



OTVA Newsletter

June 2017
Volume 18 Page 1

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2017 AGM

The AGM of the Overseas Telecommunications Veterans Association will be held on Thursday, **15th June 2017** at

12 noon 99onYork (The bowlers Club)

99 York Street Sydney.

Doors open from 11:30am

show your seniors card or club membership for a discount.

See <http://www.99onYork.com.au/dining/red-room-buffet>

for more info about the venue.

Email: president@otva.com or [SMS to 0411 260 542](tel:0411260542)



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Coming Events:

Spring Reunion

From 10am Sunday 23 September at Putney

2017 AGM Thursday 15 June 2017

12:00 noon sharp for AGM, then if you wish enjoy lunch at 99onYork (The bowlers Club)

Come early at 11:30am and enjoy a chat & maybe drink with your colleagues before the meeting.



Message from the President

Fellow Members of the OTVA,

We are halfway through 2017 and I am reminded once again of how quickly our lives are passing. Now that I spend all of my spare time with my two beautiful grandsons and enjoy every minute of it no matter how tiring it can be I have to reflect on others within our membership who may have health problems or fallen on hard times and need our help through either time or physical support or even just a friendly ear to listen and/or reminisce for an hour or two. If you know any of our members that might fall into that category please email me at president@otva.com and your Committee will see what can be done in response.



Kevin O'Brien has been acting as Newsletter Editor in a temporary capacity and has done a good job juggling it with his travel and family commitments. We thank Kevin for doing that so well since Peter Allan was unable to continue in that role. We look forward to welcoming a new Editor at the AGM on 15 June 2017.

If you would like to see the OTVA Newsletter continue we need your stories. REMEMBER: You could win \$50 for the most interesting article. So please write down your thoughts and stories and submit them for inclusion in the next newsletter.

The OTVA has a sound membership base and our finances are secure for the foreseeable future. For that I thank the Treasurer and the rest of the Committee as well as you the members who continue to support the OTVA without which I fear that historic contribution made by OTC and its staff may be lost. I am amazed that so many young people and new Australians think that Telecom was the only carrier operating in Australia before Optus joined the marketplace in 1992 and the deregulation of the Telecommunications Sector in 1995.

The OTVA continues to promote itself, its member's achievements and the history of OTC through the <http://www.otva.com> and <http://www.otva.com/blog/> web sites. Please have a look at the website and review the content for yourselves. Recommendations for improvement are always welcomed by your committee.

Employment History of members: If you have not yet provided your employment details please email me at president@otva.com and I will send you a template for you to complete and return to me for retention in the OTC Staff Library. These documents are being stored for possible use to respond to future enquiries from family and to enable us to reflect upon the impact of our members on OTC and the history of communications in Australia.



Please take some time to reflect upon those of our fellowship who passed away in the past 12 months and the impact that may have had on our lives. Their names and stories can be found on the OTVA BLOG (<http://www.otva.com>) by filtering on VALE at the bottom left of the HOME page.

May They Rest In Peace.

I wish you and yours well until we meet again.

Warmest regards,

Peter Bull

0411 260542

president@otva.com

Our New Guinea Experience. The Family Move to New Guinea.

February 1960 - by Bernie White.

(the following is just a short extract from Bernie's working history)

The position I accepted was as a Radio Supervisor with the Department of Posts and Telegraphs in New Guinea. This position came under the control of the New Guinea Administration. At this time Papua New Guinea was under the protection of the Australian Government and hence some red-tape had to be dealt with.

My posting was to be at a place called Lorengau, on Manus Island; and both Evelyn and I looked everywhere in maps and brochures on New Guinea for some clue as to just where this place was. Eventually we got some feedback from the people in Port Moresby who told us that it was located on the island of Manus between the New Guinea mainland and New Ireland. Whilst we could find these two places on the map we could not find Manus Island. Quite a bit of correspondence regarding accommodation, cooking facilities and other domestic requirements was exchanged before we became aware of our somewhat primitive new lifestyle. One feature that amazed us was that all electrical power shut down at midnight each night.

Whilst I went around making the necessary arrangements with Mum and other members of the family; Evelyn was subject to some old wives tales. One being that the scorpions were so big they could cut your leg in half with just one nip. Evelyn, being in her twenties, found this a little daunting to say the least. We both wondered just what I had let the family in for but I trusted that we would survive the ordeal.

The big day came in early 1960 and I boarded the plane at Mascot for Port Moresby and Lae. The plane servicing Papua New Guinea at this time was a Qantas Super Constellation and it left at 9.30pm at night. It was scheduled to fly through the night and arrive in Port Moresby about 6am the next morning. During the flight I was amazed to see one of the engines alight. At least I thought it was on fire as flames were pouring out of the engine exhausts. Noticing my concern the lovely hostess calmed my fears by saying that the situation was normal. The Constellations usually burnt exhaust gases and this was done as noted above. Not a nice sight for the unwary passenger.

Upon arrival in Port Moresby I was met by a chap who was to be my guide over the next few weeks. His name was Robbie Gurr who was a Radio Inspector working with the Dept of Posts and Telegraphs. It took me a while to get used to the heat and humidity of Port Moresby as the climate was quite new to me. Robbie eventually got me settled into the Port Moresby Hotel which was not air-conditioned but a cooling fan was provided. The room was like all hotel rooms, small and hot. One had to walk some distance to use the bathroom. The dining room was cooled by one of the old English style 'punkah louver' systems which had boys pulling on ropes to activate the system.

Meals were rather an adventure as, (not knowing how to speak in Pidgin), I was left to other devices in order to get a meal. Fortunately all meals listed on the menu were numbered and one only had to give the number to get the meal one ordered. The fact that one never always got what one ordered was put down to 'Oh, that's New Guinea for you'. If I remember rightly, bacon and eggs was numbered one on the menu.

The next day I had to front up at Port Moresby radio office to meet the big-wigs of the P&T. I believe I spent the next week acclimatising myself with the work of the P&T. I remember working several stations from Port Moresby including the high-speed telegraphy circuit to Sydney. It was easy to get a message through to Evelyn who was, by then, staying back with Mum.

One contact I shall always remember was with George at Daru. George was a native Telegraphist and a very good one at that. It was a pleasure to work the circuit with him as both the speed and correctness of his Morse sending was easy to read. Daru is situated up the Fly River district in the Gulf of Papua.

Eventually the flight to Manus was ready to leave and Robbie gathered me up and took me out to Jackson's Airstrip for the 'milk run' trip to Manus. This trip was by DC2 aircraft which had side-saddle seats similar to those used in Army aircraft. As we progressed along the route through Lae and Rabaul it became apparent as to why the seats were placed side-saddle. Cargo, including pigs, goats and chickens, were loaded into the centre of the plane.

The schooling was designed to cater for the PNG locals and was not of the NSW standard of education at the time. Laurie found it hard in his future school years to keep up with his mates in class. This did not deter him too much as he certainly achieved top educational standards in his later life.

On our final trip out we boarded the DC3 at Madang and headed up through the hills to Goroka. This trip was a little hair-raising as we flew up the Ramu Valley alongside mountain-sides that were higher than the height we were flying. Here were these tall mountains with us flying up the valley between them. One felt that one could have reached out and touched them. The continual twisting, turning, diving and climbing got to Eve in the end and she did not fare too well. Laurie and I enjoyed the flight no end but Evelyn was pleased to get out for a spell at Goroka. From Goroka we flew down to Lae with Eve still a little wonky.

In Lae we boarded a DC6 aircraft for our flight to Port Moresby, thence to Brisbane and finally Sydney. This plane had a special lounge area at the back of the plane and it was very pleasant sitting there having a drink with the family. The flight was so smooth that if one left a glass of drink and the arm of the lounge it would gently turn round and round. It would not spill. This was perhaps the best and smoothest flight we had had in our very short flying career. The crew were marvellous looking after Eve all the way as she did not fully recover until we were over the Osprey Reef and near the Australian coastline. Our extended family all lined up to meet us on arrival in Sydney.

My term of service with the Dept of Posts and Telegraphs in Papua/New Guinea ended in 1964.



Our house in Madang when my mother, Mrs Cecilia White, visited us. Photo of Mum with Bernie & Laurie. 1963/64



Teapot - our car in Madang. Photo of Evelyn & Laurie.

Life on the OTC Telegraph Cable Stations 1952 -1965

by Des Kinnersley

1. Suva

My first posting to Suva was in October 1955 and as Air Travel was very expensive in those days, we had the pleasure of a six day cruise from Sydney to Suva via Auckland on the SS Orcades.

Accommodation on arrival was initially provided in a Guest House whilst I was undergoing familiarization training at the Suva Cable Station.

When this training was completed a bungalow was allocated by Cable & Wireless for the duration of my tour. Incidentally the bungalow was rent free except for the utilities.

OTC staff serving at Suva and Fanning after 1950 had to be seconded to C&W following the formation of OTCA, NZ Posts & Telegraphs and the formation of Canadian OTC (later called Teleglobe) which resulted in the breakup of Cable & Wireless's assets in Australia, NZ, Pacific and Canada.

The cable station proved to be a two storey building located on Victoria Parade right on the sea front. The Ground floor housed the Clerical, Administrative staff plus the emergency Diesel and cable batteries.



The upper floor contained all the Cable Station equipment for the four cables terminating at Suva, Suva-Norfolk, Suva-Auckland, Suva –Fanning1 and Suva-Fanning2.

The Clerical, Administrative and Telegraph Operators at the Cable Station were Cable & Wireless staff while Technical staff was all OTC staff on secondment to C&W. Some of the Telegraph Operators, Danny Yee and Vernon Yen subsequently emigrated to Australia and joined OTC. Others went to Canada and joined COTC.

The OTC Technical Staff consisted of a Technician ,4 Cable Officers on rotating shifts, 1 Cable Officer on Day Duties and the equivalent of an STO2.

The 4 Cable Officers on 6 hour rotating shifts were the Shift Supervisors responsible for ensuring the equipment operated satisfactorily during their shift.

Their additional duties were the supervision of the telegraph operators and the Revisor who handled the checking of the incoming and outgoing cablegrams and organised their delivery.

The OTC technical Staff were transferred to Suva for a 3 year term with no leave until the completion of their term and return to Australia. The staff on rotating shifts worked Mon – Sat every week and 6 Sundays out of every 8 week spell.

Some of OTC staff serving at Suva during my 6 years there were:

Randy Payne, Trevor Thatcher, John Hodgson, Jim Rodda (who won the Fiji A Grade Golf & Tennis Titles, as well as being the Snooker Champion of the Defence Club), Bob Wright, Gunny Shepherd, Keith Oxley, Alec Griffiths, Paul Borg, Bruce Collett, Bruce Sutherland, Val Litchfield, Dud Treliving, Monty Montague, Joe Collister, John Newlyn, Jack Fisher, Jim O'Toole,

and my apologies to those who I have forgotten, but at 85 my memory is not what it used to be.

Life in Suva was very pleasant with excellent swimming, snorkelling, boating, Tennis, Golf and Cricket although the humidity and high temperatures could be trying at times.

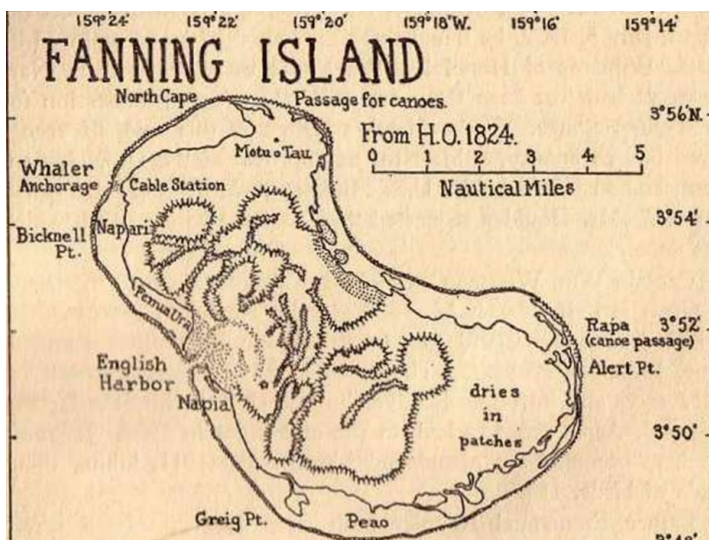
The local Fijians were a very likeable people and very easy to get on with. The Indians who formed the majority of the population at the time were very industrious and owned and operated most of the shops and businesses.

With the advent of the COMPAC cables, the telegraph cables became redundant, so OTC staff were no longer required as C&W Personnel manned the new COMPAC Cable Station which had been built at a new location.

2. Fanning Island

The island was discovered in the 1870's by Captain Edmund Fanning of the Whaler 'Betsy' and subsequently became part of the British Gilbert & Ellis Island Protectorate. It is now part of the Republic of Kiribati and has been renamed Tabueran. It is a perfect coral atoll about 25 nm in circumference with a large lagoon in the Centre and only about 9 feet above sea level. It is situated about 1100 NM SW of Honolulu.

The island was selected as a cable station in 1902 by the Pacific Cable Board as part of the 'All Red Route' for the British Empire Round the World Cable System. The world maps at the time showed all British colonies, Dominions and other British possessions in red. The cable system was designed to only have landfalls at British possession, hence the name. Apart from the Cable Station the only other occupant of the island was a copra plantation owned by Burns Philp.



The island was very isolated with no air strip and well off the main shipping lanes.

The only method of getting to the island at the time was by chartered ship which called at the island every five months to drop off incoming staff and supplies and take the outgoing staff to Vancouver

The NZ operated Union Steamship Company had four ships which operated between Fiji and Vancouver carrying raw sugar. The ships were all Liberty ships built during WW2 and were given Maori names, Waitomo, Waihemu, Waikawa, and Wairuna. Two of the ships operated under NZ articles and two under Canadian articles to avoid problems during industrial action.

The ships had to be paid a diversion fee to call at Fanning as it was well off their normal route.

The ships had three 2 berth cabins so they could a maximum of 6 people to Fanning and take the same number of outgoing staff to Vancouver

I was transferred to Fanning Island in 1960 and my family boarded the Union Steamship cargo ship 'Waitomo' at Lautoka in Fiji. After a very pleasant 10 day voyage, we arrived off Fanning to see a very low lying island with what appeared to be hundreds of coconut trees and very little sand.

There was one unusual feature, on one part of the island we could see Norfolk Island pine trees which appeared very odd. These trees actually marked the area near the Cable Station and were planted when the station was first established in 1902.

The ships anchored off the island and the incoming staff and supplies were brought ashore by launch and lighter.

As there were no facilities on the island, the Cable Station had to be completely self-sufficient. This necessitated having our own power plant, grocery stores, canteen supplies, and all general purpose items. There was no 'Bunnings' a few minutes away and 5 months was a long time to wait for the next ship.

It was quite an eye-opener to see the amount of facilities which had to be maintained namely: Staff Cottages, Power Station, Carpentry Shop, Bakery, Single Staff Mess, Boat Shed, Swimming Pool, 2 concrete Tennis Courts, 2 Jetties,

Several other out buildings which had various uses as well as the fuel storage area where the fuel which was supplied in 44 gallon drums, sufficient to last for 6 months, and last but not least, the main Office building which was a very long two storey building.

The ground floor was used for the cable battery banks, Liquor Store, Grocery Store, and General Stores. The upper floor housed the main equipment rooms, workshop, Managers Office, 'Hermit Crab' (the Recreation area and bar), Library, Billard Room, 6 Bed Hospital and the Doctor's Surgery.

The expatriate Staff consisted of :
Manager and Manager's Clerk

D/E (STO 2 equivalent), 1 Cable Officer on permanent day duties, 2 Cable Officers on rotating shifts, 2 Telegraphists who were capable of doing rotating shifts by themselves but as everyone lived on site, help was readily available, if problems arose, 1 Technician, Doctor provided by Cable & Wireless, Outside Engineer provided by Cable & Wireless. Duties involved keeping the Power station, 2 Vehicles, Motor Launch, Large Freezer for keeping 5 months supply of meat frozen, Large Cool Room for 5 months storage of fresh vegetable operational.



This is a fairly old photograph of the Station building and does not show any of the improvements which had been made over the years, such as the tennis court but the building is substantially unchanged.



Staff Photograph taken at the closure of the Station in 1963/64

Back Row L to R Carl Raecke, Geoff Day, Geoff McDonald, Keith McCred-den, Len Martyn.

Front Row L to R, Unknown, Unknown, Randy Payne, Unknown, Alec Griffiths. Two of the 3 unknown personnel were Dr. Clarke and Peter Beechey (C&W staff) Keith McCred-den may be able to match up the faces and names of the unknowns as he was there when the photograph was taken

Some interesting facts about the Expatriate Staff

- All staff were required to carry out extra curricular duties such as Grocery Store Jaga, Canteen Jaga, Private Orders Jaga. The word Jaga came into useage from staff who had served at Cocos Island where Malay had been spoken.

- The duties of the Store Jaga, the most onerous one, involved placing grocery orders about 2 months prior to the supply ship leaving Sydney. These stores had to be sufficient to last at least 6 months due to the 5 monthly supply ship visit. Upon the arrival of the ships, the stores were unloaded at English Harbour, where we had a warehouse and then transferred to the Cable Station at Whalers Anchorage. The prices of the individual items had to be determined and placed on the shelves ready for the wives to do their grocery shopping on Friday mornings. Next checking the individual order books and details of the amount spent by each family, to the Manager's Clerk who debited their monthly account.
- The duties of the Canteen Jaga involved ordering enough liquor and soft drinks to last the six months. The same procedure was involved transferring the liquor from the warehouse to the Canteen Store. All liquor consumed was entered in the 'Hermit Crab' bar books and then debited to the family account. We occasionally ran into problems, as instanced when a Royal Navy frigate 'HMS Crane' visited the island for a day and consumed our 5 monthly supply of beer in the one afternoon. The visit of this Navy Frigate proved that it is a small world as the CPO of the ship saw Lou Brown and said 'I know you'. Apparently they had been shipmates during WW2.
- The duties of the 'Private Orders' Jaga involved ordering items which were not stocked by the Grocery Store. Families requiring these items placed their orders with the Private Orders Jaga who then transmitted them to Sydney. Upon arrival at Fanning, the goods were handed to the families and their accounts debited. Some staff received no pay for several weeks until the goods had finally been paid for; however no interest was charged.
- The Cool Store Jaga duties involved the supervision of the large Cool Room and Freezer where meat & fresh vegetable were stored too ensure they lasted for the six months. It also had occasional other uses, as instanced when Trevor Thatcher had to sleep there for a short while due to a skin problem caused by the heat and humidity.
- The Movie Jaga duties involved the ordering of 16mm Movies from a Sydney supplier and running the Projector for the Saturday night movies. Unfortunately because of the supply ship delays, the supplier would not give us up to date films as they would be out of circulation for long periods; so we movies were restricted to the 'The Three Stoges', 'Durango Kid', 'Lone Ranger' and the occasional Tarzan movies. However these movies were a great success with the Gilbertese audiences.
- Eggs were not obtainable on the island, so families wanting them had to bring their own chooks to the island. In our case we imported 18 Rhode Island reds from Fiji with us and they kept us supplied for most of our 2 ¼ year term.. Each Cottage had a Chook yard and Hen house. We had to resort to a few tricks to try and lengthen their life span. One trick was to coat the egg shells with Vaseline and place them in large tins filled with sawdust, ensuring the eggs did not touch each other, as egg laying dropped off at the end of the 5 monthly cycle due to the chook food supplies running out and having to depend on fish/coconut meal.
- Fresh vegetable and Fruit were non existant on the island as it was impossible to grow any due to the coral structure of the island with very little suitable soil. However each cottage managed to have a small backyard garden which consisted of 44 gallon drums cut in half and filled with soil obtained from ships which had carried some as ballast. Results were poor however and the only things that managed to grown successfully were 'Snake Beans'
- Another interesting situation was the payment of Staff wages. Staff were paid fortnightly, with every second fortnight's pay being debited for items purchased from the Grocery Store, Canteen or items purchased on one's behalf on Private orders. Staff were handed their wages in cash when they signed the paysheet but were requested to hand the notes back again as they were recirculated for the next fortnights pay. The Station ran an Agency for the Commonwealth Savings Bank in Sydney and each fortnight a deposit was made on one's behalf with the bank. There was nothing on spend one's money on the island except for the Fanning Island Plantation store which had very minimal items such as needles, thread and cotton. This recycling of the currency caused major problems, if one decided to withhold their pay and not deposit it in the Bank. This occurred in one instance when one of the expatriate staff had an argument with the Manager and decided to hold onto his fortnightly pay with the

result there was a currency crisis. It was only resolved when the staff member came home to find his daughters tossing five pounds notes around, so decided to go back to the normal arrangements. Australian currency was used on the island despite the island being a Gilbert & Ellice Colony.

- One major problem was Childrens education which was conducted by correspondence through a NSW Department of. Education Blackfriars Correspondence School. However this proved to have major drawbacks due to the shipping delays. For example, a child would complete an assignment say four months before the supply ship arrived, the completed papers would then go out on that ship but it would be another five months after that before the corrected papers were returned.
- Fishing on the island was fantastic as one only had to throw a line in and a minute later pull it in with a fish on the hook. It was quite normal to see some of the Gilbertese walking past with an empty wheelbarrow and half an later, see them walk past with a full barrow load.
- When one completed their tour of duty at the Island, they joined the Supply ship which had called at the island and dropped off the incoming staff and enjoyed an 18 day trip to Vancouver. Upon arrival at Vancouver, we were met by the COTC Manager who made all the necessary banking, hotel and onward travel arrangements. Staff flying back to Sydney caught the weekly Qantas Saturday flight. This meant that if the ship arrived in Vancouver on a Sunday, one had six days in Vancouver at the OTC's expense. As staff arriving in Vancouver had no warm clothing after arriving from Fanning, one was permitted to buy warm clothing and upon returning to Sydney submitted the receipts and were reimbursed 30% of the cost.

The local Staff numbered approximately 33 Gilbertese islanders consisted of;

Chinese Head Man - Ting Tong Hai (normally called Tong) and his assistant Taikobo (normally called Teacup) responsible for looking after the Stores and general oversight of the Station grounds and the Gilbertese Village. 2 Plumbers, 2 Carpenters, Bakers, 6 Power Station workers, Doctor's Assistant, General Work Gangs responsible for keeping the ten miles of dirt roads through the coconut trees open, general work around the station and surrounds including the cemetery at Green Trees, the warehouse at English Harbour used for storage of the supplies when unloaded from the ship until transported to the Cable Station.

Some interesting facts about the local staff were :-

A few of the Gilbertese staff had mixed Gilbertese and German parentage, with names like Herman Bretchfeld and Anton Meyer.

The Chinese headman Tong and his Gilbertese wife, Keke had a son who subsequently became a President of Kiribati.

One of the very early local staff, named Hugh Greg who was of mixed Scottish and Gilbertese parentage, was involved in a very famous incident during WW1. A German raider visited the island during WW1 and sent a party of marines ashore who cut the cables fairly close to shore but left the inhabitants unharmed. The cables were repaired thanks to Hugh Greg who free dived around 80 feet (no scuba gear in those days) and brought the severed ends of the cables to the surface so that they could be repaired.

Fanning Island after the Closure of the Station

Following the closure of the Station in 1964, Dr. Marty Vitousek of the Scripps Institute of Oceanography was based on the island for a few years and during that time put in a small air-strip which enabled him to fly to/from Hawaii.

Burns Philp also closed their Copra plantation as it was no longer economic and the Northern Cruise Lines purchased the land and set it up as an attraction for their passengers to spend a day on the island.

However it did not prove successful and the project was abandoned.

One of our Staff member's Wives, Verna Neylon managed to visit the island on one of the cruises about ten years ago. Unfortunately she was only able to get to the Copra Plantation which had been developed by the Cruise Lines site and not the Cable Station site which was located at the other end of the island. However she took some interesting photographs which showed that global warming has submerged a considerable portion of the island.

Hope these brief notes give you some idea of life on the islands.

Des Kinnersley.

Life on O.T.C. CRS Outstations – A Woman's Perspective

Thursday Island (1954 –1958), Port Moresby (1959-1961), and Rabaul (1964-1966)

By Bev MacDonald

As the years go by and we reminisce about days long ago where families shared the early days of OTC outstations – come with me as we remember those days from a woman's perspective.

The Arrival: A young family arrives, usually after a long plane trip from their city home, and is suddenly plunged into a completely new world. But being young and adventurous, its exciting, and they are full of optimism. Their accommodation has been provided and they set about settling into their new lifestyle.

One thing is certain – a positive outlook and a sense of humour are needed to cope with the many changes which are encountered in a new environment.

Firstly, its usually hot. Really hot. So that means light, loose clothing, and very little makeup for the women. Suddenly chores like housework, shopping etc. seem such an effort, so the ceiling fans in the houses are more than welcome. No air-conditioning on those days, of course. But after an outing, the first thing you do when you get home is switch the fans full on – oh, the blessed relief!

Shopping for food was often a challenge. In the very early days, some places relied on a monthly supply ship bringing grocery items and perishables etc. to the local food store, and that was a great day. Fresh fruit and vegetables were highly sought after, and if they ran out then they had to be sent up by air on a weekly basis. A little more costly but well worth it. But in some places the local population grew all sorts of fruit and vegetables, and the weekend markets were a blessing. Good, fresh produce, great prices and a lot of fun shopping there. Great memories of little indigenous children walking around all day chewing on a cucumber, with a big smile.

Some of the outstations had beaches nearby, great for a picnic under the casuarina trees, meat cooking on a barbecue. Often these beaches were reached by a short boat trip, and this was the highlight of the week. Maybe a fish – caught on the way over – cooked right on the barbecue, delicious. Now our children, as adults, often speak very fondly of the wonderful times we had with friends on a beautiful tropical beach, snorkelling, watching the fish – almost on our doorstep.

Because of the extremely hot climate, it was usual to employ a houseboy or girl. Believe me, it was such a relief to have the heavy housework, washing and ironing etc. done, and these people became part of the household. Some lived in separate accommodation in the grounds, with their own families. They were happy, had beautiful little babies, and it was very sad when it was time for us to leave to “go south” back to our lives.

Friendships were formed which often endured for many years. It was a happy, simple lifestyle without complication, although hard to be away from family back home. Unfortunately some wives were unable to cope with the big change and so didn't stay long. They went home, leaving their men to carry on with the job.

There was also the problem of schooling for the children. When they were due to go to high school, it was off to boarding school for them. A very big wrench for all, although they seemed to cope well. So hard to send your 12 year old away and only see them a couple of times a year, if you were lucky. I'm afraid there were lots of tears shed by me.

Our social life was what we made it. No restaurants to visit for a meal, although at one of the stations there was a family who cooked great Chinese food, and so we would go and visit, with a couple of saucepans, - our version of Chinese takeaway! At times we would visit friends for meals, or they would come to us, and then there would be long discussions, deep into the night, discussing anything and everything.

A big social event at one of the stations was the world premiere of the movie "King of the Coral Sea" with Chips Rafferty. This was held in the outdoor cinema, complete with deckchairs. A big event, attended by a few media people, all in the hope that it wouldn't rain.

There was a big community interest in celebrating things like Anzac Day, Easter, school functions, Church functions - in fact anything that involved getting together and so there was plenty to keep us occupied. School fetes were a big thing, with the wives spending untold hours making children's clothes, sweets, cakes etc. to sell. Great events and great money makers.

But there were many months without rain, just very windy weather leading up to the doldrums, that quiet, still time before the storm. Our island outstation was at its most beautiful then, with great masses of dark clouds, or gorgeous sunsets reflecting in the still sea. As time went by the town water supply dwindled, and then usually at Christmas time the rains came. Glorious, wet and most welcome. We put raincoats on the children and let them play in it! No more carting buckets of water from the tanks at the side of the house, or buying water brought in by ship.

In later years, and in later outstations, conditions changed with modernisation and improvements to our everyday living. More shops - wonderful! No shortage of water - Great! Life on an outstation continued to be a wonderful experience for us, one which we wouldn't have changed, and one which our children continue to talk about and be grateful for. A fantastic opportunity for us. Different, yes. Life changing? Definitely - and for the better.

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 and reconnect with some of those who have since retired but were instrumental in helping those still in work with their career and career aspirations along the way. 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: **882000** (Bankstown City Unity Bank)

ACCOUNT NUMBER: **602081862**

Remitter: ‘**SUBS:** ‘ plus your **surname** followed by your **firstname**.

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 can't take a screenshot—please email the treasurer (cc President) anyway to let them know that you 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

2 Tirrabeena Place, Bangor, NSW 2234 .