



# OTVA Newsletter

April 2015  
Volume 15 Page 26

Registered Address:  
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## Christmas Gathering a Huge Success

Tall Tales and sometimes true stories were the flavour of the day at the OTVA Christmas Function. A record 76 attendees took the opportunity to catch up with fellow OTC Brethren and test those unreliable memoirs. A good time was had by all.



OTC Legends—John Hibbard, Dave Stimson and Dennis Grant



Dean Veverka and Ernie Wan catching up

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### ***Coming Events:***

#### ***Autumn Social Event***

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2015

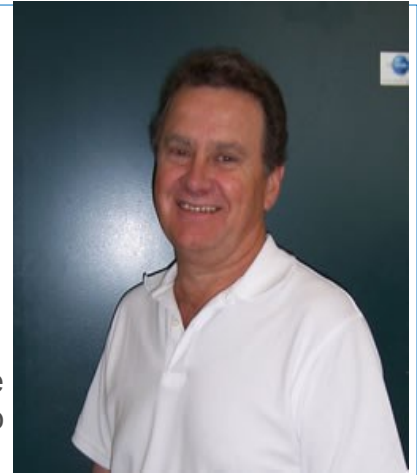
#### ***Committee Meetings –10 am:***

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

#### ***AGM***

Friday 12th June, 2015

## Message from the President



Peter Bull—President OTVA

Fellow Members of the OTVA,

I hope that you and your families are in good health and enjoying life and I wish you more of the same for 2015.

Since our Christmas function your committee has distributed 128 DVDs containing the Contact & Transit Library. Hopefully those of you that have taken the opportunity to review these magazines have enjoyed the nostalgic ride back into your past and have been able to relive the enjoyment that you experienced working with a great bunch of people. Your committee has received many compliments in recognition of this initiative since the release of the DVD.

Your Committee meets on a regular basis and hosts two major functions each year in addition to some informal social gatherings to enable members to socialise and re-establish relationships from their OTC years. Some old stories are retold and some new stories unearthed all of which creates enjoyment and camaraderie that reminds those present of how great it was to work for OTC.

Unfortunately our Treasurer, Bob Dean, has been unable to continue in the role although he has agreed to continue to represent you on the Committee of the OTVA. The workload associated with the role of Treasurer of the OTVA has been greatly reduced through the creation of a Subscription Officer role which handles the day-to-day processing of subscription moneys transferred either electronically or via Australia Post. The Treasurer's role is now predominantly associated with overseeing the OTVA finances, managing the bank accounts and preparing the annual report to the Auditors. Allan Hennessy has been performing the role of Subscriptions Officer for the past few years with great success. If you would like to support the OTVA by taking on the role of Treasurer please email me and I will send you the duty statement.

Your committee considers each year recommendations from members for the Life Membership awards designed to recognise significant contributions made by members to the OTVA. If you would like to nominate a person for life membership please send me an email. For your information the life members of the OTVA are: Ken Theaker; Mick Wood; Derek Walker; Tom Barker; Joe Collister; Henry Cranfield; Tony Farrugia; Robert Hall; Allan Hennessy; Keith McCredde; Bernie White; Pam Helps

Our newsletter editor, Peter Allan, has been doing a sterling job in producing the OTVA Newsletter and preparing it for circulation to members. Hopefully you are all enjoying the stories that Peter is able to elicit from members and some that he has produced that relate to his own experiences during his working life in OTC.

The Newsletter Editor continues to seek stories from members without which the newsletter could lose value to its readers. John Lilley won the \$50 award for his entry in the last newsletter: *John Lilley Remembers*. If you have a story that can be printed and is assessed by the committee to be the top story in that edition of the newsletter you too could receive \$50. You have to be in it to win it!

The OTVA BLOG (<http://www.otva.com/blog/>) continues to receive a large number of hits each month with regular contact from ex-OTC personnel, their families and members of the public asking questions about many aspects of OTC. It continues to be a valuable source of promotion and access for the OTVA.

Charlie Rudd (Ex-OTC and founder of Pheonix Foundry) has agreed to supply a plaque to commemorate the landing of the Compac Cable in 1962 and the opening of Compac on 3<sup>rd</sup> Decem-

(Continued on page 28)

ber 1963 by HM Queen Elizabeth II. Geoff Parr currently manages the Paddington Terminal located in Oxford Street Paddington. Geoff has negotiated on behalf of the OTVA with Telstra and gained agreement for the plaque to be mounted in a prominent position on the building once the renovation of the façade has been completed. The renovation work should be completed in the next few months.

I extend my sincere condolences to the families of our ex-OTC brothers and/or their partners who have departed this life since I last addressed you. We are saddened by their passing but are gladdened by the fullness of their rich and long lives. May They Rest In Peace.

Warmest regards,

Peter Bull

0411 260542

peterbull@otva.com

## Raid On Cocos Is Cable Station—Mike Tobin

Mike Tobin remembers this story from Bill Lawry ex Doonside.

Apparently Bill was stationed on an island in the bass strait during WW2 as a tech/telegraph operator when the island was paid a visit by a German U boat.

The captain spoke broken English and demanded diesel and food as his boat was running extremely low on both.

Bill summed up the situation and decided that to refuse would of meant certain death and the Germans would take the required anyway. however if Bill complied then he could report the incident as soon as the “u” boat had left.

The Germans smashed the transmitter final valve thinking this would make the station inoperable until a new one could be delivered from the mainland however bill had a spare in his store and was proud to be back on air 2 hours after the Germans left.

In all my years with Bill at Doonside his attention to detail was still foremost.

### **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 on-shore—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.***



## Blast from the Past—30 Years ago this month

### MIDAS and MINERVA at OA 85

The Office Automation Expo, OA 85, was billed as Australia's first major exhibition of its kind, displaying a range of products that would change the face of today's office forever.

Office automation has been described as the convergence of several technologies — telecommunications, computing and video electronics for example. What better opportunity for OTC to display its MIDAS and MINERVA services?

OA 85 was held at the World Trade Centre in Melbourne and featured products from such well-known organisations as Rank Xerox, Data General, Hewlett Packard, Telecom, Control Data and L M Ericsson, as well as OTC.

Melbourne Sales Manager Eddie Hope described OTC's display as 'mainly MIDAS and MINERVA'. "We included on-line displays of various computer hardware to demonstrate that our services are terminal independent."

"A number of MIDAS clients signed at the exhibition and several leads for MINERVA have since resulted in contracts," he said.

"Everyone worked extremely hard to make the display the success it was. And three new marketing officers, Quentin Shepley, Artie Koopman and Gary Kelly, had just completed their induction training in Sydney and gained great experience interacting with the public," he added.

**Footnote:** OTC's MIDAS and MINERVA services will be displayed to the public several times this year, including the prestigious DATA 85 exhibition next month.

Also in the pipeline, to help the public better relate to such 'high-tech' services, is a video tape showing how simple they are to operate. It's to be hoped that incorporation of the video in the product display stand will help generate more enquiries about the services.



This 'bird's eye view' of OTC's display stand, courtesy of Eddie Hope, gives some idea of the detail involved.

### Head Office staff meet M.D.



Head Office staff gather around as George says a few words.

Anyone who read last month's *Transit* editorial will know that one of George Maltby's first acts as OTC's newly-appointed Managing Director was to meet as many staff as possible at a 'getting-to-know-you' function organised at Head Office.

Scores of OTC staff took the opportunity to meet George in an informal atmosphere and, as our picture shows, it was standing-room only.

Having welcomed everyone personally, George moved about

the room, stopping to chat at every opportunity.

He said afterwards that it was always pleasant to renew friendships, and to meet new people, and he'd managed to do both at the function.

He added that he was looking forward to working over the next five years of his initial appointment. "There will be some changes along the way," he said. "We need to ensure OTC maintains its position as a successful organisation, harnessing new technology to provide the best possible service for all Australians."



# OTC VETERANS WA 40<sup>th</sup> AGM

On the 18th of November the 40th OTC Vet's W.A. Reunion was held at the Perth International Telecommunications Centre. There was a good turnout of 31 people comprising Des Kinnersley ( President ), Derek Walker, Jim Congdon, Kevan Bourke, Kevin Hills, Keith Darwin, Tom McKnight, Andrew Jones, Mike Cadd, Jim Keenan, Leif Akslen, Ian Briggs, Ted Wraight, Bill Kay, Peter Forrester, Don Charles, Bruce Weber, Tony Belts, Geoff Goddard, Peter Lalor, Colin Benporath, David Dean, Andrew Shaw, Gavin Kerr, Ray Parkinson, Mal Kerwin, Neil Smith, Roly Morin, Richard Ferris, Steve Hoban and Mark Hopper. Apologies for absence had been received from Reg Jones, Graham Watts, Mark Roberts, Barry Whittle, Joe Edgecombe, Ken True, Barrie Field, Bob Smallwood, Tore Boe, Mark Roddy, Andrew Monka, George Mattaboni, Geoff Shaw, Matt Saunders, Tim Dalton and Rod Pernich. Des has held the position of President since 1994 and Derek Walker was the Secretary / Treasurer for 25 of the 40 years which is an impressive achievement.

A short meeting was held where one minute's silence was held for the following Veterans who passed away in the period since the last AGM – John Strmecki, James Bairstow, Mick Wood and Bob Ellis.

Attendees were advised that OTVA in NSW have introduced a lifetime membership of \$50 for anyone interested in joining. They provide a webpage and regular newsletters. Members who attended the pre-Christmas function in Sydney received a copy of a DVD that contains a library of 296 Transit and 40 Contact magazines that are being made available free of charge to all financial members of the OTVA of NSW. There is a process whereby financial members of OTVA ( NSW ) who did not attend the Christmas function can obtain a copy. The newsletter committee

appreciate contributions from members regarding their work and personal experiences at the stations where they served. They give a \$50 prize for the best contribution submitted each issue.

Andrew Shaw made the suggestion that next year we compile photos from days gone by and include a slideshow which sounds a great idea.

Office bearers Des Kinnersley (President ), Kevan Bourke (Sec/Treasurer ) and committee members Jim Congdon, Kevin Hills and Tom McKnight were re-elected

unop-

posed. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday the 17th of November, 2015. Anyone interested in attending who are not on the mailing list should contact Kevan by phone ( 08 9361 9379 / 042 8 619 379 ), email ( [kevan.bourke@iinet.net.au](mailto:kevan.bourke@iinet.net.au) ) or any of the other committee members. We're always happy to welcome new members.

The formal part of the meeting concluded with lunch and drinks following.



Bruce Weber, Tony Belts and Mal Kerwin



Bill Kay, Tom McKnight and Ted Wraight



Don Charles, Peter Lalor, Peter Forrester and Jim

## COMPAC Memoirs-Henry Cranfield

With the advent of the COMPAC Cable, OTC's technical focus changed from H.F. Radio and DC Telegraph Cable systems to Co-axial, Mult -Channel Submarine Cables, an International 4 wire telephone exchange and more modern Telegraph Systems and facilities. This required the building of the Terminal at Paddington .

The first section in traffic was Sydney to Auckland in July 1962. and this was extended via Fiji, Hawaii to Vancouver Canada and across Canada via Microwave systems to UK. And USA, this was opened on the 3rs December 1963

My earliest contact with the Compac Cable system was as Supervisor in the PMG workshops Radio and Carrier section. This was to build the "End Correction Networks" for the Paddington – Dalley Street 200 pair telephone cable. These ensured that the cable presented a 600 OHM impedance match for the switched circuits., The return loss stipulated being 27 db or better as against a perfect match of 30db.. The measurements were made by the PMG Transmission Planning group and the units made by us. After making 6 or so units, *I remembered that the STC- time. We learn all the time?*

For the Compac cable system installation, Bob Long was the "Supremo" and being a perfectionist, would turn up after head UK built racks had a different lay-out to the standard PMG rack so went to Paddington to check and found that was so and had to redesign the cans and the layout of the components to suit the 50% of the units for Paddington.

On joining OTC, I was assigned to Ralph Brown's Telex group, given a desk in the back corner on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor in Spring Street (Construction Section) and 2 off 24 channel Frequency Modulated Voice Frequency Telegraph Channel Equipment (FMVFT) handbooks for Paddington to read .

One being TMC and the other AEI(UK). After several days I asked Noel Martin what several trainees were doing writing up IDF records in Head Office and was told that they were for the new ISTC at Paddington.

"How do you know they are correct" I asked "They must be " was the reply but I pointed out that for the AEI equipment the cabling was terminated on the individual channel units down the side of the racks and not to a "Rack Mounted terminal block".

This was one of many things to overcome over the installation office hours at Paddington to oversee/participate in the commissioning which due to our geographical position occurred mainly in the evening . He had Kerry Kearney make him up a very long cord for a Head-Breast Set and Kerry would follow him around the ITMC plugging it into different test desks as Bob moved around.

The more daring would seize upon a position when he was out of view and partially unplug the headset where upon he would give Kerry a sharp retort for not keeping up! If this happened several times the DB level would go up and the retort sharpened?

Bob Long stipulated that the transmission loss through the telephone exchange was 4.00Db in both directions, To ensure this was so, the writer and Kevin Reid were given a "Victorian Meter Laboratory's" Db meter and a magnifying glass to read the level to an accuracy of 0.02 Db We

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then had to use 7 Figure Logarithm tables to calculate the resistance values for the "H" pads to build the path out to 4.00DB. No pocket calculators in those days?

At the same time as the ITMC was being commissioned; the telegraph section or ISTC was being installed on the floor above and this included the Circuit control' for the H.F Radio Circuits plus semi-automatic Telex switchboards and Siemens Multiplex (MUX) equipment, Hasler T.O.R. And Siemens (FRXD) torn Paper Tape stores.

The semi-auto Telex required training for the operators. This was now in progress. and what a fine bunch they were, Jim Anderson, Charlie Maiden, BJ Callaghan, Jack Edwards, Stewie Taylor, Barry Henson to name a few, with Vince O'Donnell as the Supervisor. We would go out into the ISTC and Patch one circuit down the floor to another position and watch the mayhem? Vince O'Donnell . never appreciated the humour??

On the final cut-over to live traffic at 0001GMT on a Sunday, all was quiet, for 50seconds and then all the FRXDs took off and then 10 seconds of silence followed by 50 seconds of noise and nauseum. Poor Vince frothed at the mouth and carried on and we discovered **that the relay sets were wrongly wired due to the designer counting the springs on a 3000 type relay from the wrong sides** as Noel Martin said "it was a horrid moment"

Allan Hennessey had a much loved multimeter which during the ISTC installation he lent to one of the technicians, he mounted a pair of steps and put one prod on the + 50volt busbar and the other on the -50 volt one. There was flash and bang, the unit dropped as **it got hot and as they say in France 'C'est finit'** It was switched to the "Ohms" function. ?? Allan not amused?

During the ITMC commissioning John Hampton was one of the engineers and loved his cup of coffee, so he told me to go across the road and buy a jar of Nescafe which we shared. On leaving at night he left the jar' almost full, in the ITMC kitchen cupboard. ( Foolish Boy) and on the next night no coffee ??

So he bought a bigger one with the same result. So I got some Masonite and cut it into pencil width strips and put them through the pencil sharpener then mixed the shavings with the top layer of another jar of coffee. The result was, no more coffee used from the jar; but no one owning up.?

There was much friendly rivalry between the ITMC and ISTC staff. Trevor Thatcher put a length of grey conduit up the cable way between the 2 floors and would blow into this .in the dead of night, the noise was scary to say the least? The late Jim Neylon detected the conduit and waited one night with a jug of water and a funnel.. On seeing movement he poured the water down the funnel? As the French say"Apres mois la deluge" How wet it was?

# Quick Crossword #1 — by Andrew Long

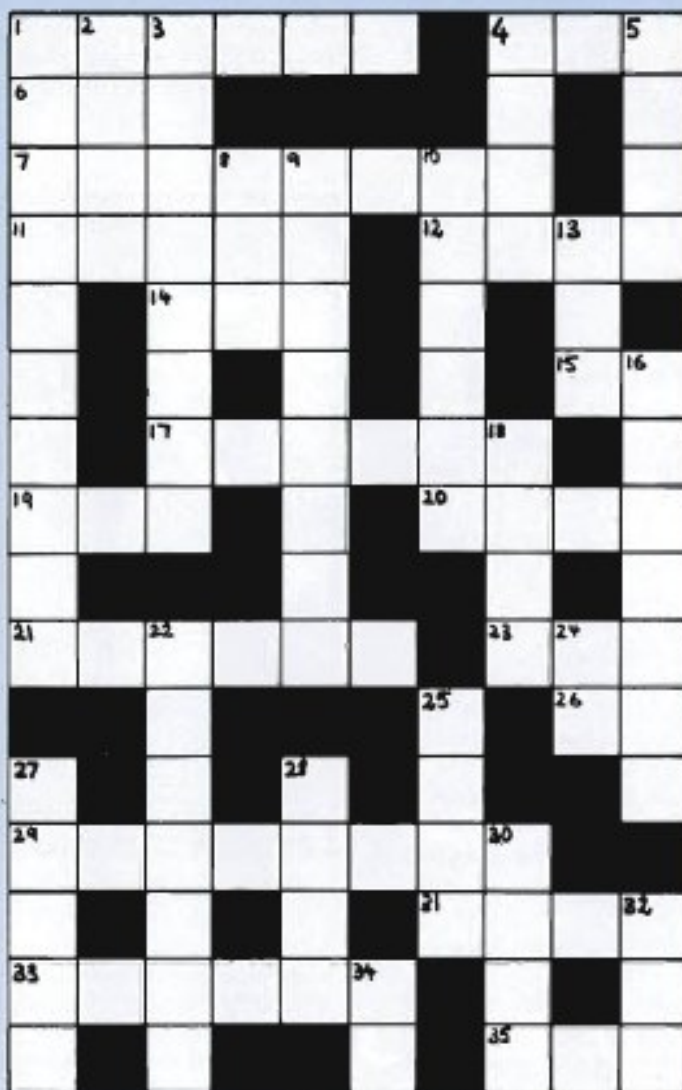
## ACROSS

1. Come after (6)
4. Hit high (3)
6. Single (3)
7. Final (8)
11. Stockings are made from this (5)
12. In a short time (arch.) (4)
14. First integer (3)
15. With regard (2)
17. Taker of tobacco (6)
19. Anger (3)
20. Musical sound (4)
21. Find by paying attention (6)
23. Increase (3)
26. Above and touching (2)
29. Without heed (8)
31. Ghetto (4)
33. Required (6)
35. Method of doing (3)

## DOWN

1. Base (10)
2. One and . . . (4)
3. Set free (3,5)
4. Noticed (4)
5. Tall tale (4)
8. Charged particle (3)
9. Memory jogger (8)
10. It's shot at (6)
13. Propels a boat (3)
16. Part of water heater (7)
18. European capital (4)
22. Helps you learn (7)
24. Knock out (abb.) (2)
25. Gap between mountains (4)
27. Foremost part (5)
28. Run away (4)
30. Takes a long time (4)
32. Fifth month (3)
34. Carry out (2)

**Solution page 2**





# LIFE ON THE OTC COTTESLOE TELEGRAPH

## CABLE STATION 1952 -1954-Des Kinnersley

After joining OTC in January 1952, after several years with Cable & Wireless having served at their Karachi Cable Station and their Bahrain Radio Station, I started as a telegraphist in SOR.

I enjoyed SOR but was only fated to spend a few months there before being transferred to Cottesloe as a numerical relief for Bart Fletcher, a Canadian who wanted to return to Canada. Bart was one of the last remaining staff from the days when Australian, New Zealand and Canadian staff were able to transfer to any of the Australian, New Zealand, Canadian or Pacific stations.



The Cottesloe Cable Station was a two story building ideally located about 20 meters from the beach. The Upper floor consisted of the Manager's Office, Operating Room, Workshop and D/E's Office, with the emergency generator and amenities at the rear of the upper floor.

In the early 1950's the road terminated at the Cable Station and across the road was a large concrete block house and the beach.

This block house was an Air Raid Shelter built during the war and was fully equipped with duplicated cable equipment, so that the cables could be reterminated in this shelter, if the Cable Station was attacked and damaged. Luckily this never happened and the air raid shelter is still there today. The Cottesloe City Council tried to have it removed but found it was going to be too expensive so they built a memorial to the Dutch explorer Vlaming on top of it.

On the technical side, Cottesloe had 3 cables, one to Adelaide which was abandoned in 1947 and two cables to Cocos Island. One of the Cocos cables was a slow speed Duplex cable which continued onto Rodriguez Island, Mauritius, Seychells and terminated at Durban. The other Cocos cable was a Simplex loaded cable which continued onto Jakarta and Singapore. The direction of working on the faster cable was changed every 12 hours to suit the traffic

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peaks, by means of a 'Y Switch' at Cocos. A repeater was installed in the slow speed cable some 60 nm from Cottesloe around 1956 which enabled faster speeds to be worked and eliminated the need to change the direction of working on the Faster Simplex cable.

As Cottesloe was essentially a relay station with all traffic received destined for Sydney and Melbourne. This onward traffic was sent to Sydney by landline using High speed Morse (80 wpm). Melbourne traffic was sent on a Cottesloe-Melbourne radio circuit.

Additionally during periods when the direct London-Sydney and London-Melbourne radio circuits were performing poorly due to adverse propagation conditions. Cottesloe operated radio circuits to London either direct or using relay links at Colombo or Nairobi. The Perth Receiving Station was at Bassendean and the transmitting station was at Applecross. This traffic was tape stored at Cottesloe and onsent to Sydney and Melbourne.

Catering for the adverse radio propagation conditions affected our rosters, as for 6 months of the year, we had a preponderance of night shifts (2 days, 2 evenings and 6 night shifts). For the other six months it was 6 evening shifts, 2 day shifts and 2 night shifts.

The staff at Cottesloe during my two years there were;

Malcolm Tregenza (Trigger) Manager,

Len Michell, Herc Clark, Stewart McDonald, Norm Sampson, Vern Gibson, Ces Pegler, Charlie Swinney, Charlie Watt, Reg Shepherd, Dick Hickinbotham, Dick Christoffersen, Ron Cocker, Brian Morrell, Tom O'Donnell, Jack Thomas, Des Else, Harold Burdett, Cyril Swinburne, Bernie ?? (he went to SOR from Cottesloe), Lou Sherburne. ( I apologise for the incorrect spelling of some of the names)

Some of the interesting features associated with the Cottesloe Cable Station were :

- The Concrete Air Raid Shelter mentioned earlier was put to good use in the early 1950 by courting couples who would park their cars on the beach adjoining the Shelter and when they attempted to leave would find their car bogged in the sand. As we always had staff on night duty and all the lights on, it was not uncommon to hear a furtive tap on the window asking if one of us could help extricate their car. Which had become bogged in the beach sand.
- Buckland Hill situated just across the Stirling Highway and fairly close to the Cable Station was an Australian Army installation which had several large calibre guns for defence purposes during the war. The guns were still being used in the early fifties and every time the guns were fired all our glass windows used to shatter. This problem was fixed by the Army warning us when they were about to fire the guns and we would open all the large sash windows. Problem solved.

## Cottesloe Cable Station Today

The road has been extended past the Cable Station to Leighton Beach and Fremantle by a scenic coastal road.

The Council Rubbish dump disappeared some 40 years ago and was replaced by Railway shunting yards and they in turn were demolished and replaced by a very upmarket housing estate boasting many luxurious homes and apartments.

The Cable Station building was taken over in the late 1960s by the WA State Government and is now called the 'McCall Centre' which operates a Fostering & Adoption Service for the Foster Care Association of WA. The Photograph below shows the old Cable Station Building in the foreground. The buildings on the left rear of the photograph were additions by the WA Government to cater for their new usages.



(Continued from page 35)

An obelisk has been erected just across the road from the old Cable Station which has a large brass top engraved with the details of the cables which were terminated at the Cottesloe Cable Station.

(Cottesloe-Adelaide, Cottesloe-Cocos 1 and Cottesloe- Cocos 2)



The old Air Raid Shelter mentioned earlier is still in existence but is no longer visible, as the local Cottesloe Council has built a monument on top of it, as they found it was too expensive to try and remove it.

The monument was built to honour the Dutch Explorer Vlaming.

The photograph below taken from the old Cable Station building which was just across the road shows the Vlaming Memorial mound.





# 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](mailto:treasurer@otva.com) cc [president@otva.com](mailto: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.***

#### **THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD SOLUTION**

