



# OTVA NEWSLETTER

Overseas Telecommunications Veterans Association (Australia)  
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## THE OVERHEADS

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### Subscription:

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

(Please check your mailer as the indication  
"5/05" indicates you are seriously  
unfinancial)

### Mail Address:

Unit 605, 41 Meredith Street  
BANKSTOWN 2200

### Website

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

Photos aren't going on the website as the  
Editor wishes but it is his fault!! He  
keeps running out of time!!

## Coming Events

**Sydney** When: Thursday 24 Nov  
at Noon

Where: The Mandarin Club, Goulburn St  
Sydney. Bring your partner!

Cost: :\$30.00 each (cash bar)

R.S.V.P. by Monday 21st November to:

Henry Cranfield: email: [henrycra@tpg.com.au](mailto:henrycra@tpg.com.au)

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David Richardson, phone.(02)9487 1985  
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Eamon Fitzpatrick: phone:9743 3806

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**South Australia OTVA Xmas**

"Do" Thursday 24 November 2005,  
presumably at the old McLarenVale Pub at  
noon.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Victoria OTVA** Wed 30th November,

2005, Legacy House Melbourne, 1/293  
Swanston St, Time: 12Noon to 3pm, R.S.V.P.  
27th Nov 05 Robert Hall  
[rjmdolphin@optusnet.com.au](mailto:rjmdolphin@optusnet.com.au) or (03)  
95116969,

\*\*\*\*\*

Put the dates in your diary NOW and work  
around them!!

\*\*\*\*\*

Correct Address? Please ensure that  
Will Whyte has your correct address  
and latest email address.

\*\*\*\*\*

## The President's Message.

In November 1956 some staff from AWA and OTC saw fit to start our organization. In the intervening 49 years our fortunes rose, we were recognized by OTC(A) management and became nationwide. With the demise of OTC and its amalgamation into Telstra; support from Telstra is nil, our membership aging and diminishing in numbers. But we have continued to progress our aims, put out a quarterly newsletter, maintain a website and our social re-unions. At this time of the year, memories come flooding back and we are thankful that we worked for OTC or whoever and shared the times we did.

In the year ahead we have our "Golden Jubilee" to celebrate? Already your committee has started working towards our celebrations in November 2006. We sincerely trust that all will support this event, making it 'A Year to Remember'

To add interest to next years functions, we are organizing a visit to the Telstra Museum at Bankstown for our Autumn function and a "Return to Paddington" for our Spring function. So come, see, support them and watch for details in the "Newsletter"

My best wishes for the Festive Season and for a Prosperous 2006

Henry Cranfield, President

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*(As usual, Cupie is a major contributor. This one is the history of the OTVA and needs to be run this year, the year of our Golden Jubilee.)*

### OTVA'S FIRST 50 YEARS

**by Gordon Cupit**

*(This has been updated and edited)*

This year, being the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the OTVA, I thought that some of our newer members may care to hear some of the background and milestones of the Association.

In 1955 a group of Beam, CRS, Technical staff plus some AWA engineers and ex-cable staff got together and founded the Association. Requirement for membership was a minimum of 25 years service in International communications.

Founding office bearers were:

President, Jack Cameron, Senior Technician Cables

Secretary. Wilf Atkin, Welfare Officer OTC Ex-Beam

Treasurer. Bill Stevenson, Senior Telegraphist Beam

Committee Hilton Robertson, Senior Investigation Officer Beam

Frank Marsden, Draftsman, Ionospheric Prediction section, Engineering

Gordon Cupit, Administration. -3 years short of membership qualifications and co-opted as OIC Typing Pool and Pitney Room

Subsequently, Frank Marsden designed the veterans badge.

The first Reunion was held in the OTC Amenities Room with supper being coffee, tea and sandwiches! I don't think any of the foundation members are still alive. *(except Gordon -- Ed)*

**1957** Melbourne Association formed. R. Freeman President and Charlie Carthew Secretary. The Melbourne show was a one man show controlled by Charles from its inception until he had a stroke in 1983. He was a very ardent Secretary, who did not agree with some of the practices of the NSW. Branch.

A group of communicators started holding meetings in Perth WA but did not become a branch until 1975.

In the same year it was suggested that a National Secretary be appointed and this was approved in 1972. Charles Carthew was appointed to the position in the following year.

**1972** With a suggestion from Charles Carthew that we should have a Newsletter, I agreed and produced the first edition that year, with me as Editor and producer. Copies were sent to all members, to a few selected persons in the UK, to all members of the NZ Cablemens Association and to all members of the retired Cable and Wireless Pioneers Association of Canada.

A group of Ex-cable staff had met regularly for some years in Adelaide and were reluctant to join our Association. With a great deal of

lobbying from Charles Carthew and myself they finally joined our association in 1973.

**1973** Members History sheet produced for record of service commenced.

**1975** Queensland Association formed in Brisbane.

**1976** It was agreed that spouses be invited to Annual reunions. This increased attendance considerably. Secretary started sending Xmas cards to all widows. Many showed pleasure in replies in that they were remembered.

**1978.** As many OTC officers could never reach the 25 years service for membership, a group of these requested OTC's management to consider an OTC Retired Officers Association. Management conferred with the vets, but it was considered that our functions were as much as we could handle and suggestion was dropped.

Keith Vincent,, Manager Cairns Cable Station, started a small technical display at the station. Because of the interest shown by visitors, he suggested that the veterans start collecting Archival and museum relics . This was the start of the present Museum and historical Archives. I found a cabinet in the Records Section for storage, John Walker, General Services Officer took an interest and became the official custodian. Unfortunately John passed away in 1987.

**1980** 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunions in Sydney 118 attended and Melbourne (88). VIP's included Bob Sommervaille (OTC Chairman), Bill Schmidt (OTC General Manager), Sir Albert Chadwick (Ex OTC Chairman), Jack Curtis (OTC Commissioner) , John Hooke (Managing Director AWA)

**1985** AWA retired officers formed their own Veterans Association

**1987** In view of the numbers of older Vets, it was decided that our meetings and reunions be held in the afternoon. This was a great innovation and resulted in an upsurge in the attendance of older members at our meetings

Archival Officer Kathy Hambly was appointed by George Maltby and Archives were set up on Level 2 at Paddington Terminal. Veterans Archives were merged into Official Archives.

**1988** Kathy Handley found the job too big and resigned. Kimberly O'Sullivan appointed and commenced work immediately on a data base for the archives.

OTC's contribution to the Bi-Centenary Celebrations was an exhibition which opened at Paddington. Many veterans assisted by lending and with preparing equipment, also acting as guides at the exhibition..

**1991** Veterans were concerned about their future due th the merger with Telecom to form Telstra. At the Annual Reunion that year they were assured by CEO Steve Burdon that the Elizabeth Street Function Room would always be available for functions.

**1992** Steve Burdon, arranged for publication and printing of Historical Booklets most of the information coming from our Archives> Copies were given to all Veterans.

**1994** The Archives suffered a great blow when Kimberly O'Sullivan resigned and Assistant Mark Kitchener selected in charge of Archives.

**1996** Telstra cancelled all funding and use of their facilities. Referred us to Telecom Historical Society which they heavily subsidized. The Society agreed to help us but the conditions were not suitable and it was decided to go alone. We lost the valuable secretarial help and printing of the Newsletter. This proved too much of a problem for an old bloke and I resigned as President. Tom Barker was elected in my stead.

**1998** Being an experienced manager and used to delegating Tom set up sub-committees which have proven most successful.

**1999** Visit to Centre at Roseberry NSW well attended and most interesting .

**2000.** OTVA receives a donation of \$5000.00 from OTVA Provident fund Trusttes on wind-up of fund. Special bank account opened for same. No Spring or Autumn Socials due to Olympic games held in Sydney.

**2002** President Tom Barker endeavours to have adopted a new constitution for OTVA. Due to cost of "Incorporation" and insurance requirements plus opposition from some states this was abandoned. October 2002 OTVA participates in "Centenary of Pacific Cable

Opening” celebration at Southport School in Queensland. . Items from OTC collection lent for Museum together with cable samples.

**2003** In March Tom Barker resigns from Presidency due to ill-health and Keith McCredden elected to vacancy until end of OTVA year. Henry Cranfield elected as President.

**2004.** Life memberships awarded to Gordon Cupit, Jim Anderson and Pam Helps (NSW) Derek Walker (W.A) Robert and Elaine Hall (VIC) Max Lang (S.A.)

**2005** OTC collection of nearly 400 separate historical items at La Perouse were all identified, tagged, catalogued and packed in “Museum Quality” materials by OTVA volunteers. This included material from the 1988 Bi-centenary exhibition. At Paddington. Items from 231 Elizabeth Street lift foyer show cases also found. These all to be added to “Telstra Collection “ for showing (On loan) at Museums around Australia and remain permanently owned by Telstra.

#### **NSW OTVA PRESIDENTS:**

1956 - 1961 Jack Cameron  
1961 - 1962 A.B. Sharland  
1962 – 1965 Wilf Atkin  
1965 – 1966 Bill Jenvey  
1966 – 1967 A.D. Gregory  
1967 – 1969 Harry De Dassel  
1969 – 1979 Jack Guthrie  
1979 - 1983 Phillip Geeves  
1983 – 1986 Ron McDonald  
1986 – 1997 Gordon Cupit  
1997 – March 2003 Tom Barker  
2003 - 2003 (March to July) Keith McCredden  
2003 – 2005 Henry Cranfield.

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#### **JOHN HAMPTON**

*By Bob Lions*

Not content with the material on offer for this newsletter, I recently journeyed to the USA to interview one of our members in his adopted environment. John went to all the trouble to drive about two hours from his home on Chesapeake Bay to get to Washington (and

afterwards two hours home) but he gave us a great tour of Washington. Anyone who has been there will know that there are many things to see and so making a selection for one day is quite difficult. There are lots of impressive memorials and everything is bigger than life size!



**Soothing ale, Washington style**

However, John took us to Alexandria for lunch and we had a couple of cleansing ales (Remember, everything is bigger than life size!!).

John is one of the avid readers of this rag and sends his greetings to all members of OTVA.

He also talked of his pending move to Florida (Valda was at home, trying to sell the house, so we didn't see her.) but considering the weather there lately, we wonder why he would want to go.

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*The final instalment of Erik's interesting story of technological challenge.*

**THE GERMAN ENIGMA MACHINE.** (by Erik Bachman)

#### **Part 2: -- Breaking the Code.**

The procedure used initially by the Germans meant that a single day key would be used to encrypt maybe hundreds of messages, which would make it easier for a cryptanalyst to identify the plaintext messages.

British cryptanalysts realised at an early stage that any repetition was a weak point with the Enigma. They soon realised that the Germans repeated the 3-letter message key to avoid operator error and interference problems. This provided the first clue, namely that the first and the fourth letters were encryptions of the same plaintext letter, taking account of the Caesar shift; similarly, the second and the

fifth, and the third and the sixth letters. Another clue was to examine the frequencies of certain characteristic letters and combinations of letters as known from the German language.

As an extra precaution, the Germans therefore took the clever step to use a random message key (with a new scrambler orientation), which was encrypted with the day key and repeated to start the message. The message key was supposed to be chosen at random, but in practice, in the heat of battle, overworked operators would sometimes pick three consecutive letters from the keyboard, e.g., QWE or BNM, another useful clue to decipherment. Because the scramblers rotate after each letter, the new message key would be different from the original message key. The receiver typed the repeated message key and decyphered it, noting the repetition and reset his scramblers accordingly. The main body of the message then used the new message key. In other words, the day key was only used for a limited amount of text (namely for the new message key), while the latter would be used for the main body of the messages.



**A 4 rotor Enigma Machine**

Using a large number of known and guessed cribs, Turing applied these at the same time to three Enigma machines, which had the same

settings, except that the second had its scrambler orientations moved forward one place, relative to the first, while the third machine had its scrambler orientation moved forward three places, relative to the first.

It was Turing who identified Enigma's greatest weakness and exploited it. Analyzing Bletchley Park's large library of German messages he realised that many of them conformed to a rigid structure. For example, it was known that the Germans sent a weather report soon after 6 am every morning. Such a message would be almost certain to contain the German word for weather, *Wetter*. With a cypher text where a specific section, say ETJWPX might represent WETTER, the challenge would be to identify the rotor settings of Enigma, which would transform WETTER into ETJWPX. When a piece of plaintext (in this case WETTER) can be associated with a piece of cyphertext (in this case ETJWPX), such a combination is called a *crib*. In principle one could now type in WETTER and see if the correct cypher text emerged. If it did not, one could change the settings again, and again, and again, etc., until the right one appeared, the only problem being that there were 159,000,000,000,000,000,000 settings to check. (It is easy to see why the German military believed that the machine was infallible).

The magnitude of the challenge presented by the Enigma traffic is also seen from the fact that the German military had a number of distinct Enigma networks, all using different codebooks. For example, breaking the *Wehrmacht's* North Africa network did not mean that the European traffic or the *Luftwaffe* traffic could be decyphered. Using a more sophisticated 5-rotor machine, the *Kriegsmarine* network was most difficult of all.

In the early 1940s, as Bletchley failed to crack the *Kriegsmarine* Enigma network, the Germans were gaining the upper hand in the Atlantic. With secure communications, they could assemble large packs of submarines, which devastated Allied shipping, which was supplying Britain with badly needed weapons and food from the USA. At this time, the Allies were losing an average of 50 ships each



month, and ca. 50,000 Allied seamen died during the war.

Attempts to crack Enigma included a clever ploy by the Royal Air Force. The planes would lay mines in a particular location, provoking German vessels to send warnings to other ships. Such messages would invariably include a map reference, which would of course be known to the British, so it could be useful as a crib (an association of plaintext with cyphertext). The operation of sowing mines to obtain cribs was known as *gardening*; it did, however, require special missions and could not be done on a regular basis. An alternative method was desperately needed, if the Battle of the Atlantic was going to be won.

Stealing codebooks was a possibility, and a number of daring raids were made on weather ships and submarines. In this regard, restraint had to be excused, as it was essential that the Germans never suspected that their security had been compromised; if so, they would undoubtedly have made changes to their Enigma machines. The British therefore always sank a German vessel when they had stolen its code books.

To simplify the code-breaking problem, Turing tried to disentangle the Enigma scrambler settings from the patchboard cabling. Using a large number of known and guessed cribs, Turing applied these at the same time to three Enigma machines, which had the same settings, except that the second had its scrambler starting positions moved forward one place, relative to the first, while the third machine had its scrambler orientation moved forward three places, relative to the first.

The various initiatives started to improve the possibilities of decyphering, swinging the battle in favour of the Allies. It is not possible to pin-point exactly, when the Enigma code could be said to be broken, because the Germans continually made changes, both to the cryptography and to the technology, making the code-breaking a continuous effort. It is known, however, that already when the Germans invaded Denmark and Norway in April 1940, Bletchley Park was able to provide a detailed picture of the German operations.

## Death of Turing.

Churchill claimed that Allan Turing's efforts shortened World War II by four years. In 1945 he was awarded an O.B.E. for his contribution to the war effort, and in 1951 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, but his life came to a sad end in 1954. He died from cyanide poisoning, with a verdict returned of suicide. It is hard to believe, however, that this was not connected with his trial on charges of homosexuality. Turing was quite open about being gay, but at that time, a homosexual relationship was not just a scandal, it was a crime. He agreed to accept chemical castration, instead of going to prison, but before it was carried out, he committed suicide.

## Sources.

Enever T., *Britain's Best Kept Secret*, London 1994.

Hinsley F.H. and Stripp A., *Code Breakers*, Oxford 1993.

Singh S., *The Code Book*, London 1988.

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It was crisis day in the Parliament,

The house was hushed and still.

As a member rose with a question

"Will Telstra go downhill?"

"I am confident of an upturn." The PM made reply

"If the workers all give up their jobs, we'll all be home and dry."

"How True! How True!" cried the workers. "Let's end this futile work."

We don't want jobs and wages, they can stick it where it hurts."

"Thank God! Thank God!" sobbed the PM."

"There's faith in the workforce yet

and if we've got this extra,

We will not need the "Fair pay Commission".

They put in the extra circuits, with internet ~ real neat,

With the pay foregone by workers, they serviced every creek.

They moved among the paddocks with a dish for every shed,

With streaming eyes and heartfelt cries. "You need it and we've got cred."

Soon all the people prospered and the devil became a saint,

Now that the sober unions had exercised restraint.

And the homesteads were filled with singing and the sound of laughter spread

As they shook hands in the golden land, AND THE PIGS FLEW OVERHEAD

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## **THE HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS.**

*This is the third part (of five) of Gordon Cupit's history of Australia's International telecommunications.*

### **OTCA**

In Australia the Overseas Telecommunications Act, 1946, was passed. This Act resulted in the acquisition of the Beam Wireless and Coastal Radio Service from AWA and the Australian section of the services of Cable & Wireless and granted ownership and management to the specially newly formed Overseas Telecommunications Commission (Australia),(OTCA)

It was also agreed under this Act for OTC to staff and manage the cable stations at Suva, Fanning Island and Cocos Island on behalf of Cable & Wireless. Beam Operating staff were also transferred to OTC, together with Traffic Accounts staff and Asst. General Manager, Chief Engineer and Chief Accountant of AWA, and the Traffic Superintendent of the Australian Branch of Cable and Wireless. The Beam Service was earning more than 50% of AWA's profits and was a big loss to the Company. During the War Years, AWA had concentrated on manufacture of radio equipment for the Defence Dept and Beam equipment had been let run down. Cable & Wireless had always run on a shoe string, so OTC immediately started on a programme of modernising the equipment. Administrative staff was advertised for and mainly drawn from the Commonwealth and State Public Service. Staff Rules and procedures were based on those of the Commonwealth Public Service.

Jim Malone, a PMG pioneer and senior executive of PMG was selected as Chairman of the Commission, and Major General J.J. Stevens as General Manager.

It was not long before improvements took shape, 1947 saw the use of Side Band

techniques on the Radio Telephone circuits, Teletype trials were carried out with the US.

1948 Metreological services to ships were introduced and Wireless Telegraph to Antarctica, Radio Telephone service to European Countries via London, and to New Zealand, New Guinea and Hawaii. Aerogramme service to commercial planes, Facsimile service to New York, and testing started for a new Beam Receiving station at Bringelly.

1949 The International Telecommunications Union was formed with Australia being a foundation member. Radio Telephone service to Atlantic liners introduced, Radio Telephone to Australian Naval vessels. Land was acquired at Doonside and Bringelly with a view to the forthcoming 1954 Royal Tour and the 1956 Olympic Games.

1950 Fiskville and Rockbank up dated for the pending Royal Tour and Olympic Games, Radio Telephone to Pleasure craft. PMG's Dept extended their Picturegram service to Capital Cities with an Automatic Relay to OTC's Melbourne Fax Room. Sydney Beam and Cable Operating Rooms combined.

Professional Radio Employees Institute (Union representing all operating and technical staff) submitted a Log of Claims on the Arbitration Court. The Union was unable to break the comparison, with the PMG Staff and therefore in the main gained little.

1953 OTC paid off Treasury Loans and arranged loans from the private sector, with its lower interest rates and saving approx 50%

1955 Doonside Transmitting Station and Bringelly Receiving station opened.

1956 Unprecedented telegraph and facsimile traffic handled during the Olympic Games and all past records greatly exceeded. OTC were able to arrange the use of circuits on loan from the Navy, Army and DCA. to augment its recent vastly improved facilities.

1957 Rockbank and Bringelly monitored transmissions from Sputnik.

1958 Intelsat of which Australia was a foundation member launched two satellites, both being unsuccessful. OTC established International Telex.



**The model of Sputnik 1 in the Smithsonian**

1959 Transatlantic cable (CANTAT) Opened.

Aust/New Zealand Telex opened. Pacific Co-axial Cable Planning meeting opened in Sydney

1961 Tasman Coax Cable between Sydney and Auckland opened. This cable capable of carrying 80 telephone channels due to the use under sea amplifiers inserted in the cable every 18 miles. Radio Telephone service to NZ closed

1962 Pacific Coax Cable (COMPAC) opened between Vancouver and Sydney via Hawaii, Fiji, New Zealand. Paddington Terminal station opened. Norfolk Island, Fanning Island and Southport cable stations closed. Southport cable station buildings became private school and now houses a cable museum in association with Overseas Telecommunications Veterans Association.

The Compac cable replaced the cable laid in 1901. The new cable has a telephone capacity of 80 channels, each channel could be split into 40 telegraph channels. This virtually gave 3200 telegraph channels to the old cable of 3 channels one way and 1 channel the return way. A big improvement to a radio channel with a couple of side bands.

The cable was laid on a partnership basis with the Governments of Great Britain, Canada, New Zealand and Australia sharing the costs and ownership. New relay stations were built at Honolulu (on a lease basis with the USA), Auckland and Suva. Power was fed into the

amplifiers (known as Repeaters) at each terminal and relay stations. Each repeater required 90 volts so that high voltage had to be fed in. Power was carried along the cable with a sea earth. The quality of the telephone calls and the cable capacity being so great, it spelt the demise of the Beam Wireless Service, and the closing of the Victorian stations. Doonside and Bringelly were kept in operation to improve the Pacific and ship/shore services. A Telex exchange was opened at Paddington.

It was planned that the new cable would have life term of at least 20 years. What was not envisaged was the upsurge in business due to the quality of the service and before long the cable became overloaded.

1963 a similar cable was planned to go from Cairns to Singapore via Madang (SEACOM) and land was acquired at Cairns and Madang, for Stations and Staff Housing.

1964 INTELSAT the International Satellite Communications Governing Body was created, with

Australia as a foundation member.

First stationary Satellite was launched over the Atlantic as the first stage of a Global Satellite Network.

1965 First Intelsat satellite (EARLY BIRD) was launched

1966 Cottesloe and Cocos Island cable stations closed. Experimental Satellite station opened at Carnarvon from which a successful TV broadcast between London and Australia was made.. This was the commencement of Australia's overseas TV Service as the cables up to that time did not have the necessary 900 channels required for TV.

1967 Satellite services commenced in Australia with Satellite stations being built at Carnarvon, Moree and Ceduna. The initial satellites had a capacity for 600 telephone channels and 1 TV A new radio station was opened at Gnangara (Perth) to support the NASA Apollo service..

1968 OTC Head Office moved from Spring Street to Martin Place. Satellite Station opened at Moree.

1969 Moon Landing pictures received at OTC Satellite Stations. Rockbank, Fiskville and



Applecross H.F. Radio Stations closed. Aust/UK Beam Wireless H.F. Radio Service closed. All services now using Coax Cable and Satellite Circuits. Ceduna Satellite Station opened. Commonwealth Telegraph Bureau became Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation. Computerised Automatic Telegraph Message Relay Centre opened at Paddington Cable Terminal.



**The Message Relay Control Desk**

*(Another installment in the next issue.)*

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From Left to Right  
Bill Kay, Ron Vogels, Joe Edgcumbe, Bill Dunn, Eamon Fitzpatrick, Doc Roberts,  
Martin Scales, Jim Condon, Keith Darwin and Family.

**Bill Kay's barbecue in Perth for Eamon's visit**

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*Another Satellite snippet –*

## **THE BOAT:**

*(Dennis Grant)*

Having always had a desire to do some fairly serious water skiing and never having had the money to buy a boat, Moree and shift work presented an opportunity and the time to build a boat. And so we did. Over about 18 months starting from flat timber and a set of plans basically single-handedly built a timber and plywood ski boat. I covered it with fiberglass and fitted it with a V8 engine from an old car

and wow did it go. I also used the car wheels to build a four-wheeled trailer to tow it about. The first few outings were to a local river then we decided to go about 60 miles down the highway to a big lake for a day. Traveling about 55 miles per hour (85ks) we went over a bridge and the whole combo started to jackknife/oscillate. Fortunately the road was very straight and for about a mile, absolutely terrified, we continued like a high-speed worm. First with the rear of the car/front of the trailer out to the right then the left then the right and so on until we did jackknife as the rear wheels of the car lost traction and we slid into the table drain beside the road. Not too much damage, the boat was slightly askew on the trailer but the most dramatic effect was the almost straightening of the tow bar which was about 3 inch by one inch steel. Unable to continue on we headed back to Moree to notice black banana shaped skid marks where the trailer wheels had been scrabbling for adhesion as we lurched down the road.

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## **Ever wonder what happened to Cooktown Radio?**



“Janellganell” is set high on a headland near the old lighthouse. This 1.7ha property has 360-degree views over pristine rainforest and coast to Mt Cook and the Great Barrier Reef. The home is the old wireless station, extended and restored as a unique 10-room home with outdoor living area, three vehicle garage and storeroom. *(Ad in 2000, no price indication)*

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## **VALE**

**Edgar Clive Harcourt O.B.E.**

*(Eulogy at his funeral by George Maltby, 4 August 2005)*

Edgar Harcourt joined the Overseas Telecommunications Commission (OTC) in 1947 in its first year of operation after he returned from service in the RAAF as a wireless navigator in WWII and retired in 1980 after 33 years of distinguished service.

He was one of an original group of professional staff recruited to play important roles as OTC faced the task of merging the staff and facilities of AWA's beam wireless service and Cable and Wireless Ltd's telegraph cable service to form OTCA. He initiated many activities designed to develop a corporate culture, with the two very different staffs of AWA and C&W - who had previously been in active competition with each other. He was the first Editor of "Transit". He was instrumental in setting up the Staff Relations Committee which introduced staff balls, children's Christmas parties and supported a wide range of staff sporting and social activities.

At the same time he provided principal support to Pat Greenland, OTC's first Secretary and succeeded him in the early 50s when Pat left to join the Atomic Energy Commission. As Secretary, he took on much wider responsibilities for the management of the British Commonwealth partnership in international telecommunications.

This role continued throughout his career. He was a delegate to many communications conferences and every meeting of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Council until his retirement.

Progressively he became Director of International Affairs and then Assistant General Manager International, with high level policy responsibility for all OTC's activities in the British Commonwealth environment, in broadband cable projects (COMPAC), Intelsat, Inmarsat, the ITU and bilateral arrangements with foreign carriers.

He was awarded the OBE in 1978 for exceptional service in these areas.

In retirement Edgar turned his attention to a project he had had in his mind for some years - a history of the first 100 years of international telecommunications in Australia from 1872, when the first telegraph cable landed at

Darwin, to 1972 to mark OTC's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. It was a mammoth undertaking but with his usual persistence, scholarly research and writing skills, it was completed in 1987, including a final chapter looking forward from 1972.

The book's title "Taming the Tyrant" is a fitting memorial to a century of change, Edgar's own high level involvement in the last 25 years of that century and to all the people in OTC who shared those years with him. It remains the benchmark account of Australia's role in the continuing hectic and nationally important development of that period and continues to be consulted regularly by scholars and others with an interest in the history of international telecommunications in Australia.

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**Thomas Learmonth Lang**, aged 97, passed away on the 9<sup>th</sup> September 2005. He was born 11 February, 1908, in Moonee Ponds Victoria. Tom is survived by his wife Dulcie with 67 years of marriage and 4 children, Margaret, Warren, Ian, and Bruce and 12 Grandchildren and 4 Great Grandchildren.

The funeral service was attended by about 50 family and friends, OTVA was represented by Robert & Judith Hall.

Tom commenced work at Beam Wireless on 12th May 1927 in Melbourne as a Junior Clerk Beam on £136 pa. Beam Wireless in later years was taken over by the Government and formed the OTC (Aust.). Tom later worked in Melbourne, Rockbank and Fiskville prior to retiring in Melbourne in 1973 as an STO2.

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**Aileen Gowanloch**, widow of Lyle passed away 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2005, aged 101. She was well known for her help and attendance at Vets functions. A grand lady! The funeral was held at "All Saints Anglican Church" in Balgowlah on Thursday 22nd September 2005.

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#### **THE LAST WORD**

If you are in Sydney I hope to see you at the party on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Best wishes for 2006 to all and I hope to serve you some more issues then.