

## OTVA NEWSLETTER

Overseas Telecommunications Veterans Association (Australia)  
Registered Address: 605/41 Meredith Street BANKSTOWN, 2200  
ISSN 1322-1906 May 2004. Volume. 9 Page 7

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## Coming Events

**AGM:** – The Editor had it wrong last Newsletter – **Friday 18 June 2004 is the date for the AGM.** It will again be in the CTA Club in Martin Place at 12:30 and the subscription will be \$15 to cover the cost of room hire and finger food.

Please book by **Mon 14 June** to David Richardson, email: [d\\_s\\_Richardson@yahoo.com.au](mailto:d_s_Richardson@yahoo.com.au), Henry Cranfield (see box for phone or email) or Eamon Fitzpatrick, phone 9743 3806

### Business.

- 1 President's Report for 2003-4
- 2 Minutes from 2003 AGM
3. Treasurer's Report for 2003-4
- 4 Election of Officers and Committee for 2004-2005
- 5 Future Social functions
- 6 General Business

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### Melbourne Vets 47<sup>th</sup> A.G.M.

Wednesday 9th June 2004, 12Noon to 3pm  
Legacy Melbourne Building  
1st Floor, Comradeship Room  
293 Swanston Street, Melbourne  
**Contact:** Robert Hall, Secretary/Treasurer  
Ph. No (03) 9511 6969, Email:  
[rjmdolphin@optusnet.com.au](mailto:rjmdolphin@optusnet.com.au) .

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### President's Message

Once again we come to our Annual General Meeting . To the newcomers to our committee, go thanks for their enthusiasm and participation.

Highlight of our year was the election of Gordon Cupit, Jim Anderson and Pam Helps to "Life Membership" for their

### THE COMMERCIAL BIT

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#### Subscription:

\$10 p.a. -- Due in May each year.

*(Please check your mailer as the indication "5/04" indicates you are seriously unfinancial)*

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#### Website

[www.otva.com](http://www.otva.com)

contribution to the association. An honour well earned. We have several interstate nominees to endorse at this AGM from interstate. It is pleasing to note that the interest in other states is strong and that David Rogers is attempting to reform the Queensland branch, To him, our sincere thanks for his efforts.

We need, I feel, closer liaison with the Telstra Museum and ex AWA groups as we get requests from a number of people for information. There is also a need to look to the future of our membership and the functions of our organization. 2006 marks the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the passing of the "OTC Act" and the establishment of OTC and we must plan to recognize this in the coming year.

My personal thanks to all the Committee members for their support. In particular, the Newsletter group, Bob Lions, Bernie White and Allan Hennessey, our functions organizers, David Richards and Keith McCredden and finally Will Whyte for his efforts as Secretary and the provision of a venue; aided by Colin Kelly, for our committee meetings.

It has been a privilege to serve you as President and may I take this opportunity to wish everyone good health and prosperity for the coming year.

Henry Cranfield

President

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### **NEW ZEALAND CLASS OF '44**

The Veteran Cablemen's Association of NZ meets annually in Auckland. Most of the members now are from the Cable & Wireless Ltd Class of '44 and this year marks the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of their training. At our special luncheon this year we had the pleasure of the company of one of the Australian (Adelaide) Class of '44, Bruce Gall and his wife Margaret.

Our long-time Chairman, David Thompson, set the tone for the gathering with his brief run-down on our short service with C&W,

South East Asia. He reminded us of our close relationship with the Australian contingent to TELCOM. The many reminiscences centred on the overseas postings in 1945/6/7 in Colombo, Penang, Singapore, Batavia & Hong Kong, including references to the famous Press Ship, LCI(L)104. The C&W TELCOM days were discussed and many names of our UK associates were spoken of. Likewise we spoke of our TELCOM Team Leaders, Bill Craig (NZ) and Harry Colliver (Aust), both now deceased.

Bruce Gall brought greetings from our Australian mates, with whom a strong friendship has been maintained over these 60 years and with whom we have shared a number of memorable reunions. He also reported on his own recent visit to Sri Lanka. Perhaps, best of all, we discovered who it was who hijacked that bullock cart on the road to Colombo in 1945 - although we always knew it wasn't a Kiwi!

The 12 veterans enjoyed their gathering in company with wives and widows. In mid-April another luncheon gathering is planned to greet a further TELCOM Cable & Wireless Ltd veteran, now living in retirement in Canada, Peter Cork. No doubt, more reminiscences will be kicked around. We might even hear some more of the bullock story!

The Veteran Cablemen's Association NZ is now quite a small group but it is held together by Chairman David Thompson and our Sec/Treasurer John Walker. We send our best fraternal greetings to members of OTVA throughout Australia.

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### **Lost Golf Trophy**

Eamon Fitzpatrick has been asking about the whereabouts of a 'golf trophy' which took the form of a old Carnarvon feed horn mounted on a shield of some form, with the winning players' names engraved.

Does anyone else recall the trophy, the conditions under which it was awarded or have any ideas of its whereabouts?

If you can offer news or assistance, please contact Eamon at (02) 9743 3806

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### **CAPE YORK - TELEGRAPH ROAD.**

by Gordon Cupit

In the Escape Section of the Sunday Telegraph, 8 Feb 2004, in an article on travel to Cape York, there is an instruction "Left to Weipa but straight ahead towards the Cape on the Telegraph Road. -- This is named after the Telegraph Line, built in 1887, which linked Brisbane to Singapore."

In the Vets Newsletter, Vol 2 Pt 1 dated October 1978, appeared a request by the National Museum of Victoria seeking the exact location where the last of a rare type of bandicoot was found in Cape York. The original reference quoted "Northern Cape York, where specimens were from Utingu and Cable Station, collected 20 September 1912."

From our Vets history sheets we knew that old pioneer Veteran, Dave Fleming had started his career in the PMG's Department at Thursday Island in 1905. On contacting Dave, he advised that an under-sea cable ran from Thursday Island to Horn Island and on to Utingu near the Cape. There is no record as to whether this cable went further than Utingu.

The Telegraph Road was originally a track from near Thursday Island and was the site of a telegraph landline from Thursday Island to Cooktown. One of Dave's duties at Thursday Island was to periodically ride this track on horseback, to observe the line's condition and, if necessary, carry out maintenance.

Dave knew of the subject bandicoot, and so we passed this information on to the Museum for which they were extremely grateful. The Museum advised that their Curator of Vertebrates had just completed a paper for presentation at the Second International Teriological Congress in Brno, Czechoslovakia and she was so

pleased to include this information in her paper.

This is an example of how important our Vets History Sheets are, so any member who had not completed one of these sheets, please do so as soon as possible.

Dave subsequently left the PMG's Dept and joined the Navy as a Petty Officer Tel, and was on HMAS Sydney when she did battle with and sank the German Raider, Emden, at Cocos Island in 1914. This was the first time that an Australian warship saw action. He was discharged medically unfit in 1919 and took a job with AWA as a ship's operator, and after many years at sea, he was transferred to the Coastal Radio Service.

Dave originated from Ireland, having been born in Tipperary in 1891. On retirement he took many a trip to see his relatives. On his travels he kept us posted by either letter or postcard, and we produced some of his letters in the Newsletter. He often came into Head Office to see me to keep me informed of his health etc.

Dave was in the position of Assistant Manager, Sydneyradio, when he retired in 1956. His salary at the time was £500 per annum.

He was an interesting character, who did not have a day of sick leave until 3rd Feb 1949, a fact of which he was very proud. Dave died in 1982 at the age of 91.

I can't find any reference to Utingu in any of my maps. Does anyone have any knowledge of this place or of the said cable station. If this cable went further, do you know where to? Also was Dave's old track the same route as that of the Telegraph Road ?

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### **Sydney Social Function,**

(20 March, Kokoda Park Concord)

It was a lovely Autumn day and we were optimistic about enjoying a nice get-together with the boys and girls. When Fay and I arrived at about 11.45am the only

sign of activity was the Reserved notice on the shelter shed.

We decided to read the paper in the shed and did so for the next hour, when Ross Craig arrived with his wife, Cheryl. We all windbagged for a while and then Jim Simpson arrived and we had a nice chat. A bit later we were joined by Neil Yakalis, Annette Taylor and Don Withers. That was the total attendance, eight in all. We were able to all sit at the one table and have lunch and a mag together for an hour or so, before we all went home.

Thanks to Tom Barker for this report.

It would appear that Saturday doesn't suit people either so please, can we find out at the AGM what format suits for our get-togethers???

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### **Blast from the past.**

From Vernon Yen

Have moved up to the Gold Coast just over a year ago and finally gave the game away. I turn 65 next month and have been living off a suitcase for the last 10 years or so and now want to spend time with my wife and enjoy my children and grandchildren whilst I still can. We have 4 lovely grandchildren - 2 each from my son and daughter respectively. We're up at Bilambil Heights, about 10 minutes drive to the beach - Far enough not to be caught up in all the tourist and city claptrap but close enough if we need to access services in the city - on the other side of the mountain range behind Coolangatta Airport and high enough above sea level to catch the cooling sea breeze. There are a few ex OTCites living in the area. Martin Cresswell lives down the valley from us at a lovely little village called Tumbulgum. Also bumped into Des Woods at the local Shopping Centre - He lives down at Kingscliff, just South of us. I hear from some of the Old Boys from time-to-time - Grumpy Callaghan, Feely, Simmo, Naggar.

How are you and Fay ? I trust you have recovered from your illness. You know Tom, people like us never really know when to stop until we are fortunate enough to be dealt a severe reprimand. We are dedicated workers and of course achievers but we pay a very high price. The rewards were also great both financially and through self satisfaction. Many of my colleagues in Asia, Europe and the Americas call me from time-to-time for a chat - these friends really make it all worth while. The new generation moving in don't seem to have the same camaraderie. Here are my contact details and if you are in the area feel free to give me a call and we can organise a get-together. Mail: 8 Buena Vista Drive, Bilambil Heights, NSW, 2486. Phone: (07) 5590 7538 Mobile: 0418 242 912

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### **Another Blast**

Dennis Grant lent me some documents to remind us of Lincompex (Does anyone remember Lincompex??) and also some documents related to the DEW line on which John Hampton worked. This all apropos of the fact that John will be visiting Sydney soon and will catch up with some of his colleagues.

However, one of the documents was a copy of Transit (Volume 6, No 4 – May 1977), with a photo of John at the Sixth Meeting of INTELSAT Signatories in April 1977.



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**Sign of the Times** – Comment from el Presidente after a visit to Norfolk Island

“The OTC presence on Norfolk Island is almost gone. The STO for Telstra at the ANZCAN site, now a satellite site with 10 metre dish is an ex-OTC trainee named Mick Donohoe from Paddo and Broadway.”

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### Early Staff of Adelaide Radio



And while we're nowhere near the subject of what life was like in olden times, here's a picture of Ye Olde Originale First-ever Adelaidradio staff.

A very ship-shape crew, as you can see — their labours went on under the auspices of the Navy in those times, which helps account for the stunning array of brass buttons noticeably absent from the chests of our CRS men today.

The glazed eyes, it should be explained, are the product of the photography of the era, and not of too much drinking on the job.

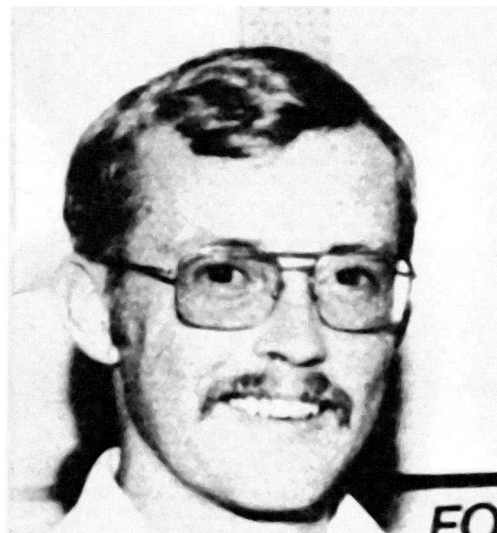
Seated is Lieutenant Burgoyne, and from left to right are Petty Officer Frank Gowlett, Chief Petty Officer Alien Longstaff and a gentleman whose name is unknown, but whose uniform indicates that he was a Sub-Lieutenant.

(Reprinted from Transit, May 1977)

### Movies on Broadway

The following is another excerpt from the May 1977 Transit

When it comes to screening movies, Technical Officer Wayne Kitchener almost bubbles over with enthusiasm — an enthusiasm for which OTC's Sydney staff should be grateful.



Wayne Kitchener in 1977

"I guess you could say that movie showing and theatre presentation is my major hobby", Wayne says.

"So, when I heard that the theatrette in the OTC display centre at Broadway could be available for staff film showings, it was like all my Christmases had come at once."

Wayne approached the Social and Sports Club and made an arrangement with them that he would hire and show films in the theatrette, with management agreement, and the S&SC would foot the bill for any difference between the film-hire cost and the amount collected at the door.

Under this arrangement, the first movie went to screen on November 29, 1974. The staff responded with full houses.

But evidently, while everything was going smoothly for the audience, things were a little hectic in the projection box.

"The theatrette had been designed primarily to show the multivision presentation as part of the Broadway

display tour for schools and other audiences.

"So, while two excellent 16 mm movie projectors had been installed, nothing had been done to facilitate screenings such as feature-length movies.

"Two of us were kept pretty well on the hop swapping plugs, changing reels, switching projectors, theatre lights and operating the curtains.

"And we had to do all of this in the dark or by torch light (there were no operating lights) and in silence (there were no monitor speakers in the projection box)".

From Wayne's point of view it was pretty obvious that things were far from perfect.

He approached Public Relations Officer Gavin Trevitt with his problem and between them they got clearance for a scheme whereby Wayne carried out the work on modifications to the theatrette facilities in his spare time and OTC paid for the materials and equipment he needed.

Things soon started to happen.

Operating lights appeared, strategically placed where they would provide light for the projectionist without interfering with the enjoyment of the audience.

Wayne designed, constructed and installed a main control console between the two movie projectors, centralising all the major projection, sound, curtain and light controls to within reach of a single operator. Motorised screen masking was wired up, monitor speakers were installed outside the theatrette and in the projection box, along with a warning bell.

At the same time Wayne managed to tidy up and rationalise a lot of the wiring for the multivision equipment, which in itself entails six 35 mm slide projectors controlled through a small computer.

While all this was going in, of course, Wayne kept on showing movies, for the staff, their families and friends — once a month on Friday and Saturday nights.

While the audience response never lacked enthusiasm, it did vary.

"Apart from obvious factors such as weather etc, we found that some films attracted a bigger audience than others.

"Surprisingly, the really big-name films such as 'Ryan's Daughter' didn't seem to do too well — maybe because most people had already seen them — while others like 'Deliverance' played to packed houses.

"One thing we tried, which proved a real winner was Thursday night shows for the kids, to enable Mum and Dad to go shopping in peace.

"These really worked well, and I'd like to continue them. The main problem is finding suitable films, these days".

Since 1974 Wayne has shown over thirty films to thousands of OTC types and their friends.

Although the shows started off experimentally as being mainly for the Broadway staff, they are now open to anyone from OTC in the Sydney area.

And it has to be one of the cheapest cinemas in Sydney with seat prices varying from 75 cents down, depending on the hiring cost of the film from the distributors.

"I always have a cartoon, and the shows are usually double features", says Wayne, wearing his entrepreneur hat.

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### **Some Statistics**

From an article accompanying Denis Grant's article on Lincompex, comes this information about the World's Telephones in 1964!

#### ***THE WORLD'S TELEPHONES***

On 1 January, 1964, there were 171 million telephones in use throughout the world—an increase of 9.9 million (or 6.1 per cent) compared with 1 January, 1963. The numerical increase was the highest so far recorded.

The country with most telephones was the United States (84.4 million), followed by Japan (10.6 million) and the United Kingdom (9.3 million). The United States also headed the list of telephones per 100 of the "population with a figure of 44.26, followed by Sweden (42.25) and New Zealand (35). The number of telephones per 100 of the population in the United Kingdom was 17.41.

According to the American Telephone and Telegraph Company which produces these statistics, the most telephone-minded people in the world are the Canadians who, during 1963 had 11,313 million telephone conversations—an average of 597.7 per person, followed by Iceland (574.9 conversations per person), and the United States (570).

The total number of telephone conversations made in the United Kingdom was 5,778.8 million an average of 107.9 per person). At the bottom of the list was Mali (3.1 million conversations and an average per person of 0.7).

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### Sixty Year Reunion

August 7, 2006 will mark 60 years since OTC ventured into the world on its brief existence. It would be great to mark the occasion by appropriate celebrations.

Work will need to start soon on the organisation and any suggestions or ideas for the festivities should be conveyed to the President or any member of the Committee.

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### The XXX4 Years

1954: Still dependent on HF radio, preparing for the Melbourne Olympics

1964: COMPAC was already in service and in August, Intelsat was formed.

1974: Broadway was opened, Cyclone Tracy hit Darwin with Darwinradio suffering comparatively minor damage.

1984: ANZCAN cable was opened on November 8 and COMPAC shut down on November 30

1994: OTC had ceased to exist

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### Editor's indulgence

To fill this final space, I include this picture of the AWA CLH 30 transmitters at Doonside which was included in the Engineering Yearbook in my final year (Guess the date??)



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### VALE

**Patricia Anderson** (passed away Friday, 30 April 2004)

Pat worked in the SOR, then moved to Paddington as Orme Cooper's secretary in the '70's and then became what she claimed was the first female shift worker in OTC's history, working in the ISCC at Paddo performing dialling tests on the afternoon shift.

After she retired she travelled widely (I wonder if all the ISCC calls were to official test numbers?) and maintained a life long volunteer interest in the Travellers' Aid Society at Sydney's Central Station, where she worked into her 80s.

The funeral was at Waverly Cemetery

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**Brian Morrell**, (April 2004)

Brian, who was one of the founding members of the West Australian branch of the Veterans' Association, passed away in

April. Brian had served with Telcom, a unit formed after the war to help restore cable stations destroyed by the Japanese in the Far East. When Telcom was disbanded, Brian joined OTC and worked at the Cottesloe cable station until its closure in 1966, at which time he joined the then PMG.

On the formation of the WA Vets in 1974, Brian was elected as the first secretary/treasurer and held that position for ten years. He later recovered from a stroke and continued to attend meetings, but some years ago his health declined rapidly and he spent the remaining years of his life in a Perth nursing home.

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**Pat Cordell** (April 24, 2004)

Pat was the OTC nurse for many years at 231 Elizabeth St, then the Telstra nurse for some years following that.

Pat died after a brief illness and complications arising from surgery. Pat had a fairly tough time of life. Her husband was an alcoholic, one son committed suicide and one is blind. Despite the nasty things she did to me with needles (allegedly "following OTC travel regulations") I maintained a friendship with her and her family since the late 80's - working with her son Iain at Optus for some years.

Pat's funeral was at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium April 30.

If you would like to send a message, Iain can be emailed at iaenc@hydra.optus.com.au

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**Sara-Beth Hainke** (24 April 2004)

Sara-Beth Hainke passed away on Saturday 24 April. Those of you who may have worked with Ian during your time at OTC and met Sara-Beth will undoubtedly have fond memories of her.

A service was held at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium on Delhi Road, North Ryde, on Friday April 30<sup>th</sup>.

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**Jack Whittaker** (19 December 2003)

A few words from Gordon Cupit: Jack was one of a group with Nev Creaney and myself together with "Scratchy" Thatcher, and Johnny Hodgson (24 in all including Ross Herrington, Wilf O'Donnell, Cliff Pearson (dec'd) and Jack Sheath (dec'd) who were all trained for the Beam Wireless service by the late Stan Gray, who, considering his students, did a marvelous job. I also remember Bob Fisher being with us who, as you know, turned out to be a very hot technician (Bob had to do the wireless course to qualify as a tech). There was another young bloke who trained with Bob and who went on to be the head of United Press communications, (Gordon someone). They were a great bunch of fellers who were around in those Beam days.

When we first came to 47 York Street we were perceived to be some form of threat to the incumbents' careers, but we proved them wrong, didn't we. I regard them as friends for life.

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**Deadlines for next Issue**

Assuming that there will be another issue of this literary masterpiece, the Editor asks that all those who have material to submit, please do so by Wednesday 4 August.

I am particularly keen to publish more photos. They can be submitted electronically to my email address or I can borrow them to scan. All offers gratefully received.

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