NEWSLETTER
OVERSEAS TELECOMMUNICATIONS VETERANS ASSOCIATION

REGISTERED ADDRESS : PO BOX 8 GEORGE'S HALL, NSW 2198

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To
All our readers we wish you
A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year!

2002 Xmas Social
The Mandarin Club Goulburn St Sydney
Friday November 29th at 12.00 noon
Cost &25.00 per head

Bookings by Friday Nov. 22nd to :-
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N.B.Please!

We ask all members to check the expiry date printed
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Our WEB Page address is changing.
(www.users.bigpond.com/deepwaters/)

We are pleased to advise that as a result of the efforts of some dedicated members of our association, we now have our own site.

www.otva.org

Joe will maintain a link from the old site as long as found necessary.

From the President's Desk.

This has been a rather momentous year for the OTVA. A year tinged with some regrets at our failure to achieve some things we had hoped for, but a year which has ended with increased optimism at the way in which we have coped with our adversities. My ambition, as President of the OTVA, has always been to achieve an open-ness and inclusiveness, which would make this an organization in which anybody who has enjoyed the experience of a career in international telecommunications would find the company of others with a similar background and with whom they can enjoy a pleasurable association. I believe that we are well on track to achieving that ambition. I hope that the year to come will see an increased involvement in our activities by our members in other States and by younger ex-OTC employees, who will accept our open invitation to them, to attend our reunions and other functions.

As was pointed out in a Newsletter article in our last issue, 2002 marks the anniversary of a number of significant milestones in the history of international telecommunications in Australia, but only one of these is being celebrated in any public manner. The Centenary of the establishment of the Pacific Telegraph Cable at The Southport School, Queensland, which will take place on 31 October, 2002, will have been accomplished by the time this Newsletter goes to press. I look forward to meeting many old colleagues at this function and I am sure we can all look forward to some interesting and amusing narratives to be related about that occasion in our next issue.

May I take this opportunity to wish all our Veterans and their families, a very happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Tom Barker.

Summer Family Gathering.

After many requests for a Week-end Social Function your committee puts the following proposal to all our members and friends and it would be appreciated if you could advise Keith

McCredden, Will Whyte or David Richardson, if you intend to come and the number of people you will be bringing to the function. This is MOST important for catering purposes, also to determine if the proposal is worthwhile.

We have obtained permission from both Concord Council and Kokoda Track Memorial Trust to hold this function.

Date and Time. Saturday 8th February 2003 at 12.00. NOON

Location: Rhodes Park Concord Road, Concord. (Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway), Brays Bay

Your committee invites members, friends and other EX-OTC associates to attend and make this day an enjoyable success.

We have obtained permission from both Concord Council and Kokoda Track Memorial Trust to hold this function. Costs will be covered by the small profit raised from our other OTVA functions.

The venue is on the shores of the Parramatta River near Concord Bridge and has a large Shelter Shed, tables, seats, a large lawn area, Coffee shop and nearby toilets.

How to get there ;

By car…… To Carpark in park off Concord Road via Hospital Road and Fremont St.

There is further parking in McIlwaine Park for those coming from the North, or at CONCORD Hospital Carpark ($4.00) at the commencement of the Memorial walkway.
Street parking near the entrance to the park is also available.

By Train: To Rhodes Station, then follow the signs to:-
The Memorial Walkway-
Distance about 500 metres to park.

By Bus:
McIlwaine Park stop on Concord Rd.
The Memorial Walkway
- Distance about 200 metres.

YOU bring: - plates, cutlery, sweets and drinks

WE Supply: - sausages and bread Rolls.
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MOST importantly for catering purposes, you need to advise Keith McCredden, or David Richardson your intentions and the number of people you will be bringing, by Wednesday 5th February.

Those wishing to do so, may bring and cook their own meat or whatever on the BBQ's provided
The Walkway is newly open and we feel all who attend will enjoy the outing and learn something of the history of WW2 and of our forces whose efforts on the Kokoda Track in Papua New Guinea saved Australia in 1942.

Vale:
Our thanks to Ray Connolly from our kindred New Zealand organization, for the following obituary

FRED STUDMAN.
[Ex Pacific Cable Board and Ex Cable & Wireless Ltd.]
Sadly, we report the passing of another of our older veterans, on 23 Sep 2002, in Auckland, aged 98 years 11 months.
We can only regret that Fred did not quite make his 'ton', nor did he quite see the centenary observance of the Pacific Cable in Nov 2002, on which he had worked for 40 years.
Apart from his skill & experience Fred was known for his unfailing gentlemanly approach to life and for his quiet humour. His funeral service was well attended in Auckland.
Fred began as a probationer with PCB Auckland in March 1921 - transferred to Suva

May 1924 - and to Bamfield BC in July 1927. PCB was taken over by Cable & Wireless Ltd. in 1935. Fred's remaining service was in Suva and in Auckland, although he was quite familiar with Norfolk Island and Southport.
He was the original Secretary of Veteran Cablemens' Assoc., NZ, from 1955
Fred is believed to be the last of our PCB veterans and we will all miss him greatly at our annual gathering.

The Southport Celebration.
I think everybody who attended the celebration of the Centenary of the Pacific Cable Station, at Southport, expected it to be a big occasion, but I dont believe any of us really anticipated what actually transpired there on 31 October, 2002.

It was a truly great event.

I doubt if words can do justice to the emotion and satisfaction experienced by those of us who were fortunate enough to be there, however, I shall do my best to find those words. The Southport School is a beautiful school, situated in spacious grounds on the banks of the Nerang River. It has all the accoutrements of a top class private school, such as grassy sports grounds and tree-lined parks, with attractive school buildings dotted around the large campus. Located along the banks of the river is the music school, known as "the cable station". This is the original Southport Cable Station, moved from its original site in Bauer St and beautifully restored in federation colours. What is more, all the adjacent buildings (including the magnificent auditorium) are designed and painted to match the cable station. This school takes great pride in its place in Australia's history and the Headmaster, Dr Cook, his staff and students all deserve to be commended for the way in which they commemorated the opening of the Pacific Cable, in 1902.

On the morning of that Thursday, in 2002, an area was prepared in a courtyard, bounded on three sides by the verandahs of the cable station, with seating for about 200, arranged in the shade of the trees and with the school band playing a selection of items.

Amongst those attending were about thirty of our veterans (including quite a few old cable station staffers) many of them with their wives. I was delighted to see many old OTC friends that I had not seen for about twenty years. At ten o'clock the band struck up a martial air and we were asked to stand for the arrival of the Headmaster and the Mayor of the Gold Coast City Council, in two vintage cars. These two were met by a guard of honour, comprising (in uniform) members of the army who actually guarded the cable station during World War two. They presented arms and the two principals made their way up to the platform, on the verandah. The band then led us all in the national anthem and the M.C. (Director of Music, Barry Walmsley) began the ceremony by calling on the Mayor to speak about the significance of the occasion. This was followed by readings by half a dozen boys, from the history of the cable and its landing in 1902. We then heard a message received (in morse, via the internet) from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth 2, and then Gareth Thompson spoke on behalf of cable station staff. With obvious pride, he described the way in which those cable stations were operated and the systems which were employed. I then made a presentation to the Headmaster, of a plaque from the OTVA, commemorating the occasion and a copy of Edgar Harcourt's book "Taming the Tyrant" which had been signed by Edgar himself. This will be kept in the school library, of course.

After the official ceremony, we were all invited to inspect an exhibition of old cable equipment (which the OTVA had arranged to be sent from La Perouse) together with copies of letters and photographs relating to the Pacific Cable and related history.

The local amateur radio society also had a display of operating equipment in an adjacent room. It was a credit to the organisers, which included the Gold Coast Museum, Channel Nine and many members of the school staff, not forgetting Mick Wood and Deane Laws. After the inspections were over, we assembled all the Vets along the front of the cable station (with difficulty) for a photo session.

It was (as Mick Wood said) "bigger than Ben Hur".

Most of us then adjourned to the local RSL club for an informal Vet's Reunion, which then carried on at the motel (where a large number of us were coincidentally staying).

We interrupted our celebrations (briefly) to watch the local Channel Nine News, where it was all given the full treatment, including excellent interviews with Trevor Thatcher and Deane Laws. I dont think I have ever felt prouder to be associated with the OTVA than on that day. To all of those involved, congratulations and thank you so much.

Tom Barker.

The Editor's Corner.

Christmas is upon us again and a New Year follows. The message of Christmas and hopes for world peace, lies in tolerance. To respect the differences in the views, culture and the languages of those thought "different "to ourselves. The extension of a welcoming hand, offered with a smile needs no language to convey the message.

From a communications perspective the world of today is a world of instant communications with distance seemingly no barrier;. This causes one to wonder if this is really a good thing? As there is very little room for errors.
1948 saw the invention of the transistor, followed by other semiconductor devices, integrated circuits, digital circuitry and fibre- optics. These advances have changed our lives markedly. The speed and reliability that has come, also has brought them into our homes, the medical world and entertainment, to name a few areas of major usage.. There have been more changes in technology in the past 50years than in the millennium before. But we still have famine and droughts, third world countries, the poor and the envy of those who are without. All this leads me back to the Xmas story and perhaps one could add " is what we are doing for the good of all mankind?" I have preached enough.
My thanks goes to all who were kind enough to extend complements on our last issue and to those who have contributed in the past year. It's not a solo effort. It takes input from all areas to be interesting. So please keep them coming! My especial thanks to, Allan Hennessy and Bernie White who help print, fold and post to you all. Without them there would not have been a Newsletter. Your feedback is essential if we are to put out a meaningful publication. Negative or positive, I can smile to myself or cry; having had many years experience of being away from, as I was once told "The real world of H.O." sorry but it is true!

To all our readers, my best wishes, may good fortune smile kindly down on you and yours and may the Spirit of Christmas be with you all.

As one of our now retired executives once told me," if you stuff it up, remember. It is "they" who selected you, so irrespective of whatever you do, it's theirs to live with. Success, is " theirs" always, so remember that too! Most gratefully yours for the experiences I have had.
Henry Cranfield
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A Short History of Telegraphy – Pt .1 of 2

By Alan G. Hobbs (G8GOJ) and Sam Hallas (G8EXV)

Our sincere thanks goes to the two authors, for their permission to reproduce this article. It was originally written in 3 parts and these have been combined into two (Pt 2 in next issue.) Most regrettably, the excellent pictures which illustrated the text have been deleted, as we do not have the capability to reproduce in colour or black and white. Anyone interested in these, can view same on the WWW address :
http://www.samhallas.co.uk/telhist1/telehist3.htm
It is well nigh impossible to describe the entire history of the electric telegraph in a few pages, but I hope we can still give you an insight into the ingenuity and technology of the early inventors - the pioneers who laid the foundations for today's complex, computer based systems**.**

The Dawn of Time.
Since earliest times human beings have wanted to communicate at a distance. Primitive Man could keep hunting parties in touch about the movement of game by means of smoke signals. Military man was able to co-ordinate his armies. The ancient Greeks used mirrors to reflect the sun's rays at the battle of Thermopylae. All sorts of ways have been found of passing messages and they all rely on extending the human senses of sight or hearing in some way. The explorer and journalist, Stanley, - famous for having found Dr Livingstone when he was travelling the Congo river (now the RiverZaire), was mystified to find that the villagers knew he was coming in advance. Of course the answer to the mystery was the talking drum. The drum is made from a tree trunk, hollowed out and shaped.

Depending on how you hit it, different notes are produced which can sound like the local language. A means of communicating ideally suited to a country with dense forest, where one cannot see from one village to the next. Another very apt name for the drums is the;"Jungle Telegraph"

Conversely, one place where one can see for miles is at sea. And navies have used flags and semaphore for centuries. Using it on land is more difficult. To signal as far as possible some high vantage points are needed - even better if you can put it on a tower.

Mechanical Telegraphs.

Just such a system was invented in the 1790s by Frenchman, Claude Chappe - a system of wooden shutters on a tower, which could show 63 different signals. Naturally, military leaders quickly grasped the importance of systems like this and Napoleon made good use of the Chappe telegraph in his invasion of Italy. A system was made linking London to the naval dockyards at Portsmouth. Needless to say, fog or bad weather frequently interrupted communication. These semaphore type systems were the first to be described as a telegraph. Telegraph was a word coined in 1792 from the Greek, tele, afar, and graphos, a writer. {Concise Oxford Dictionary}

First Steps with Electricity.

But electricity was on its way to assist the art of telegraphy. In the second half of the 18th Century there were important discoveries about the nature of electricity though it remained a mysterious fluid. Galvani conducted experiments with frog's legs to show the effects of electricity. Volta developed a battery, giving a steady source. Other experiments showed that transmission along wires was virtually instantaneous. This held out tantalising prospects for telegraphy. The first problem was to detect the presence of an electric current. Lesage's telegraph used pith ball electrometers and another early idea from S.T. van Soemmering was to use the electrolysis of water to detect the current. But an important breakthrough came in 1810 when Ampere and Oersted showed that the current in a wire could deflect a magnetised needle. By 1836 a needle telegraph had been developed by Baron Pawel Schilling. This was seen by the young William Cooke.

The Cooke & Wheatstone Era.

Cooke immediately saw the possibilities of a telegraphic system linking the major towns in the country. But he was unknown to investors. So, to get commercial support for his scheme he turned to Professor Charles Wheatstone as partner. It was in 1837 that Cooke & Wheatstone devised the first practical telegraph, which was known as the " five needle" system. This was an alphabetical system with five needles, controlled by five separate wires. The needles pointed to the desired letter. It only remained for the receiving operator to note down the letters in order as received. The five needle system was clumsy to operate and, because it needed five wires, was expensive to cable. It was not long before it was replaced by the double needle system, with only two wires, using a code to indicate the letters. The first telegraphs were the Railway Companies' private systems, but the double needle telegraph was the first to be used for a public telegraph from Paddington to Slough in 1841.

Morse Code Begins.

In turn the double needle gave way to the single needle system, using only one wire and the famous code developed by the American, Samuel Finley Breese Morse. A further development, the Highton single needle system, introduced in 1837 employed the Morse code, transmitted from a device known as a commutator. The Commutator, had two keys, which made current flow in opposite directions in the line, corresponding to a dot and a dash. Originally, the receiving operator had to watch the needle and write down the letters. This made it very slow, and pretty soon means were found to make the signal audible to the operator By putting in two different types of stop pins, two distinctive sounds were made- a sort of " Ting" and "Tong. "The operator now had only to concentrate on listening to the sounds, and write down the letters. Experience soon showed that a skilled operator could interpret Morse code from the long and short periods of the dots and dashes. As a result, the familiar single current Morse key and sounder came into use. This was the first data transmission system, which is still in extensive use today on the amateur bands.

Easy as ABC with Wheatstone.

To get away from the need for highly trained operators, Sir Charles Wheatstone invented the ABC system in 1840. It indicates the letter directly by a pointer, like a clock hand. There is a hand generator on the front, a dial with 30 keys round the edge and a pointer. The whole thing was known as a communicator. A separate receiver also had a

single pointer. To work it one pressed the key for the letter wanted and wound the generator. The pointer would go round until it reached the key pressed and then it disconnected the generator. Pressing another key then allowed the pointer to rotate to the next letter and so on. The generator sent alternating half cycles of current to the line and the receiving pointer moved round a letter at a time, like a stepper motor, till it reached the letter being sent. It was pretty simple, robust, and needed little skill to operate. Speeds were up to about 15 words per minute

Recording Telegraphs. So far the systems examined are what we would call transitory. If a character is missed there is no way of getting it, back. Though, for ordinary text, the missing letters can often be guessed. Another problem is that these systems need constant attention from an operator. A far better scheme is to produce a permanent record. There is much less chance of a mistake, and any queries can be checked later.

One of the earliest attempts at this, was the Morse embosser. It was invented by Sam Morse in 1837, but was first used in 1844 over the 40 miles from Baltimore to Washington. At first an automatic sender was used consisting of a plate with long and short metal bars for the Morse equivalent of the alphabet and numbers. The operator slid a pointer across the bars. The pointer was connected to a battery and to the line. And so dots and dashes were sent to line. Competent telegraph operators soon memorised the code, so all that was needed to send the signals was the simple Morse key which we are all now familiar with. The receiver had an electromagnet with a stylus on the end of an arm. When the magnet operated, the stylus produced a dent in a paper tape wound past by a clockwork motor. But the dents in the paper were often faint In 1845 the embosser was replaced by the Bains chemical recorder, and again in 1854 by the Morse inker, invented by Thomas John of Vienna. Here an inked wheel in contact with the paper tape produced easily readable characters

Printing Telegraphs.

The advantages of a telegraph that printed characters directly was obvious from a very early date. In fact attempts were recorded as early as 1832. The Hughes printing telegraph was invented by David E Hughes of Kentucky in 1855. Like the earlier Brett system, the transmitter used a piano type keyboard with 28 keys. Each key has a letter or numeral marked on it. The typewheel went round continuously carrying 56 type pads for letters of the alphabet alternating with figures and punctuation marks. The change from letters to figures and back was done by sending special “shift” signals. The transmitter and receiver ran in synchronism. Each character was sent by a single pulse of current, the same for all characters, but separated from the last by a different time period, depending on how long it took for the type wheel to reach the next character - what we might call today ‘pulse position modulation’. A good operator could send up to 30 words a minute. The Hughes system was very stable and accurate. The cable companies got good mileage out of it, literally, on submarine cable circuits between Britain and Europe. But it needed considerable skill to work. Unlike the Wheatstone ABC, it had to be operated rhythmically - in time with the print wheel. Inland it was mostly used for coded messages, where its accuracy was important.

Emile Baudot.

The Baudot printing telegraph was invented by Emile Baudot, of the French telegraph service in 1874. Today it would be called a synchronous time division multiplex system. It used certain printing details from the Hughes instrument, a distributor invented by Bernard Meyer in 1871, and the “ five unit code” devised by Gauss and Weber. Baudot combined these, together with original ideas of his own, to produce the final multiplex system. The Baudot distributor is central to the operation of the system. Brushes rotate over the segments driven either by weights or an electric motor. The brushes connect several transmitters and receivers in turn to a single line. Typically four channels could share one line. Correcting currents were sent down the line to keep the brushes in synch at the two ends. There were five piano type keys, worked by two fingers of the left hand and three fingers of the right hand. The

five unit code employed by the system was arranged to be easy to remember. Once the keys have been pressed they are locked down until the brushes have passed over the segments connected to that keyboard. Remember that there may be four or more keyboards connected to one distributor. The keyboard is then unlocked ready for the next character with an audible click to warn the operator, known as the cadence signal. Working the Baudot keyboard required a lot of skill.. The operator had to keep up a steady, unvarying, rhythmic pace. The usual speed

of operation being, 180 letters per minute. The receiver is also connected to the distributor. The signals from line are stored on a set of five electromagnets. The combination is then decoded to print the character on paper tape The Baudot system was accepted by the French administration in 1875. It saw widespread service in France and. other countries and the British Post Office adopted it for a simplex circuit between London and Paris in1897.

Wheatstone Fights Back.

At this stage, telegraphy had reached a sort of halfway house. Reception was now automatic, but sending relied on an operator. Obviously a human operator is limited in both speed and accuracy. An operator might be able to transmit at a maximum speed for a short while, but they cannot keep up the pace without making mistakes. Even the fastest operator is usually slower than the maximum speed of the line. So on expensive lines - especially transatlantic lines - some sort of automatic transmission would be more economic. The earliest practical system was invented by Wheatstone in 1867. First of all the message was punched by an operator into perforated tape. The original Wheatstone perforator was entirely mechanical. There was a separate key for a dot, space and a dash. The keys were hit with rubber tipped mallets rather like playing a xylophone. This was called the Stick Punch. Later on, Wheatstone devised a punch with pneumatically operated punches. It could punch up to eight tapes at once. Later still, typewriter style keyboards were produced by a number of inventors. The keyboard automatically produced the complete Morse code for each character, quicker and more accurately. With these later keyboards a touch typist could keep up an average of 40 words a minute, against 25 words a minute for a good punch operator. Wheatstone's transmitter took the perforated tape and by a combination of levers sent either a dot or a dash to line. A dash was arranged to be three times as long as a dot. Speed was typically 70 words a minute, which was much faster than any single operator could keep up for long. The receiver operated like the Morse inker we saw earlier and produced a record on paper tape to be read later. (Part 2 in our next issue.)

TRANSFER TRAUMAS.

Transfer Trauma 3

By Derek Moore, CRS 1964 to Maritime 1993.

For the benefit of any new reader here is my foreword again: Each of my transfers had its moments! Perhaps some of the episodes I relate will trigger "*fond*" memories for CRS members or those from other work areas who also went through traumas of their own as a consequence of being transferred! Wouldn't be at all surprised if others could tell even more horrendous stories than mine.

My wife and children had only just joined me in VID New Year 1969 (readers of TT2 may recall I myself arrived only just before Christmas '68) when, to my surprise, Head Office asked me if I'd like to go to VIO as "acting Grade 1" Our initial reaction was: "Oh no! not another move so soon. We're still unpacking" The lure of a step up the promotion ladder and the higher pay niggled away for all of ten minutes & swung the response in favor of the move, so I said: "Yes" So far, so good. We were quite looking forward to the adventure but wondered how we would be getting from VID to VIO. We assumed we'd go by W A Stateships which ran a frequent service in those days, including passenger vessels, between Perth and Darwin calling in most ports along the way. Then came H.O. travel instructions: we were to go by road! Even today the road between Darwin & Broome is sometimes closed during "the wet". In the '60s it often was. We contemplated the idea of driving via Alice/Adelaide (see TT2)/Perth/Broome with or without uplifts by Ghan and Trans Australia trains on the relevant sections and discarded that notion quick smart. So a strongly worded letter was sent back to H.O. pointing out the impracticality of going by road at that time of year, especially with my wife & very young children (aged 6,5 and 2) in a conventional vehicle. 4WDs were pretty uncommon then, and I didn't have one anyway! Day by day I besieged the Officer in Charge (before the days of "Managers" at CRS stations) asking if any response yet on the travel orders. This leads me into an aside about what became known as "The Case of the Collapsed Filing Cabinet" Whilst still gnawing knuckles and otherwise showing symptoms of m-m-major t-t-trauma awaiting those amended Travel Orders I was on an evening shift at VID (1800-MN). Was duly relieved at MN and went back to my staff house on

the periphery of the station paddock. In the morning I was summoned to the station by the O-i-C. Hooray, thought I, the amended Travel Orders must have come. I hurried across the paddock to the station but was greeted by a very serious looking O-i-C and was asked to go to a nearby empty staff house for an interview. "This is weird" thought I.. "What did I know about the damage to the Filing Cabinet in the O-i-C's office? The filing cabinet had appeared OK when the O-i-C locked it around 5pm but had apparently been forced open and had a "drunken lean" to it when the O-i-C arrived next morning. As I'd been pestering him about news from H.O. and been on the station alone for several hours I was his prime suspect! I had "probably been searching for any info about my transfer!" He also interviewed the MN chap, also the 2iC and station cleaners - with a tape recorder hidden in a drawer while he questioned us. I won't mention any names, that O-i-C has since died, but when I served with him at another station several years later there was no apparent rancour between us. The "Collapsed Filing Cabinet" case was never solved. Staff consensus was that it suffered terminal corrosion and just fell apart, perhaps when knocked by the cleaners. We'll never know now. I've mentioned this as it did constitute an ingredient for my TT3.

Finally the amended Travel Orders came. Myself and family, were to travel to Broome on the Stateships' "Kabbarli" which sailed in a few days hence. Day before sailing I drove my car to the docks alongside "Kabbarli", disconnected the battery and handed the keys to the wharfinger or someone - I forget who - and got a lift back to my family. Then another unexpected summons. I had to return to the docks and pick up my car - the Captain of the "Kabbarli" had decided he had insufficient incentive to put into Broome. No cargo, just me and my family and belongings. (The "Kabbarli" only carried a handful of passengers, not hundreds like the "Koolama" for example)

Back to square one! H.O. then approved us flying VID to VIO, our car and bits & pieces to follow on the next ship calling into Broome. Finally we got away after about 3 weeks (I've forgotten exactly) from saying "yes" to the transfer and actually going. It was a really traumatic time for my whole family. If H.O. had approved going by sea in the first place we'd have been aboard one of the larger passenger vessels which did call into Broome a week or so before the "Kabbarli" sailing. We'd have had an enjoyable sea passage instead of the frustration of the waiting, then being cramped in the tiny economy seats aboard a Mickey Mouse* Fokker. (*MacRobertson Miller Airlines) Arrival at Broome Airport after dark, c1900 hours, saw us welcomed by the O-i-C and taken to his house for a meal. Then, as the kids were so tired we just had to get them to bed a.s.a.p. Our home-to-be was just down the road from the O-i-C's so it took only a few seconds to go from one to the other. Staff houses in VIO were well built for the era before air conditioning became more commonplace in the tropics. Floor to ceiling most walls were louvres; some metal, some frosted glass, some clear glass. The louvres enabled one to capture any hint of a breeze and we were to find ours quite comfortable although with the aid of big ceiling fans when, as was often the case, there was no breeze to dry up the perspiration. Our house had not been lived in since the former Gd.1 had "shot through" while on leave six months or so previously. (the background reason for my unexpected transfer) Dust was inches thick everywhere – louvres not only let in the air they admitted dust and sand with gay abandon too. We had to pick up the mattresses and tip off the accumulated dust & sand before putting the kids on them. Non-air-conditioned Broome homes in February do not require blankets on beds! One of the station staff, the late "Yimmy" Larsen, had had the forethought and consideration to have switched on the fridge and stock it up some milk and butter as well as bread & other foods so we were right for breakfast. In daylight next morning we found our dust filled house surrounded on all sides by dense growth - long grasses and out of control trees and shrubs. We couldn't see the boundary fence! What a task confronted us. One last "trauma" - on arriving for my first shift at the then fairly new VIO building I found the station's air conditioning was not functioning! It had packed up about 2 weeks previously and although the O-i-C had reported it, he had not, apparently, been pushing for the upfix. So one of my new colleagues had, horror of horrors, told the Union (PREIA) about it a day or so before my arrival to demand quicker attention! As the station had been designed for air-conditioning it housed not only receivers but the Txs too (CTM2K, CLH-1L, CTH-P5J - [the ATS1s came later]) which generated quite a lot of heat. So there were no ceiling fans - staff had brought in small personal ones for their own comfort and to blow on the Txs to try to prevent them overheating. At night the fly wire screens on windows failed to keep out myriads of tiny black midges which crawled everywhere and weren't averse to sampling human beings either. Every day dustpans full of

them had to be swept up. Whether the Union speeded things up I don't know, but the air-conditioning did get repaired within a few days and we never had a prolonged outage again during my 3+ years at VIO.

So there we are, TT3 finally survived!

The OTVA Newsletter.

Currently I am looking at ways to both improve our Newsletter by including photos, diagrams etc at the same time trying to reduce our costs of production. This is possible and I am indebted to John Hodgson and Robert Brand for their help. Robert has put forward some ideas and offered assistance which to me look very positive and we will discuss this at our next committee meeting. There are a number of delivery options including E. Mail . To be interesting we have to cover a wide field and I believe we should maintain our present style of article. This is hard to do, as we no longer exist as a “Working” organization. But we do have a rich history and much of it unwritten. Also our membership should be the source we need to tap. The exotc website (www.exotc.com.au) gives us an insight into what is possible. There are many organisations who offer historical material as evidenced by the article on the “ History of Telegraphy.” My foray into the history of telephony has proven quite interesting and will be followed up in later editions. It seems each country’s writers push their own barrows. But! I can assure you dear reader, that is not my intent. My main concern is that Australia’s Communications history in the International sphere be properly recorded