



OTVA NEWSLETTER

Overseas Telecommunications Veterans Association (Australia)
Registered Address: 605/41 Meredith Street BANKSTOWN, 2200
ISSN 1322-1906 August 2007. Volume. 9 Page 167

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COMING EVENTS

POWERHOUSE MUSEUM

28TH SEPTEMBER

Book in with Dave Richardson by the 21st September then assemble at 9.45AM at Power House Entrance in Harris Street Ultimo. This will be an opportunity to see items not generally open to the public.

If it goes well we may be able to organise a future visit to the Museum's Annex at Castle Hill)

Respond by Friday 21st to David Richardson (d_s_richardson@bigpond.com or 9487 1985)

CHRISTMAS DATE FOR YOUR DIARY: NSW Christmas function, Noon on Friday 23 November at the Bowlers Club in York St Sydney. More details in the next Newsletter.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, from our new President, **PETER BULL**: Thank you to those of you who bestowed upon me the honour of replacing Henry Cranfield as President of the OTVA for the year 2007/2008. The OTVA has a long history of excellence in recognising the efforts of the staff of OTC and other organisations engaged in international telecommunications.

The members of the current OTVA Executive are representative of the virtues that the OTVA has extolled over the years since its origin in the mid 1950s. The OTVA ended the last 12 months on a high with the success of the Golden Jubilee Celebration. This

THE OVERHEADS

Office Bearers 2007-8

President: Peter Bull
email: Peter.Bull.NOC@optus.com.au
Phone: 0411 260 542

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

Treasurer: Bernie White
Phone: 02 9708 4666

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

OTVA Membership Subscription:

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

(Please check your mailer as the indication "5/07" indicates you are unfinancial)

Mail Address:

Unit 605, 41 Meredith Street
BANKSTOWN 2200

ABN 75 502 170 235

Website: www.otva.com

stimulated interest in the OTVA amongst our membership as well as providing access to some potential new members who are associated with members who attended and could not stop talking about it.

I look forward to leading and supporting the members of the Executive to provide value and service to the members of the OTVA in a year where we will endeavour to attract younger members by creating greater incentive to join our illustrious organisation.

NSW AGM REPORT: At the NSW AGM on 29 June, a new era commenced with the election of Peter Bull as President. Henry felt that being OBE (Over B... Eighty) entitled him to step down in favour of our younger members and Peter Bull didn't duck fast enough when the nominations were called. Otherwise all the usual suspects were re-elected and some useful discussions ensued about future activities.

Most importantly, Life Membership certificates were presented to Bernie White and to Joe Collister, recognising their contributions over the years.

Thereafter, we enjoyed a very pleasant lunch in the Bistro with a few tables reserved for our use to enable us to keep together. The Bowlers Club is proving a very congenial venue and will be the location for the NSW Christmas Reunion on 23rd November. **(Make a diary note, NOW!!!)**

SA AGM REPORT: SA's AGM was held on 31st May 2007 at the McLarenVale hotel. Those present were John McGregor (retiring President) Harry Stone (Treas.) Mike Richardson, Max Lang & wife Tod, Paddy Wilkinson, Dave Herbert (past Pres.) and Ernie Barrett. Apologies from Dick Inwood.

One minutes silence was held in memory of Denis Maher who passed away on Feb 20th this year. Denis will be missed greatly as a wonderful colleague and friend.

A sheath of flowers was sent to his funeral in Murrumbateman/NSW as a mark of respect

from all members here in S/Aust. Max & Tod Lang celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary last year. Due to our diminishing numbers, Harry Stone has agreed to take on the presidency as well as Secretary for this new term. Meeting was closed at 12.40pm and the next couple of hours was pleasantly passed partaking of lunch and various liquids.

We, in South Australia send our fraternal greetings to our other friends & old mates scattered around Aussie. SK .-. .-.-

(Sadly Harry will not read this in print. Ed)

PHIL CHAPMAN: A postscript *(by Maurie O'Connor)*

Gordon Cupit's tribute, May 2007 Newsletter, for the recently deceased Phil Chapman was greatly appreciated and I hope that Gordon won't mind my adding this postscript to cover Phil's time in Guam.

In 1965, while I was struggling along as project engineer for the SEACOM submarine cable, OTC's General Manager, the legendary Trevor Housley, selected Phil as our point man on Guam. It was an inspired choice. At the time Phil was the Coastal Radio Superintendent, something that meant nothing to me as I then didn't really know what the Coastal Radio service was.

To set the scene, Guam was called an unincorporated territory of the USA (diplomatic code for colony), the Cold War was at its peak and the disastrous Vietnam War was at full gallop. Guam was where the US Air Force had its base for the monstrous, 8-engine, 185 foot wingspan, B52 bombers a few miles north of where we were building our Cable station. Every evening a dozen B52s groaning under their bomb loads took off for Indo-China, something less than a dozen returned the next day.

All night long semi-trailers chock-a-block full of bombs trundled past the cable station on their way to the airforce base from the magazines in the hills, where the landscape was littered with the rusted carcasses of hundreds of tanks left over from the mother-of-all WWII shoot-outs between the

occupying Japanese and the invading US forces,. There was also a naval base for the Polaris missile armed submarines south of our construction site. Soviet trawlers, logging the movements of the B52s and the Polaris submarines were permanently located just off the territorial limit.

Then to add to the tension, AT&T never liked the idea of upstart foreigners like us muscling in on their territory where several of their own submarine cables had already landed (they eventually succeeded in kicking us out in the late 1980s) and the authorised Record Carrier (?RCA) simply despised our presence and made that clear every time we met. There were no hotels so we all made do with clapped-out cinder-block motel rooms. Welcome to Guam!

In no time at all, Phil had managed to secure an invitation to join the local Rotary Club where everyone who was anyone was a member. He had the Admiral, the USAF General and all those whose decisions might one day be important eating out of his hand. They seemed particularly fascinated by his externally gruff (brought up in the tough Rocks area of Sydney) and laconic way of speaking. He addressed the titular head of government, Governor Guerrero, as "Gov". He took me to the Governor's Hacienda as a lunch guest and took a sadistic pleasure in putting me on the spot for impromptu talks at various places like Rotary. They all loved him. I have no doubt that had Phil not been there, our job would have been extremely difficult at best or impossible at worst.

Also, in the background, Phil's wife Veronica, was there giving him essential support.

Gordon hinted at Phil's extraordinary WWII experiences in Papua New Guinea and Darwin early in his career; so his time on Guam during the Vietnam War, towards the end of his career, provided the other book-end for a most exceptional contribution to OTC. Too bad we've missed the opportunity of striking a special medal for special people like Phil Chapman.

PLAIN TALES OF THE WHITE RAJAHS.

By Bob Emanuel

We were trying to get together a compilation of stories from a group of expats who moved to KL in early 1995, who all had some wonderful tales, but most refused to write them down. The title, "Plain Tales Of The White Rajahs" refers to the earlier English rulers of Borneo who were known as the the White Rajahs, and is a take off of the excellent Radio National series on India, "Plain Tales Of The Raj."

What added to the general gaiety of the situation for Jim and me was that the Ambassador would not have known that our telco was indirectly owned by the ruling party, UMNO (United Malay National Organisation), so any threat to take it to the Foreign Minister (which in the event was not made) would have meant that her daughter was ripping off the ruling party!

It's not often that one in my station of life can say that they've been the subject of a tirade by an, outraged, angry and embarrassed ambassador, but it happened to me in Malaysia and in the most comical of circumstances.

In early 1995 it became apparent that I wasn't going to enjoy myself in the new Telstra, so when I was offered an opportunity to move to Malaysia to help set up their first fixed wire competitive telco, I jumped ship and moved to Kuala Lumpur – thank you Tony Fisher.

Other OTC folks there over the next 3 years in Time or associated companies included Tony Fisher, Mick Callaghan, Les Collins, Eddie Seve and Steve Frendo. Tony Kalcina and Angela Dickinson were there as well. Many of the people who built the systems for the INOC at Paddington were also building the systems in Time.

My first job was Manager of Switching Operations, but over time I found myself involved in many other areas, including the setting up of International Network Operations, which was a load of fun (and a poke in the eye for the ex-Telecom Australia guys up there who fought it bitterly, until they saw a month's revenue for inbound IDD was

greater than a year's from the national PSTN network!).

One of the more interesting areas was Fraud Investigation - no one else there had ever done it before so it fell to me.

As customers' buildings were connected to our network and their PABX's connected, they received a level of service they were totally unused to, including itemised IDD and Long Distance phone bills.

One such building was a high-rise serviced apartment near my own condo, whose management queried a bill with several hundred dollars worth of calls to the People's Democratic Republic of Ishmaelia each month. It didn't tally with their PABX's billing system and they complained that we were at fault, refusing to pay that portion of the bill. Jim Pugh (an American engineer who, amongst other things, ran the first fibre optic cable across the Andes), who was looking after PBX & CAN issues at the time called me in to investigate.

So the fun began....

After a half an hour questioning of the condo's management, we found that the Ishmaelian Ambassador and her daughter were residents on the top floor and that the Embassy occupied one suite. Aha, easy conclusion to jump to, there's the source of the calls, but, no, we were assured by the management that she had a mobile and all her IDD calls were made on that handset, and she had already assured management that she did not use the Hotel's PABX facilities for calling home. There was the issue - that these calls did not appear on the PABX billing system. Condo management didn't do any bill reconciliation until they changed carriers.

It took almost a week before they'd let us have access to the PABX, and the first thing we found was that all phones in the building were set to a line class that said "Charge for all calls" except one - the Ishmaelian Ambassador's, which was set to "Don't Charge for any calls." Condo management was most concerned, asking, amongst other things, if it were possible that changing

networks from Telekom to Time could have caused that to happen!

As Jim and I had spent 3 years in the country by then and were very much aware of the way in which some business is conducted, we tactfully withdrew after advising the hotel management that there was only one possible explanation for the calls. They didn't want to hear that, so to satisfy the customer, Jim and I checked all wiring to see if there was any double jumpering of lines and extensions that could be used for making calls, but, of course, there was no such jumpering. (Wiretap fraud is not uncommon in Malaysia - that's another good story).

We wrote up the incident for senior management, noting however that calls to Ishmaelia kept appearing.

Ten days later I was asked by a very amused COO to visit Her Excellency the Ambassador and explain the situation to her. The hotel's billing system had by now been picking up these calls but she still denied using the Hotel's lines for those calls.

Jim, I, the condo manager and two of the account managers duly turned up at her Embassy. We received a very frosty reception from the Her Excellency, the Ambassador and, surprisingly, her daughter.

The Ambassador was a tall, imposing, hirsute woman and her daughter was following in her footsteps. Decorating the walls were many photographs of Her Excellency with various heroes of the glorious revolution, but her standard of living in KL was considerably better than most Ishmaelians would enjoy.

We were introduced and she again denied making any calls, but her daughter looked as guilty as sin. She asked us to check the phone installations to see if anyone was tapping into her line and making calls. This we did, and found no evidence in her suite or the hotel floor of any tampering, which we duly explained to her.

Well, that opened the floodgates - a torrent of abuse flew from her about how her lines were being tapped, all these strange noises on her lines, about how she was being falsely accused

of theft and she would take this up with the Foreign Minister that very day! How dare we! Her daughter cringed noticeably.

The locals winced, but Jim and I, very formally and politely, offered to take her or anyone appointed by her through our network to show her that no-one was tapping into her lines, whilst at the same time trying, very hard, to suppress a rising tide of laughter that threatened to destroy the seriousness of the moment, not to mention considerably embarrass the locals.

Her face grew redder and her voice was raised several dB as she continued her torrent of abuse at Jim and me. We then said that the company shared her concerns and she should refer her problems to the Foreign Ministry, as we were just as concerned at the allegations as she was.

Jim and I were now pissing ourselves not to laugh.

The daughter was now looking even guiltier than sin.

On that note we left, walking down the corridor to the nearest lifts.

It was the longest walk in my life. As soon as the lift door closed, Jim and I broke out into uncontrollable laughter. The locals were somewhat surprised at that, but they joined in, because it was the funniest & most incongruous situation any of us had ever been in at work.

The Ishmaelian calls stopped. We wrote the incident up for senior management, detailing Her Excellency's threats to go to the Foreign Minister, but heard nothing more of the matter.

When Jim Pugh and I get together for drinks or dinner, the first toast is always "The Ishmaelian Ambassador," to which the response is "...and her gloriously guilty daughter."

There's a few more fraud and other fun stories from my days in KL, but perhaps Dave Stimson should be regaling us with several of his fraud stories...

(What about it Dave?? Ed.)

INSTALLATION ANECDOTES

by John Toland.

NORFOLK ISLAND ANZCAN CABLE STATION INSTALLATION: The Station was at Anson Bay, the site of the old Compac Cable Station

During the construction of the Station and prior to our arrival, a lighter, loaded with material for the building, had capsized and lost its cargo. Thus it was decided to airfreight all of our equipment. This was done with three Fokker Friendships and the freight included my dog!

The installation was to take 15 months and the installation team consisted of five married members, with their families and three single men. Due to hold ups in material deliveries, the three single lads had to be sent back, as it was difficult to return the married ones, due to their housing arrangements. Two families moved into new staff cottages until the arrival of the operations staff, and one moved into the old manager's cottage at the airport. The other two found rented accommodation and we travelled out to the station each day by car.

We had both STC and NEC equipment to install. For the NEC equipment we had a Japanese Representative by the name of Hidinori Kawamura. Initially, he would come to work dressed up in a suit but it wasn't long before we called him Mura and had him dressed in shorts and drinking stubbies. He stayed with us for about six months, until his section was commissioned.

One of the NEC cabinets that we received was damaged during delivery and had to be replaced. It's replacement came with an NEC Engineer who was to see to the disposal of the old one after we had stripped it of parts. Came the big day of disposal, our lads loaded it on a truck and took it down to Headstone, a clifftop, where Norfolk disposed of all of its rubbish into the sea. The Engineer was getting his camera ready and our lads were saying "one, two, three, away she goes". The Engineer said "Ready, where is it?" and our lads pointed down the cliff.

Another of our lads, Guido Linnsen was a dedicated bicycle rider and rode his genuine top class Japanese bike to the station each day over a very bumpy road. Eventually the front forks bent. Mura rang the company in Japan and they sent out a new set of forks for him. Months later, the same thing happened and along came a new set of forks, this time accompanied by a Company Shirt and Cap.

The STC lads had worked their way down the cable from Vancouver to Hawaii and Fiji before Norfolk Island. It was their job to commission the STC equipment and the tech in charge was Bob Waterfall who had been involved in many STC Installations. We had some wonderful times on Norfolk with the entertainment, eating out and the innumeral BBQs around the cliff tops. One evening BBQ we had was attended by Bob Waterfall and he stepped backwards to get a better picture on his camera and stepped over the cliff, falling down a couple of feet and landing on a ledge where one of our lads grabbed him and pulled him back. Next day he went back and looked at the hundred foot drop that he had just missed out on.

On the day of the opening of the Station, which was to be by the Minister of Communications, at that time, Michael Duffy, a brass plaque was mounted on the front of the building and had a small curtain across it, to be opened by the Minister at the appropriate moment. I checked it just before the ceremony and found, pasted over the name of Michael was the name Barney. That's Norfolk Island humour or was it one of our lads? I think I know who it was. Right K?

PLANNING FOR PEAK TRAFFIC:

By John Mc Dermott

(This is one of those articles which gives insights into the range of talents which OTC had which were aimed at providing customer service in the most important way – it just seemed to be done without any fuss!)

Most Australians like to make or receive a phone call from their special friends at Christmas. Many people have friends and relatives in other countries and they like to

wake them up with a “Christmas” greeting. International telephone traffic usually peaks when the times are convenient for both the calling and the called party. However, on Christmas day, this changes and peaks usually occur when it is Christmas morning in the destination country. As a result, we have differing traffic profiles in each direction. While Christmas day is the biggest day in the year for international telephone traffic, other days such as New Years Day, Mothers Day, Chinese New Year, Easter and Greek “name days” all result in very heavy calling to and from Australia to specific destinations.

OTC, Telstra and Reach over the years have planned for these peak days and other discount calling days to ensure that as many people who wish to make their call may do so with as little difficulty as possible. For over 10 years Sami Dahbar and I were responsible for peak day planning of the international network to cater for traffic loads far beyond the normal day to day requirements. These plans resulted in the addition of over 7,000 additional circuits over the Christmas/New Year period, which was around the maximum spare capacity that existed in our international exchanges. In addition, we looked at the global network, and where possible found lightly loaded paths throughout the global telephone network to carry those calls which could not be switched on our direct routes to those peak countries. The additional capacity that we sought to implement was equivalent to installing and commissioning a new international exchange for a period of less than a week.

But to activate extra capacity requires extra exchange terminations and the demand for calls far exceeded the supply available. International exchanges are equipped to cater for 85% of the network in case of a catastrophic failure of one exchange. Thus, if 10,000 circuits are required over 2 exchanges for normal traffic, each exchange would have a maximum capacity of 8,500 circuits. Hence, the maximum number of circuits that could be activated at Christmas would 17,000 meaning that a maximum of 7,000 extra circuits could be established for Christmas. This number

would have to be spread over all peak Christmas countries. But this number could be reduced by other factors such as the lack of temporary satellite or cable capacity available or constraints with other carriers.

Our main peak destinations on Christmas day are: -

- United Kingdom
- New Zealand
- Canada
- Italy
- Ireland
- U.S.A
- Netherlands
- Philippines
- South Africa

By far the biggest destination at Christmas is United Kingdom where peak traffic levels were usually five or six times normal levels. As a result, our traffic to and from UK at Christmas is equivalent of our total traffic to over 200 other countries at normal times. Obviously, having unlimited direct circuits to United Kingdom at Christmas would solve most of the problems. But the UK carriers have to share their spare capacity with other Australian carriers as well as carriers in other countries, such as Canada, USA, New Zealand and South Africa. Despite having over 4,000 extra circuits to UK carriers, we have to rely on other countries to assist us to complete our calls. Most international carriers can carry traffic to other countries at quiet times, but this is not always the case at Christmas. Peak traffic spreads over a larger number of hours at Christmas and this reduces our opportunities for transit switching to UK. Even countries which do not celebrate Christmas usually have some two way traffic with Australia and we have to ensure that we protect this traffic and do not overload it with traffic to, say UK. We achieved this by segmenting these routes so that terminal traffic could access, say the satellite circuits while the overflow traffic to UK would only have access to the cable circuits. In times of heavy traffic load, it is more economical to have two separate calls rather than one call switching via the middle country. That is, we stop switching our calls to UK via Canada so that we can have one call

from Australia to Canada and a second call from U.K to Canada.

It is the role of the network management staff to optimise this traffic flow. This has been achieved by having a full time HOTLINE linking the network management centres in twelve carriers throughout the world. This is an open voice path whereby, say ATT, will tell our INMC to stop sending traffic from Australia to UK when their traffic to UK starts to build up. Other carriers can then give a status report on their availability to the destination. All temporary circuits – which in most cases cost us money – are established for the optimum period. These extra circuits must be tested by forcing live traffic onto these new circuits in the week leading up to Christmas eve. In order to co-ordinate the planning, implementation and testing of the extra circuits and routings, a Christmas team was set up several months prior to implement these plans. It consisted of several groups: including:

- Sami and I who designed the network structure and routing.,
- Paul McCann's group which turned our numbers into implementation plans
- Wayne Grundy's group which negotiated the best price to switch calls to each destination for the paths that we had selected.
- Greg Martyn's group which implemented and tested our routing plans.
- the operational staff who activated the circuits in time to meet our traffic needs.
- Bob Fisher's network management team which monitored traffic flows and, when required, implemented routing changes to optimise the traffic flow.

In addition there were marketing strategies to offer callers a range of time based discounts which could have a major impact on the traffic at various times. An example of this was the introduction of dialling prefix 0018 which gave the caller up to an extra 30 minutes of talking time after completing their initial 30 minutes. As the average call duration over Christmas is about double normal, this had a

major impact on the traffic carrying capacity of our network.

The pre-Christmas timing of the extra circuits and routing was critical. We aimed to have everything in place at least a week prior to Christmas day. Our Christmas team realised that our customers wanted to make their calls at a certain hour on Christmas day – not two days later! Therefore all our extra circuits had to be tested and activated in conjunction sometimes with a carrier at the other end of the circuit for whom English was not a familiar language. As we had to pay for most of our temporary circuits, we aimed to test the extra circuits and then block the circuits out of service until two days prior to Christmas. In a similar manner, we aimed to have our new routings in place by 15 December. As some carriers did not provide us with access until a date closer to Christmas, we tested these routes when available. Overall, we managed to be ready for the big days!

For United Kingdom, we usually negotiated around 60 different ways of completing calls. As our international exchanges could not handle such a large number of routes, our routing was achieved by the use of three different call distributors – one for calls to London numbers, one to UK mobile numbers and one to the rest of UK. Each of these distributors would have a differing routing pattern, with small carriers appearing in only one branch of one distributor, whereas larger routes such as USA (ATT) would appear in each branch of each distributor. Further subdivision was achieved by having different routings at each exchange. A day or two before Christmas, all the extra circuits and new routings would be tested by Bob Fisher's network management team.

As a result the peak traffic flows were as follows:

Christmas Eve, 24 Dec: 6pm to Midnight

Unless Christmas eve fell on a weekend, Christmas eve was a working day and so there is always a business component of traffic during our evening peak hours. However, we also find that in certain countries, mainly in Europe, there are more calls made on

Christmas eve than on Christmas day. This includes Germany and also the Nordic countries of Sweden, Denmark and Finland.

Christmas day 25 Dec: midnight to 6am.

We often carried transit traffic from Canada and USA to the Nordic countries and Germany as most of the Australians were asleep.

Christmas morning 25 Dec: 6am to mid day

When it is 7am in Sydney (with daylight saving) it is 9am in New Zealand, 8pm in London, 9pm in Europe, 3pm in New York and midday in Los Angeles. Traffic starts to flow from most of the world, except Asia into Australia and New Zealand. Traffic between New Zealand and Australia flows in both directions as it is already Christmas day in both countries. In most cases, all the circuits into Telstra's domestic network have filled up with calls to most Australian states except Western Australia where it is 4am (no daylight saving until late 2006!). Calls were then switched over to Perth and back to Sydney to clear traffic into N.S.W. At 10am Sydney time, this switching via Perth was stopped so that calls could be cleared into Western Australia. When it is 11am in Sydney it is midnight in London and 1am in Western Europe. Most Europeans have gone to sleep, and if they have not made their call into Australia, it is deferred until 7pm Christmas evening Sydney time. Our aim is to clear as many of these early morning calls as possible so as to free up capacity during our Christmas evening peak.

Christmas afternoon: mid-day to 6pm

It is still night time in Europe but late evening in USA Canada and South America. Apart from congestion to Chile, Peru and other South American countries, traffic is relatively light. Heavy traffic to and from the Philippines is the largest Asian destination because of its Christian background. Traffic to and from Canada and USA flows well, mainly as a result of extra circuits. These countries also route to Australia via European countries such as Germany, Italy and UK where it is still the middle of the night.

Christmas Evening 25 Dec: 6pm to 10pm

It is now that Australians make their calls into Europe and then UK. Those who could not call into Australia eight hours earlier are now competing with Australians calling into Europe/UK. North America is still asleep and this capacity is used to supplement the extra circuits that have been provided to help clear the traffic. As time passes, more callers try calling overseas and more calls come into Australia. If congestion occurs on the major destinations, repeated attempts occur which can overload the exchange and cause a possible shut down of the network. This condition is avoided by restricting the attempts made to UK within the national network. When our international exchanges look like going into overload, despite all our extra circuits and extra routing, our network management staff ask Telstra's national network management staff to restrict attempts for the peak destinations. In some cases, up to 70 percent of the UK calls are deliberately failed before they reach the international exchange. At the same time, a caller to Papua New Guinea will probably get through on the first attempt because some spare capacity to PNG existed at that time.

Christmas Evening : 10pm to 3am Boxing Day. 26 Dec

At this time, North America awakens. It is no longer possible to switch via Canada and USA to UK or Europe as they will be making their own calls into North and South America. It is midnight in New Zealand and Australia and New Zealand have stopped calling each other. Calls to UK are switched to Auckland where adequate capacity exists onwards to London.

Some capacity also exists via Asia and the Middle East into UK. Traffic to UK is carefully routed via places such as Japan, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, India, Tel Aviv and Cairo. In addition, as traffic to Europe has eased off, and it is possible to switch some of the UK calls via Germany, France, Italy and The Netherlands. This is the most critical time over the Christmas period. All spare capacity has been used and callers start to redial at a rapid rate. As time progresses, the unsuccessful callers at 9pm clash with those

who decided to wait until 10pm to call. They in turn are clashing with the 11pm callers. The international exchanges can easily go into an overload situation unless traffic can be controlled. The INMC staff then arrange with the domestic NMC to apply controls on the number of call attempts being offered to UK and when required, to other countries. It probably makes little difference to the number of attempts being made by the UK callers during the peak periods, but it can probably prevent the network from completely failing. If an international exchange does overload and fail, it can reduce by 50 percent the overall capacity.

Boxing Day 26 Dec: 3am to 7am

Australian traffic is fast disappearing. Opportunities now exist to handle traffic from UK and Europe to Canada and USA. By 7am this traffic is stopped so that Australian callers can now call UK, before it gets too late and to Canada and USA, where it is afternoon in North America.

Boxing Day: 26 Dec: 7am to 1pm

Traffic peaks to USA, Canada and South America. There is still residual traffic to Europe where it is late Christmas night. European traffic cannot use the North American routes as these routes are filled with two way terminal traffic. It is still early in the morning in Asia and some limited capacity exists for UK traffic. The use of New Zealand is not possible as New Zealand has its own traffic to UK.

Boxing Day 26 Dec: 1pm to 7pm

Traffic levels are very low at this time as Europe and UK have gone to sleep and North America can be handled via UK if required.

Boxing Day :26 Dec 7pm to midnight.

Traffic to UK and Europe is still very high, but traffic flows very well and congestion is non-existent.

New Year's Day: 1 January

This is the one day of the year in which world wide traffic occurs simultaneously to the destination countries. Peak traffic occurs as close to the stroke of midnight as it can.

As New Zealand is two hours ahead of Sydney it is convenient for Australians to call New Zealand , but it is not convenient at 2am New Zealand time to wish Australians the best for the new year.

At 9am Sydney time, it is midnight in Greece.

At 10am Sydney time, it is midnight in Western Europe

At 11am Sydney time, it is midnight in United Kingdom.

Each of the traffic surges last about forty minutes and during this time, each carrier has to rely solely on their own direct circuits to the destination carrier as all other routes to that destination are filled with other calls .

In addition to the “ stroke of midnight “ traffic, we have more traffic to Scotland and some other countries on New Year’s day than we do on Christmas day.

During the late nineties, Telstra’s marketing group arranged for discount calling during the period 27 December and 30 December. Although these discounts resulted in very heavy calling during this period, they had very little impact on Christmas day or New Year’s day calling. Obviously these special days mean more to callers than getting a discount – although they were happy to get a discount on another day and a different time. Finally, I prepared a Christmas report

Other days in the year when traffic levels were around at least twice that of normal were:

Chinese New Year, Lunar New Year or Tet (Vietnamese New Year)

This normally occurs around late January or early February and it co-incides with a new lunar month. Although most Asian countries celebrate this period, it is usually more popular in some countries such as Hong Kong and China than Indonesia and Singapore. Traffic starts on the day before New Year’s day and continues for around three day.

Easter

Easter Sunday is defined to be the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Equinox (21 March). The major destination is Italy, where

traffic levels are usually substantially larger than at Christmas. Usually we provided at least 480 extra circuits to cater for the extra traffic as well as routing calls via USA. Traffic to UK at Easter is not substantially different from that of a normal Sunday. But our Sunday traffic is the busiest day of the week.

Greek Easter

The date of Greek Easter varies from year to year. Sometimes it coincides with Western Easter, but most years it does not. Here are the coming comparisons: -

Year	Greek Easter	Western Easter
2007	8 April	8 April
2008	27 April	23 March
2009	19 April	12 April
2010	4 April	4 April

The Greeks use the Julian calendar for calculation of Easter, while the Western Churches use the Gregorian calendar which has a difference of twelve days.

Greek Name Days

Name days are significant to the Greeks and on your special day, Eg St Helen and Constantine, there will be high calling to everyone called Helen or Con.

The dates which are most significant are : -

- 7 January St John
- 21 May St Helen and St Constantine
- 15 August St Mary
- 26 October St Dimitrios
- 6 December St Nicholas

Mothers Day

This is the second Sunday in May and is a major peak day for most countries except UK. While we still get a larger than normal traffic to U.K. on Mothers day it is nowhere near as much as U.K. Mothering Sunday. The major destinations are: New Zealand, Canada, USA, Philippines and Italy

U.K. Mothering Sunday

The date for U.K Mothering Sunday is variable and is the fourth Sunday of Lent. Lent commences on Ash Wednesday and finishes on Easter Sunday (first Sunday after the first full moon after the Equinox – 21 March).

Normally the traffic on this Sunday is the largest of the year apart from the Christmas – New Year period and extra circuits are activated for this day. Mothering Sunday is also celebrated in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland on this date.

Saint Patrick's Day: 17 March

This is a very important day for the Irish and the traffic always increases on 17 March irrespective of the day of the week.

Islamic Peak Days

There are two major Islamic peak days: -

- Id Ul Fitr
- Id Ul Adha

At the start of the month of Ramadan, one of the 12 lunar months in an Islamic year, Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset. At the end of the month, and when the new moon is seen, Muslims then celebrate the Id Ul Fitr which usually lasts 3 days. Id Ul Adha corresponds to the Hajj. This is usually 70 days after the end of Ramadan.

Jewish Peak days

The main Jewish peak days are: Rosh Hahshana (Jewish New year – September – October), Yom Kippur (September – October)

Hanukkah (December), Passover: - 15th day of Jewish month of Nissan. It usually occurs around Easter.

Diwali

Diwali or Festival of lights, is a major Hindu day of celebration that is celebrated across India. It occurs on a different day each year depending on the moon. It will occur on 9 November 2007 and was on 21 October 2006.

Fathers Day :

This is the first Sunday in September for most countries (9 months before next Mothers day).

Canada and USA celebrate this on the 3rd Sunday in June.

As can be seen, a peak day planner has to be aware of all these special days and has to plan the international network accordingly. A job well done will result in a good service to our customers – and hopefully these customers will call back next year using our network.

(All of the above is predicated on circuit switched technology which is now being phased out in favour of IP technology. I am continually amazed at the modern approach where the technique to handle traffic is to supply virtually unlimited bandwidth rather than apply any QOS techniques and use the existing bandwidth more efficiently. I watch developments with interest! Ed.)

Brian Mullins, Manager of the Telstra Museum at Bankstown was awarded the OAM in the recent Queens Birthday Honours for his part in preserving telecommunications history.

VALE

Geoffrey Warner: Died 21 August 2007

Geoff was educated at Wyong Public School, and later as a boarder for three years at Broughton School in Newcastle.

Early in life he developed a keen interest in wireless which was then coming into popular use, and from 1930 was operating his own amateur station, VK2CK, being then, it was said, at the age of about sixteen, the youngest such amateur in Australia.

His extraordinary interest in radio never waned. In 1934 he gained his first-class certificate in commercial radio operating; then in 1935 joined Guinea Airways Limited being stationed first at Lae and later at Wau; and in 1937 joined A.W.A. in Port Moresby.

In 1946 when O.T.C. (Overseas Telecommunication Commission, Australia) was formed he transferred to that organisation with which he stayed, serving in various places, until his retirement as manager of the Bringelly Radio Receiving Centre in December, 1979.

At Port Moresby in 1939 he married Lilian Joyce Lewis, and they had two daughters.

Following his retirement to Camden, tending his lawns and gardens, he died peacefully on 21 August.

Harry Stone: Died 27 August 2007, (a few days after his old mate, Geff Warner)

Bernie White remembers -- Harry was 90 years of age.

My first recollection of Harry was when the big boys of the AWA's Beam messenger service then were gathered in the back lane of the AWA building with their motorbikes. Gordon Cupit, Jack Radnidge, John Hector and Harry all had bikes. Harry, however, liked to innovate and so he experimented with the gears on his old Norton. He took the big gear cog off the back wheel and placed it on the motor. Then he took the small gear cog off the motor and placed it onto the back wheel.

Next came the exciting part when he revved up the engine to full bore, stood the bike up on one wheel and let out the clutch. Some chaps said that he shot straight up and reached the first floor of the building before returning to ground. Harry was roaring with laughter all the way. Vale my old mate Harry.

Tom Barker noted "When I took over the OTVA chair from QP, I had a very rough time, with some bitter opposition from interstate branches. One constant source of support and encouragement was Harry Stone. He was always in there supporting me."

Phyllis Thatcher: died 28 April 2007

Phyllis Thatcher (wife of Trevor) passed away on Saturday 28th April at Wauchope.NSW

Geoff's Life

(As a departure from normal practice we have a piece which Geoff wrote himself about his life.)

G.A.Warner (Bringelly)

I left school at 16 with no regrets (no Certificates, either!), took on odd jobs (some very odd) but mostly servicing radio sets in the

district around Wyong and the lakes. In fact, at that time, people took anything that looked like work.

Within a few weeks of leaving School, I went for the Amateur Radio Operator's Certificate becoming at that time the youngest operator in Aussie. The Station was a very modest affair, constructed from junk starting with power supplied by an accumulator and a couple of dry cells. Living in the bush, there were no AC mains available, so the next step was to develop power by connecting a telephone magneto (with extra magnets across), and string driving it from the grinding wheel of a hand operated bench grinder. This gave a nice ripe raspberry on the air, and quite a distinctive note when keyed with the 'spare' hand. Eventually this gave way to a 'bicycle' with an old airplane dynamo (DC) coupled to the rear wheel. A lot of 'fun' was had by many miles of pedalling. (The power varied greatly, as did the transmitted frequency of the self-excited Hartley!). Going from power to power, I scrounged an old cream separator engine (water cooled), and mounted it in the radio shack (which was inside the house), and made it do the work of the bicycle - in addition, coupling a car generator as well to 'float' charge the accumulator. High power at last!

Amateur Radio aside; other jobs included picture-show projectionist at the local flea-house, ice carting, off-sider to the local electrical chap etc... Being already a morse operator, and inspired by the glossy pictures of a Marconi Marine Operator, cherry blossoms, Geishas etc, I set off for the big smoke.

Managing to get a servicing job with the G.E. Co, I 'did' the Marconi course, coming out with a nice looking 1st class ticket, and a couple of new uniforms with buttons and gold braid: these I never got around to wearing (or, for that matter seeing the cherry blossoms, until many years later!)

Ships were hard to come by at this time, and during a period of "resting" I had the offer of two land positions - one at a sawmill in the Islands; the other with Guinea Airway Ltd at Lae (NG). This was in 1935 when Lae was vastly different from what it is now. At that

time, the NG goldfields were in full swing and air transport was the only practical method of moving material and personnel from the coast at either Lae or Salamaua (both places being situated on the Huon Gulf, up the Morobe coast). For that era, G.A. was unique in the transport field, owning a large fleet of aircraft (four Junkers G31, 3 engine; two Junkers W34; one Junkers F13; two tri-motor Fords; one Lockheed Electra, twin engine; two Stinson 'Reliants', one DH 61; one Taifun; one Fox moth and one Gypsy moth). Quite a few of the staff were quite young like me, and we put in some interesting safaris into the mountains, and the coastal areas as time permitted.

After spending a year at Lae, I moved to the goldfields area of operations, at Wau for a time, doing mostly the same sort of thing with radio communications, cargo checking etc. A lot of this cargo, incidentally, consisted of raw gold - literally tons of it. This would come from not only the large operators like Edie Creek, Golden Ridges, Bulolo, Bulwa and so on; but also from the smaller prospectors in many outlying areas. These were reached by the smaller aircraft; and some of those little airfields in the mountains were hairy in the extreme:

In 1937, a friend in Port Moresby Radio (Ken Frank), asked me if I would like to join AWA at the Moresby station as Operator/Technician. Having had enough of the outback, I took up the job at VIG. This station was not quite the conventional Coast Station: besides the usual MF and HF CRS stuff, we had a couple of dozen out-stations scattered around Papua (at that time a separate 'country' from the Territory of New Guinea). These stations had to be serviced from time to time, so much of my time was spent in journeying here and there by either plane, copra boat, or canoe - sometimes by a combination of all three! Back at the Station we also had a Broadcasting Station (4PM) to maintain and staff. This Station, owned by AWA, was the first in the Territory and served quite a large area. Part of our duties would be the early morning morse interception of the GBR press from the UK by typewriter (filling in the missing ANDs,

THE's etc as we went), this before breakfast, then hot-footing it across to the Studio, doing a quick re-editing of the items in between playing records, reading or playing advertisements, checking levels etc. The News as read was, I guess mostly accepted in the spirit it was sent, together with the more important items of local shipping movements.

Wednesday nights were a bit of fun, as we gathered anyone in the town with any talent (most with none) and had a real session in the Studio with music, locally produced plays - quite a lot of horseplay too.

After a couple of years of this, I was shipped out with malaria, and had treatment in Sydney. This was successful, and was followed by a brief holiday visit to Perth - where I met she who is now the present Mrs Warner. We were married in Port Moresby in 1939, and after another two years, which was the term before leave was granted, we came south on leave. By this time, of course the war had hotted up a little in the area, and I applied to be sent right back (not from patriotism, of course: just to protect our belongings). However AWA would not have a bar of it, and immediately put me into the point-to-point Island radio-telegraph circuit at 47 York St. After slipping down to the Showground with a few others to have a try at the patriotic thing, and getting abused and turned down there also, I later got involved with the Navy watch out at La Perouse; moving from there to Melbourne Radio for a spell, then into the Melbourne FAX department. From there, out to the Beam Wireless Receiving Centre at Rockbank for a couple of years, thence to the transmitters at Fiskville (Ballan to those who have never heard of Fiskville). It was during service at Rockbank that OTC was formed, and I, together with others from the AWA organisation accepted the offer to transfer to the Commission.

Eventually, we were allowed back to Moresby-town, where we stayed until 1954. The next move was to Bringelly during it's construction, remaining until 1971. A further move then to Perth, resulting in three years at the Bassendean receiving centre and another three at the Gngangara Transmitters. Following

this six years holiday in the west, we returned to Bringelly where we've remained until the present time - the next move (our 20th house move in 40 years) will be the second last ... not being sure at this time, just where the last will be!

Hobbies during this gallop through the years, have been Amateur Radio (as the first love, having been issued with nine call signs here and there); 9.5mm movies before the war and 8mm since. Have always been interested in travel and together with my wife, have visited between 50 and 60 different countries. There was time, of course, to rear two daughters who are now living in the Sydney area.

THE LAST WORD: Apologies for the lateness of this Newsletter. It is dated August and I am finishing it near mid September.

It carries notes on the passing of two of our well loved members. Like other members, I have my memories of Geoff and Harry, initially from Bringelly but also from other occasions.

One, when Harry was manager at Madang, I was "loaned" the Toyota Land Cruiser, during a visit to Madang, even though I was seconded to the PNG Department of Posts and Telegraphs.

The additional story about Phil Chapman shows that there were aspects of our operations which were not known to everybody.

We have another new correspondent in Bob Emanuel and promises of more. Every member has at least one or two stories which could be told and would make this newsletter just that little bit more interesting.

However, there is good news too with the election of our new President, demonstrating that what we have cherished for so long is valued by our younger members and they are prepared to do their part to preserve it.

**THIS SPACE FOR LEASE TO
HOLD ALL THOSE INTERESTING
STORIES WHICH ARE YET TO BE
WRITTEN!!**