning Officer at OTVA Annual General Meetings. The Election of Officers was the speediest section the A.G.M. with Randolph in the Chair. He conducted the whole show in sixty to ninety seconds, and presto - a new Committee for the ensuing year. We had a disastrous meeting one year when the election took two minutes and ten seconds - protracted because Randy dropped his Biro midway through the proceedings and had to retrieve it from the carpet.

He will be sadly missed by all Veterans.

Further to the above, several hundred OTCA and OTVA members attended a memorial service for Randy at St. Margaret's Church, Turrumurra on 12th July, 1985.

OVERSEAS TELECOMMUNICATIONS VETERANS' ASSOCIATION

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

MAY MEETING, 1985

We held our winter meeting at the Royal Hotel, Kent Town, on 23rd May, 1985.

Those present were Hugh Taylor, Keith Parker, Norm Mackay, Brax Horrocks, Fred Reeve, Les Reynolds, Bill Hyde, Max Lang, Ken Springbett, Geoff Cox, Bert Dudley and Ken Collett.

Apologies recorded, mainly because of ill health, were from Rocky Gordon, Cliff Birks, Ron Ward, George Rowe, Chas. Smith and Eric Symes. Cliff Birks, who keeps remarkably fit, explained that his sight and hearing are so poor that it would be quite useless his coming along. Cliff was 95 in July.

We had a letter from Alan Arndt advising that it was not possible for him to attend, but expressing the hope to be there for the Christmas meeting.

Sadly we advise that Harold Oates died recently, and as he was born in August 1892, he must have been close to 93 years of age.

Fraternal greetings were received from Brian Morrell on behalf of the Western Australian branch, and from Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. Pat Sykes of Perth, and Bruce Sutherland of Nelson, N.Z. wrote conveying their best wishes for a happy meeting. We were also pleased to receive a letter from the Managing Director, George Maltby, conveying his good wishes.

President, Brax Horrocks, and Hon. Secretary, Bert Dudley, were re-elected for the coming 12 months.

Hugh Taylor advised that he and his wife, Marion, are now at the Masonic Village at Ridgehaven. Hugh is 86 and Marion 80.

Ken Springbett mentioned that when he attended the opening of the B.A.T. museum in Darwin recently he saw his old friend, Rolly Lane. Ken and Rolly joined the E.E. CABLE CO. as probationer operators in Adelaide in the early twenties.

Keith Parker, who now lives at Pt. Elliott said that he manages to keep in touch with former key-pushers via amateur radio, both with dots and dashes and with voice.

Fred Reeve, the current manager of VIA, transported three other Vets to the meeting. Geoff Cox, and former CRS managers, Les Reynolds and Max Lang. Fred said that VIA is very busy these days handling OTC's marketing enquiries and providing services such as the VHF Seaphone. He also demonstrates services, such as MIDAS and MINERVA.

Our next meeting will be held on the afternoon of Thursday, 28th November, at the house of Brax Horrocks, Unley Park.

VALE

BILL HYDE and "ROCKY" GORDON, two South Australian Veterans passed away during August. Both were 83 years of age.

W.R. "Bill" HYDE was born in South Australia and joined the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company in Adelaide in 1919 as a probationer operator. He was appointed to the staff in 1921 and was transferred to Darwin and subsequently had 28 transfers, including Plm. Rz, Penang, Se, Ccs (6 times) Bv, Sey, Pt Sudan, Seuz and Alex. After passing examinations and attending ther school in Adelaide for six months in 1932, he became a supervisor in which capacity he served at most of the stations. He resigned at the age of 49 for health reasons, then at the age of 58 joined the accounts branch of the G.E.C. in Adelaide. He retired at 65. Bill was mentioned several times in the article which Pat Sykes wrote in our last "NEWSLETTER".

R.E. "Rocky" GORDON joined the clerical staff of the E.E. Telegraph Company in Adelaide at the age of 16. For many years he was a sending-out clerk, then was transferred to Darwin, and later served at Suva and Fanning. He retired at 55 and went to live at Mannum on the Murray where he built himself a house. He never married. He was a keen tennis player and enjoyed the game until he had a major operation in 1966.

MORE MEMORIES

By Brax Horrocks

When I joined the E.E. Cable Company in Adelaide as a probationer operator in 1921, that branch of the service had a very active sports club. We had a total staff strength of over 80 and we selected teams for football and cricket which played against the banks, public service, and some of the colleges. We were fortunate in having as our home ground the Unley oval, where we both played and practiced.

At the Memorial Drive we hired grass tennis courts twice a week, and there we practiced and held championship and handicap competitions. Once a year, at the Unley oval, we held an athletic meeting which was always well attended and most successful. It included morning tea and drinks afterwards. We also had an Annual swimming carnival, usually held at the Glenelg baths or the Unley swimming pool.

Opposite the lift on the first floor of our building in King William Street, "Electra House", was a large board which bore the words "EASTERN EXTENSION SPORTS CLUB" in big, bold letters in gold leaf, and detailed under the various headings such as tennis, swimming, cricket and so on, were the names of those who had excelled in those sports each year.

During my time on the staff there were some quite outstanding athletes. I recall, for instance, the LEO GLEESON, LANCE LEAK, and ARTHUR SHEPHERD played both League and Interstate football, and some of our tennis players could well have been in District teams had they not been on shift-work. Fellows such as HARRY CHINNER, HERBERT MUHLHAN, ARTHUR SHEPHERD, ROY EDWARDS, RON WARD and GEOFF COX. Our cricket teams had varying successes but all players were keen and some were very good indeed. I think of JOHN HALIFAX, HARRY COWHAM, HARRY TEAGUE and HAROLD GATES, for instance.

Bowling championship and handicap tournaments were played every summer, and for these we hired greens at Toorak or Unley. I recall that HARRY CRAWLEY usually has his name on the championship board at the end of each season. Competition was very keen to be the athletic champion of the year and some were quite outstanding, among them being LEO GLEESON, KEN GOODALE, MALCOLM TREGENZA, ROLLY LANE and NORM MACKAY. I was lucky enough to have my own name recorded under this heading a few times.

On our staff we had some fellows who participated in other sports. NORM MACKAY was featherweight boxing champion of south Australia two or three times. FRED DOOLETTE was a cross-country running champion. In fact, I remember that he even won the Adelaide to Glenelg marathon one year. BRUCE and FABIAN SUTHERLAND were outstanding lacrosse players and both represented South Australia. Our swimming carnivals were well attended when we held them in the sea baths at Glenelg. In those days our best swimmers were probably KEITH and AUBREY BARNES, so it was usually one of them, or ARTHUR GEARY whose name was placed on the championship board each year.

It is sad, but it seems that no one knows what happened to that championship board when the company left Electra House, nor, apparently, does anyone have a record of the names on it. If anyone does have such details, I would be very glad to hear from him.

LOCAL BOY MAKES GOOD

The April issue of "NEWSLETTER" had been prepared and was on its way to bed before we could recognise a most historic event which we now hasten to acknowledge. I refer, of course, to the appointment of Mr. George Maltby to the position of Managing Director of OTCA.

The event is an important one in OTCA history because it is the first time that the Chief Executive has been appointed from within the Service of the Commission, the previous incumbents having come from the Army, private companies, or the Public Service. The Chairman and Commissioners of OTCA are to be congratulated for two reasons; firstly, because they have acknowledged the fact that there is no longer any need to look further afield for talent to fill the Commission's top position and, secondly, in the choice of the appointee. I can't think of a better choice than George Maltby.

I have known George for the thirtynine years he has served in the Commission. The day I retired he cam along to my retirement ceremony, as he graciously put it, "just to make sure you are really going". I welcomed his presence because it gave me the opportunity to remind those present that George had started out in what was then known as the Traffic Section. I also quipped that had he been able to remain awake on the midnight shifts he could have retired with me as an Intlx Controller, instead of remustering and going on to become the then General Manager - Operations, or Director - Operations as it became later.

During his service George has held various positions but I feel that the one job that influenced him most in his formative years was Industrial Relations. In this field he was lucky enough to work under the guidance of the late T.A. Housley. Trevor Housley's forte was Staff and Industrial Relations, with the reputation of being a shrewd but fair negotiator long before he became General Manager of the OTCA. Trevor Housley was able to identify with the people under his command, right down to the lowest echelon, and he never lost the common touch, despite his exalted position. As a Governing Councillor on the Union, the then Professional Radio Employees' Institute, I sat on the opposite side of the negotiating table facing these gentlemen on occasions too numerous for memory and, to me, Trevor Housley's influence on George became more evident as their association continued. There is no doubt in my mind that features of succeeding General Managers also had some influence on George, but the one I mention comes through my personal experience. George may or may not agree with this, but that's the way I saw it.

There is also another historic first created by this appointment. In the past we have had General Managers who have become members of the Overseas Telecommunications Commission Veterans' Association, but it is the first time that an OTCA Veteran has become Managing Director.

Veterans still employed by OTCA take heart!! There's still hope for the oldies yet.

It must also be a shot in the arm for those who have elected to seek a career within the service of the Commission, encouraging those with the ability and drive to aspire to the top position.

They reckon that it's lonely at the top, George. It may well be for some, but I don't think it will be true in your case.

Good on yer, me ole son!!!!

(This is the advantage of being retired -- you can say all this about the Managing Director without having to worry about the Promotions Appeals Board.)

OPEN LETTER TO BRAX HORROCKS

The article which follows was sent in by BRAX HORROCKS with a covering letter in which he says "Would you be so kind to hand the attached to Ando in the hope that he will be able to include it in a "NEWSLETTER" some time - after I kick the bucket, if he likes!!"

No way, Brax. If you write these articles then you have to sit down and read them, just like I have to do. Feigning death won't get you off the hook. There will be no ghost writing in this publication, me ole son. Besides, even if you do kick off they are bound to have an Appeals Board up there, and with a bit of luck it will have an independent chairman.

Anyway, I need all the material I can get.

LEISURE TIME UNLIMITED

By BRAX HORROCKS

If you have any tears prepare to shed them now. I have a season ticket at the local crematorium to attend the funerals of so many of my contemporaries who, having retired around the age of 65 have said, "Hurrah... no more work - now only play and leisure time unlimited."

I respectfully suggest that the expression "All play and no work is fatal." I am convinced that after a lifetime of work if someone suddenly ceases his labours, ceases to use his brains, he won't last very long. Physical activity is only part of the answer.

If those of you yet to retire think that life after retirement is leisure unlimited then you delude yourselves. "Unlimited" must be qualified in many ways, especially as it is possible by that time that illness has dulled the zest for living, or there may be some commitments, such as having a sick wife, which could make it quite impossible to enjoy leisure time. It could be a vain hope to think that one can leave most of the enjoyment of leisure until retirement. By that time some ailment could restrict activities, and therefore the ability to enjoy life. Sciatica or arthritis are not conducive to skiing or surfing, and a world trip confined to a wheel-chair or bird-watching with failing eyesight takes the pristine bloom off retirement leisure.

Let's face it, it would be exceptional for anyone over the age of 70 to be ailment free, even if you make it to the traditional three score and ten and a lot of those worthies spend protracted periods in hospital - it's leisure, but of the type we can all do without.

A lot of the suffering I have seen could be prevented, especially the habit of heavy cigarette smoking. I can imagine the collective groans being given by our smoker readers. During the several years I have seen my contemporaries who were addicted to tobacco and suffering from respiratory complaints such as emphysema I am obliged to say it again - that the smoker is sowing the seeds which will eventually choke him. To see one of your mates fighting for the breath to greet you when you visit him in hospital is pathetic. Three of my close mates are already so affected, and another a few years younger has terminal lung cancer, and this is ten years after he has stopped smoking. Ten years too late.

I entreat you, don't wait until you reach the end of the "time" rainbow. Now is the time to begin planning for that magical retirement so that you can enjoy it to its fullest, and it will help no end if you fill each minute with a full sixty seconds even now, while you are working.

OVERSEAS TELECOMMUNICATIONS VETERANS' ASSOCIATION

VICTORIAN BRANCH

GENERAL MEETING

The 28th Annual General Meeting of OTVA (Vic) was held at noon on Friday, 10th May, 1985 at OTC House, Lonsdale Street, Melbourne. Forty-two members signed the Attendance Book whilst eighteen apologies were tabled and recorded.

Opening the Meeting our President George Magnus called for a minute's silence in respect of past members.

One of the main items of the Annual General Meeting was the tabling of a motion re membership. After a lengthy discussion the motion was carried and full membership to OTVA (Vic) will now be on 20 years service and associate membership 15 years.

One of the pleasing aspects of the Meeting was the fellowship generated when the oldies got together again. Yarns began to flow thick and fast and among the best were those from Ellis Smellie, 94 years and now blind, Ted Turner, Eddie Tresize, Mark Wilton, Alan Vagg, Oscar Ash, Cliff Allison, Bill Shea and others.

Vets around Australia will be pleased to learn that Charles Carthew continues to make very good progress. His E.T. (entertainment therapy) which consists of constantly practising his well remembered tricks of yore has been invaluable in his recovery.

Jean Edwards, nee Constable although on the "not so well" list, never forgets to write a cheery letter wishing all her friends in the Association a successful year.

Arthur Ross - ex A.W.A. is suffering from arthritis, and as a consequence finds it difficult to get around these days, but as always sends his regards to his old mates.

When retiring President George Magnus handed over to Douglas Crabtree for the ensuing 12 months, many of those present could well remember the time when these two Vets joined the Beam Wireless Service as young Juniors.

At the conclusion of the Meeting President Douglas Crabtree invited all present to partake of the hospitality of the Melbourne Vets.

It was agreed that the Meeting had been very successful - both officially and socially.

WILL A SECRETARY GO TO HEAVEN?

If a Secretary writes a letter - it's too long.
If he only sends a postcard - it's too short.
If he doesn't send a notice - he's lazy.
If he attends a committee meeting - he's butting in.
If he stays away - he's a shirker.
If he duns a member for dues - he's insulting.
If he fails to collect dues - he's slipping.
If he asks for advice - he's incompetent.
If he doesn't - he's bull-headed.
If he writes a complete report - it's too long.
If he condenses them - they're incomplete.
If he talks on a subject - he's trying to run things.
If he remains quiet - he's lost interest in the meetings.

ASHES TO ASHES, DUST TO DUST.
IF OTHERS WON'T DO IT, THE SECRETARY MUST.

The above contribution came from CHARLES CARTHEW, but if you have never been a Secretary the wisdom will be lost on you.

THE TIMES THEY ARE A'CHANGIN'

In one of his letters to ALAN ARNDT (our NSW Branch Secretary), Charles also writes:-

"When in hospital, the doctor on his rounds paused at my bed to admire a basket of fruit artistically adorned with flowers, and to which was attached a card with the wording 'Best wishes from the working Veterans of OTC House, Melbourne.' "Seems a contradiction of terms", said the Doc. "If still working, how can they be Veterans?" However, once the explanation was given, he fully understood.

It occurs to me that the generation gap and modern technology precludes any youngsters may have of joining our Association, which demands a thirty years minimum service. When we started in 1950, thirty, forty, and even fifty years of service was taken for granted by the Morse men who excelled in their work to maintain traffic flow at minimum transit time. There are kindred Associations of telecommunications in the USA, the UK, NZ, Canada and other nations with tradition the binding link the world over."

Chas also reports that his two-finger typewriter has packed up, a fact self-evident to the Editor of "NEWSLETTER" who was privileged to read the original copy. There was enough material for JOHN LEE to write a follow-up on his "Phantom Finger" article. However, it's always good to hear from you, Charles.

VALE "PONTO"

It is always a bit difficult to get correspondents to supply articles for "NEWSLETTER", so it became a sad occasion when I hear of one of my regulars passing away.

JOHN BESSBOROUGH PONSONBY, perhaps better known under his nom-de-plume "Ponto" died on 10th September, 1985.

He was employed in the P.M.G. Department from April 1911 until June 1919 except for the period February 1916 to November 1918, during which he was "on tour", as he put it, with the A.I.F. overseas. Upon his return from active service he spent the time from August 1919 to April 1920, temporarily employed with the Post Office whilst waiting to ship out as a ship's wireless operator. From May 1920 until August 1924 he served in that capacity on various ships, and from then until July 1961 in the Coastal Radio Service around the coast and at Perth, Geraldton, Pennant Hills, Brisbane, Townsville, Sydney, Townsville again, Hobart, Thursday Island, Hobart again, Port Moresby, Darwin and Bassendean. At Thursday Island, Darwin and Bassendean he was O.I.C.

He will be missed by all those who knew him.

VIV MOLYNEUX

By John Lee

The passing of Viv Molyneux was noted with regret. He was one of the colourful characters of communications. I first met him in 1943 when I relieved him in Suva. Just had time to sip a beer with him and swap a few stories, of which one illustrates the devilish side of his humour. When World War II broke out in 1939 Suva witnessed a lot of what Pat Sykes termed "Boy Scout activity". Viv had juggled a few days off for a trip round the main island by bus stopping overnight at various hotels. He had not completed the first stage before he became aware that he had a shadow - a "tail" as the spy stories term it. Well, he did wear this rakish beard and he did have a foreign sounding name. I suppose most chaps would have accepted this situation with resignation but Viv decided that he would make the shadow earn his salary. He proceeded to lead the surveillance fellow a merry dance by stepping behind doors, leaving his room by the window, whispering into Indian's ears and all manner of harmless dirty tricks. At the end of four days the poor shadow was looking decidedly jaded and Viv laughed all the way back to the Cable Office.

Around 1952 we met again in Suva and served three years enlivened with many an example of Molyneux humour. Walking home after a strenuous evening shift I told him that I had had a disastrous round of golf the previous day. He stopped under a street lamp and said, "Here, hand me your gamp and I will show you how to play that approach shot". I handed him my furled umbrella. He hefted it and played several practice swings, then stopped in mid-stroke. "You thieving bugger", he said, "That's my new umbrella". It was, too. I didn't think he would recognise it in the poor light.

On one occasion he was on duty on a Sunday afternoon and unable to bear the humidity he stripped off his shirt. He was unlucky enough to be caught in this state by the manager's wife who called in to see if the mail from Australia had arrived. She must have mentioned Viv's semi-strip to the manager for Viv showed me a very pompous please explain letter. He asked for my advice. I said, "I think you had better make a clean breast of it". The Molyneux eyes twinkled as he replied, "That's just what I was doing when the Manager's wife caught me". Well, he took his time over the reply and I must admit that it was a masterpiece. He explained that he had been wearing a new Hawaiian shirt of which he was very proud and one of his duties was to check the specific gravity of a bank of batteries which were being charged and fearing that battery acid might splash on his shirt, he had removed it, and was the Manager aware of the effect of battery acid on Hawaiian shirts, and should protective clothing be provided and so on. The Manager must have wept when he read it for he withdrew his "please explain" letter unreservedly.

There was the occasion when a spell of freak weather had triggered off a splendid crop of mushrooms. Viv and I were gathering them in the Botanic Gardens when he drew my attention to the fact that better mushrooms were visible through the fence in Government House Grounds. Despite protests I was coerced through the fence and we were harvesting mushrooms merrily when we were accosted by the A.D.C. who demanded, "Aren't you aware that Lady Garvey has these mushrooms harvested and sold for charity?" Before I could apologize Viv rose to the occasion. Eyes flashing and beard thrust out aggressively he asked, "Since when are Government House Grounds out of bounds to two Loyal British Subjects?" The A.D.C. recoiled a few paces to think this one over giving two Loyal British Subjects the opportunity to beat a strategic retreat, clutching the mushrooms, of course.

THE CHARIOT RACES

By John Lee.

The staff quarters building of the Pacific Cable Board in Suva was an impressive structure with its wide sweeping verandahs on three sides. It had an ideal situation on the hill overlooking Albert Park and the Grand Pacific Hotel.

Originally it housed the bachelor section of the staff and presumably it became unnecessary when manual working gave way to automatic relay working. The building was then converted into a high-class boarding establishment, the Oceanic. The grapevine reports that it is now used for a girls school.

I feel like an imposter in relating this episode as I was not a member of the Pacific Cable Board and have to rely on almost forgotten conversations with three ex-PCB stalwarts, John Creswick (Senior), the late Jim Vasek and the late Hercus Clark. But as no ex-PCB chap seems to be coming out of the woodwork with the story here is what I can remember of the yarns they used to spin.

What did all those active young men in the staff quarters do when housebound by the torrential downpours so prevalent in Suva? Some unsung genius dreamt up the chariot races. Here was a combination of athletic prowess and art form that would have created a furore at the Olympic Games!

The first-floor bedrooms opened onto the wide verandah running round three sides of the building. The "track" would be prepared by rubbing the verandah floor liberally with laundry soap to provide a lubricated fast surface.

The chariots? Well, every bedroom boasted a washstand equipped with an ewer of water, a large basin and that utilitarian article which seems to be vanishing into the realms of nostalgia, a chamber pot. One is reluctant to become lyrical about the chamber pots but they were the essential item - the chariots.

Questioned about them (I'm still talking about the chamber pots) one of my informants said they were "substantial", the second said they were "massive" and the third (he had a nice way with words) said they were "commodious". I got the impression that they were not egg-shell china.

Sheets stripped from the beds were rolled and threaded through the handles of the chariots and with a bloke pulling each end of the sheet and a charioteer sitting astride the chamber pot the team was complete. The teams raced one another round the verandahs, the chariots slithering on the soaped floor. One can imagine the pile-ups and crashes as the chariots swung wide at the corners. However, the races relieved boredom and worked off high spirits on many a wet day. All breakages were covered by deductions from salaries at the end of the month.

The next segment of the story came from Hercus Clark, a great raconteur. There was a gymkhana in Albert Park with a grandstand full of notables. The program indicated that the staff of the Pacific Cable Board would provide a "novelty event". You've guessed it - when the time came they lined up with mysterious parcels under their arms. When unwrapped the parcels disclosed sheets and chamber pots. Sheets were threaded through handles, charioteers seated themselves and at the starting gun away went the chariots skidding over the slippery turf to the amusement of the crowd and the embarrassment of the Superintendent and his lady. I have been unable to get confirmation of this park episode - is there anyone out there who can verify it?

(Continuing) ELLIS SMELLIE - THIS IS YOUR LIFE

An amazing coincidence took place the evening Thursday Island radio was hooked up to the post office lines to have a direct link with Brisbane after the local post office had closed. Charlie Tapp had held back half a day's traffic from Port Moresby for the event. First, Cape York, and Ellis said "I know that fist", and asked the man at Cape York, had he come from Kerang in Victoria on line number 138. He answered "yes, who is that?" Ellis replied, "I took Frank Shepherd's place at Bridgewater on the 6th June 1906. I know Frank is dead, where is his sister Poppy?" He said Poppy was now school teaching at Bridgewater, and they had a yarn. Ellis then called Mount Surprise in the middle of Queensland. Again came the remark, "I know that fist, and are you Sam W.?" Yes, it was Sam Westerman, a mate during their Victorian Railway days. He took five messages and switched the line through

to Townsville. For the third time, "I know that fist. Are you Frank H.?" Yes, it was Frank Herrick, the man who was at the Bendigo railway and sent the first messages to Ellis at Witcheproof railway. He was the fastest sender Ellis ever knew. They were the only three people Ellis knew in Queensland. Can you beat that!

When Ellis returned to Thursday Island after forty years he found that he was known as the man who washed a little girl who was living in a house on the site. It was occupied until shifted later on. The girl, about six years old at the time, used to come the few yards from her home to where we were working before the station was opened. Then for awhile, she did not come. The mother told Ellis, the reason she was prevented from coming was that she got so dirty. But she relented when told we all missed the little girl's chatter. Some weeks later, the mother asked the girl why she never got dirty anymore. Her reply, "because Mr. Smellie washes me and brushes me down", was still a joke forty years later. The mother's name was Mrs. Herring. As a widow she owned one of the hotels and was heartbroken when the hotel was delicensed due to its run down condition. No one would take her in and she had to leave the Island.

On the outbreak of the 1914 War, an Australian warship was at Thursday Island. Tapp, the warship's Captain and the radio chief made up a list of call-signs, such as, R I for Thursday Is. RT for Townsville and so on for the wardships and coastal radio stations. These were confirmed and adopted by the Navy Office. Tapp was a ruthlessly ambitious man. Here was a chance. Make Thursday Is. a key wireless station. He commandeered transformers from passing ships, put their primaries in series and their secondaries in parallel and doubled the power of the station. With the 100% earthing system, we got all the work. When the H.M.A.S. Australia was at Rabaul most of the many messages were about such trivial matters as alterations in payment to defenders, and even birthday greetings. This was known because the local naval officer had a staff of local business men decoding all messages before sending them on and Tapp also gave a hand. Once for three days the H.M.A.S. Australia could not be worked because of static and electric interferrance. One evening, Ellis took over at sunset and started on a huge pile of traffic. Lord be praised, Dave Flemming was on duty on the H.M.A.S. Australia. His signals were so perfect that, providing the first dot or dash, and the last dot and dash of a figure was in the clear, that figure could be written down by its length. No doubt some errors occurred, but both Dave and Ellis worked to a principle that it was better to handle say forty messages per hour with one or two errors, than five or six with no errors at all. Both Dave and Ellis would ask for what repetitions they wanted and sent five or six more messages. They would do this even though they may have ten or twelve messages needing correction. About 2 a.m. Dave Flemming left and the C.P.O. in charge took over on the H.M.A.S. Australia. He insisted on one message at a time and completely ignored the five messages Ellis sent until that one message was O.K.'d. After about twenty minutes of this, Ellis broke down completely. Charlie Tapp took over and Ellis went for a walk along the beach. On his return he took the phones from Tapp. At the same time, Dave Flemming returned, and they carried on till daylight. The last O.K. for the last message came through as daylight faded out the signals. A mighty night's work! After Ellis retired and went as a ships radio operator he sometimes met Dave who was also a ships radio operator and they chatted over that night. Dave had gone for a meal. The messages on that famous night were all in five figure code and he told Ellis he also could judge the figure by its length.

Tapp's way of life must have been varied. This was revealed during the walk Ellis took with him from the wireless station to the Royal Hotel. Some five or six people stopped him and spoke to him while Ellis went ahead and waited. Not one was a white person. Ellis remembers three - the first was an old Aboriginal woman who gazed at Tapp with rapture and fondled his hands as she talked to him. Another was a Japanese diver and a third one was a wealthy Hindu Singalese pearl cleaner. The others could have been anywhere from the Pacific Islands or from the East. It was a mystery to Ellis why these people stopped and talked to Tapp, they would have done it to no-one else on the island.

Tapp neither drank alcohol nor smoked tobacco. On one occasion he appeared in a soft shirt and a tie. This in the tropics! When told no-one ever wore a tie to tennis he could not bring himself to take it off. It was not there when he came home. This was the only occasion Ellis knew him to play any sport at all. No fishing, no parties, no dancing, but he was highly thought of by the pearlers and other leaders of the community. They often sought his advice.

Charlie Tapp was a real study, ambitious, at times ruthless, an intelligent man who sometimes did stupid things. He was a ship's wireless operator with the firm Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia) Ltd. This firm had a coastal radio station call sign AAA above the Hotel Australia Sydney. When the Government station using the Valsillie system was operating from the Melbourne Domain, E. T. Fisk Manager and Founder of A.W.A. ordered all his ship's operators not to work the Melbourne station. Tapp obeyed this order for awhile, then as a good Australian commenced working Melbourne radio from the coast of Queensland. His reports appeared in the daily newspapers. On his return to Sydney, he left the ship and Valsillie awarded him, at the age of 19, by sending him to Thursday Is. by taking charge of the station there, replacing Jimmy Brown who went to Honolulu. Tapp played no sport, rarely went out on launches and lived a lonely life. He was engaged to a charming Sydney girl who was looking after his dog. Tapp made all arrangements with the officers of his to take care of the dog on the return trip from Sydney to Thursday Is. He then asked the girl to take the dog down to the ship. When there, she took it away and told Tapp that she would not put the dog aboard the ship, not realizing that it would be cared for. Saying "she should have I would make my arrangements for the dog", he broke the engagement. Tapp once said to Ellis, "when it comes to women, I may be a screw loose". Ellis replied, "not one screw loose, but all the bolts, screws, rivetts and all else are loose", to which he seemed to agree. After falling in and out of love a few times, he went overboard on a middle aged woman, Mrs. Mitchell. Mrs. Mitchell's sister, 40ish, came up from South for a holiday. In order to please Mrs. Mitchell he visited the sister, who got her claws into him and married him. As soon as she became engaged she went South. Now with her away, Tapp fell in love with a pretty little barmaid named Ellen Searle. It was a town joke. One wit drew a cartoon of a bull with two cows looking at him, one on either side, and underlined it "how happy could I be with either, were other dear charmer away". Tapp was transferred to Woodlark Island calling in at Port Moresby on the way.

When the site was bought for the Thursday Is. station, some houses had to be removed off it. One, still there, was used by Bill Wing, Charlie Tapp and Ellis for bachelor's quarters. An Englishman was engaged as cook. He had been trained in England to be a missionary and Bishops and others were at his send off when he went to New Guinea. But he found it was a trading concern. When he was put at the door the Church to prevent any Papuan from entering, who did not have enough produce for the collection, he resigned. He was an excellent housekeeper for the quarters Ellis was living in. Ellis and Charlie had many a heated debate but never once was any name calling or abuse used. It was always on a friendly basis with respect. Tapp arrived when the station was nearing completion. He replaced Donald McDonald who had been a properly trained post office mechanic. He taught Ellis how to strip back the insulation on covered copper wires and to properly cut back the lead sheathing. Also to make a good job with the soldering on the lugs and all that type of work. For a reason known only to himself Tapp took out all this wiring and replaced it with very crude work of his own. He re-sited the wiring. Donald McDonald went to Darwin, returned and spent a few hours at the station while the ship was in port. He cried when he saw what a mess Tapp had made of it.

Donald McDonald went to Raboul and was the administrator's advisor on the army and coastal radio station. The Raboul traffic was sent to Woodlark Is. for relay to Townsville. McDonald sent messages which he knew would enrage Tapp, finishing up with a thumping lie. Ellis knows about this because that message was handled by an old mate of his at the Spencer Street operating room, of the Victorian Railways, Jack Gleason. Gleason was then told to copy all RSF (Radio Service Free) messages from Woodlark Is. to Melbourne. Sure enough he copied one from Tapp to Melbourne calling the Administrator a liar. Jack told Ellis he held that message for a long time thinking he may go to the Administrator and disclose what McDonald was up to. But he finally took no action. Tapp was dismissed in disgrace from Woodlark and left for Sydney, where for some time he did Junior work. After A.W.A. took over the service he quarrelled with Fisk over "sealed sets" which Fisk favoured. Fisk said "he may be a bloody fool but no-one was to tell him so". Ellis then heard that Tapp was the Managing Director of a prosperous radio manufacturer and was very sorry to hear of his death at an early age. One fight Ellis had with Tapp was over 'days off'. After two years, days worked on holidays had mounted up. Tapp was told to give us days off in lieu of those holidays worked. He chose Sunday afternoons. Everyone objected to losing half a day's pay to Tapp, but only Ellis refused to take the afternoon shift off. When told to do so he said, "we will both work the shift and ask head office who should get the money. After Wing, Bain and Mowlem's days off had been given, Tapp again brought the matter up and was given the same reply. Tapp for once lost his temper and yelled "you'll pay for this, there will be other times". Having got his own way Ellis then said "I've got a favour to ask of you. It is much easier for me to find mates to go out to the other island with on a Sunday, than on a weekday. So will you please give me all my days off in future on a Sunday, not only these holidays, but the normal days off. Also, next time, have a talk to us. We are not a team of four lead by you. We are a team of five, all equal. Everyone of us could do your job as well or better than you are doing it. You are chief among equals", etc. etc. Tapp told his mates that he learnt more from Ellis that day than from anyone else.

Charlie Tapp's brains and ability were put to good use at Woodlark Is. when a large (for radio) rotary converter burnt out. He organised Woodlark. The women, with their scissors and sewing machines, cut up bolts of silk into insulating tape. The men unwound the copper wire coils, laid them out in lengths and cleaned them. The insulating tape was wound around the copper wire. All we assembled and a station was again operating in 3 days. Few men would have had the ability and drive to do this.

Jim Lamb was a popular manager of the beam office in Melbourne for a long while. He retired before he was 65 and Ellis was asked to speak on behalf of the coastal radio at his farewell gathering at the beam office. he has recited his speech to himself while driving a car or when unable to sleep so often that he can now repeat it. It went like this:

"When asked by Fred to speak I said, 'What will I say?' Fred answered 'You can't say too much in his favour'. A colleague (Hedley Tyler) said to me, 'We are saying goodbye today to a kindly, Christian gentleman.' A messenger boy said to me 'look at them, look at them, he must be popular'. I told the lad 'yes he is'. 'Which is he?'. When told which one was Jim Lamb, the lad remarked 'he's a big man isn't he?' 'Yes he's a big man in more ways than one' and some of my audience said 'in more ways than one' with me. A man up near the door said to me 'We will never see his like in this office again'."

The next few sentences are not included here as they told only of Jim's earlier service in the coastal radio.

"In the early days of the coastal radio, for some unknown reason, Valsillie gave many of his staff the impression that they would be in charge of the station they were being sent to. Fights broke out. So the first remark made to a newcomer was 'what's things like there?' For one station, possibly Townsville, the reply was always the same, 'Jim Lamb's in charge' and any more questions would mean a thump on the head. About a fortnight ago a mate from Adelaide was talking to me in my little office and he asked me, referring to the beam, 'how many work here?' My reply about half of them caused a laugh. Then he asked 'how are things here?' I yelled at him 'Jim Lamb's in charge'. He should have got a thump in the head for asking a silly question.

"Two things dovetailed here perfectly. I like a bit of fun and the beam men are easy meat. And so I asked an old colleague of the First World War days in Adelaide radio, when we both wore the uniform of the navy, what do you think of Jim Lamb pulling out? His answer of 'yes' sounded dismal. Then I said 'it ought to suit you long slabs'. He glared at me 'what do you mean suit anybody'. 'Well, the top man goes, you all get promoted one step up the ladder'. 'You mean', he asked, 'because I would get promotion I would want him to leave?' Looking him straight in the eye I said 'Well I would'. Now I had to be squashed. 'If I could sacrifice the whole of my promotion from now till when I retire, and by that sacrifice.' Here was my chance. 'You're mad, you're as mad as a sheep. There are plenty of blokes far better than that useless, lazy clod,' and then I put my hand out in case he fell as the long slab went into a mild state of shock. His shoulders came forward and his arms dangled, his eyes clouded over, his mouth opened and his bottom lip hung down, but it was the man on my left spoke next and said, 'You listen to me', it was a sight to see the long slab recover. His mouth closed, his eyes cleared, his shoulders went back further than I liked the look of, arm extended, fist

closed and finger pointing, he snarled, showed all his gums and roared, "You listen to me". I did not leave those three men, I took off and on coming to my little office, shut the door, and put my foot against it. On leaving, "The stairs", no, too dangerous I went down the inside stairs to the Messenger's room and there ran head on into the great big, useless, lazy clod himself. Jim looked at me as though he didn't like what he saw, and snarled, "what are you doing down here?". What a question! Moving around to the door, I told Jim "for once in my life, I'm minding my own bloody business", and went home. My wife told me I should apologize to the long slab. "Oh no, he's after me. If I see him first it will be six months before I go within a bull's roar of him. Say boys now about calling it off, I was only having a bit of fun?"

"But why this semi idolatory. Ask 6 people and you would get half a dozen answers. I will select two. Jim Lamb never nagged at me. Even when he was jumping on you with those big boots of his, and my God, how small he could make me feel, you knew you still had his goodwill. My second is Jim Lamb was a shield between us and harm. We slept soundly in our beds, knowing we were safe under Jim Lamb. The clapping and applause was loud and long. Much as we think of Jim, there was another more highly regarded than him. Someone has blundered. Jim Lamb's wife should be by his side. Again the clapping was loud and long. When the coastal radio was born, they came from the far ends of the earth. Not all were wise. Amongst them, Mrs. Lamb's influence and good advice, were far reaching and long lasting. There was a saying, "would Mrs. Lamb approve?" which spread through the whole service. On my coming East after being at Adelaide, Darwin, Broome, Geraldton, Perth and Esperance, I wished to meet Mrs. Lamb and cross questioned Jim on social events they would be attending, that I could take my wife to. But there was a jinx on me, I could never go. Then Jim got niggly, "why are you asking all these questions?" And now I'll never meet Mrs. Lamb.

And so I concluded, and so through me, the coastal radio says goodbye to Mr. and Mrs. Lamb and we want them to know, each time they are reminded of our parting gift, that with each and every two bob that went to make it up, went a heartfelt prayer to the great architect, that in the evening of their lives, they will be blessed with the same tranquility of spirit and peace of mind that they have so ably given us."

(A portion of this was not actually said but I have included it here because it should have been. It was later told to Jim.)

VALE

We now hear from Brax that the South Australian Veteran's Association have lost another of their members, N.G. McKay who died on 19th September.

Norman McKay was born 31st January, 1909 and joined the clerical staff of the E.E. Cable Co in 1925. During the Second World War when there was a desperate shortage of operators, Norman, after special training, transferred to the operating staff and remained with them until his retirement when the Adelaide office closed in 1948.

Norman was an outstanding sport and excelled in many ways. He was the South Australian flyweight boxing champion for two years, was a good footballer and tennis player, and athlete. He won the E.E. Adelaide Sports Club athletic championship on two occasions.

He and his brother, who was also on the clerical staff in Adelaide, were part owners of several race horses and they had quite a lot of success over many years.

MINUTES OF THE 10TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, HELD IN
BRISBANE AT NOON ON WEDNESDAY, 29TH MAY, 1985.

In the absence of President Alan Jones, Secretary Jim Banks opened the meeting and welcomed the following members, wives and associate members, Sid and Eileen Gill, Alf and Heather Goebly, Dean Laws, John Marshall, John and Mildred Norris, John and Phyll Ponsonby, Vince Sim, Bob Webster and Wim Elbertse.

A special welcome was extended to "new" member Glen Searle and Pat and to our new Managing Director George Maltby and Mary.

Apologies were received from President Alan Jones, Wilf Atkin, Gordon Collyer, Eric Cramp, Laz Eliou, Lou Heggie, Kevin Hiscock, Jock Kellie, Alan Rees, Blue Easterling, Les Doubleday, Pat Gray, Keith Vincent and Dick Westwood.

Minutes of the 9th AGM were accepted as distributed. In the absence of the Treasurer, the Secretary presented the financial statement showing an improvement in the current balance from \$186.84 in 1984 to \$219.17 at the end of March 1985. This was adopted.

All offices were then declared vacant and it was moved, seconded and carried that existing office-holders be re-elected for a further term, viz:

President - Alan Jones
Secretary - Jim Banks
Treasurer - Denis Moorhouse
Auditor - John Norris

George Maltby was then invited to address the meeting and he reaffirmed his personal support and that of the Commission to the continuation of the Veterans Association and all it stands for. He also gave a most optimistic review of prospects for the Commission in the foreseeable future.

The Secretary suggested that there was a need to update our records on the "history" of members and asked that each complete and return the form he would include with those minutes.

After agreeing to hold the next reunion at VIB, Brisbane Radio, during November, with wives and associates again most welcome, the meeting was closed and followed by the usual excellent fellowship.

NEWS FROM THE QUEENSLAND O.T.V.A. BRANCH

A small gathering of 19 members and wives, as per the attendance list, supplemented at intervals by our duty people in BOR (John Jackson, Ray Horeau and Tom O'Sullivan), it was nevertheless a lively and most enjoyable occasion.

It was good to have George and Mary Maltby with us again - fresh from a visit to VIB where staff shortages unfortunately prohibited regular members Kev Hiscock, Laz Eliou and Alan Rees from attending the Veterans.

A new and most welcome member was Glen Searle and his wife, Pat. Glen, an ex AWA man, retired in 1940 to grow rubber in Papua after a varied career in stations such as Lautoka and Moresby. He brought along a rare copy of the old AWA "Radiogram", the staff journal of 1933, which brought back many memories to some of those present, particularly Ponto who, at almost 89, is our 'senior' member. (Note a copy of the Radiogram was taken for Sydney and Melbourne - I am sure it will be of interest.)

All present looked in pretty good shape - especially the ladies.

Amongst the apologies, President Alan Jones was still in Cairns on holiday; Wilf Atkin was keen to come to say 'congrats' to George but unfortunately needed at home where his wife is recovering from a slight stroke. Eric Cramp was in hospital for a check-up and Jock Kellie was in the hands of a chiropractor. Dick Westwood was still awaiting his relief in Townsville but hopes to host the next reunion at VIB. None of the 'Rockhampton mob' were able to make it but we have hopes of getting them down to VIB in November.

It must be said that the presence of the ladies - far from inhibiting our meetings as one or two of us had feared - has given them a new vitality. It is thoroughly recommended to those associations which have remained 'chauvinistic'.

Other snippets - Dean Laws has just moved down to the Gold Coast and John Norris, looking very healthy in retirement, has also moved out to Runaway Bay now that Milored has retired from Telecom too. Bob Wester and Sid Gill seem to be keeping busy and well, with no regrets at having left BOR behind. Vince Sam and John Marshall seem to be ageless.

SOME MEMORIES OF MILESTONES

By Clendyn Edwy Searle.

I was browsing through a 1983 copy of an O.T.V.A. "NEWSLETTER" and upon pages 8-9 I came across an article by "Ponto" which gave examples of long distance communication between ship and ship, and ship to shore. One of these was that of the MV. "Niagara" (GBE) with Sydneyradio (VIS) whilst in the vicinity of Vancouver B.C.

There is a well-documented performance of the TSS "Jervis Bay" (VZDK) during its trip from Sydney to London and back in 1926 which I think is also worthy of mention.

This was a unique milestone in the development of long range telecommunication using thermionic valve transmitters. I recount it briefly here.

The TSS Jervis Bay set sail for London from Sydney on the 24th April 1926 with a new receiver and transmitter constructed by the AWA factory at Ashfield. The equipment had a T250 thermionic transmitter valve that operated at a wavelength on approximately 48 metres. No crystals were employed for the excitation. The receiver was an "Expanse B" model. The radio personnel comprised Vivian Brooker (RIM), Col Hickey as second and myself as third. I was fortunate to have the appointment as I had been waiting awhile for one, there being a dearth of such positions because of dock strikes. I was the only one of us to have had prior experience with thermionic valve transmitters and that was obtained while with 2BL in Sydney and earlier while with the RAAF.

By the time we reached Melbourne the receiver was on the blink. Our major concern was to repair the receiver before our scheduled departure for Perth next day. The Melbourne AWA office was unable to respond to Brooker's request for help. We approached the ship's purser for a loan to purchase parts to build the new receiver under my guidance. I cannot recall how large the loan was but I do remember that the three of us had to augment it from our own pockets. We went ashore and bought the essential components from Veall and Co. in Swanston Street. The ship's engineers gave us assistance with tools and materials to enable us to construct, through the night and next day, a replacement receiver. The result looked hamish but to our delight it worked the first time we switched it on. The hand-wound honeycomb inductors which projected out like bat's wings gave a variation in coupling. The Mullard Ora valves which we had incorporated in the new receiver were superior to the valves in the old receiver, which turned blue at any small increase in plate voltage. It worked like a charm all the way to London and back.

As we entered the Atlantic on our trip over other passenger ships around became aware of our telegraphic capacity and offered us traffic for Australia. This we had to decline. Even while in the King George V Dry Dock in Tilbury, London, we were able to talk to Sydney Radio.

On our arrival in London reporters from the "Times" and "Wireless World" magazines besieged us. Our photographs appeared in both. The Australian Prime Minister, Bruce, was in England at the time. He forwarded messages to Australia through us including congratulatory messages to AWA in Sydney and Melbourne.

Following our return to Australia the monetary outlay we had made on the receiver was recompensed. As far as I can remember AWA showed little appreciation for the receiver that we had constructed and that had performed so faithfully. I have often wondered what happened to my two colleagues, Vivian Brooker and Col Hickey. Together we shared the pleasure of being the radio operators on the first ship to travel from Sydney to London and back with radio contact both ways all the way.

A couple of other notable achievements of the era might also be mentioned. About 1924 Jack Chesterfield of AWA logged a call from Walvis Bay in South Africa on 500 kcs early in the morning while on

watch on Adelaide Radio (VIA). He gave them a call which they acknowledged. Another example is the frequent exchanges that we made with Perth while aboard the SS Marella on the Sydney-Singapore run. We were able to contact Radio Perth even when north of Batavia using our Telefunken quenched-gap spark transmitter on 500 kcs. this was quite remarkable at a time when Japanese high-powered arc quenched-gap transmitters were swamping other ship to shore traffic in the area, including transmissions to and from Hong Kong. Their overbearing control of the air waves resulted in a lot of frustration at times. It sometimes prevented us from communicating with a nearby port.

Now sixty years later the early history and milestones are little remembered but they were surely as significant in the development of the sophisticated telecommunication systems that exist today as the encouragement of early wins at athletic meets are to the later Olympian.

MATTERS OF INTEREST

By Various Contributors.

Veteran Jim Banks (Brisbane) sent along a copy of a 1933 "RADIOGRAM" to Charles Carthew, who advised us that it gave him a nostalgic feeling to read the names of confreres of years ago. It also contained a picture of Hugo Phillips who always called those men being posted to his office by the use of Morse code. It also revived the fact that operators could be identified as readily by their hand sending as their handwriting. Seems all so impersonal these days, mused Charles.

Popular Veteran Oscar Ash, ex-Marconi in the old country, is now resting at home after a heart attack. We all wish him a speedy recovery.

Chris Fox will be coming out to Australia very soon, making it his third visit.

Bill Sanders, one of the ex-PCB boys, has been in touch with Alan Arndt, our Secretary extraordinaire, expressing his intention to donate an Arabian outfit to our museum when it becomes a reality, around early 1987, hopefully. It is identical to the one presented by the Ruler of Bahrain to the late Mr. H.H. Eggers, Managing Director of Cable and Wireless. Bill's was presented at the same audience when he was General Manager of Cable & Wireless, Middle East, stationed in Bahrain. The donation is very much appreciated, Bill, and it is our hope that it may spark some of our other Veterans to go through the old tin trunks or whatever for inclusion in the museum.

"Pancho" Vincent, (Keith to his mother), who has attained the exalted post of Manager Cairns has sent us a snippet from the Friday, 16th August edition of the "Cairns Post". Beneath her photo appears an article about Mrs. Margaret Hamilton. It reads:-

"Brisbane woman, Mrs. Margaret Hamilton has donated her father's photo album to the James Cook Historical Museum. One of the joint curators of the James Cook Historical Museum in Cooktown, Mrs. Carol McKinna, (pictured with Mrs. Hamilton), is seen discussing the album which

belonged to Mr. Reginald George Thomson who was in Cooktown from 1st July, 1918, until 10th February, 1919. Mr. Thomson was a telegraphist at the radio station in Cooktown area and had taken 60 photos of the Cooktown area which he placed into an album purchased with cigarette cards from Capstan tobacco.

The album was a welcome addition to the museum as there was a gap in available information for the period 1900 to 1940, Mr. McKinna, the other custodian, said. However, while the album would be on display the photos were only matchbox size and were difficult to see, he said. He commented that it was wonderful when members of the public contributed to the museum as it helped to increase knowledge of the area's history."

At the inaugural meeting of OTC in Victoria, the Commission's General Manager, the late Trevor Housley, came along with a keen interest in our activities - an interest which has continued to be shown by his successors over the years. It was certainly a great incentive to all five branches to extend contact with kindred societies abroad, namely, the Wireless Operators of America, C and W pioneers of Canada, Cablemens' Association, New Zealand. Correspondence has been on a personal basis influenced by the magnetic attraction of Morse-men the world over - a relationship made popular by amateur enthusiasts, more generally referred to by the media as "Ham radio operators". It was good to read the sentiments expressed by recently retired popular General Manager, Bill Schmidt, which corresponds to veteran sentiment over the years.

Some time ago the American Newsletter gave our senior veteran, Ellis Smellie, a full front page placement showing Ellis, "the grand old man of Radio", in the uniform of a R.A.N. Petty Officer, World War 1. In similar vein, Eric Symes, retired C&W officer to live in Adelaide, was given good coverage in "Mercury", the C&W Staff Magazine regarding his attending a South Australian Annual Reunion.

Appropos of "family", our own veterans of A.W.A., the P.O., and engineers Harry De Dassel, Murray Johnson, Bill Jenvey, Cliff Cutler, all left their mark and are held in high esteem and well-remembered as true gentlemen of the old school.

VETERAN CABLEMENS' ASSOCIATION

The news from the Land of the Long White Cloud is not the best, according to Bill Craig. He writes:-

"Thank you for the last issue of the "NEWSLETTER" and all the newsy bits that keep us up-to-date with happenings in the communications world.

Unfortunately we have suffered a few casualties since I last wrote, but that is only to be expected as our elderly comrades grow older.

- LOFTUS RUSSELL - died on 12th January - he was our last Eastern Extension member and served in Singapore, Darwin, Cocos and Banjowangi before accepting the D/N retirement offer made to Cable staff in the depression years.
- NEIL WYLIE - died on 9th February. Neil had been in indifferent health for some years including near blindness. He worked in Halifax, Suva and Auckland for the P.C.B.
- CHARLES BENNIE - died in January in Honolulu. Joined the P.C.B. in Auckland and left for the Commercial Pacific Company working in Midway and Honolulu.
- CLAIRE RICHMOND - nee Claire Thomas of Suva - widow of G.K. Richmond, P.C.B.

Trust you are keeping out of the bushfire area, and that the New Year has brought happiness and prosperity to you and yours."

Well, we thought that was bad enough but since then we have received further news from Bill, and it's not good, either.

- LESLIE HORACE
DAVISON - died on 17th August, aged 82. Davie was a gifted mechanic and engineer. As a junior he assisted the inventor K.C. Cos with several communication improvements. He served at many Pacific Cable Board stations including Auckland, Norfolk Island, Fanning Island and Bamfield, Canada. Willing and good natured, Davie repaired radios, clocks, watches for all staff members, and on isolated stations he even manufactured necessary replacement parts in his workshop. After retirement he did similar work for his Church bazaars.
- AXEL BREVAD
MORTENSEN - died on 30th August, aged 87. Axel was seconded to the P.C.B. after the German destruction of Fanning Island station in World War 1. After a period on Fanning and Bamfield he returned to the N.Z. Post Office but kept up his association with the Cable staff. We shall miss them both at our gatherings.

Noticed at these sad occasions were Harry Fox, Tom Condon, Huia Evetts, Les Gladding, Huia Jacabs, and Telecom's Ken Pae.

The rest of our retired folk appear to be managing O.K.

BITS AND PIECES - HERE AND THERE - ROUND AND ABOUT, ETC.

Just to show how great minds think alike, we have received references from two of our better-known Vets, Charles Carthew and Gordon Cupit about a book entitled "Clear Across Australia" by Mrs. Ann Moyal. I have always been a sucker for E.S.P., and mental telepathy, which I intend to practice when I get a brain, so I will reproduce the views of both our correspondents.

Gordon writes:-

"I was on the first Archives Committee in 1954 and together with Tom Hughes and Edgar Harcourt, have been pushing for the upgrading of our historical records and a Museum all these years. Having done a lot of the groundwork and collected many items of interest, it is gratifying to hear of George's proposals in this regard. I trust the Vets keep up their end. Percy Day was not at the meeting, and he is one who would give valuable assistance.

I have just finished reading a book called "Clear Across Australia" by Mrs. Ann Moyal. It is a history of Telecommunications and dedicated to the Telecommunication Pioneers. She was commissioned by Jack Curtis to write a book and from the contents and bibliography was given every assistance and did a great deal of research. Some of the material is in our archives but it fills in the picture beautifully. Although principally a story of the Australian Post Office, it covers in depth the C.R.S., Beam, A.W.A. and O.T.C.A., and takes in the period 1770 to 1983. The book consists of 400 pages and no doubt worth a bit. I am sure it must be in the O.T.C. library and possibly in the Archives. If not, I would suggest you approach George to get copies as it is a must. I am also sure that all Veterans would be interested in reading the book and attached is a draft for consideration for the "NEWSLETTER".

(Thanks Gordon - the article appears in this edition under your by-line and headed "Historical Record".)

Charles writes:-

"Historian Mrs. Ann Moyal has completed a very interesting and complete coverage of telegraph history entitled "Clear Across Australia". Many familiar names and places appear and is nostalgic plus. I can recommend it to all Veterans.

Our colleagues over in the U.S.A. included three articles taken from the O.T.V.A. "NEWSLETTER", several stories submitted by our own chaps and also a couple from N.Z. into their own newsletter. The Pioneer Wireless Operators Society is very strong in membership, producing a quarterly newsletter, with a more comprehensive edition each year. By comparison, our membership now exceeds 500 through Australia.

Ellis Smellie is writing a book and should gain popular acceptance among the Morse operator fraternity for our popular colleague sure is acknowledged as a legend in his own life-time, especially on the key.

The Beam Wireless family here in Victoria is still a compact group, keeping in touch with one another as the years go by.

Veteran Fred Ash, affectionately known as "Oscar", recently suffered a heart attack and is now convalescing at home."

Both the above boys are ex-Beam men so the article which follows this from the A.W.A. Veterans' Association should be of interest, not only to them, but to other O.T.V.A. members who served with that Company.

OUT OF THE MAIL BAG

Received this letter from a bloke by the name of Jack Woodall who lives at 4417 Old Orchard, Montreal, Quebec. Jack signed himself as a P.C.B. Pensioner so I thought I would repeat what he says for the benefit of the P.C.B. Aussies who saw service in Canada. He writes:-

"Thank you for the regular receipt of "NEWSLETTER". There are always some interesting articles for me as I was born near Sydney and trained at the Southport school. Also, before being transferred to Canada in 1934, I was stationed in Sydney, Auckland, Fanning and Suva. I have remained in Canada since 1934, so I wouldn't know many of the Aussie retirees on the present staff.

Enclosed is a photo of Bamfield Cable Station (1952). You may know that the property was taken over by the Government Biological Department. They demolished the bachelors' quarters situated on the level above the office building. There was a large hall behind the quarters which was used for dances, and movies every Saturday evening."

We would like to hear more from you, Jack. Perhaps about the early days you spent in Aussie.

Through the courtesy of Charles Carthew, there is also a bit of news about Harold and Vi Le Quesne. As you all must know by now Harold is President of the Quarter Century Club, Western Chapter, within Teleglobe Canada and has been over to our O.T.V.A. Meetings on quite a few occasions. He writes:-

"We had our 1985 Annual Meeting and Dinner in the Empress Hotel, Victoria, Vancouver Island on Saturday, 20th April, 1985, with some 68 persons attending.

This 1985 to April 1986 when we hold our 1986 Annual Meeting and Dinner will be my last term as President. I have been President since 1974 when the club was formed and after 12 years the club needs new direction. I have had the pleasure of meeting you, Charles, and honoured to have you as our only Honorary Life Member, and, of course, I have enjoyed my several visits to the N.S.W. O.T.V.A. annual banquets where I met several old friends and made some new ones.

I cannot guarantee the future close ties with Australia since the new President may well be someone who has no ties in your country. Furthermore, there is talk of the Government selling Teleglobe Canada to private interests in the not too distant future. I do not know just what status the Quarter Century Club will have, if any.

In the meantime my wife and I will be visiting Sydney next October/November, primarily to visit my two brothers who have been in hospital.

Continue to take good care of yourselves, continuing good health and happiness; I do hope one of these days to meet up with you once again."

Harold also included photos of the Executive and a list of members of the Western Chapter of the Quarter Century Club with Charles W. Carthew's name as Honorary Life Member.

RETURN THANKS

Jock Cowie writes:-

"Through the facility of the columns of O.T.V.A. "NEWSLETTER", I would like to thank Ted Bishton for the information of the Page family, as supplied by him.

My original query was prompted by the fact that a good friend of mine had introduced me to Lieutenant R.C. Page's widow, and knowing that there was a New Guinea connection, the query was a natural result.

For anyone who may be interested, the book "The Heroes" by Ronald McKie, retells the incredible exploits of that very valiant military party, on and off the "KRAIT" in Singapore harbour and elsewhere.

Prior to enlisting, Lieutenant Page had been a medical student."

A LINE FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Derek Walker has sent along a clipping announcing the death of William Alan Gilmore who died at home on 22nd June with a private funeral being held on 25th June. He has been good enough to send along Alan's biography.

GILMORE, William Alan - aged early 90's, (approximately 93 from memory), originally retired under the "D/N" scheme in 1929; D/N was the date/time of the service message from H.O. London to all stations advising of the conditions of the scheme, which was a sort of redundancy offer to surplus staff - not due to the great depression, but in fact due to "mechanisation" - the change-over from hand operating cable station to cable station, to regenerator automation. Hence the sudden huge surplus of staff. Gilly started in WOKKA, which is a shortened version of the name of the Cable station on Cable Bay, North Island, New Zealand, I would say about 1910 to 1912; I seem to remember that he served at one or another Australian station, maybe La Perouse and Adelaide, and I would feel that he was an old "Eastern" man. After 1929 he married and settled in Perth, and dabbled in many jobs as far as I can remember from talks George McDonald and I had with Gilly.

Allan was "manpowered" during the last war - he was employed by Cable and Wireless Ltd in their Perth Office, St. George's Terrace, as a temporary Reviser, his services terminating in the late '40s. There were two Revisers, each working 7am to 1pm and 1pm to 8pm daily on a six-day week basis, working alternate Sunday mornings. The shifts were rotated weekly between the two Revisers. I can remember Allan during one relieving spell in the Perth office from the Cable station, Cottesloe, during approximately 1948. Perhaps someone else may be able to throw some light on Allan's movements from the early 1900's to World War 2. He was a gentleman at all times and a pleasure to work with. His handwriting was characteristic of many cable operators, as they were known earlier this century.

WHILST WE ARE ON THE BAD NEWS ... LET'S GET IT OVER

From Kingscliff, N.S.W., Mrs. M.J. Olle writes:-

"I have to inform you of the death in January of my father, Armour Andrew McCollum. In every respect he was a man of outstanding qualities but this is not an occasion to eulogise, though I will add that I believe in all his years with the Commission he did not miss a day on duty, other than for official O.T.C.A. business."

From Castle Hill, N.S.W., Mrs. Sylvia Giles reports:-

"My husband, Norman Frank Giles, passed away on 6th June inst. We have lived here in retirement since a stroke he suffered five years ago. We both appreciated the interesting "TRANSIT" and "NEWSLETTER" received over the years, since Norman's retirement."

W.J. (Bill) Johnston, ex C.R.S. La Perouse was not a member of the O.T.V.A. but was well-known by many members nonetheless. Born in March 1909, he served as a Radio operator at various locations, finishing up at La Perouse until he retired in February, 1972. We report, sadly, that he passed away on 17th June, 1985, aged 76 years.

From the Brisbane "COURIER MAIL" comes this clipping which appeared on 3rd September, 1985.

WILLIAMSON, John (Jack) George, ex-R.A.N., O.T.C., and Department of Mines and Energy, died at Royal Darwin Hospital on 30th August, 1985. He is survived by his wife Joyce, and family.

OUR SINCEREST SYMPATHY GOES TO THE RELATIVES AND FRIENDS OF THESE EX-OFFICERS.

29TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

10TH MAY, 1985

MINUTES

PRESENT

A. Arndt, D. Almond, L. Brown, T. Bastow, D. Bourne, E. Bishton, A.H. Brown, B. Collett, G. Cupit, M. Casey, A. Culloden, O. Cooper, J. Collister, R. Connolly, G. Day, R. Doohan, N. Donohoe, J. Davis, J. Hodgson, T. Hanson, E. Harcourt, T. Hughes, B. Henson, W. Luke, J. Lee, C. Maiden, R. McDonald, G. McDonald, G. Madren, G. Maltby, A. Purtil, J. Pow, R. Payne, R. Peacock, R. Smith, J. Toland, G. Thompson, A. Taylor, T. Thatcher, C. Vahtrick, B. Waugh, B. Woods, B. White, D. Woods, P. Whisson, M. Wilden, C. Watson, M. Wood V. Yen.

APOLOGIES

Mr. Bob Somervaille, Chairman of OTC(A) regrets being away from Sydney today and tenders his apologies. The following were taken from an Attendance Book:-

E. Anthoney, A. Agius, J. Bonnici, C. Brophy, J. Burgess, A. Brown, J. Bullen, B. Brown, R. Baty, R. Beecham, R. Bronson, E. Cockle, A. Cilia, B. Chant, W. Chant, J. Chant, B. Callaghan, B. Curran, J. Cowie, C. Dalley, J. Davis, M. Dwyer, F. Dale, T. Ebert, P. Frost, L. Gowanloch, J. Greer, T. Gunning, S. Gray, G. Goswinkle, A. Griffiths, J. Howe, N. Huntington, B. Hickling, N. Harris, A. Holmes, E. Haran, L. Hunt, A. Keenan, J. Mattes, P. Meulman, H. McInnes, A. McEntyre, N. Martin, E. Norris, W. O'Donnell, D. Osborne, M. O'Hanlon, J. Pattoniott, A. Ricketts, D. Rogers, C. Raecke, E. Richie, D. Richardson, J. Simpson, C. Winney, R. Stewart, A. Shepperd, K. Stone, R. Towner, S. Taylor, E. Thornley, R. Tully, K. Vincent, J. Whittaker, H. White, J. Walker, B. Wright.

The President welcomed our official guest, Peter Jontulovic, Director, Personnel and Administration Branch OTC(A), and all members to the meeting. A special welcome was extended to the following new members attending their first meeting:-

George Madren
Mick Wilden
Ron Connolly
Horrie Brown

Fraternal greetings were received from the Quarter Century Club of Teleglobe Canada, and the Presidents and members of our Victorian, Queensland, South Australian and Western Australian Branches, on the occasion of our A.G.M. A cordial invitation has been issued from our Branches, to any of us who are interested in attending their next meetings, which are listed in the April Newsletter.

Our minutes silence was observed to mark the passing of members during the past twelve months:-

George McDonald
A.A. McCallum
Frank Briggs
John Lennon
Charles Halsted
Jim Shore
George Wheeler

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of our previous meeting were distributed to members on their arrival and were declared open to discussion. There being no discussion it was moved by Alan Arndt and seconded by Randy Payne that the minutes of the 28th Annual General Meeting be confirmed.

Carried unanimously.

BALANCE SHEET AND ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The Balance Sheet was presented to all members present and there being no discussion it was moved by Tony Hanson and seconded by Ron Flood that the Balance Sheet and Auditors report be accepted.

Carried unanimously.

ELECTION OFFICERS

The President declared all offices vacant, and called for nominations for a Returning Officer to conduct the annual elections.

Mr. Randy Payne was nominated by Lou Brown and seconded by Joe Collister, there being no further nominations, Mr. Randy Payne was duly elected as Returning Officer.

The Returning Officer called for nominations for the office of President. Mr. R. McDonald was nominated by Des Woods and seconded by Bruce Collett. There being no further nominations, Mr. R. McDonald was declared President.

Mr. A. Arndt was nominated as Honorary Secretary by G. Day and seconded by R. Doohan, there being no further nominations, Mr. A. Arndt was declared Honorary Secretary.

TREASURER

This vacancy is brought about by the resignation of Joe Collister, (who is due to retire from OTC(A) early next year), nominations were called for and Mr. Mick Wilden was nominated by M. Wood, and seconded by J. Hodgson.

Carried unanimously.

AUDITORS (TWO)

These vacancies are brought about by the resignations of Eric Cockle and Bernie White.

Nominations were called for and Mr. Ray Peacock (nominated by B. Henson and seconded by L. Brown) and Ron Connolly (nominated by G. McDonald and seconded by C. Maiden).

Carried unanimously.

The following committee members indicated their willingness to accept a further term of office. Mr. G. Cupit nominated the new committee in toto, seconded by Mr. O. Cooper and were:- Messrs. J. Anderson, R. Baty, A. Ricketts, B. Collett, A. Griffiths, T. Thatcher, G. Thompson, C. Maiden, D. Bourne, and Jack Whittaker were duly elected as Committee.

NOMINATION FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

It is pleasing to note that Mr. Charles Carthew has made such satisfactory progress with his recovery from a stroke, that he can now continue in his role of National Secretary.

29TH ANNUAL REUNION

In accordance with feelings expressed at previous meetings, the President recommended we endeavour to secure the OTC House Conference Centre on Friday, 6th December, 1985 for our next reunion. Moved by L. Brown and seconded by A. Arndt, carried unanimously and agreed that the Committee make all necessary arrangements.

SICK LIST

The President regretfully reported the following members were either sick, or recovering from illness:-

Jack Burgess is about to enter hospital for a heart by-pass operation.

Jack Chant is recouperating at home from a longtime illness.

We all look forward to seeing both of these members at our Annual Reunion in December.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A letter of appreciation has been received from the "Philip Geeves Memorial Trust Fund", expressing thanks to our Association for the generous gift of \$347 we donated to this very worthwhile cause.

GENERAL BUSINESS

A proposal from Mr. G. Maltby, M.D. of OTC(A), suggesting members of the O.T.V.A. do voluntary work, using OTC(A) provided workshop facilities, to restore our collection of old equipment for future display in our Museum, which is to be located in OTC(A)'s new building, being erected in Bathurst Street, Sydney.

Discussion opened with Trevor Thatcher itemising the Cable and Radio equipment he has stored for us. A suggestion was made by Lou Brown that perhaps this restoration work could be more conveniently carried out at home. This suggestion was generally accepted and the following volunteers were noted:

Lou Brown
Ron McDonald
Tony Hanson
Gareth Thompson
Peter Whisson
Trevor Thatcher
Cyril Vantrick

President Ron then suggested our next move should be to arrange for an inspection of this equipment, so we can better evaluate the extent of work necessary, to complete this restoration. A visit to this store at OTC(A) Broadway, will be arranged by Mr. Alan Arndt.

President Ron mentioned an error on page 123 of our last Newsletter, which stated a name as VALSILLY instead of BALSILLEY. Several members present confirmed his observation, and a note correcting this error will appear in our October edition of Newsletter.

The President expressed the long standing appreciation and thanks of our Association, to the Commission for its continued support and generosity to our Association.

There being no further business, the meeting was declared closed, after inviting all present to adjourn for some refreshments in the adjoining room.

A.J. ARNDT
Honorary Secretary

HISTORICAL RECORD

From Gordon Cupit:

Having just completed reading a book called "Clear Across Australia" By Mrs. Ann Moyal, I recommend that all veterans endeavour to obtain this book from libraries etc., or better still if they can afford a copy to put it in their own library. (No idea of the price but it is rather large of 400 odd pages - I had the loan from a friend.)

It is a history of Telecommunications in Australia dedicated to the Telecommunications Pioneers between the period 1770 to 1983, so you will see that it is up-to-date. The author has carried out unprecedented research, taking three years to complete the book. The bibliography itself takes up 24 pages, so that one can see the effort put in by the Author. It carries stories on such subjects as the postal service, telegraphy, wireless telegraphy, telephony, wireless telephony, cables, CRS, Multi channel and broadband, broadcasting, switching, satellites, administration and organisation, earth stations, beam, gateways, transponders etc. One also sees names such as Anzcan, Aussat, Cantat, Compac, Comsat, Domsat, Intelsat. On the personal side one sees names as John Balsillie, Gen. Blamey, Gordon Bennett, Ken Boyle, Harry Brown, John Button, Sir Giles Chippindall, J.M. Crawford, Jack Curtis, Ernest Fisk, Dr. John Flynn, Graham Gosewinckel, Holmes A'Court, Kerry Packer, Trevor Housely, Richard Knuckey, Roy McKay, Guglielmo Marconi, Tom May, Samuel Morse, Frank O'Grady, Sherard Osborne, Father Shaw, Jack Skerrett, Bob Somervaille, Charles Todd, Harold White etc. to name a few. Some of these will be known to most Veterans and others have been mentioned in previous Newsletters.

It is difficult for one to find any aspect of Australian Telecommunications missing, both in peace and war. Some interesting examples are:-

- 1946 at the takeover from AWA and Cable and Wireless. The Long alliance between private enterprise and Government had ended. Instead, a strategic marriage had been arranged between the PMG's Department and OTC. As in many marriages there would be tensions and conflict. Rivalries would flare for the positioning of exchange gateways, the sites of satellite earth stations and submarine cable landfalls. The large family of PMG Engineers would tilt at the small band of OTC brothers as a "cushy and exclusive Club". But the fundamental relationship between the partners jogged along unquestioned for 25 years. With the Royal Commission into the Post Office appointed by another Labor Government in 1972, the question of OTC's future assumed all the infighting and bitterness of divorce.
- 1974 at the proposed incorporation of OTC into Telecom, OTC's own General Manager, Harold White, had already stirred ferment before Parliament rose in November 1974, energetic and mercurial, White pressed two insistent themes. He saw OTC as 'unique' and he was sharply critical of what he termed the 'divine right' of the APO as operator, regulator and advisor to Government. Under threat of submergence, White wasted no time in mustering the support of two powerful allies the Overseas Telecommunications Users Association and the Sydney Chamber of Commerce, and in drafting a fighting speech for the shadow Postmaster-General, Senator Durack. His politicking brought rewards.

Another chapter in Harold White's action in getting Domsat planning for OTC is also well worth reading.

Need we say any more - get it - read it and be better informed.

A LESSON IN PHYSICS

"Gentlemen, I draw your attention to the objects housed on the top of those old lockers, yonder."

The speaker was a Mr. George Sheppard, Esq., one of a band of characters employed as telegraphists in the old Spring Street S.O.R. (Sydney Operating Room).

Six pairs of eyes swung in the direction indicated.

Shoved back in an unobtrusive position were two "multi-pots", dust encrusted and lack-lustre. They had figured in a brain-wave scheme implemented by one of the semi-administrative staff, or "outer party members" as George Orwell called them, as the where-with-all of doing away with the making of personalised pots of tea, a staff practice galling to some members of the non-traffic brethren.

In the normal order of things, a fresh pot of tea was made at intervals throughout each shift, and the staff's attention to the fact that a new brew had been made was gained by bashing a lump of angle-iron against the chrome-plated leg of one of the operating tables upon which it was placed,

producing various reactions. Those with weak hearts clutched at their respective chests, and the lame and halt hobbled aside at maximum knots to avoid being trampled in the ensuing rush of cup-bearing personnel converging on the pot. The degree of noise and mayhem was dependant upon whether we had OTC top brass or VIPs visiting the section, i.e. the more brass/VIPs the noisier and wilder the rush. It was our way of showing our gratitude for even the smallest privilege.

So, it came to pass that a minion of the hierarchy was despatched to find ways and means of ending this barbaric display by providing an alternate method of tea-making. The result - the installation of two multi-pots.

The multi-pots were of stainless steel, each with a capacity of approximately sixteen Imperial pints. The theory behind the multi-pots was simple. An edict was promulgated explaining that in the future the multi-pots would arrive on the scene firstly around 0800 hours. (0800 is telegraphic jargon for 8am - for clerical staff, it when the little hand on your Mickey Mouse watch points to eight and the big hand is straight up in the air over Mickey's head.) One of the pots was filled with black tea and the other with tea with milk. This, the pundits proclaimed, should serve staff requirements until 1600 hours (4pm or Mickey's little hand on four and biggie straight up). At 1600 the pots were to be replenished with similar brews calculated to last until 2300 hours, after which time personalised pots would be tolerated until 0800 the next morning when the multi-pot procedure would commence all over again.

In fairness, let us concede that the scheme was installed in good faith and with the best interests of staff in mind; however, it was doomed to failure from the start, because of three main factors. Firstly, the lot fell to the cleaners to prepare the brews, an act they resented as it was not part of their duty statement or requirements. Secondly, after the first hour or so the prepared brews, particularly the one containing milk, tasted as if it had been stewed for a week and was plummy awful. The third, and perhaps most important reason, was that the scheme had been installed without any consultation with the staff users, and that, as any Industrial Psychologist will tell you, will put the kybosh on any scheme. The staff went back to making their own pots of tea, and the Administration, finally conceding defeat, subsequently abandoned the scheme, with the multi-pots being despatched to their present location.

All this, mind you, flashed through the brains of the observers in a split second.

Six pairs of eyes swung back to George.

"So???", said the owner of one pair.

George made tsk tsk noises in the manner of a teacher who realises that his dumb pupils have not observed the lesson.

"It's a matter of physics", he explained. "The multi-pots are designed to hold hot liquids with a form of insulation designed to exclude exterior cooling forces. If we concede this factor then we must also concede that the reverse will apply, i.e., if it were to be filled with cold liquid, the insulation would exclude any heating agents....."

"How much?" we chorused. (We had just caught up with him.)

"I would say six to ten bob, depending upon the number of starters", said George, reaching for a pink Inward Service Pad upon which he recorded the names and amounts tendered by us. (When you are young, everyone loves a party.)

Sub nocte, as the Romans used to say, (or "under cover of darkness" for those of you who took the High School commercial course), emissaries were despatched to Aaron's Hotel (now defunct) to purchase the necessary ingredients with the available funds, whilst two pairs of hands scrubbed and sterilised the multi-pots with a loving, tender care never imparted by the hands of the conscripted cleaners.

The response from the "starters" had exceeded our wildest expectations, enabling the purchase of a large range of spirits and wines broken down to a non-toxic consistency by the addition of dry ginger ale, soda water, mineral water and ice. After all the objective was not "to get bombed outer yer skull", as one of our intellectuals put it, but rather to receive that warm inner glow that allowed you to laugh at the supervisor's jokes. Such was the enthusiasm of the participants that precious emergency supplies were also contributed. One donor contributed three-quarters of a bottle of Buckley's "Canadiol", a brand of cough mixture reputedly used by the Mounties in the blizzardly cold north of Canada, and which they apparently drank with their burnt toast and baked beans (according to the label). It, too, was added to the concoction to achieve the correct "colour", as George put it.

The method of distribution was simple. Each contributor was issued with a piece of cardboard cut into uniform dimensions similar to the war-time ration cards. This was presented to the M.P.C.D. (multi-pot custodian and distributor) on each trip to the font, and was good for five rations, each card being put under the electric clock-stamp when a ration was claimed. After the issue of the fifth ration the custodian destroyed the card. The five rations per customer had been mathematically arrived at simply by measuring the volume of punch with a standard glass cup. Volume divided by number of participant contributors equals five. Q.E.D.

The supervisor called a snap meeting of his supernumeraries. Had they noticed that everyone was present? That no one had left the premises to buy a sandwich or a newspaper? That everyone was in his place and that there was a place for everyone? They had. The supernumeraries countered. Had the supervisor noted that the punching was proceeding at rollicking rate? That operators were opening extra channels off their own bat in keeping with traffic offering, and without being prompted by them? That the way things were going they would achieve the impossible dream - a "clear situation" handover for the midnight men? He had.

There was also a passing reference to the apparent recent addiction to cold tea in glass cup by two thirds of the staff, the tops of the cups being carefully covered after each sip. However, these worthies had progressed through the ranks themselves and they knew when to strike and when to leave well enough alone.

And a "clear situation" handover it was. The joy of the evening supervisor was exceeded only by that of the oncoming shift.

In due course the news relating to the newly-found use for the multi-pots reached "the authorities" and the multi-pots were banished from the scene. I would like to think that they will turn up as exhibits in our proposed telegraphic museum, but maybe I am asking too much of life.

Still, they achieved their moment of glory, and so far as the night went, the immortal Bard said it all with his statement

"ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL".

(The central character in the above tale, Mr. George Sheppard, is now the Secretary-Manager of the Western Suburbs Rugby Union Club, located in George Street, Burwood, N.S.W. 2134. George would appreciate a visit from any of the Beam boys, but a warning 'phone call would be appreciated and bring your money with you.)

AMALGATED WIRELESS AUSTRALASIA VETERANS' ASSOCIATION

This letter was sent to Alan Vagg in Elwood Victoria from Fred Holloway, President of the above Association, via his Secretary Reg Vine who lives at 1 Dean Court, Baulkham Hills N.S.W. 2153. For the benefit of ex-AWAers in other States, the numbers given are Sydney numbers and will require the 02 prefix if ringing STD, with the exception of the Membership Secretary, Ken Stevens which includes the STD code.

"Dear Alan,

Ron Smith rang me a few days ago to tell me that he had recently been in Melbourne and had contacted you and told you about our Association. He went on to tell me that you were interested and would like further details, so here goes:-

It all started last September when Reg Vine and his wife, Alrene, came over to our house for dinner. We were discussing old times and how one loses contact with fellows we had worked a lifetime with. I made the suggestion to Reg that perhaps we could start an association similar to that run by retired people from Qantas, OTC, the Armed Forces, Banks, etc.

So we decided to contact a few people who had already retired and try out the idea. The enthusiasm was so great that we had an inaugural meeting on 29th September last attended by 16 people, at the Kuringai Businessmens' Club, Pymble. At this meeting we put our ideas together and decided to push ahead with an association, which, at Ron Smith's suggestion, we decided to call the Amalgamated Wireless Australasia Veterans Association.

Encouraged by this meeting we decided to meet regularly in order to properly formulate the Association. During the next few months the meetings were really working parties aimed at working our rules, eligibility, procedures, formats, etc. By the end of January this year we were ready to go. We had a constitution setting out the purpose of the Association, eligibility for membership, management and financial matters.

I told John Hooke about it by phone and later in his office filled him in with the details. He was most enthusiastic and gave formal approval of the use of AWA in the name. He also expressed the hope that all sections of the Company would be covered. This, I assured him, was our intention.

We had our first regular Association meeting in February, attended by 40 retirees from all the Sydney divisions and Head Office. It was a most successful meeting. Our Guest Speaker was Ron Stewart who had just retired. He gave us a most interesting talk on the Company and its current activities. Everyone seemed to enjoy himself.

The format of the meetings is

1. Assemble from 11am for fellowship and refreshments.
2. 12.30pm - 1.30pm Lunch with the conducting of Association business.
3. 1.30pm - 2.15pm Guest Speaker
4. Informality, free and easy - depart when ready.

We meet four times a year - on the 4th Thursday of February, May, August, and November. The November meeting is the Annual General Meeting with the election of the committee for the following year.

The Committee this year is:

President - Fred Holloway	Phone 449 1205
Vice President - Garth Jones	84 5865
Secretary - Reg Vine	624 8974
Treasurer - Theo Schilizzi	997 6706
M/Ship Sec. - Ken Stevens	(045) 67 2184

Some of these names will be familiar to you."

Fred Holloway goes on to say that membership application forms can be obtained from the Secretary whose address and phone number appear above. Each intending applicant will receive a copy of the Constitution and a copy of the Association Newsletter. An invitation to any retirees who may be in Sydney during the meeting times mentioned would be most welcome. The cost of the luncheon is around the \$6/7 plus the cost of liquid refreshments. As we are required to book prior to the function it would be appreciated if a prior phone call is made advising us of your intention. The call can be made to any one of the Committee.

The venue for meetings is the Concord R.S.L. Club, Nirranda Street, Concord West. Club facilities are available at the conclusion of Association business.

A copy of the Constitution was included in Fred's letter which I will not reproduce here, as any information may be obtained from any of the Committee members. However, the guide-lines as to Member Eligibility are:-

MEMBERSHIP

- (a) Membership shall be restricted to ex-employees with at least 20 years service who:
1. Retired within 5 years of the Company's recognised retiring age.

2. Retired due to ill-health or unusual domestic circumstances within 15 years of the Company's recognised retiring age.
3. Retired at the Company's request or suggestion within 10 years of the Company's recognised retiring age.
4. Left to take up other employment or who were terminated within 15 years of the Company's recognised retiring age.

Elsewhere it is stated that the Management Committee may refer applications for membership which do not strictly meet Clause (a) above.

Annual membership fee is \$10, with no joining fee. The only other costs are those mentioned earlier, that is \$6/7 per head for the luncheon.

We are including a copy of the February AWAVA NEWSLETTER because of its possible interest to our own members, and as a fraternal gesture toward a brother/sister Veterans' Association with our best wishes for the success of their organisation.

AWAVA NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 1985

Committee

President - Fred Holloway 449 1205
Vice President - Garth Jones 845865
Secretary - Reg Vine 624 8974
Treasurer - Theo Schilizzi 997 6706
Membership Secretary - Ken Stevens (045) 67 2184.

Meetings

The Association meets four times a year - on the 4th Thursday of February, May, August and November. This last month, November, will include the Annual General Meeting with election of committee for the forthcoming year and with presentation of reports.

The present venue is The Kuringai Club, 13 Telegraph Road, Pymble. This may be changed depending on the size of the Association and the wishes of the members.

The committee meets one month before the main meeting.

Format of Meeting

Assemble from 11am informally for fellowship.
12.30 - 1.30pm Light lunch during which time Association business matters will be conducted.
1.30 - 2.00pm Guest Speaker with questions.
2.00pm End of meeting. Club facilities available.

The sections of cable from Australia to Fanning Island had already been laid by the cable ship Anglia, and, since a cable service had already been established across the Atlantic Ocean, and to Australia via the Middle East (called Via Eastern), it only remained for the section of cable between Bamfield and Fanning Island to be laid to complete the globe-encircling system of communications.

By this time, the buildings at Bamfield were nearing completion. Clearing the site of huge cedar trees had been a problem in itself. The efforts of the workmen were limited to felling the trees and cutting them up into cordwood lengths for future use in the furnace of the station. The stumps were left in the ground and in many places are still there today. One or two of them came in handy for mooring the large cable ships, the wharf being too small to accommodate them.

The main building, a beautiful photogenic three-storied structure, was built by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company and resembled one of their hotels. This company was involved in the project because they were responsible for re-transmitting the messages across Canada on their telegraph lines. The building provided not only the office and maintenance rooms, but also accommodation for the staff of twenty bachelors. It was complete with hotel-like kitchen and cooking facilities, (the kitchen range is now at Camp Ross, Pachena Bay) dining room with windows commanding a panoramic view of Barkley Sound, billiard room, library with over three thousand books and open fireplace, music room, etc. It contained about fifty rooms altogether. The bathrooms were equipped with electric bells - presumably one pressed the button to summon a Chinese servant when in difficulties of some sort or other. Accommodation was provided in basement rooms for about a dozen Chinamen, half of whom acted as houseboys, while the remainder were maintenance men.

On 19th September, 1902, the Colonia arrived at Bamfield and commenced laying the shore end. She lay some 400 yards offshore while a long endless rope was rigged around a big swivel block fastened to a large stump ashore, and around a similar block on the ship. This was for the purpose of pulling the cable ashore. Empty barrels were attached at intervals to keep the cable afloat until the end was safely ashore, then they were cut adrift, allowing the cable to sink to the bottom.

At two o'clock in the afternoon, with a parting salute to the officials ashore, the Colonia began paying out the cable on her long voyage to Fanning Island, 4,000 miles away.

As was customary on such occasions, local residents who had gathered to watch the historic event were served refreshments in the traditional manner by Mr. McLachlan, superintendent of the cable station.

Such importance was attached to the laying of this cable that civic authorities in Victoria planned a special celebration to mark the event. It was held in the old Victoria Theatre (now the front part of the T. Eaton store) and the program contained musical items interspersed with speeches by local dignitaries and items by the band of the Fifth Regiment.

The stage was decorated with a large map showing the route of the All Red Cable, and since both the Pacific Cable Board and the Canadian Pacific Telegraph Company had arranged to send congratulatory messages over their lines free of cost, a table containing telegraph apparatus was placed in a corner near the footlights. Seated at the table as operators were Mr. Christie, manager of the local Canadian Pacific office, and Robert Bain, assistant superintendent of the Bamfield Cable Station.

Mayor Howard opened the meeting by explaining the tremendous importance of the event which had that day (1st November, 1902) become an accomplished fact, thus completing the last link in encircling the world. He expressed the feelings of the gathering when he said that it could not fail to be a source of pride and satisfaction to every member of the British Empire that this important enterprise had succeeded; that it would form an additional bond of brotherhood and would, in various ways, prove of great benefit to every part of the Empire.

A long poem about the glories of the Empire, especially written for the occasion by the town clerk, was read and loudly acclaimed.

Messages were sent to various heads of state, including one to Sir Sanford Fleming, and replies were received during the course of the meeting.

The following day more messages were exchanged by various governments with King Edward, the Prime Ministers of Australia and New Zealand, Governors, Lieutenant-Governors and Governors-General. Cablegrams from all parts of the world poured in to Sir Sanford Fleming, congratulating him on the success of his great project.

Later, engineers who tested the cable reported that, despite an electrical resistance of 6,295 ohms and an electrical capacity of 1450 microfarads, it had exceeded expectations and attained a duplex speed of 110 letters per minute, practically double that which had been anticipated. Over the ensuing years this was gradually increased to 135 letters per minute.

ORIGINAL STAFF

The original staff of the Bamfield Cable Station was listed as follows:-

Adams, W.G.	PCB operator
Bain, R.	PCB assistant superintendent
Bradbury, C.	CPR operator
Cox, K.C.	PCB mechanic
Godson, J.	PCB bookkeeper
Godwin, A.J.	PCB supervisor
Jackson, R.J.	PCB cable operator
McLachlan, R.G.	PCB superintendent & postmaster
McWha, C.E.	PCB cable operator
Mars, J.	PCB engineer
Noad, F.E.	PCB cable operator
Osborn, D.	PCB cable operator
Owen, W.G.	PCB cable operator
Scott, George	PCB cable operator
Stewart, R.D.	Carpenter
Sullivan, Arthur	CPR operator
Waugh, L.	PCB cable operator

THE WEAKEST LINK

The winter storms that followed the completion of the trans-Pacific cable soon showed up the weakest link in the around-the-world system: the tenuous thread of copper wire strung from tree to tree along the eastern shore of the Alberni Inlet, connecting Bamfield with Port Alberni. From there the line went by an overhead system strung on telephone poles via Cameron Lake to Parksville and then underwater by cable to Vancouver.

All too frequently, the line was interrupted by windfalls and heavy snowfalls, causing lengthy delays to the whole service, evidenced by the following entries in the Carmanah lighthouse diary:

"Oct. 31, 1902. No connections with Victoria, and Alberni wire is crossed with the Cable Station wire.

Jan. 27, 1903. The cable wire to Victoria from Bamfield Creek gone; broken at Franklin River every half mile. Five feet of snow at Quatsino."

This was partly rectified the following summer when the cable ship Iris laid a cable up the Inlet to replace the landline. However, this still left the vulnerable overhead system from Port Alberni to Parksville.

Right from the beginning some experts claimed it would have been better to have run the cable underwater up Juan de Fuca Strait to the vicinity of Victoria instead of landing it at Bamfield. That argument lasted for the duration of the cable station at Bamfield, and did not end until 1963, when the overhead landline between Port Alberni and Parksville was replaced by an underground cable, protected from falling trees, heavy snowfalls, saboteurs and other hazards.

For the first few years the Pacific Cable Board was operated as if it were a private line connecting government departments in the Commonwealth, consequently it operated at a loss. It was not until it was placed on a competitive basis that it became increasingly profitable. So much so, that in 1926, the cost of duplicating the system between Bamfield and Suva, Fiji Islands, was paid for out of the preceding year's surplus of over \$850,000.

It was surprising the amount of traffic that could be transmitted over a slow cable when it was kept full twenty-four hours a day. At the prevailing duplex speed of 24 words a minute (120 letters), 34,560 words could be moved daily in each direction, an average of 2,300 messages each way. Additional space was saved by abbreviating offices of origin and destination: for instance - London was sent LN, Vancouver VR, etc. Numerals also were abbreviated by using a special code.

During World War I the limitations of the cable were realized, the cheaper deferred classes of traffic being delayed for weeks on end awaiting transmission over the slow cable. It was obvious that additional capacity was required.

It was during this war that the German trans-Atlantic cable was confiscated by the British and part of it re-laid as an emergency route from Bamfield to Victoria via the Juan de Fuca Strait. It was landed at Clover Point and the shore-end is still visible there encased in concrete on the eastern shore. The concrete foundation on the bank above marks the place where the cable hut once stood.

The cable was an old one and not in very good condition, with the result that it was interrupted most of the time and proved too expensive to maintain just as an emergency route. It was never used except for an occasional message during World War II when the Canadian government insisted that it be maintained and connected to Gordon Head army headquarters where the University of Victoria now stands. After the war it was abandoned.

In 1923 it was decided that the system across the Pacific Ocean should be duplicated, but before doing so, experiments with long distance radio (which was becoming increasingly competitive with the cables) were conducted. A party of radio technicians arrived at Pachena Point lighthouse in September of that year and set up equipment for the highspeed transmission and reception of radio telegraph signals. Contacts with Honolulu and Sydney were established but proved to be unreliable, mainly because, at that time, the system of beaming signals by means of special antennae, had not been invented - or at least was not used by the experimenters.

In 1926 the cable system across the Pacific Ocean was duplicated. On 26th October the 9,000 ton cableship Dominia which, like her predecessor the Colonia, had been especially constructed for the Pacific cable project, sailed from Bamfield and began paying out cable at the rate of ten knots. The cable was of a new type described as "loaded", having a thin wire permalloy wound spirally around the copper core, which increased the inductance of the cable in order to neutralize the effect of the capacity. Thus an increase in speed, which the engineers predicted would be five times that of the original Pacific cable, was made possible.

After travelling an average distance of 200 miles each day for 17 days, the Dominia arrived at Fanning Island, a coral atoll in mid-Pacific, on the 14th of November, and buoyed the end of the long cable. While she had been laying this section of the cable, another cableship, the Faraday, was duplicating the section between Fiji Islands and Fanning Island.

When speed trials were conducted on the new cable, they proved that the expectations of the design engineers had been correct: a working simplex speed of 150 words (750 letters) per minute was attained, making it not only the longest telegraph cable in the world but also the fastest in the Commonwealth. The speedy service which resulted from the duplication brought an increase amount of business to the cable system. However, shortly afterwards, the introduction of beam radio antennae so improved the transmission and reception of long-distance radio signals, that radio - which offered a cheaper service - took the business back again.

At this time, a new cable office of concrete construction (the present Marine Biological Station) was erected in front of the original wooden building at Bamfield. The architect, Francis Mawson Rattenbury, had also designed the Parliament Buildings and the Empress Hotel in Victoria. The austere new building resembled a Tibetan lamasery, perched as it was on the edge of a hill overlooking Barkley Sound, and was often referred to by unhappy bachelors on the staff as "Alcatraz".

Also at this time, a new wing was added to the north end of the original wooden building, now referred to as the Bachelor's Quarters. It contained twenty-four single rooms for the additional staff required to man the duplicated system. However, as the number of bachelors decreased over the ensuing years and the number of married men increased, this new wing was turned into flats for married couples.

CABLE REPAIRS

The deep sea cable lies on the bed of the ocean, in some places four miles deep where there is little or no movement of the water. Therefore, it is seldom broken except by submarine, earthquakes or earthslides and it does not require much armor for protection.

The shore ends, which are in shallow waters, are heavily armored with iron sheathing wires. It is here that most of the breaks occur owing to tidal movements causing chafing of the cable on rocks, or to damage by ship's anchors.

Should a break or interruption occur, either complete or partial, the fault can be located from either end by measuring the resistance and the capacity of the cable to the point where the signals leak through the fault to earth. As the resistance and capacity of the cable per nautical mile are known factors, the position of the fault, which is the unknown factor, can be calculated from the readings obtained by the Wheatstone bridge test.

Sometimes a marine animalculae may bore through the insulation of the cable and expose the core to salt water, causing an interruption. This type of fault can be sealed temporarily by applying a sealing current from the nearest shore end, which causes a chemical coating to form on the exposed core and insulate it from the seawater. It is only a temporary measure, however, for sooner or later, the cable ship has to go out to the spot, grapple for the cable, cut out the fault, haul up the ends and splice in a new piece of cable. Sometimes this has to be done at a depth of over four miles.

It is not generally known by fishermen and other mariners that cable companies will gladly compensate owners of ships for the loss of their anchor and chain if reasonable proof is produced that they were in the vicinity of a submarine cable, and that they did hook the cable and had to cut their anchor loose rather than run the risk of damaging the cable by trying to clear the anchor with brute force.

METHODS OF OPERATING THE CABLE

Methods of operating the cables changed radically over the years. When the first cable was laid across the Atlantic in 1857, the method was very primitive compared with modern methods. A galvanometer, consisting of a moving copper coil suspended between two magnets, had a small disc mirror attached to the coil. A beam of light centered on the mirror and, as the coil moved to the left for a dot and to the right for a dash, the receiving operator, in a darkened room, called out the letters to another man who wrote them down at a speed of approximately eight words per minute. Later on, it was found practicable to project the moving beam of light on the writer's pad, thus eliminating the reader and avoiding sound, or phonetic, errors. A disadvantage of this system was the lack of a permanent record which could be consulted a second time in case of doubtful signals.

The method of signalling over cables differed from that over landlines in that, instead of a single key to make and break the contact, a twin key was used to reverse the current in the cable, the positive current making a dot and the negative a dash. The signals were recorded in a wavy line on a moving tape by means of a siphon recorder like a seismograph. The system of manual transmission by key was used for many years and some operators attained an amazing degree of dexterity, producing signals with machine-like precision.

From the simple manual operation by key, the next step was to manually operated hand punches which perforated an oiled tape, which was then fed into a transmitter. These punches had three keys, one for dot, one for space, and one for dash. The operator hit the keys with two rubber-tipped metal punch sticks, or mallets, in proper sequence. A high speed could be attained by the experts who could play rhythmic tunes while operating and even cross over hands without missing a beat.

After the hand perforators came the Kleinschmidt and Creed perforators, each with a keyboard like a typewriter and operated in much the same manner as a typewriter, except that they perforated a tape instead of printing on paper.

Although the methods of transmission changed, the method of reception continued to be much the same: by means of siphon recorder. The reading of long-cable signals called for a high degree of skill. The signals, as recorded on the tape, had little definition and it took an experienced operator to differentiate between the various combinations of dots and dashes. In addition, disturbances on the cable produced distortion and added to the difficulty of reading the signals. A long cable, bisecting as it does the lines of force of the earth, acts as a generator of surious signals and any movement of these lines of force, or any lightning, generated a current in the cable and distorted the signals. In latter years, however, most of these spurious signals were filtered out and bypassed.

A large proportion of the messages sent over the cables was in code and cipher, which increased the difficulty of reading the long cable signals. An operator could have a fair idea of what a letter in a word should be in plain language, even though it might be distorted, but in code, he could not guess - he had to be sure. Every error was logged against the operator who made it, and operators were allowed only a certain percentage of errors in the number of words they handled. If they exceeded this percentage in the course of the year, they lost their annual wage increment. It was a hard school, but it produced good operators, some of whom could receive and transmit over half a million words in a year without an error.

Later, the manual translation, or "human relay" system, gave way to automatic tape reception and transmission and, finally to a completely automatic system whereby the message was handled only once at the transmission end and thereafter was untouched by hand, being received at its destination, wherever it happened to be, by automatic printer.

When manual operation became obsolete, so too, did the long distance cable operator; a new kind of expert was necessary; an electronic one. An era was passing away and its passing spelled the doom of the Bamfield Cable Station.

EVACUATION

The cost of operating and maintaining a large establishment like the Bamfield Cable Station was very high - especially as it was only a relay station and did not produce any revenue. Throughout the years, various schemes had been suggested whereby the station could be bypassed but they were not acceptable to the head office in London, England. One such scheme, which was eventually undertaken, was to continue the cable underground from Port Alberni to Horne Lake and Cameron Lake, thence underwater in the lakes and underground again to Parksville and thence under the Strait of Georgia to Vancouver.

It was not until the Canadian section of the route came under Canadian government control in 1950, and the Canadian Overseas Telecommunication Corporation, a Crown corporation, was formed, that a system of tone control was devised which would make possible the remote control of the cables from Vancouver. At this time, all of the Commonwealth countries took over control of their own section of overseas communications, and a central Telecommunications Board was formed in London. The cost of operating the unproductive but necessary relay stations was borne by the whole system and profits were allocated on a proportionate basis. It soon became evident that the Bamfield Station was costing far more than it should, so it was decided to bypass it.

In 1959, a new cable office was built in Port Alberni and a new connecting cable was laid up the Inlet to Port Alberni from Bamfield by the cables ship Monarch. The electronic equipment was installed and tested and the station was ready for the changeover from the old system to the new.

It took place on 20th June, 1959.

At the appointed hour, the few remaining staff at Bamfield sent the following message to all stations on the line across the Pacific Ocean:

"Farewell from Bamfield before closing down after fifty-seven years of operation and leaving it to the shades of the past."

A footnote to Fanning Island, the next relay point, was added:

"The next signals you see will be those of Port Alberni. Goodbye, old man."

The cables were then joined together at Bamfield and that was that! An era had passed!

All of the instruments in the Bamfield office, which throughout the years had attained a remarkable degree of electro-mechanical perfection, were left where they were and covered with white sheets, making the operating room look like a morgue. They were obsolete. The lights of the office building, which for fifty-seven years had served as an aid to navigation (being visible at sea), were now extinguished; in their stead, the Department of Transport, Marine Division, erected a flashing light on the rocks of Aguilar Point to serve the same purpose. The empty office building, which now seemed like an oversized mausoleum, served only as a cable hut wherein the cables were joined together, bypassing Bamfield.

At that time (1959), this was considered to be a radical change in the method of operation of the cable, but it was nothing compared to the change that was to come within the next few years. Not only did the system of operation become obsolete, but so too did the cables. Telegraphic cables gave way to telephonic ones.

The new type of co-axial telephone cable, which had proved so successful across the Atlantic Ocean, was completely different in construction from the old telegraphic type. It was comparatively lightweight and flexible, containing built-in amplifiers every twenty miles, which permitted the transmission of wide frequency bandwidth necessary for the numerous channels of telephonic and telegraphic communication.

When the trans-Pacific telephone cable was laid in 1963 by the cableship Monarch, it bypassed the old Bamfield Cable Station completely, being laid up the Alberni Inlet directly to Port Alberni.

Despite the importance of the project, and unlike the occasion when the original cable was laid across the Pacific, there was little publicity in the local newspapers. One small item said:

"the cableship Monarch had begun laying the new trans-Pacific telephone cable from Port Alberni to Hawaii, which would link Canada with Hawaii, Fiji, New Zealand and Australia."

It will be noticed that this cable landed on foreign territory in Hawaii, so that the system could no longer be referred to as the All Red Route.

On the 3rd of December of that year, 1963, the new telephone cable from England to Australia was officially declared open by Queen Elizabeth. The first stage across the Atlantic Ocean had been completed in 1961; the second stage, Canada to Australia, was thus completed in 1963, the two stages being linked across Canada by the trans-Canada micro-wave system.

The system contained eighty voice channels, each of which could be split up into twenty-two telegraphic channels if required, and the system was a duplex one, meaning that it could be operated in both directions at the same time.

CONCLUSION

For six years the old cable station buildings lay idle, attended only by two caretakers. In 1965 the beautiful wooden structure known as the Bachelors' Quarters, still well preserved although neglected, was demolished. Twelve houses, previously accommodating married staff, were also put to the torch, presumably in order to reduce the taxable value of the property.

All the old equipment, apparently considered valueless by the authorities, was disposed to junk dealers. Fortunately, their historical worth was recognised by the Victoria branch of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers which, in January 1969, honored the old cable station by assembling a permanent display of early submarine telegraphic equipment in the Maritime Museum of British Columbia in Victoria, B.C., some of the old equipment being re-purchased from the junk dealers for that purpose.

In the latter part of 1969 the cable station property, consisting of 190 acres, was purchased by the five Western Canadian universities of Victoria, British Columbia, Simon Fraser, Calgary and Alberta, for a Marine Biological Station, much to the pleasure of local inhabitants. With this development, the old cable station will come to life and once again be the centre of activity in the Barkley Sound area.

CREDITS

Well, good people, that about wraps it up for 1985. Already we are getting ready for the April 1986 "NEWSLETTER" so let's have some contributions. A few lines of nostalgia could unleash a torrent of memories of our earlier days.

Editing this "NEWSLETTER" has been the most rewarding venture I have ever undertaken, but I cannot repeat often enough that when you older Veterans go there will be a lot of history go with you. Take a few moments of time, and put pen to paper. We'd be glad to hear from you.

My thanks to the following contributors

BRAX HORROCKS
CHARLES CARTHEW
JOHN LEE
CLENDYN SEARLE
BRUCE SCOTT
GUYE RUSSELL
ELLIS SMELLIE
JIM BANKS
GORDON CUPIT
JACK WOODALL
BILL CRAIG
ALAN VAGG

and if I have missed anyone, my apologies.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS.

