



OTVA NEWSLETTER

Overseas Telecommunications Veterans Association (Australia)
Registered Address: 605/41 Meredith Street BANKSTOWN, 2200
ISSN 1322-1906 February 2006. Volume. 9 Page 83

CONTENTS

President's Message	84
Christmas pictures	84
WA Notes	85
History of Australian OT	85
Time Out	88
Cocos Island staffing	88
Madang Memories	90
No more telegrams	90
Deja vue	91
Coronation of King George VI	92
The uses of technology	93
DVDs	94
Vale (Heb Farrar, Frank Stanton, Merv Gidea)	94
The Last Word	94

THE OVERHEADS

Office Bearers 2005-6

President: Henry Cranfield
email: henrycra@aapt.net.au
Phone: 02 9534 1526

Secretary: Will Whyte
email: will.whyte@optus.com.au
Phone: 02 9342 5088

Treasurer: Bernie White
Phone: 02 9708 4666

Editor: Bob Lions
email: boblions@optushome.com.au
Phone: 02 9498 7745

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

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

Friday 31 March

There was to be a trip down memory lane to **Paddington Terminal**, but Reach have decided it is too much of a risk and have refused the group.

However a few vets decided that considering the late cancellation, we would arrange an alternate venue. No arrangements, no speeches, no reservations, just come.

The Date: 31 March, The Venue??

The Oaks at Neutral Bay Junction

The time: From 12:00 noon Cost: Pay as you go. This harks back to the days of cooking your own steak!!

The NSW AGM is on 16 June at noon at the CTA Club in Martin Place

50th Anniversary of OTVA.

A luncheon on Friday 17 November for members and partners at the Bowlers Club in York Street, Sydney. The date has been selected to avoid other pre Christmas functions and to allow as many of our interstate members as can, to join us. **Put it in your diary now!!**

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 for 2006.

A happy New Year to all our readers! 2006 marks the 50th year since the first general meeting of our Association held on 14th June 1956, followed by a second meeting on the 19 July 1956, at which, Jack Cameron was elected President, Treasurer was Bill Stevenson and secretary Wilf Atkin, committee members were A.E Shephard, Bill Jenvey and F.Marsen and one member to represent the retired officers of the Commission. The first annual re-union was at the State Ballroom, Sydney on 14 December 1956. It was a buffet tea starting at 6.30pm and ended at 9.45pm.

From this has grown 50 years of continuous association which we will celebrate in November. Much has happened over those years, OTC and AWA have both fallen, but our association has survived, thanks to the efforts of the various office bearers over that period. Especially when Telstra failed to continue OTC's support after the takeover. We now look to our more youthful members "to carry the torch" and bring forward new ideas and so continue our efforts.

We have investigated the publishing of an OTVA 50 year history; but after perusal of the archived Transits and other publications held by Sandra Hinchey, Telstra's Records Manager plus our minutes, have decided against it. There is not enough material to give continuity. The early association objects were "two social functions per year, one of which shall be the AGM.". These are all covered by the Newsletters. We have now, thanks to Peter Bull, all the Newsletters except volume 1 scanned to a CD; with Indexes compiled by Gordon Cupit. However there is much work yet required to finalise this project.

An especial vote of thanks to Martin Ratia for his efforts and our best wishes to him and wife Linh for their venture in Vietnam.

We extend a warm invitation to all interested to join us when possible at our functions. Please look at our website: www.otva.com.au for information.

Sincerely

Henry Cranfield, President

Sydney Christmas Do, 24 November 2005

Some 80 members gathered in the Mandarin Club for the traditional Christmas bash.

Below are a few photos selected from the many taken by Kim Hopkins



Yvonne and Allan Hennessy



Tom Barker, Evelyn and Bernie White



Stan Peck, Robert Lee, Dave Bourne, Alan Durham



Eamon Fitzpatrick, Dennis Grant, Ross Craig, Jim Simpson, Ernie Wan and RAF Taylor

Minutes of the 31st AGM of OTVA (WA)

Held at Gnangara 22 November 2005

President Des Kinnersley opened the meeting at 12.59pm.

1. A warm welcome was given to WA Veterans Jim Bairstow, Tore Boe, Kevan Bourke, Ron Cocker, Jim Congdon, Paul Cooper, Kevin Hills, Reg Jones, Derek Kaighin, Jim Keenan, Sean Leahy, Tom McKnight, Ray Parkinson, Wal Perryman Bob Smallwood, Tom Swarbrick, and Derek Walker.

2. Apologies for absence had been received from Colin Benporath, Allan Headley, John Knight, Barry O'Keeffe, Val Parker, Rod Pernich, Ken True, Dirk Veldhoen, Bernd Wendpaap and Barry Whittle.

3. One minute's silence was held for Veteran Heb Farrar, who died in June.

4. The Minutes of the 30th AGM were approved and signed as a true and correct record.

5. The Hon Sec/Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement were approved and endorsed.

6. Election of office bearers: The positions of President and Sec/Treasurer were declared vacant and nominations called for. The only nominations received were for the retiring incumbents, and Des Kinnersley and Derek Walker, respectively, were elected unopposed.

7. Other business: Fraternal greetings had been received from Geoff Warner in NSW and Harry Stone in South Australia.

8. A vote of thanks by acclamation recognised the efforts of Reg Jones in facilitating the use of Gnangara for OTVA(WA) meetings.

9. The next meeting will be on Tuesday 28th November 2006

10. The meeting concluded at 1.05pm with all being invited to partake of the lunch and drinks provided.

THE HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS.

This is the fourth part (of four) of the history of Australia's International telecommunications as recorded by Gordon Cupit.

Part 4 -- Expansion

1970 Land acquired for second Cable Terminal Station at Broadway Sydney. Data Tests commenced on a Radio Telephone Circuit between Sydney and Montreal. Automatic Telex service commenced. Brisbane City Office opened.

1974 Broadway Cable Terminal opened. (*Lest the mistakes of Paddo be repeated, the first item on the architect's design brief was for the provision of a Ladies Toilet!*)

1975 PMGs Dept split into two organisations, Telecom and Australia Post. The Bill included the merger of OTC into Telecom, but this was defeated in Parliament by intensive lobbying by the Chamber of Commerce and the Telecommunications Users Association. OTC remained a Commonwealth Government Instrumentality. Previously the PMG's Dept finances were controlled by Treasury and the system was that all revenue, each year, was taken by Treasury, and for the following year, their expenses were funded by a Treasury loan. This loan was not repayable, and interest was accrued, to an enormous amount. With the split it was decided that the interest debt would be cancelled, and a new debt be made for Telecom based on the value of their assets. As Australia Post had few assets, they commenced with no previous debt. The old arrangement with non replayable Treasury Loans would prevail for both organisations. OTC was included in this arrangement on the same basis as Telecom. However OTC did not call on any Treasury Loans, but paid off their new debt from loans again from the private sector, and kept free of Treasury debt.

First daily International TV service commenced.

Radio Teletype service to ships introduced.

Australia was first to introduce Time Assignment Speech Interpolation which doubled the capacity of the COMPAC and SEACOM cables.

1976 Direct Dialing (ISD) introduced.

Tasman Cable to New Zealand lay commenced.

A-PNG Coax Cable opened between Cairns and Port Moresby.

1977 Australia became the first signatory to the Immarsat Agreement. (Maritime Satellite)

1978 Marisat equipment installed on Australian ships.

1979 Data service to ships commenced.

Seaphone VHF Radio Telephone service to ships commenced.

Overseas Fax came into Commercial operation...

New CRS Station opened at Laperouse.

MIDAS (Multi Mode Data Acquisition Service) commenced.

1980 Second Satellite Antenna opened at Ceduna.

First Optic Fibre Submarine Cable laid in Scotland for trials.

1981 Australia's Domestic Satellite launched. Australian Government owned.

Two OTC top Engineers appointed General Manager and Deputy Manager. Computer Controlled Telephone Exchange installed at Paddington.

CUPIT RETIRED. *(Physically but not mentally!.* Ed.)

1982 Second Earth Station built at Moree.

ANZCAN (1500 Channel Submarine Coax Cable across Pacific) lay commenced. The route being Sydney - Norfolk Island - Suva - Hawaii and Canada.

1983 Minerva Data communication service launched. OTC established its own Research and Development Board, New Cable Station opened on Norfolk Island.

1984 Anzcan Cable opened. Compac Cable across Pacific closed. Facsimile service via Beam Wireless closed. Telecom conferencing service opened. Herogram Service opened for the L.A. Games.

1985 Optic Fibre Planning Committee established.

Lay started of an Indian Ocean Cable.

Australian built Satellite Station at Cocos Island opened.

1986 Satellite and Cable stations opened in Perth. Seacom Cable closed, Guam Cable Station closed. Indian Ocean Cable (AIS) opened.

1987 Coastal Radio Service renamed to OTC Maritime Communications Service.

Carnarvon Satellite Dish decommissioned.

Overseas Telecommunications Act amended paving way for OTC to expand into sales of communications systems to foreign countries and OTC International created.

International gateway exchange opened at Scoresby in Victoria.

OTC Head Office moved from AMP rented premises in Martin Place to a Commission owned building in Elizabeth Street.

Satellite Station at Oxford Falls Sydney opened.

1988 Skystream Service opened.

Moree Satellite station closed.

OTC International's proposal for a Pacific Area Cooperative Telecommunications Network endorsed at South Pacific Forum.

Macquarie Island, last of chain of four stations in Antarctica completed

1989 OTC was incorporated and became OTC Limited. Management was advised by the government that they were now responsible for their own activities. This was a sad year for OTC, in that Managing Director George Maltby was dismissed by the Minister for granting salary rises to Engineering and Technical staffs without the approval of the Minister. His basis for the increases in salaries was that OTC was suffering badly from brain drain in these categories. OTC was granting full time cadetships for Engineers and traineeships for technicians, and other organisations saving on training costs were offering attractive salaries to OTC trained staff. In the case of the technicians, over 50% had been pillaged before the end of the traineeship. For years OTC had been

hampered by the Government linking OTC tech staff to those of Telecom. For example a much superior technician on a Satellite station was paid on the same scale as a Telecom Tech in a street manhole. In an unprecedented move the staff of OTC went on strike in support of George Malby, a man who had come up in the ranks from a junior clerk in Cable and Wireless to management positions in OTC. Malby requested the staff to return to work. He then assisted the new acting Managing Director in settling in. George had extensive dealings with the Telecommunications Users Association who appointed him as Chairman. He was also appointed to a number of Boards of private companies.

Direct Aust-UK video conferencing service opened.

OTC International, who had opened offices in London, New York and Hongkong was going from strength to strength and it was announced that with all its contracts it was using Australian sub-contractors for the supply of equipment, and was the highest earner of overseas dollars in Australia.

Government required higher dividends from Telecom and OTC and directed that their rates, which had not changed for some time, be increased.

1990 Merger of Telecom, OTC and Aussat proposed.

OTC launched its Switched Digital service its first international product based on ISDN technology. This allowed the high-speed transfer of text, data, and images, high speed facsimile and interactive video and audio.

Perth International Telecommunications centre opened.

OTC International signed its first agreement with island communities in the South Pacific to become members of the Pacific Area Cooperative Telecommunications Network.

1991 Commonwealth Telecommunications Interim Board was formed by the Federal Government to advise on the new telecommunications body which would result from the merger of Telecom, OTC and Aussat.

1992 OTC merged with Telecom to form The Australian and Overseas Telecommunications

Corporation. (AOTC). The OTC section of the organisation became known as International Business Unit (IBU).

Due to continual adverse media reporting on Telecom including a certain radio journalist, the Government decided that AOTC needed competition. Optus was established as the competitor, on condition that 51% of shareholding would remain in Australia. The overseas holding was a partnership of Cable & Wireless and Bell Telephone of America.

Under agreement with the Government, Optus was given a clear advantage in that AOTC was to lease to Optus any facility or portion of service they require, at cost less overheads. This meant that they could pick the eyes out of any AOTC service and AOTC was left with all of the non viable but essential services. AOTC was responsible for billing arrangements for Optus. Optus was able to change its rates at will, whereas AOTC was hampered by the requirement to get approval of the Minister which they never received in a hurry. It appeared to the public that Optus was the instigator of cheaper rates.

1994 AOTC renamed as Telstra.

1997 Telstra floated its first parcel of shares on the open market.

Subsequently a second parcel were sold leaving the Government 51% of the holding. *(The notorious T2 tranche which sold for \$7 and can now be bought for about \$4!)*

Since 1994 Telstra merged its International Service with Rydges of Hongkong which has not been a success, and Telstra withdrew with a loss in the vicinity of \$3 Billion.

There have been many technical developments in the last 10 years and Telstra has taken advantage of these and opened many new services. Cable and Satellite services now have a capacity of over 100,000 channels, giving Telstra capacity for its requirements for many years to come.

In the meantime Optus has developed much of its own infrastructure with the laying of cables and is now less dependent on Telstra. This allows them to be more competitive.

How many Telstra shares are now held by overseas investors.

Why were so many talented OTC personnel offered redundancy packages, and how many are now still employed by Telstra.

How many ex OTC staff were recruited by Optus? Could they not be employed in Telstra's international services?

Sources of information.

- Overseas Telecommunications Veterans Association Newsletters,
- OTC publication "Invisible Bridges "
- OTC Staff Magazines.
- OTC Historical Books.
- Personal knowledge.

(Editors Apology. I divided the original submission up into 5 parts but realised as I put this episode in that there were some duplications of material so the story finishes in this issue.)

TIME OUT!

During a recent phone call with George Maltby, it was pointed out that the 1st February, 2006 was the sixtieth anniversary of the date when a fresh faced young lad joined C&W as a temporary clerk. He was set to work in the section called Abstracts, which worked out the routing by which messages had travelled, so that appropriate allocations of the revenue could be made. The objective of C&W, of course, was to disburse as little of the revenue to others as possible!

The rest, as they say, is history!!

COCOS ISLAND STAFFING

(Cyril Vahtrick)

(Editor's note. I feel like Morris Iemma – always apologising! (for those in other states, he is our new state premier who is forever on TV, apologising for the cockups and the brown stuff left behind by his predecessor.) This item should have been in the last issue since that is where the references to Cocos were buried in Cupies History but I blew it!)

I assume that there may still be some Vets around who remember Cocos first hand. Most of you would remember that when OTC was established in 1946, the arrangement at that time was that Cable and Wireless Ltd.,

London continued to own and operate the submarine telegraph cable stations at Suva , Fanning Island and Cocos Island using Australian staff.

Following the transfer to Australia of the sovereignty of Cocos, OTC purchased the Cable Station assets on Cocos and assumed full responsibility for the Cable Station's operation in January 1957. (There was, however, an ongoing arrangement with C&W to provide support staff from Asia for non-operational functions).

This latter situation eventually came to the attention of Canberra bureaucrats the following year and they demanded that this practice of using Asians was to cease forthwith. At that time I was summoned into the GM's office and, with the hint of a grin, Trevor Housley said to me that now that I had been appointed as planning engineer, here was a planning exercise for me - fix the Asian staff situation!

Since at that stage I knew naught about Cocos, I desperately sought some background information. Luckily I found out from Staff section that John Stubbs, then manager of Cocos cable station, was in Sydney on leave. I asked him to come in and fill me in on the position.

He told me that the Cable station was located on a small island called Direction Island and that there was nothing else on that Island. The Clunies-Ross family owned all of Cocos and resided on Home Island where there was a population of some hundreds of Malays who worked on copra plantations and were descendants of original slaves brought there a century earlier. There was an airport on West Island staffed by a handful of expatriate Australians. Home Island Malays only worked for Clunies-Ross.

When John Stubbs heard the Canberra demand to get rid of the Cable Station Asians, he just said "Impossible!" Cocos was a single man station and all the Asian staff were required to keep the place going -- house boys, cooks, gardeners, fishermen, pig and chicken keepers, etc. totalling some 44 men (from memory). Replacing them with Australians at award

rates would enormously increase the cost of running the station.

When I suggested that perhaps we could do this with a few less people, he said he did not believe that we could get Australians to do that type of work. For example, at the end of his day's work he had his Chinese servant light up the fire and heat him some bath water for his hip bath, when he got in, another servant would prepare a gin and coconut milk drink and hand it to him as the Chinese poured rinsing water over him. There was no running water.

When I reported my preliminary findings to the GM he thought for a while and having asked what happened at Suva and Fanning and being told they were "married stations" he directed that we would have to do the same for Cocos, adding dryly that the wives could then do all that work.

I had already established that the manager's house was quite unsuitable for married accommodation - apart from no water reticulation, the kitchen was a tin shed well apart from the house because of fire danger from the fuel stove. The other quarters were also antiquated.

I therefore proposed that OTC should start from scratch and build a new station complex (apart from the operations building, most of which would remain). There would need to be proper water and power reticulation and other amenities. My enquiries from the station established that there was a diesel generator in working order which appeared to have adequate power output and operated at 230 V, three phase. (more about that later).

We located a bright young architect in Sydney and he and I mapped out a general plan for our requirements and he proceeded with the design. We would have a large water storage system, a large bulk refrigerator, water pipes, power lines etc making up a whole new village. From memory there were 5 or 6 cottages plus single quarters for additional staff.

We advertised in Western Australia for a builder to undertake the complete contract, involving extensive prefabrication in Australia before shipping to Cocos.

All this, of course, took some time and I had to keep answering a string of impatient correspondence from Canberra getting more and more hostile at the progress. One thing OTC had to do under the terms of our leasing agreement from Clunies-Ross was to seek approval for any works whatsoever and, in particular, no coconut trees were to be disturbed.

Canberra decided to circumvent this process by compulsorily acquiring the necessary land. (At least this kept them off our backs for a while). This proved to be quite amusing as they soon became irritated by the lack of any response from Clunies-Ross. Finally, they received a letter (by sea mail) indicating that all correspondence should be addressed to his solicitor in London. This having been done, the solicitor sent back an acknowledgement advising that he had forwarded their letter to his client (by sea mail) and would let them know when he had received instructions. The net result of this in the long run was that the acquisition was not accomplished and we went ahead with tacit approval from Clunies-Ross.

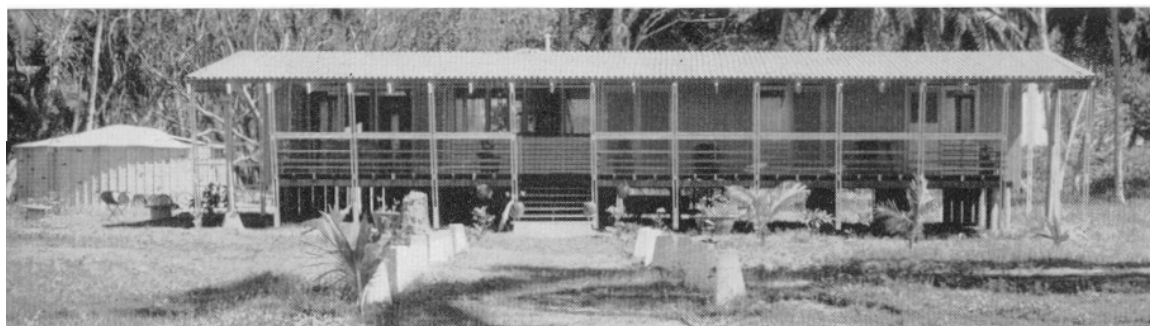
Meanwhile the project proceeded and one of the first items to be completed was the quite large communal refrigerator. This required 3-phase power and then to our dismay we discovered that the so-called 230 V system was 230V phase to phase (i.e. about 130V phase to neutral). I also discovered that the ancient diesel required full time attendance to adjust controls etc. when the load varied and this was being done by 7 Indian technicians who were classed as "superior Asians" and had not been included in the Cable Stations count of Asians. Unfortunately, I was fully up to my ears on the COMPAC Cable and other urgent jobs while this had been going on and had not had the time to go to Cocos to see this for myself.

This now necessitated a rush project to obtain, deliver and install a new diesel power station to overcome our problems. Although our architect had been to Cocos, I felt that we needed a first hand review from our own resources. I knew that Tom Petry had just finished a major home building project, so I arranged to have him go over to Cocos where

he successfully sorted out the loose ends to complete the project.

Tom visited Clunies-Ross and found him quite an interesting character part Malay from his ancestry, barefoot, dagger at the belt, he presided by sitting on a sort of throne on a dais. Visits to Home Island were only by personal invitation from him and visitors had to leave before sunset. He had his own currency and the Malay community were totally his subjects.

Picture: Typical OTC Cocos Cottage. Open plan for tropical maritime climate. Cyclone proofed by steel rods extending from roof through studs down into concrete footings.



The large water tank in the background was fed from roof gutters and the water was pumped to gravity tanks in each cottage.

MADANG MEMORIES?

By Henry Cranfield

Free calls!!

On the opening of the Seacom cable in 1967, 4 voice circuits were connected from Sydney to the local Madang magneto exchange, as the proposed Ericsson ARF Crossbar exchange was lying rusting in cases in the line depot yard! The rest of New Guinea was envious, as they still had to use HF Radio circuits to Sydney. A few weeks after the opening; I received a call early one morning from the Overseas Exchange Supervisor in Sydney. He told me that it had been noticed, that from about 8.00PM nightly, one circuit was always tied up with traffic and the originator of the call was always Madang 326. The volume of traffic was high and destinations were both nationwide and overseas. As the bill would be

high could I find out why and who was this subscriber ?

Off I went down to see the Supervisor of the Madang exchange. On the way down, I remembered that 326 was the public telephone at the Madang Club. At that time, all "local" calls were free and at 8.00 PM. the operators were always 'Locals'. The supervisor agreed that my memory was correct, but said the line ie 326 was used mainly to call Taxis or ring home if members were delayed. We then found out by subtle enquiries; that the indigenous operators would put anyone who rang, through to any number, anywhere! They connected callers straight to Sydney as they could not understand the Sydney operators and when asked where they were calling from, the

caller blithely replied, Madang 326. The word was all around town, to ring anywhere outside PNG, go down to the Madang Club use the public phone, all for free!! Needless to say that number was made "local calls only" and the Madang Club got a bill for about \$3,500 which caused much consternation amongst those who knew, the Madang Club committee and the local P and T.. as the bill had to be paid!!

AFTER 145 YEARS, WESTERN UNION HAS QUIETLY STOPPED SENDING TELEGRAMS.

Wed Feb 1, 10:00 AM ET (Eastern time, US)

On the Western Union web site, if you click on "Telegrams" in the left-side navigation bar, you're taken to a page that ends a technological era with about as little fanfare as possible:

"Effective January 27, 2006, Western Union will discontinue all Telegram and Commercial Messaging services. We regret any inconvenience this may cause you, and we

thank you for your loyal patronage. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact a customer service representative."

The decline of telegram use goes back at least to the 1980s, when long-distance telephone service became cheap enough to offer a viable alternative in many if not most cases. Faxes didn't help. Email could be counted as the final nail in the coffin.

Western Union has not failed. It long ago refocused its main business to make money transfers for consumers and businesses. Revenues are now \$3 billion annually. It's now called Western Union Financial Services, Inc. and is a subsidiary of First Data Corp.

The world's first telegram was sent on May 24, 1844 by inventor Samuel Morse. The message, "What hath God wrought," was transmitted from Washington to Baltimore. In a crude way, the telegraph was a precursor to the Internet in that it allowed rapid communication, for the first time, across great distances.

Western Union goes back to 1851 as the Mississippi Valley Printing Telegraph Company. In 1856 it became the Western Union Telegraph Company after acquisition of competing telegraph systems. By 1861, during the Civil War, it had created a coast-to-coast network of lines.

Other company highlights:

- 1866: Introduced the first stock ticker.
- 1871: Introduced money transfers.
- 1884: Became one of the original 11 stocks tracked by the Dow Jones Average.
- 1914: Introduced the first consumer charge card.
- 1964: Began using a transcontinental microwave beam to replace land lines.
- 1974: Launched Westar I, the first U.S. dedicated communications satellite.

On Jan. 26, the last day you could send a telegram, First Data announced it would spin Western Union off as an independent, publicly traded company.

DEJA VUE

Some years ago, IT&T were faced with a dilemma, whether to stay in communications and its endless regulation or hitch its star to the hotel business. They chose the latter -- Did they make the right choice?

Here is a web story:

ITT CORPORATION also called (until 1983) International Telephone And Telegraph Corporation, former American telecommunications company that grew into a successful conglomerate corporation before its breakup in 1995.

ITT was founded in 1920 as a holding company for a number of Caribbean-based telephone and telegraph companies; it received its name in imitation of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T). Throughout the 1920s ITT expanded into the still-undeveloped European telephone market, obtaining the concession for telephone service in Spain in 1924. In 1925 the company purchased AT&T's large foreign manufacturing subsidiary, International Western Electric, and renamed it ITT Standard Electric Corporation; this move made ITT a major telecommunications manufacturer in 11 countries.

Between 1959 to 1978, ITT became an aggressive conglomerate and underwent a second period of rapid expansion, acquiring 275 other companies and increasing its annual sales nearly 20-fold. Among its purchases in 1968, were the Sheraton Corporation, one of the largest American hotel chains, and, in 1970, one of the nation's leading insurance firms, the Hartford Fire Insurance Company.

From 1980, however, ITT sold off many of the companies it had acquired earlier. In 1987 it divested its telecommunications businesses by forming a joint venture, Alcatel N.V., with France's Cie. Générale d'Electricité, which held a controlling interest in the venture. In 1995 it sold its financial-service businesses and acquired Madison Square Garden in New York City and Caesars World, Inc., a large casino operator. Later that year, ITT split itself into three separate companies: ITT Hartford Group Inc., consisting of insurance companies; ITT Industries Inc., defense-

electronics and automotive-parts companies; and a 'new' ITT Corporation consisting of the Sheraton Hotel chain, Caesars World, and Madison Square Garden. In 1998 this new ITT Corporation was acquired by Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc.

THE BROADCAST IN AUSTRALIA OF THE CORONATION OF KING GEORGE VI IN JUNE 1937

by Henry Cranfield

Having been given a rather bedraggled volume of the "Telecom Journal of Australia" (Feb 1937 to June 1940) by Terry Hume (Ex Paddington), who now lives in Brisbane, I came upon many interesting articles for an Ex PMG man like myself. An article by the late Harry (A.H.) Kaye described the rebroadcast of the BBC coverage of the Coronation of King George VI and shows how greatly time and technology have changed. This is an extract of the major points from his article.

The programme was broadcast from the BBC's transmitters in Daventry, UK for 5 hours and 30 minutes from 7.00 PM to 12.30 AM (AEST) on a range of frequencies with 16.00MHz band providing the best direct service and 10.00MHz from Hongkong on relay.

Of the actual 5 Hours, 30 Minutes coverage;

157 min	were received direct
74min	were relayed via Canada
33 min	were relayed via USA
116 min	were relayed via Hongkong.

(Lest the smarties add up and find the sum is greater than the whole, there would have been extra time used for line ups, etc.)

In order to provide the best coverage, 8 receiving sites were selected and the resources of both the PMGs Department and AWA were utilized, with the programme being material pooled. Reception centres were located at La Perouse and Middle Head in Sydney; Mont Park (2) and Rockbank in Victoria; Sommerton in Sth Australia whilst Queensland was fed from the Sydney site and Tasmania from Melbourne. From time to time it was found that fading could be overcome by combining the signals from La Perouse and

Mont Park. A total of 20 changes were made over the 5 1/2 hour period.

A central control centre was set up in the city West Exchange in Melbourne, where the best quality circuit was selected and distributed; the ABC being responsible for its network and AWA for all the commercial stations. All the equipment at the City West exchange was duplicated.

West Australia proved a difficulty for the commercial stations as there was only one telephone circuit available between Adelaide and Perth. A local receiving station was set up using 4 receivers and this programme was far better than that in the Eastern states initially but later failed at 10.00PM. AEST. A total of 96 stations participated in the programme nationwide.

It must be mentioned that on the previous nights, sunspot activity was very bad and the ABC had prepared a special programme for use in the event of this occurring on the actual night but this was not needed. It was generally agreed that the programme was satisfactory and "adequate justification for the somewhat elaborate precautions."

All this took place 69 years ago. There was no TV, transistors or printed circuit boards and microchips, satellites, fibre optic cables and co-axial cable systems were still in a developmental stage. Having survived all this, one must take one's hat off to those pioneers who made it happen. That was "Steam Radio" at its best

A letter from Deane Laws in Burleigh Heads
(There is a reader out there!!)

Dear Bob,

Your August edition of our newsletter carried an item by Ron McDonald which included mention of the late Harold Drake-Richmond and his type 37 Bugatti. Also included was the information that he had participated in, and was placed 3rd, in the 1931 Australian Grand Prix at Phillip Island. In those days, racing cars operated with a crew of two, much like present day rally cars. The second crew member was I think referred to as the "riding mechanic".

Long forgotten is that my father, the late Norman H Laws (ex MOR) was the second crew member in that event.

Up until dad's death in 1970, we had many photographs and cuttings from Melbourne newspapers describing the event. As a youngster I can remember reading the race description and I recall that they had been leading the event until a spark plug oiled up. They had the choice of stopping to change the plug, or carrying on at reduced speed and I can now not remember which option they chose, but the newspaper reports of the time suggested that the choice they made was incorrect and had they chosen the other option they may well have won the event.

As a memento of the event, Harold D-R presented my father with a silver cigarette case embossed on the front with a replica of the type 37 Bugatti and inscribed inside with the race details. I have included a photograph of the cigarette case, the car stands out quite well on the front, but the inscription on the gold plated interior is now tarnished and somewhat difficult to read. If there is any interest in the subject I have attached photographs of the embossed front, and the inscribed interior.

Perhaps your readers will find this of interest.

Best wishes,

Deane Laws



THE USES OF TECHNOLOGY

Once upon a time, many years ago, after the transistor had been invented but before they invented all those snazzy earphones, the rich and ostentatious had transistor radios which it was de rigeur to show off. Some bright souls, having a transistor radio were so happy with it that they wished to share it with all in earshot. While this could generally be handled in the open air, it was not too good in the confines of a railway carriage – particularly the old “Red Rattlers” of the Sydney suburban network where the ambient noise was already quite high, requiring the radio to be turned up loudly in order to compete!

No doubt this would have been acceptable if the station selected was the ABC with gentle soothing music but of course Murphy's law operated and the radio owner wanted to listen to rock & roll (I don't think we had heavy metal or acid rock at that time!).

One young engineer, not having his own radio with which to compete, resolved that there could be a way to stop these hoons. A small, one transistor oscillator, working in the AM broadcast band (we didn't have FM then either) was designed and built. It was small enough, in its tiny plastic box to slip into a pocket. If switched on in close proximity to a receiver, and tuned just near the frequency of the station being received, a loud whistle would be generated. This could be modulated by varying the tuning of the oscillator gently.

The puzzled radio owner would pick up his precious toy, shake it and as the noise would persist, would then try another station. The oscillator tuning would follow the station change and the “fault” would still be there. Genrally, this was sufficient to have the offending device turned off. The design was copied and many train (and no doubt bus) journeys were made more pleasant by the absence of the noise from an unwanted transistor radio,

All this of course was in defiance of the provisions of the Wirelss broadcasting act and its regulations which spoke of draconian penalties for emitting unwanted radio transmissions!! However, we were from OTC!!

DVDs

As you may be aware the committee is working on a celebratory DVD to be issued at the luncheon in November. In the meantime, I have been forgetting to put in this plug for Jas Shennan who has the original material for many of our past productions. He listed the following about twelve months ago and I am sure if you contact him he may have more to tempt you. The DVDs in May 2005:

1. OTC Video Show Disc 1

Vol 1 editions 1-3 July 1984 to Feb 1985

2. OTC Video Show Disc 2

Vol 2 editions 1-3 June 1985 to Feb 1986

3. OTC Memories:

The Story of OTC 1992 - 24 mins

George's Memories - George Maltby retires

Memories Commercials

4. The ANZCAN Cable Story

Voices from the Deep 1984 - 25 mins

The Anzcan Cable Story 1984 - 5.5 mins

Anzcan Launch 1984 - 8 mins

The price per DVD is \$25 inc GST

Jas Shennan

Avid Media Productions

19 Craig Place

Davidson NSW 2085

Phone: 02 9451 6944

Mobile: 0418 615 810

jas@avidmedia.com

No card facilities so cheques/money orders to the contact address above. Order by Fax or Phone. Payment with order and allow 1 week for delivery. \$25 incl GST per disc, 10% off bulk orders of 10 or more. Postage \$6.50 within Australia.

VALE

Vale Heb Farrar

Heb Farrar, a WA Veteran, passed away in June. Heb wanted to enlist in the RAAF when he left school in the middle of WW2 but was too young and instead joined Cable and Wireless, training as an operator in Adelaide. On finishing his traineeship he found himself drafted into TELCOM and was sent to

Colombo for three months, then Singapore for a year. In September, 1946 he was posted to Cocos Island and served there for 13 months.

After his service with TELCOM, Heb studied engineering in Perth and set up and managed Vickers hydraulics in Western Australia for 20 years.

Heb was adept at turning his hand to just about anything – after he married he designed and built his own home and most of the furniture, built a yacht and restored several old cars.

When his wife, Fleur, became handicapped by Huntington's disease, Heb gave up work to become her full time carer for over ten years before she died. In his later years Heb's own life was dogged by a serious autoimmune disease and a fight against cancer.

He leaves four children, Christine, Edward, Sue and Cathy.

STANTON, Francis Alexander (Frank). November 15, 2005, late of Roseville. Last surviving Officer of the 2nd/3rd Battalion. Loving husband of Jean (deceased), much loved father of Elizabeth, John, Robert and Caroline. Grandfather of Jack, Robbie, Anjelie, Neil, Louise, Eliot, Isabelle and Anina. Aged 90 years. A worthy innings for a fine gentleman. There was a service, at Leura Memorial Gardens and Crematorium on Friday 18 November 2005.

GILDEA, Mervyn Royce. February 4, 2006. Ex RAAF 102

Died peacefully at Charingfield Hostel. He will be forever missed by his loving wife Pauline, his children Glenn and Tanya, son-in-law Richard and "PA PA" to his adored grandchildren Courtney and Lukas. Aged 83 years. There was a service at Mary Immaculate Catholic Church, Waverley, on 8 February 2006.

THE LAST WORD. None of Dennis Grant's gems this month but there are still some more. Surely others can remember humorous items which should be captured for posterity and to remind others of the way things were!