



OTVA Newsletter

October 2014
Volume 15 Page 18

Registered Address:
42 Keswick Street
Georges Hall NSW 2198
ISSN 1322-1906

OTVA *BIG* Christmas Function—Don't Miss it!

This year's Christmas function is shaping up to be a big one. We are expecting 80 plus OTC Veterans and friends to attend. It is a great opportunity to catch up with your colleagues. Everyone is welcome to attend!

Please click the RSVP link below to send an email to the President. Look forward to seeing you there.

When: 11:30am Thursday 6th November 2014

Where: 2nd Floor
The Bowlers Club
99 York Street Sydney

What: Private Buffet Lunch (\$35) and Bar Service

RSVP: president@otva.com

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Coming Events:

Xmas Function:

Thursday 6th November 2014

Committee Meetings –10 am:

- Wednesday 11/2/15
- Wednesday 6/5/15
- Wednesday 22/7/15
- Wednesday 7/10/15

AGM

Friday 12th June, 2015

Message from the President

Fellow Members of the OTVA

The end of 2014 is almost upon us and I wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Our membership at the end of 2014 will be the healthiest that it has been in many years and we consider this to be predominantly attributable to the introduction of Enduring Membership.

At this time of the year we reflect upon the number of our brothers and sisters that have passed away during the year. We extend condolences to their family & friends while remembering their contributions to our lives and great memories of our time in OTC.

We continue to amass documents for the library of employment history of ex-OTC personnel. These documents are being stored to enable us to reflect upon the contribution of our members on our time in OTC.

I look forward to the OTVA Christmas function to be held at the Bowlers Club, Level 2, 99 York Street Sydney on 6 November at midday. A large turnout is anticipated with many ex-OTCers coming to Sydney from interstate and overseas.

DVDs containing many of the Transit and Contact magazines circulated by OTC since 1948 has been produced and copies of the DVD will be available at the OTVA Christmas function. The library contains 293 Transits out of a possible 335 and 42 Contacts out of a possible 56. A copy of the DVD will also be available upon request to those who cannot attend the function in Sydney in November.

Warmest regards,

Peter Bull



Peter Bull—President OTVA

More Stories Needed!

The focus of the Newsletter this year will be on people and places. I'm sure there are thousands of stories out there, and some that we can print! Do we have members that were in PNG? It would be great to hear about it. How about Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos—there was some great work done there by OTC. Other international operations such as Kazakhstan, Georgia—there must be someone that was on that famous Antonov flight to transport the Satellite dish from Australia? What about our business offices in London, NZ and New York. Of course most of OTC's work was done onshore—The SOR, MOR, BOR, Coastal Radio, Stations, Paddo, Broadway etc....lets get those memories working and preserve it for posterity.

Articles can be lodged by email, letter or recorded over the 'phone. Your editor is a very proficient touch typist thanks to OTC and Mrs Eastern at the Sydney Business college—but that's another story!

The best story (as judged by the committee) in each issue receives a \$50 prize.

Cyclone Tracy 40 Years on—were you there, tell us your story?

This Christmas will mark the 40th anniversary of cyclone Tracy devastating Darwin. OTC Staff involved during and after this disaster. Next issue we would like to publish a first hand account from those who were there and preserve these memories for posterity.

There have been some comments passed to the President of the OTVA about the event. These comments provided some names of people involved. What was it like for an OTC employee to go the site and view firsthand the aftermath and the devastation and the experience spirit of the people who had to rebuild? Please drop Peter an email recounting your experience at president@otva.com.

From Kevan Bourke

I have mentioned your request to **Derek Walker** and **Don Charles** and asked if they are willing to put something down as well or help me out as my memory is a bit hazy. Derek was second in charge of the Radio Operators to Bob Hooper who has since passed away. Derek was there through the whole ordeal and he and family stayed on. Don came up for a short period with a group of riggers to help sort out the antenna's.

The station tech at the time was **Brendan Quirk**. From memory he was on leave and **Les Gold-er** was filling in for him and they were both there through the cyclone. They had to evacuate Les because of health issues. I went up about a fortnight after the cyclone (special permits had to be obtained to enter the area) and Brendan and family were moved south shortly after.

Others to come up during that period, though some time later, were **Lindsay Harradine**, **Bill Linney**, **Dave O'Loughlin** and **Geoff Butlin**. Plans were in progress to move the transmitters into a new extension prior to the cyclone and it was decided to continue. **Ray Hookway** was in charge of the tech's and I believe **Phil Chapman** was in charge of the Operators.

There were others around at the time, mostly operators, but I don't know of their whereabouts. I was quite young compared to most of them

My brother, Tom, was in Darwin prior to Tracy but came to Bondi to spend Xmas with me with the intention of going back but couldn't. He left his girlfriend, Pat, up there and she witnessed Tracy and was then evacuated and joined my brother in Bondi. They couldn't go back as their jobs were gone. They later married, had a family, divorced and now spend much of their time together. I went up thinking I was only going for a short time and that Tom & Pat would be returning and got stuck there. One of my best mates from school was there as well and sat through Tracy.

I can't remember the exact situation but **Brendan Quirk** was the resident Tech up there and **s** was there as well. I think Brendan may have been in Darwin on leave and Les may have been relieving. When I went up Brendan was there briefly and Les had already returned to Sydney.

John Lilley remembers Charlie Carthew

I read Denis Pickwell's article about Charlie Carthew with fond memories. Charlie was on long service leave when I started with OTC in January 1955, and his place was most competently filled by Ted Turner, who eased my entry to OTC very capably. Paul Borg started on the same day, and we underwent our familiarisation program together. Having been a telegraphist in Malta, Paul already had the skills that I had to develop - the speed with which he addressed the keyboard stunned me. At 10 o'clock in the morning Paul was typing at about 50 wpm and I was still trying to find F and J! Why was I so slow? I hurried to try and catch up.

When Charlie came back from LSL, I was working as a Traffic Assistant in MOR, and spending the odd spare hour in the College of Knowledge - Charlie's kingdom on the 3rd Floor, shared with the Marconi School - bringing my typing, Morse and other skills up to the level which would permit me to undertake some full-time training which would lead me to becoming a telegraphist (Typing at 50 wpm, Morse at 15 wpm, read 5-unit tape at about 5 wpm). Charlie spoke for the abilities of those wishing to become telegraphists, and our Morse was sent to and received by Roy Mancer, the Traffic Superintendent. Roy, a New Zealander, used to make us shudder when he sent 'Poipokariki' at over 30wpm.

Nor was Charlie any slouch when it came to Morse. I remember watching him receiving at over 40 wpm on one occasion. Norm Lawes was the only other person I ever saw equal and maintain this speed.

The spare time learning we undertook was, I think, one of Charlie's initiatives to encourage us to advance ourselves.

He kept a notice on the board in the Training School of who, how many hours, and speeds, to maintain the competitive spirit.

Murray Lovatt and I spent some happy weeks in the training school before graduating in time for the Melbourne Olympics, and Blue Kennedy was assigned to be my mentor. During the Games, we were rostered on for about 54 hours per week, with optional overtime on top of that.

Charlie was well-known for his interest in the young people under his tutelage. He was always even-tempered - except for the occasion on which he berated Jim Hocking and myself for not responding to an advertisement in the 'Blue Book'. The Blue Book offered scholarships to RMIT to study to become a Radio Technician. Despite our doubts about our abilities, we both applied and were successful. RMIT had a 'sports afternoon' every Wednesday, so Jim and I would spend the time in the Training School, studying under Charlie's eye.

After gaining my Technician's certificate I went to Rockbank for a few years, moving on to Bringelly in 1964. I met Jim by chance in 1972, just after I'd left OTC. Jim was about to go to Bougainville as a Communications Officer with Bougainville Copper.

I was very surprised at a Smoke Night (I hope such a thing doesn't still exist) at which Charlie gave a great performance as a stage magician, something about which he had never spoken, but for which, I heard later, he was well-known in the community.

I don't remember when he retired - I know I wasn't in Melbourne at the time. Was he followed by Dick Lovett?

I'm grateful to Charlie for the direction he gave my life.

Regards,
John Lilley.

OTC at the Bathurst 1000

Watching the Bathurst 2014 race today brought back some old memories of OTC playing its role in the continuation of an Australian legend.

It was back in 1988 when the head of marketing Gerard Lanzarone was approached by a former acquaintance in relation to OTC sponsoring an entry into the iconic race.

Gerard was a former senior executive with Alfa Romeo Australia. Ray Gulson owned an prestige car dealership in Canberra as well as racing cars. Ray and his brother were extremely well know in car racing circles in Australia. They had competed at Bathurst for many years as a team.

For the 1988 race, Ray teamed up with his young son Graham to take on “The Mountain”. Ray would have been the oldest driver in the race, Graham the youngest.

Ray’s entry was his recently purchased BMW 635csi. The car had been procured from the John Player Special racing team and had actually won Bathurst a couple of years beforehand. There were no illusions that Ray and his son would win the race—but he was a specialist in finishing in the top 10 and that was the goal.

I was handed the task of seeing what value we could derive from sponsoring Ray. Its hard to believe these days, but in 1988 dialling international calls directly (ISD or IDD) was not that common. International operators were being used to connect international telephone calls.

Promoting IDD using a racing car became the prime objective-but how. It soon became apparent—the race number on the car should be 0011-the international access code. There were two very big barriers to doing this. The Australian Racing Drivers Club had strict rules for displaying car numbers. Two digits only in those days. The second barrier was with the drivers themselves. Drivers “owned” their numbers and were seen as their “brand”. For example 05 was associated with Peter Brock. The plan was to try and secure number 11 as the car number and put 00 in front of it. Larry Perkins owned number 11 and after some discussion he graciously agreed to let Ray have it for that year. We came to a compromise with the ARDC that 00 could be positioned near the race number. So there we were the OTC 0011 BMW was born.

To maximise OTC’s sponsorship value some of our major clients were invited to Bathurst for the big race. Arrangements were made with Channel 7 to follow the car for a full lap in the race to ensure that we had some good television exposure.

Everyone was set for a big day, until, the biggest disappointment. For the first time in Bathurst history international rules applied to this race. Among the rules were that each starter had to qualify within a certain percentage of the top qualifiers time. The top qualifier Dick Johnson did a very quick qualifying time and unfortunately Ray’s qualifying time did not meet the cut off mark by a matter of less than a second. It is ironic that Dick Johnson blew his car up during the race and had to transfer to another car.

Despite protests—the OTC 0011 BMW did not take place in the race.

The day could have been a total disaster except for Ray’s exceptional customer service ethic. He realised that we had a number of our most important customers in attendance and that this had to be potentially embarrassing.

Even though the car didn't start Ray still had his pit lane garage. The car was removed and customers moved in. They could not get closer to the race without being on the track itself. The feedback was fantastic and the day was saved.

Thinking back on it—this could not happen these days because of Work Health and Safety Rules. The 40 kilometre per hour speed limit in pit lane was not in force either. It was a very dangerous—but very exciting place.

At the end of the day Ray probably sensed that I was a tad worried about what happened during the day and asked if I would like to join the drivers in post race celebrations. He took me to “Alexander the Grapes” in Bathurst and ensured that I was well looked after in the drinks stakes. I soon found myself talking with Peter Brock and sitting down next to him at the dinner. I must say that he impressed me as one of the most genuine human beings I had ever met. Nothing seemed to ruffle him and he was a perfect gentlemen. We had a great chat and everything was fine until we got up to leave. I couldn't find my specially made OTC 0011 Jacket. Peter could not find his jacket either. He shrugged it off saying that this happened to him all the time-people souveniring his jacket. I had a bit of a laugh and thought of the disappointment on the face of the guy who took my jacket once he had a close look at it!



The OTC 0011 BMW 635csi at Mt Panorama

Back to Bondi Re Union—40th Anniversary at the Xmas Function

Way back in 1974 a group of OTC Trainee Technical Officers rented a house at 15 Consett Ave, Bondi Beach.

In November this year, we will be returning to Bondi Beach for a 40th Reunion commencing with the OTVA Annual Christmas Lunch at the Bowlers Club in the city on Thursday 6th November and the party will continue all weekend. For more information, please contact Colin Kelly at colin.ned.kelly@gmail.com or 0412 703 522.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA'S LACK OF AN EXHIBIT ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS.

The RMA have been dissatisfied by the presentation afforded telecommunications in the National Museum of Australia in Canberra. The museum depicts key objects events and milestone that were relevant in the building of our nation. There is little more than an old fashioned telephone handset to demonstrate the contribution made by the telecommunication industry. It is our belief that our industry played a major role in the building of our nation and as such deserves a far superior presentation to portray the impact it has had. To achieve our goals we have written to the minister responsible for the museum, the minister for communications, the curator of the museum and we sought the help of various back benchers. Our last communication was from the responsible minister of the previous federal government and we were invited to communicate directly with a representative of the ANU. We believe it to be impractical to have major hardware displays at the museum due to the vastness of our ever changing technologies, so we sought to depict an example of what could be displayed graphically. To this end our newsletter editor Paul Rewhorn put together a timeline chart that portrays the development from 1854 to the present day. It was our decision to seek the support of Telstra. To this end we wrote to the CEO David Thodey and sent a copy of our chart together with copies of all our correspondences. The CEO has replied and has decided that Telstra was not interested in supporting such a venture. Not to be thwarted in our endeavors we have decided to approach the museum directly and verbally. We are currently awaiting to have this conversation with the nominated representative.

[The historical timeline is placed on the website as a membership service.](#)

John Lane
Vice President
Communication Workers Union
Retired Members Association

Financial Member?—One Easy Transfer and that's it Forever!

Secure your “Enduring” Membership of the OTVA for the one off payment of \$50.

The OTVA is dedicated to organising reunions to maintain valuable friendships forged while working in the telecommunications industry. The regular meetings provide a great networking opportunity for those still in the workforce. Our 250 plus members have a common desire to preserve the history of international telecommunications in Australia.

To ensure that the OTVA can continue to preserve your part in Australia's history—become a financial member it is easier than ever!

Enduring Membership—One-Off \$50 Transfer!

Enduring Membership is open to any person wishing to join the OTVA. You will secure a full membership for the rest of your days or as long as the OTVA exists as an association without having to pay any future membership fees.

Two Easy Steps:

1. Transfer Funds from your bank account to:

ACCOUNT NAME: **OTVA**

BSB NO: **802155** (Bankstown Credit Union)

ACCOUNT NUMBER: **2081816**

Remitter: '**SUBS: your name**'.

2. Email the Treasurer and President

If possible, take a screenshot of your transfer confirmation and send it to:

treasurer@otva.com cc president@otva.com

If you cant take a screenshot—please email the treasurer (cc President) anyway to let them know that your have paid your subscription.

Annual Membership remains at \$10—please use the steps above to transfer your annual membership fees.

If you do not have access to funds transfer you can mail a cheque to OTVA PO Box 702 Riverwood NSW 2210.