

# Newsletter

Folio 2.

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Vol. 3 Pt. 2 Page 62

November 1984.

## MEETINGS AND REUNIONS

### N.S.W.

REUNION, FRIDAY - 7 DECEMBER  
TIME 6 PM

CONFERENCE CENTRE,  
4TH FLOOR, OTC HOUSE,  
MARTIN PLACE, SYDNEY.

### VICTORIA

REUNION, FRIDAY - 9 NOVEMBER  
TIME 5.30 PM

OTC HOUSE,  
382 LONSDALE STREET,  
MELBOURNE.

### SOUTH AUSTRALIA

REUNION, THURSDAY - 22 NOVEMBER  
TIME 2.30 PM

BRAX HORROCKS HOME,  
7 MIEGUNYAH AVENUE,  
UNLEY PARK.

### QUEENSLAND

REUNION, TUESDAY - 13 NOVEMBER  
TIME 12 NOON

BRISBANERADIO (VIB),  
TOORBUL POINT.

(TRANSPORT DEPARTS BRISBANE OFFICE  
380 QUEEN STREET AT 11 AM - WIVES  
AND/OR FRIENDS WELCOME TO ATTEND)

### WEST AUSTRALIA

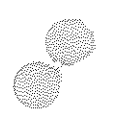
REUNION, TUESDAY - 27 NOVEMBER  
TIME 5 PM

COOLABAH TAVERN,  
MORLEY.

INTERSTATE MEMBERS AND VISITORS WILL BE WELCOMED AT  
THESE FUNCTIONS, BUT PRIOR ADVICE OF INTENTION TO  
ATTEND WOULD BE APPRECIATED BY THE ORGANISERS,  
NOT ONLY FOR CATERING PURPOSES BUT TO GET  
CONFIRMATION OF TIMES AND VENUES.

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28TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

11TH MAY 1984

MINUTES

The meeting was declared open by the Acting President, Ron McDonald at 6 p.m.

PRESENT

A. Arndt, L. Brown, C. Bardwell, C. Brophy, T. Bastow, A. Barrie, R. Beecham, R. Cruikshank, J. Collister, G. Cupit, B. Collett, M. Casey, O. Cooper, G. Day, B. Darragh, M. Dobson, R. Doohan, V. Dunlop, N. Donohoe, A. Ebert, S. Gray, J. Hodgson, A. Hanson, A. Hanlon, D. Hegarty, E. Haran, T. Hughes, F. Keen, R. Knightley, W. Luke, E. Leweniec, R. McDonald, D. Montgomery, H. McInnes, G. Maltby, N. Martin, T. Molloy, G. McDonald, R. Payne, R. Peacock, J. Peridis, C. Raecke, D. Richardson, P. Skinner, C. Swinney, W. Schmidt, J. Sullivan, H. Stone, T. Thatcher, J. Toland, A. Taylor, E. Thornley, K. Vincent, J. Whittaker, P. Whisson, D. Woods, V. Yen.

APOLOGIES

A. Agius, E. Anthoney, J. Anderson, D. Bourne, J. Bonnici, A. Brown, J. Burgess, K. Bondfield, R. Branson, R. Baty, T. Bishton, R. Brown, G. Broadbent, K. Bobrige, M. Condon, W. Chant (Snr.), W. Chant (Jnr.), A. Cilia, R. Cassar, B. Callaghan, J. Cresswick (Snr.), J. Cresswick (Jnr.), C. Dalley, P. Day, J. Davies, B. Day, J. Edwards, P. Feely, G. Fraser, P. Frost, V. Gibson, A. Griffiths, G. Gosewinckel, T. Gunning, L. Gowanlock, N. Harris, A. Henkel, P. Harris, L. Hunt, E. Harcourt, D. Kinnersley, J. Lennon, D. Lloyd, C. Maiden, P. Meulman, K. Morgan, C. Manning, E. Norris, J. Newlyn, D. Osborne, K. Oxley, J. Orton, W. O'Donnell, T. Perrett, J. Pow, J. Pattiniott, A. Ricketts, E. Ritchie, R. Smith, B. Saunders, B. Stockbridge, A. Sheppherd, K. Stone, R. Tully, S. E. Taylor, G. Thompson, C. Vahtrick, R. Wright, C. Watson, J. Walker, A. K. Walker.

The President welcomed official guests and all members to the meeting. A special welcome was extended to the following new members attending their first meeting:

Ray Peacock  
Dave Richardson  
Darrell Hegarty  
Brian Curran  
Vernon Yen

Fraternal greetings were received from the Quarter Century Club of Teleglobe Canada, and the Presidents and members of our Victorian, Queensland, South Australian and Western Australian Branches, on the occasion of our AGM. A cordial invitation has been issued from our Branches, to any of us who are interested in attending their next meetings, which are listed in the April Newsletter.

One minute's silence was observed to mark the passing of members during the year:-

Cyril Urquhart  
Frank Dunstall  
Philip Geeves  
Al Boord  
Tony Grima  
Lindsay Shepard  
Jim Donnelly  
Harold Grady  
Ted O'Donnell  
Harry Bromley  
Val Litchfield  
Bill Richardson  
Vince Duignan  
Bert Edwards  
Joe Hawkins

#### CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of our previous meeting were distributed to members on their arrival and were declared open to discussion. There being no discussion it was moved by Horrie McInnes and seconded by Des Woods that the minutes of the 27th Annual General Meeting be confirmed.

Carried unanimously.

#### BALANCE SHEET AND ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The Balance Sheet was presented to all members present and there being no discussion it was moved by Bruce Collett and seconded by Orme Cooper that the Balance Sheet and Auditors report be accepted.

Carried unanimously.

#### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The President declared all offices vacant, and called for nominations for a Returning Officer to conduct the annual elections.

Mr. Randy Payne was nominated by Lou Brown and seconded by Jack Whittaker, there being no further nominations, Mr. Randy Payne was duly elected as Returning Officer.

The Returning Officer called for nominations for the office of President. Mr. R. McDonald was nominated by Des Woods and seconded by George Maltby. There being no further nominations, Mr. R. McDonald was declared President.

Mr. A. Arndt was nominated as Honorary Secretary by G. Maltby and seconded by R. Doohan, there being no further nominations, Mr. A. Arndt was declared Honorary Secretary.

Mr. J. Collister was nominated as Honorary Treasurer by G. Day and seconded by K. Vincent, there being no further nominations, Mr. J. Collister was declared Honorary Treasurer.

The previous committee members indicated their willingness to accept a further term of office. Mr. G. Maltby nominated the present committee in toto, seconded by O. Cooper and were:- Messrs. J. Anderson, R. Baty, L. Brown, B. Collett, G. Day, A. Griffiths, T. Thatcher, G. Thompson, K. Vincent and J. Whittaker were duly elected as Committee.

#### NOMINATION FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

The meeting was advised that Mr. C. Carthew has been forced to decline his nomination for the position of General Secretary of all Branches, due to his poor health. At their earliest convenience, all Branch Secretaries will call for nominations to allow a national vote for this position to take place at our AGMs in 1985.

#### 28TH ANNUAL REUNION

In accordance with the feelings expressed at this, and previous meetings, the President suggested we endeavour to secure the OTC House Conference Centre on Friday, 7th December 1984. Moved by L. Brown and seconded by A. Arndt, carried unanimously and further agreed that the necessary arrangements be attended to by the Committee.

#### SICK LIST

The President regretfully reported the following members were either sick, or recovering from illness:-

Les Hunt is in St. Vincents Hospital recovering from a Gall Bladder Operation. We hope he will soon be out and about again.

Charlie Watson has pneumonia and is confined to bed at home.

John Lennon is in Concord Rep. Hospital with a disorder of his blood. Hopefully his problem will soon be solved.

Jim Anderson has the "flu" and regrets he was unable to be in attendance tonight.

Claude Dalley is now off the sick list but was unable to be here tonight because his wife is not too well. We look forward to seeing them both at our Annual Reunion in December.

#### BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The committee discussed the suggested new OTVA Logo and decided to use it on our Newsletter in a red colour. However, due to the strong feelings expressed at our last AGM, the lapel badge could perhaps have the morse key changed.

A motion was put to the meeting to make this change. After some discussion it was moved by J. Collister and seconded by G. Day that the motion be altered to read, "We leave the badge as is until present stocks of them are exhausted, then bring this matter up again at a future AGM for discussion." Carried unanimously.

GENERAL BUSINESS

At the last committee meeting it was proposed that we donate \$250 to the "Philip Geeves Memorial Trust Fund" (details of which appeared in our April Newsletter). After President Ron confirmed such an amount was available in our Account, it was moved by R. Payne and seconded by G. McDonald, that \$250 be donated, but the door be left open to allow any intending donations from individual members to be made. Carried unanimously. Details of these extra donations will be given in our October Newsletter.

The President expressed the appreciation and thanks of the Association, to the Commission for its continued generous support of our Association.

Mr. G. Maltby gave a brief report on his attendance at our Queensland Branch AGM that he had the pleasure of attending last week. He said all their members (including "Pinto") are in good health, and wished to be remembered to us.

Mr. J. Collister asked members interested in a "Golf Day", to keep 30th September 1984 in mind, as he intends to arrange something on this day.

There being no further business the meeting was declared closed at 6.30 pm.

A. J. ARNDT,  
Honorary Secretary.

17th May 1984.

VALE

Claude Dalley has advised us of the death of CHARLES TOWNSEND HALSTED, a well-known ex-Supervisor of the PCB.

Charles passed away on 23rd August 1984, in Bramstead, England, aged approximately 97 years.

Our sympathy is extended to his family. Many of the old PCB cable boys will remember this fine gentleman.

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VALE

We have received the news from Wendy Litchfield, that her father, VAL LITCHFIELD, died on 4th May this year. Val served in communications for some 46 years. He is survived by his daughter and wife, Gwendolyn.

Our sincere regrets go to both of them and the immediate family members.

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JOHN BEDE LENNON - THE MOST HAPPY FELLOW

Few deaths have affected so many people in all walks of life than the passing of Johnny Lennon, a bloke I dubbed personally as "The Most Happy Feller".

I can do no better than reproduce here his obituary in the Bondi local newspaper under the heading

"Farewell Johnny".

It states

Our globe-trotting "Rolling Stone" Johnny Lennon stopped rolling on Saturday, (14th July) when after a short illness he joined departed Life-saving mates on Patrol in Heaven.

"When you part from a friend you grieve not. For that which you love most in him may become clearer in his absence."

Johnny "Low Tide", as he was affectionately known to his surf club mates, was a loner, but never lonely. A man with a million friends all over the world, from Russia to Rushcutter's Bay, Rabaul to Bondi, and all points of the compass.

A competent sportsman, in surf life-saving, swimming and tennis he enjoyed these activities to the fullest. When he wasn't visiting friends in foreign lands, he was first a Wireless Operator, then Manager with OTC at Cocos Island, Samarai, Port Moresby and Rabaul, Papua-New Guinea.

A respected member of many clubs and organisations throughout the world, including Tattersalls, SCG Trust, Easts League, Bondi "Diggers", he did his bit with the Merchant Navy as an operator, but his first and last love was North Bondi Surf Life-Saving Club, where his membership was approaching 50 years.

JOHN B. LENNON - WE SALUTE YOU.

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The above is a fine tribute to a great bloke but an incident in which he was involved kept nagging at me and just when I thought I was going mad I was given a contact, one Mr. Charles Christiansen, a long-time associate of Johnny's. In fact they went to the same school together. Charles was able to confirm something that most of us knew - that John had been a brilliant student with a photographic memory, and with the capability of being anything he wanted to be, despite the fact that his education was interrupted by the death of his father which necessitated John, as the eldest, having to quit school to help supplement the family income. Charles says that one of the teachers was almost in tears when John left, saying that a pupil of John's potential appeared in a teacher's life perhaps once in a life-time, and it was a near tragedy to lose him.

Charles also told me that John was a member of the Bondi Icebergs Club and took over the training of the Juniors in the Bondi Amateur Swimming Club as well as the North Bondi Surf Club, being a donor of trophies to both of them.

But the incident I remember occurred in the late Forties, '47 or '48. John was coaching some of his Juniors when two freak waves rose out of nowhere and rushed over the beach right up to the road retaining wall leaving men, women, kids, babies, swimmers and non-swimmers struggling in the water trying to reach shore. John grabbed a board, heading for those who were in obvious signs of distress, bringing them in in twos, and on occasions, threes, dumping them in the shallows and then paddling out for others. It was due mainly to the efforts of people such as John and other strong surf swimmers that a major tragedy was averted. His act did not go unnoticed.

At that time a radio station, 2UW, I believe, had a Friday night show called "The 2UW Sports Parade", a segment being set aside for a "Sportsman of the Week" award, and John was invited to attend.

Those of us on duty that night had had a speaker tuned into 2UW rigged up on the old Shanghai Circuit table, keeping one ear on the interview and one on the traffic. The show started with the interviewer interviewing John, but ended up with John interviewing the interviewer, so that by the time the segment had finished the announcer had gone through his check list of questions with about five minutes to spare.

Johnny's good-humoured approach and infectious laugh delighted the studio audience.

The compere, evidently looking at John's roly-poly physique, said "Your individual feat in this whole thing is even more remarkable, John, because, if you will pardon me saying so, you don't look like anything like the image conjured up when someone mentions "Bondi Life-Saver". John took it in stride, and told the story of the man who was visiting the home of a millionaire businessman and who stopped to ask directions to the house from a raggedy-looking joker working in the garden. "I have an appointment with Mr. Sheridan and I don't want to be late", he explained. The "gardener" looked at his watch and replied, "I'm Sheridan - and you are by no means late". "If you will pardon me saying so, Mr. Sheridan," said the visitor, "but you don't look like a millionaire". Sheridan smiled and replied, "I don't have to look like a millionaire - I am a millionaire".



"And it's the same with me," said John. "I don't have to look like a life-saver - I am a life-saver".

He brought the house down. What's more, he got a 25 pound award. Big money in those days.

John loved kids. By the time he had finished doing the Island Outstations there wasn't one youngster who could not swim. His patience with even the most wary-of-the-water kids was unending, and the confidence he instilled in them was amazing.

You are going to be hard man to replace, John Bede Lennon.

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FROM OUR CANADIAN COLLEAGUES

HAROLD H. LE QUESNE, President of the Teleglobe Canada Quarter Century Club (Western Chapter), writes:-

"Very many thanks for your Newsletter April 1984, really a very excellent report on Overseas Telecommunications Veterans' Association's affairs in Australasia.

If this reaches you in time (and it did) please convey to your President, Executive Members and all Members very warm fraternal greetings and best wishes from all members of the Quarter Century Club of Teleglobe Canada (Western Chapter) at your 28th Annual General Meeting of the NSW Branch on Friday, 11 May 1984.

My wife, Katherine, and I have so many happy memories of our visits to Australia and New Zealand and particularly to have been able to join your members at their Annual Banquets, 1975, 1980 and 1983. So many of your members were so kind to us.

I will circulate your Newsletter among the Australians, they being Lawrence Peter Crakanthorp - B. C. Johnnie Fisk - Bart B. Fletcher - John Knight - Donald L. Schutz - Robert B. Scott.

There were so many interesting items in your Newsletter that I will not make special mention, suffice to say that you and your group have put together a most interesting document.

With very best wishes to you and yours,

Fraternally yours,

HAROLD.

THE C.R.S. DURING WORLD WAR 2. (CONCLUSION)

By PHIL CHAPMAN.

(Continuing from our April edition).

The efficiency of, and the absolute reliance on the CRS network during those perilous times is vividly described in the following extract from the Naval Intelligence Newsletter of June 1956 quoting from a Bougainville war time coast watcher narrative. "It was 8.40 a.m. they (aircraft) were still audible to the south-east as I flashed the report through to VIG Port Moresby; from where it was tapped out to station VIT Townsville, and was in the hands of Tulagi control in less than 10 minutes". Due to the geographical nature of the conflict the major operational burden for enemy reporting in the SW Pacific was the task of the field coast-watchers and their communication stations in the Papua/NG-Solomon Island. However, in the aerial battles over Darwin, the contribution by the coast-watching network was significant in providing warnings and alerting for rescue. It is now history that on 19/2/42, Darwinradio OIC Lou Curncock gave RAAF Operations 23 minutes warning of the alert from civilian coast-watcher Father McGrath on Bathurst Island that 188 planes from the same task force that attacked Pearl Harbour were on their way. Although the warning of this devastating raid was ignored and kept under a shroud of censorship secrecy for many years, nevertheless, it proved the efficiency of the Coast-watching communications.

As previously mentioned, 1942 air-raids were the heaviest over Port Moresby and Darwin. Staff stationed there during that period were -  
Port Moresby:

N. Odgers, Ken Franks, Arthur Dunstone, Syd Glenn, Alan Hooper, Max Lang, Tim Neale, Ted O'Donnell, Les Young, Jack Allan, F. Dockray, F. Williams, Frank Marlow, T. Colquhoun.

Darwin:

Lou Curncock, Gerry O'Hare, Frank Ouvrier, Arthur Oliver, Phil Chapman with Tom Hughes and Tom Swarbrick arriving in October.

A final mention of Coast-watching communications. After the war, whilst stationed at Rabaul, I spent many a pleasant hour in the New Guinea Club in the company of those famous and highly decorated coast-watchers, Paul Mason, Jack Reid, Keith McCarthy, John Gilmore and Snow Rhoades, to name a few, listening enthralled to their behind-the-enemy-lines exploits. They always paid the highest tributes to the AWA communication network, claiming it was the best of any outfit during the war and also of the uncanny ability of our staff in long-range (over-the-air) diagnosis of faults that developed in the field with the 3BZ transceivers. Due to this expert help they were rarely, if ever, off the air.

After that introduction I will now endeavour to answer Alan Vagg's enquiry. Tim Neale was primarily on coast-watching duties from May 1942 until the end of the war. From Port Moresby, in November 1943, he went to Milne Bay, Finschhafen, Hollandia, Biak, Lae, Torokina thence back to Lae and Port Moresby to depart February 1946. Jeff Buckland arrived Port Moresby in February 1943, to Milne Bay November 1943 thence Finschhafen and Lae until September 1945. Also on coast-watching duties and received the MBE. Les Young was also decorated - the DCM, I believe. Tommy Sexton, whom I last saw

in Newcastle, shortly after the outbreak of war, when we were in port on different ships, left AWA and I believe joined the PMG Radio Branch. He later went to the Solomons serving with distinction as a coast-watcher Lieutenant RANVR on Malaita and was awarded the US Legion of Merit. There are various mentions of him in Eric Feldt's book including "As in other walks of life, the professional radio-operator is ahead of the amateur. Sexton, on Malaita, could transmit and receive signals from Vila when no one else in the Group could" ...

Finally, in 1942 AWA staff serving in Papua-NG and CRS stations at Darwin and Thursday Island were accorded naval rank.

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OVERSEAS TELECOMMUNICATIONS VETERANS' ASSOCIATION (QUEENSLAND)

Minutes of the 9th Annual General Meeting, held in Indooroopilly at noon on Wednesday, 9th May 1984.

President Alan Jones opened the meeting and welcomed those present:

Jim Banks, Denis Chambers (Melbourne), Laz Eliou, Sid Gill, Alf Goeb, Bob Hooper, George Maltby (Sydney), John Marshall, Denis Moorhouse, John Norris, John Ponsonby, Vince Sim and Bob Webster.

Apologies were received from:

Dean Laws, Rowley Lane, Alan Rees, Bill Schmidt, Gordon Collyer, Wilf Atkin, Frank Bond, Les Doubleday, Stan Gray, Kev Hiscock, Blue Easterling and Charles Carthew.

Minutes of the previous AGM were adopted as circulated. Correspondence from absent members was read and adopted and the meeting recorded its pleasure at the news that Charles Carthew is improving in health.

The financial statement was received, showing a current balance of \$186.84. It was agreed that subscriptions remain at \$2 for the current year.

The President gave a brief report, apologising for having been unable to keep in touch with retired members as much as he would wish or had intended.

All offices were then declared vacant but unanimously re-elected, i.e.:

President	-	Alan Jones
Secretary	-	Jim Banks
Treasurer	-	Denis Moorhouse
Auditor	-	John Norris

George Maltby gave a brief run-down on the current status and future plans of OTC, and confirmed the Commission's continued interest in and support for the Veterans Associations.

It was agreed that the next meeting be held at Brisbane Radio on a day to be fixed in November and that wives/friends of members would be particularly welcome.

After thanking Jim and Margaret Kelly, son-in-law and daughter of 'Pinto', for the use of their lovely home, President Alan closed the meeting. The usual excellent fellowship then ensued.

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#### SOMETHING CONCRETE ABOUT SOUTHPORT CABLE STATION

Regular readers of this journal will remember the query raised by "Blue" Easterling on page 43 of the April issue as to the use of the concrete slab, or plinth, jutting up through the Operating Room floor. I offer these reasons without comment, awaiting adjudication from anyone willing and courageous enough to enter into the discussion.

Our first contribution comes from Albert "Henk" Henkel, a member of the service and who was a member of the OTCA Investigations Section in Sydney prior to retirement. He writes:-

"These concrete slabs were put in at all Cable Stations, under the floor, to absorb any vibration which may have adversely affected the siphon ink recorder (which recorded incoming and outgoing signals) in the receiving instruments which were particularly sensitive to any external movement. The four corners of each slab were mounted with rubber shockers to support a wooden platform which held the siphon recorder in place."

Alan Arndt adds a note to this. He says, "From my experience at Norfolk and Cocos Islands Cable Stations we also had our magnifiers and forks mounted on concrete slabs for the same reasons, especially at Norfolk which was earth tremor prone."

Hot on the heels of this came a memo from Len Vella (WA Branch), who says:-

"On Page 43 of the April NEWSLETTER re 'plinth'. This concrete slab was known as the Plinth on which the Clock Controls, there being two (one main one, and one spare) were placed. They were part of the Regenerator System, the synchronome clock, the synchroniser, and the clock controls. The plinth was made of concrete and went down as far as was necessary to reach solid rock foundations."

To someone who does not know, both explanations seem reasonable.

HEY ... CLAUDE ... CLAUDE DALLEY ... I know you are out there somewhere. How about being the Arbitrator on this for us.

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THE PORTLY GENTLEMAN - A TRIBUTE

By HUGH TAYLOR.

I was very sorry to read in the April NEWSLETTER that Cyril Urquhart had passed on. We knew him as "THE PORTLY GENTELMAN". He was just that.

I remember that he was at Madang when the Japs raided the township and realising he couldn't get into the slit trench he gave a ball to ball - or rather - a bomb to bomb description of it over the air.

When Madang was evacuated he travelled up to Mount Hagan from where he was flown, with others, to Horn Island (T.I.).

I was at Manus when the Japs landed there. We made our getaway by schooner to Bogajim and thence to Mt. Hagan.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Mr. Laurie Durrant advises he has finished his book on the History of Coast Radio in Australia. He has asked me to pass on his sincerest thanks to all our Veterans, who contributed material to him for inclusion in this publication.

The book should be released in 1985 and Newsletter will keep you advised as to when it will be available.

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RIPT SCRIPT (FROM SCRIPTURE HISTORY).

By "PONTO".

At first I thought it was a bad dream ... then I realised I had passed over the great divide and was headed for the Pearly Gates. Peter was there to greet me, and gave me a very nasty look. I think he was about to tell me to get to Hell out of the place when some of the Angels standing around asked me where I was from. I said that my last job was with OTC and that there were those who thought I should have been Managing Director - well, that was the opinion of my Mum and Aunt Petronella. So the Angels approached Peter and spoke to him thusly, "Let him stay. We rarely get anyone from there." And Peter replied, "Well, it's against my better judgement, but report to the Store and draw your wings, then return here for me to affix them. And Ponto - if you run into Gabriel don't let on that you played trumpet in the local band. The old windbag is still skiting about what he did at Jericho, and now he's got some idea of having a go at the Berlin Wall.

Peter also intimated that he knew an early relative of mine, Ponto Pilate who became an embarrassment to the family when he was having a bit of "hanky panky" with Salome, and which still dogs the family to this day. He

committed a "faux pas" by promising to deliver the head of John the Flautist on a plate if she performed the dance of the Seven Veils in public. He was abroad one night in AD33 when one of the crowd "fingered" him as being a good friend of the man who was betrayed for \$3.00. Old Hepzikhah got caught up in this and has paid dearly ever since. She has been condemned to remain in the First Heaven for life, where she is employed doing a spot of pillow-filling during the moulting season, and occasionally some bed vetting, which I am not sure she got from her arithmetical skill or a weak bladder.

Peter gave me the standard warning that any evil thoughts or back-biting could be the cause of my wings dropping off, and I was then free to explore the area.

It was only natural that I was flying further afield and out-distancing most of the others. I had heard that the Angels of The Seven Heaven were a bit of lovely homework - not that there was much chance of making it - but hope does spring eternal. So, one fine morning, armed with a goodly supply of angel's food cake and corned beef sandwiches, I started the long flight to see for myself. After going many hundreds of cubits I began to feel somewhat weary and landed on a bit of cosmic nebulae for a rest. I hadn't been there long when I felt a gentle zephyr and a feeling of well-being when a beautiful Angel from Seventh Heaven landed beside me.

I looked at her ... she looked at me ... then she hurriedly took off. What a terrible predicament to be in, hundreds of cubits from home and my wings lying at my feet.

I realised I was in dire trouble when there was a howling gale, and Peter made such a hurried landing that he scorched the feathers on his "ong bong point". With continued cries of "I knew it - I knew it", how he dressed me up.

Just then there came that gentle purring of wings and the Angel was back again. She looked at him ... Peter looked at her ... and Peter's wings fell off. She helped me on with mine, and as we left together I said, "Brother, am I going to enjoy this".

I took over his job for a few weeks, until Geoffrey arrived. His wife had been having an affair with Lionel who lived just down the street. They fed Geoffrey with ground glass which caused his sudden arrival. He was a jet expert from Fisherman's Bend. "Get Lionel up here and I'll fit you with the finest jet ever made to enable you to get back to earth," he said. No sooner said than done, but believe it or not, I got back to earth just in time to see my wife getting re-married. Rather unseemly, I thought, to bring him back to the home I was still paying off. I hid under the bed, and next morning I felt like saying, "And she can't cook, either." I am afraid my chances of getting to Heaven are very slim now ...

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#### A NOTE ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Ponsonby is 88 years of age. He recently had a cataract operation on his eyes, and fears that his contributions to NEWSLETTER may be rarer in the future. Let's hope not, Ponto.

ANNUAL WAGGA WEEKEND

(Held on the Australia Day weekend each year).

This annual event within the Commission is held every Australia Day weekend in January for a "get-together" between the Sydney and Melbourne staff. The story that follows was related to Greg Harris, who is about to graduate as a Technician, when he was in Brisbane with a recruiting team in December 1981 for interviews of prospective trainees.

John Nossis, Marketing Officer at the Brisbane Office, who related the story to Greg is probably the most qualified person within OTC to relate such a story, as he has attended all 'Wagga weekends' since the inception with the exception of 1983, when he was unable to attend because of illness.

During the early days of OTC (1947), the means of sending messages between Melbourne and Sydney Operating Rooms was by Morse code and the operators on duty usually "chatted" to each other, using morse, during idle times when there was little other traffic to send. This "chatting" was one way of keeping in practice using the morse key and also a way to pass on information about sporting events and other items of interest to staff members of the two operating rooms. There were some keen cricket enthusiasts among both staff of Melbourne and Sydney and it was inevitable that the talk would come around to this subject.

Three operators, Lou Sherburn, (Melbourne), Lyell Gowenlock and George Shepherd, (both of Sydney), were chatting during an idle period one night shift, about cricket, of course, and it eventuated that both operating rooms were able to boast of having excellent teams, so the challenge was issued for a match between Sydney and Melbourne at a venue about half-way between the two offices. After a bit more yatter, Wagga was decided on, with Lou Sherburn nominated to make the arrangements.

Lou wrote to the Postmaster at Wagga, a Mr. Bill West, who proved to be a great help in the following years, and the match was arranged to be played at Wagga Sports Ground during the Australia Day long weekend, 1948. Sydney won this first match, as it has done so many times since.

During the early years of this event, there was a beer shortage (remember, this was not long after World War 2 and almost everything was in short supply), and because no Cricket match is "cricket" without beer, an arrangement had to be made with Carlton & United Breweries in Melbourne for the supply of a number of kegs, well in advance of the day, I might add, to be supplied for the event. These kegs were carted from Melbourne to Wagga in a car owned by Frank McCormack helped mainly by Lou Sherburn. These two, and others, used to travel to Wagga on the Thursday before the weekend to make arrangements, such as accommodation, ground venue, and more importantly, to get the kegs chilled at the Wagga Butter Factory for the weekend activities. This was a necessary ritual for about 3 to 4 years until such times as the beer flow was improved locally.

Today, although cricket is the main game played at Wagga, there are many other activities held between the two offices, such as golf, tennis, snooker and billiards, bowls and netball, with social functions being held each night as well as the presentation night for the winners of the sporting events.

They go down by bus, car and 'plane, and some by rail - but they get there.

Estimates show that the 1984 Wagga Weekend is expected to attract more than 200 OTC members and their families.

And now, a little about John Norris, who was kind enough to relate this story to Greg Harris.

John worked in the Melbourne Operating Room from 1946 until 10th June 1970, when he was transferred to the newly-opened Brisbane Operating Room. He played for the Melbourne team in the inaugural match in 1948, and captained the Melbourne team from 1953 to 1970, and continued to play for the Melbourne team even after his transfer to Brisbane. He has the best attendance record of anyone, having missed only one weekend, and still holds the record for the highest score (90 N.O.) scored in 1950.

Many thanks must go to Lou, Lyell, and George for starting what has become an OTC tradition.

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#### OTVA SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

The Adelaide/South Australian Branch of the OTVA held its winter meeting at the Royal Hotel, Kent Town, on 24th May, in the afternoon. This venue is proving to be quite satisfactory with the advantage that parking is no problem.

Those present were Charles Smith, Claud Whitford, Bert Dudley, Ken Springbett, Les Reynolds, Fred Reeve, Max Lang, Keith Parker, Harold Oates, Oscar Goldsworthy, Ken Collett, Geoff Cox, Brian Morrell (Perth), George Rowe, Norman Mackay, Ron Ward, Bill Hyde and Brax Horrocks.

Apologies were received from Cliff Birks and Eric Symes. Cliff phoned to say how disappointed he was at not being able to join us, but he was not well and confined to bed. We were unable to get in touch with Ralph Matthews or Hugh Taylor, and are a bit worried about Rocky Gordon who did not reply to our letter, which is most unusual for him.

We were sorry to hear of the death of Jerrold Shaw. Poor fellow, he had been ill for some time.

On behalf of all members, the President, Brax Horrocks, extended a warm welcome to Brian Morrell, President of the OTVA in Western Australia. It was good to meet him and we hope that he enjoyed our meeting.

Fraternal greetings were received from the Sydney, Melbourne and Perth Branches, and also from Pat Sykes (WA) and Bruce Sutherland of N.Z.

Our next meeting will be at the home of Brax Horrocks, Unley Park, at 2.30 p.m. on the fourth Thursday in November 1984. (That should be the 22nd if my calendar is correct.)



DOWN MEMORY LANE

By BRAX HORROCKS.

It is Tuesday April 11th 1943 and early morning. Tufty Baker, Frank McCay and I are passengers on a tiny naval sloop which for the past few days has slipped through enemy waters on its way South from Trincomalee.

We stand on the foredeck as the anchor is dropped at the entrance of this most beautiful lagoon. The anchor chain reveals that we are in six fathoms but looking down through quite incredibly clear water. I have the illusion that our keel is almost touching the bottom - a bottom not of mud or sand or rock, but a fairyland garden of living coral in all the colours of the rainbow and many more. A garden hilled and terraced in nature's most delicate iridescent pastels, the coral of many different types, some hard, some soft, the latter waving gently in the incoming tide.

Here and there are giant clams their parted lips in rich shades of indigo and scarlet, and darting in and out of this maritime wonderland are fish of many types, most of which I haven't seen before, but I recognise tiny blue minarette, gawdy parrot fish with their pointed beaks and long trailing dorsal fins, and coral cod, green and blue, spotted in brown and in purple.

A gentle South-east trade wind softly rustles in the fronds of coconut palms on a tiny islet a mere cable length away on our port bow and it crinkles the pale blue opalescent water of the lagoon into a million shimmering facets which sparkle and glisten in the morning sun like so many diamonds.

We become aware of the shrill cry of a snow-white tern far above and looking up see dozens of frigate birds circling around and around in obvious curiosity.

We go ashore, landing on a tiny coral islet which is a mere quarter mile long and no more than a hundred yards across at its widest part. The beach is of pure coral, powdered and bleached and so dazzling white in the morning sun that it almost hurts our eyes. The island is covered in coconut palms laden with nuts and here and there are banana palms and pawpaw trees with their golden fruit. The air almost heavy with the fragrance of frangipani.

Tufty has come as relieving Manager, Frank as Engineer, and I am to replace one of the watch engineers, Dan Griffin.

The ship is quickly unloaded and slips away at dusk - no doubt to the immense relief of the Skipper who has all day been anxiously scanning the skies for enemy planes.

On Direction Island where the cable relay station and living quarters are, there is a tiny garrison of Indian Army troops, armed with rifles and machine-guns, in the hope that they will be able to repulse a landing. On Horsborough, a little over two miles away on the other side of the entrance is another garrison whose duty it is to man the two six-inch naval guns.

The army provides a doctor and four English officers and every Sunday they join us for curry tiffin. Two of them, Captail Bill May, and Ronnie Runagal have wonderful voices and before we eat we join with them in the singing of popular songs such as Waltzing Matilda. We also sing bawdy naval songs which we have picked up from the boys of the Royal Navy who man a wireless listening post on the Eastern tip of the island.

Our staff numbers six, Tufty, Frank, and four watch engineers, and on Saturdays those who are not on duty join with the Navy boys and two RAAF lads, George Sneyd, and Julian Hay, who man the meteorological station, to form a cricket team to play the Indian Army. And wonderful cricket it is, perhaps not quite up to international standard, but all are keen and it is great fun.

But time, unfortunately, has taken its toll. Tufty and Frank have passed on, but Pat Sykes, Bruce Sutherland, Peter Wolfe and I are still here and sometimes we manage to get together to reminisce about our days together some forty odd years ago on that tiny fragment of coral, that wonderful opalescent jewel set in the middle of the Indian Ocean.

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#### MORE MEMORIES

By BRAX HORROCKS.

Laden with sugar the MV Waitomo casts off from Number 2 wharf at Suva and heads for Vancouver.

It is late afternoon Friday May 13th 1948 and I as the only passenger on board, am to be dropped off en route at Fanning Island, some 1200 miles south of Honolulu.

There is no-one to see me off, wave me goodbye, or wish me well and I am lonely and unhappy.

There was, at that time, a staff of about sixteen at Suva and I feel that they resented my resistance of taking my turn for a two year term at Fanning followed, possibly, by a further two years at Norfolk, but to me, my reasons for not wanting to go were very valid. Some months previously I had been transferred from Adelaide to Suva and I was accompanied by my wife and daughter Pam, aged 11; after a month or so Pam developed tropical ears and the local doctors insisted that she return to a temperate climate, so at my expense, The Company refusing to pay even a penny, I had them flown back to Australia.

Small wonder therefore that when, a couple of months later, I was told to go to Fanning, I did all possible to avoid the transfer for I knew that in accpeting it I might not see my little family for a long long time. Unfortunately the Divisional Manager, Melbourne was unmoved by my pleas for clemency, hence my sadness as the Waitomo pulled away from the wharf.

A little over a fortnight later as I stood on the foredeck looking towards the horizon I detected a long row of green which soon revealed as being the very tops of coconut palms, soon it was possible to see hundreds and hundreds of palms and later, as we drew close to the atoll, other vegetation came into view.

We dropped anchor near the narrow entrance to the lagoon and went ashore on one of the small cargo barges which had been awaiting our arrival. On landing on the tiny jetty I saw a notice board about two feet square bolted firmly to a post near the shore end on which a few years previously Bob Collins had painstakingly painted the words "All ye who enter here abandon hope!"

Later, looking over old Fanning records, reading sundry correspondence and doctors reports, it became obvious to me that I was not the only one who had been unhappy in being separated from his loved ones for such extended periods. As a matter of interest three 1947 reports by the resident doctor, Dr. Ross:

" June 30th. I have found Mr. McPhee in a very depressed state of mind and incapable of emotional control.

July 5th. Mr. Pegler is suffering from anxiety neurosis in acute stage. He is irritable and depressed and is showing symptoms of emotional instability.

April 7th. The enforced separation of some married men from their families for almost 2½ years has a detrimental effect and is responsible for cases of physical as well as mental depression."

My good friend, ALAN MCPHEE, shared my hatred of the then, but of course unnamed, Divisional Manager, and whilst Alan was at Fanning he wrote this gem of a poem which I hope will be considered printable:-

"Ode to a certain gentleman"

" A.B.C. we all agree  
Thinks only in terms of .S.D. - The Bastard

He cancels vessels without a qualm  
Though we do our best to stay his arm - The Bastard

Talks of conditions never been  
Hasn't been North of Narrabeen - The Bastard

Now what he needs is a term out here  
We would sit him down and feed him beer  
We would point out things and make it clear  
He'd buggered this place for many a year - The Bastard

He would understand much he never knew  
That the Chinese coolies are far too few  
To fix things calls for a hell of a crew  
We would lather him into such a stew  
He wouldn't know what the devil to do  
Would wish himself back at his street in Kew - The Bastard

Yes, two years conditions to study  
Would change all his views no end that bloody - Bastard".

Fanning, being almost on the equator, was hot, but in many ways was a pleasant enough place for staff who were single or who had their wives with them, but was a disaster for young children of school-going age. Had our Pam gone there at that time she would have been the only young person on the island and would of course have been deprived of any kind of schooling or even correspondence lessons as the supply ships called in so very infrequently.

During my time on the island I was most fortunate in having a wonderful fellow, Malcolm Tregenza, as Manager. He and his wife Marjorie did all in their power to make us contented, they organized fishing parties, picnics, concerts, bridge evenings and so on, and looking back, we had many happy times together.

But I continued to be unhappy, MOST unhappy, at being parted from my little family. And then one day a miracle happened, our doctor noticed that my chest was almost covered in De Morgans ruby spots, indicative of heart disease, and on further careful examination he eventually insisted that I be repatriated by the next boat. So, well before my two years were up I was sent back to Australia and took that God given opportunity of seeking and luckily obtaining other employment in the Electricity Trust of S.A. where I spent many happy and rewarding years before my retirement.

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WELL ... WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT ...

By BRAX HORROCKS.

When Bruce Sutherland was in Adelaide recently one of our contemporaries died so Bruce and I went to the crematorium, where these days I have a season ticket, to pay our last respects. Walking away from the service Bruce said "How old are you?" "Nearly 80" I replied. "Yes" said Bruce, "I'm the same". With that he slowly stopped and said "You know Brax old man, it hardly seems worth going home."

When Bruce and I joined the Eastern Extension Company in Adelaide as probationer operators in 1921, the training school was in charge of Bob Moore. Seven probationers were taken on every six months and as the period of training was 18 months, we all spent several months with each group.

There were some quite unforgettable characters in our time such as Len Michell, a wizard on the piano. Charlie Smith, the wild one - how he didn't kill himself on that motor bike of his I will never know. Ken Goodale, a wonderful fellow who was an outstanding athlete, he died poor chap from cancer in his early thirties. Sammy Macdonald with a wonderful sense of humour and a magnificent baritone singing voice, and so on.

We all worked hard to pass examinations in the use of the morse key and sounder, the use of sticks for the hand-punch, typewriter, twin cable keys and reading morse signals both cable-recorder and land-line. We also received training in the workshop by Bill Lea and the repair of submarine cables by that quite extraordinary character, ex seaman, Rodman.

On becoming operators, we took turns on the various circuits including reading siphon-recorder signals from the Cocos-Cottesloe-Adelaide submarine cable and using a hand-punch to perforate tape for use in the

transmitters on the Sydney and Melbourne land-line circuits. Morse signals from Melbourne and Sydney activated the old "Bille" & "Creed" perforators and the tapes from these took their turn to be fed into the quite slow (135 letters per minute) transmitter to Cottesloe-Cocos.

At night we worked the morse line to Darwin (copper had replaced the original iron). Incoming signals there were recorded in ink and the Darwin operators used a hand-punch to perforate tape which was fed into the submarine cable to Banjoewangi at 115 letters per minute.

We worked 6 hour shifts, with no time off even for a cup of tea, six days a week. Sundays, also of six hours, were paid at the overtime rate of one and a quarter.

Probationers received seven shillings and sixpence a week, then as first year operators the commencing salary was 3 pounds per week paid once a calendar month. It was of course quite impossible to save, but looking back, we seemed to manage quite remarkably well even though, of necessity one had to walk home after the evening shift and on Sunday mornings when there was no public transport.

After two or three years experience most of us were transferred to Darwin for the then term of 2 years and after that we were sent all over the place, some returned to Adelaide, others were transferred to Sydney, Melbourne, or Cottesloe, and a few went up East.

Those were the good old days!?

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FROM THE LAND OF THE LONG WHITE CLOUD

VETERAN CABLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION  
AUCKLAND

The next Veterans' reunion will be held on Wednesday, 28th November at the Rose Garden Lounge, Parnell, with the AGM at 11.15 a.m. and a smorgasbord luncheon at noon.

A cordial invitation is extended to all old friends to take advantage of the devaluation of the N.Z. dollar, for a leisurely trip through the country including a stop-over in Auckland on that date.

With regret, I report the passing of Veteran D. C. (Don) Baker on July 17th.

Don was one of the old school from the Eastern Telegraph (afterwards Cable & Wireless) and he had terms of duty at Malta, Cairo, Colombo, Gibraltar, Ascension, St. Helena, and Port Sudan.

Several Veterans attended the recent funeral of Mrs. Eva Wylie, wife of Neil (Porky) Wylie. Neil, who has nearly lost his sight, keeps reasonably well otherwise.

Kind regards

BILL CRAIG.

### THE WAGGA WEEKEND

Elsewhere through this issue you will find the story of how this annual phenomenon came about, but, like the TV series used to say, "There are a million stories about the Wagga Weekend - this has only been one of them."

Why, for instance, does Jack Whittaker go into gales of laughter when someone says, in a falsetto voice, "Cup of tea ... cup of tea ..."?

Get someone to tell you about poor old "Sugar" Edwards (father of John Norman Edwards) and the embarrassing moments he suffered when a southerly buster came up in the morning, slamming his bedroom door and trapping him in the hotel hallway."

Ask, I urge you, Derek Jolly to explain how his Fiat came to be parked in the L-shaped verandah of the Union Club Hotel.

Have Bob Studd relate to you how he carried his bat right through the innings in the 101 degrees searing Wagga heat and the part "GUZZLER'S GIN" played in his success.

How about the Smoko night when the C.A.O. was bombarded with peanuts, whilst wild exhortations of "Double pay for Doubleday" rang the rafters, and the classic remark made by the C.A.O. to the Chairman of the Commission as he wrestled his coat-tails from the clutching hands of the Chairman?

AHHH ... the memories warm the cockles of this old heart.

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### A BIT OF LIGHT ON THE SUBJECT

By BILL CRAIG.

Bill Craig Veteran Cablemen's Association, Auckland, has answered a query raised in the April issue of NEWSLETTER. It will be of particular interest to George Maltby, who raised the matter.

"The extract from the C. of E. magazine "LUX" was written by the late Miss Gwen Langford, daughter of A.F.T. Langford, clerk in charge of the Fanning Island staff 1914/16. Gwen's brother, Reginald, who died in Auckland in May 1982 was the last overseas recruit to join the P.C.B.

The Langford family had been stationed at Bamfield B.C. awaiting transport to Fanning by the Cable Steamer "IRIS". At the outbreak of war this vessel was delayed at Bamfield until the Admiralty gave permission to proceed.

It was known that the "NURNBURG" was searching for her. When permission was finally granted "IRIS" took a lengthy zig-zag course for Honolulu. After taking on coal, she left port within twelve hours on a further zig-zag course, reaching Fanning on 31st August. The "IRIS" hurriedly discharged her passengers and stores and steamed away to the safe harbour of Suva.

A few days later, the British Consul in Honolulu advised the Manager, Mr. Alfred Smith, that the "NURNBURG" was taking on supplies and that her destination was Fanning. Manager Smith, a cockney, was a bit of a wag and posted a memo on the office notice-board that: "Mails for all parts of the world would close at 5pm on Sunday for despatch by His Germanic Majesty's ship 'NURNBURG'".

Ed's Note: I chose the heading for a reason. "Lux" means light in Latin. Just thought I'd throw that in for all you non-Catholics and those jokers who did the High School Commercial Course instead of the General.

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-- AND JUST TO CONFIRM THIS ...

BOB WRIGHT, Suva, writes:-

" On reading your NEWSLETTER of April 1984, regarding war-time experiences at Fanning Island, I suggest the initials 'G.L.' could be those of Gwen Langford, who was the daughter of Superintendent Langford (they were not called Managers in those days) and I feel sure that Supt. Langford was in Fanning during the old Cablesip "IRIS" days.

Gwen was the sister of the late Reg. Langford who was in the N.Z. P&T."

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VALE

It is with regret that we mention the passing of G. J. (GEORGE) WHEELER on 12th September 1984 after suffering a heart attack. George spent his last years in Telecommunications working as a Counter Officer at OTC's Spring Street Office. He retired in July 1969.

Our sympathy is extended to his widow and family.

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OTVA VICTORIAN BRANCH  
27TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 27th Annual General Meeting of the OTVA(Vic) was held at noon on May 11th, 1984, at OTC House, Lonsdale Street, Melbourne. Thirty-nine members signed the attendance book, whilst fifteen apologies were received and recorded.

At the opening of the Meeting the President, Mr. Jack McGrory, called for a minute's silence in respect of:

Vin Molineux  
Frank Dunstall  
Ron Taylor  
Vin Duignan  
Sir Albert Chadwick

all of whom were popular members and will be sadly missed.

Before dealing with the election of new officers, President Jack reminded all present that OTVA membership must decline with the passage of time and after a lengthy discussion a motion was tabled that full membership be lowered to 20 years service and associate membership be 15 years.

As he vacated the Chair, President Jack McGrory thanked his team for all their assistance during his term of office and then handed over the reins to our new President, George Magnus, a very popular choice who is well known to the Melbourne and Sydney staffs of AWA, OTC and C&W.

At this time all Veterans around Australia would know that Charles Carthew has been on the sick list for some time and has now found it necessary to relinquish his secretaryship after 27 years. Guye Russell, who has been helping Charles over the past few months, is now the Victorian Secretary, and all present wished him well in his new office.

Popular Melbourne Manager Jim Robinson agreed to fill the vacancy on the Committee. We hope his knowledge of the Commission's activities will be an added advantage to OTVA Victoria.

A very good ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING closed with our new President George inciting all present to partake of the hospitality of OTVA (Vic).

GUYE RUSSELL  
4 Pareora Avenue,  
East Brunswick. 3057.

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#### VALE

RON G. TAYLOR died 27th April 1984. He joined the Marconi Marine Service in 1936 and saw service in many parts of the world before eventually coming to Australia to join AWA Marine Service.

Later he was to transfer to the Beam Wireless Service, Melbourne.

He retired from OTC in 1968. A conscientious operator and a good workmate - sadly missed.

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### A Surprise Visit

"Due to a serious illness it was necessary that our Foundation Secretary, Charles Carthew relinquish the Secretaryship of the Victorian Branch of OTVA, a position he had held for 27 years.

At our last Annual Meeting it was decided to honour Charles with a Life Governor's Certificate as a memento of his 27 years of service and guidance to OTVA(Vic).

On Tuesday, 14th August, seven Veterans representing C&W, AWA and OTC paid Charles and Vi an unexpected visit.

Our President George Magnus made the presentation with all the dignity and accord that the occasion warranted. Charles, although overcome by the surprise visit and presentation, responded suitably and thanked the Association for such a beautiful certificate.

Vi was equally surprised when President George presented her with an attractive arrangement of flowers.

The afternoon concluded with a chat over afternoon tea - enjoyed by all."

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### "- AND THE BEST PLACE FOR IT, TOO."

By CLIFF BIRKS.

Cliff Birks, our oldest Veteran, who will be 95 next birthday has submitted the following contribution.

" In the year 1906 the Eastern Extension Australasia and China Telegraph Company, (commonly known as the Cable Co.), decided to train four young teenagers as future operators.

The four who answered the call were Messrs. Douglas, Longson, Rigby and Birks.

A "practice room" suitably equipped with siphon recorder, Cable operating key (which had two levers, one for dot and the other for dash), a plentiful supply of message pads (for writing off) were supplied.

The four young hopefuls got going with such enthusiasm they must have used nearly as much stationery as the operating room. This apparently so worried the Assistant Superintendent (Mr. R. R. Black), that he issued the following notice:-

" Persons using this room are requested to economise with the stationery, i.e., use both sides of the paper, and for short messages half a sheet should be sufficient."

So far, so good, but at a later date this notice mysteriously disappeared.

It was eventually discovered attached to the door of the senior officers lavatory.

The perpetrator of this crime was never discovered, but in all fairness I must say that it was not A. C. BIRKS.

P.S. Eventually all four trainees were engaged by the Cable Co."

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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Once again we are indebted to a number of our Veterans for their contributions to NEWSLETTER. I wish to encourage more contributions for publication. All items are fast becoming history now. Once we have disappeared from the planet who will tell the tale?

Our thanks go to:

Charles Christiansen (Re J. B. Lennon)	Bill Craig
Phil Chapman	Cliff Birks
"Henk" Henkel	Ellis Smellie
"Ponto"	Al Brunsden
Greg Harris	J. F. Moynihan
Brax Horrocks	

I still have some material on hand for future publication, but I would appreciate more.

ANDO.

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#### BITS 'N PIECES - HERE & THERE - ROUND AND ABOUT

TONY EBERT is a proud grandfather for the first time. 'Tis a bouncing baby boy born on 9th May 1984. Congratulations, Tony. After all you helped lay the foundation. By the way did you hear about the Irish grandfather who had a vasectomy so that he couldn't have any more grandchildren?

JOCK COWIE bundied in to Alan Arndt. Appears he had to come up to the Big Smoke for a medical check on his goitre problem, for which, we are glad to report, he has received a medical clearance.  
After reading "The Tabar Island Story - A Run-down" in the April NEWSLETTER he is wondering if anyone can say if Coast-watcher Col. Page was related to an Administrator of the Territory, a Mr. Page, who, like C.L. Page, was beheaded by the Japanese on Nago Island. Anyone know?

ALEX CILIA who will be well-known to our S.O.R. people, has been released from hospital last July, and now is recovering from a heart by-pass operation. It goes without saying that we all wish him a quick recovery.

VALDA BUDD

S.O.R. staffers, particularly those who served in the Beam Wireless section, 47 York Street, will remember the beautiful and gentle Valda who was Mark Mortimer's secretary in York Street, and later served in the Managerial/Secretarial section in Spring Street. The Geriatric Intelligence Service tracked her down and can report that Val is happily married and living in Melbourne.

Val left OTC in 1957 and joined the CSIRO until 1961 when, together with Claire Brophy (who used to be a cashier in OTC), and another lass she went to Europe on a working holiday. They bought a car in London and after working there for nine weeks set off for the Grand Tour, more or less.

Returning to Australia Val worked for a Sydney firm which transferred her back to London in 1970 for two years, unfortunately cut short by family matters at home. In 1973 she went to Melbourne where she met her future husband, Ron, and was married in 1976. Their honeymoon was another working holiday, taking in South Africa, the UK and Canada.

Some time later they took over a small but ailing company and between them have built it into a thriving business. Val still works three days a week for a Managing Director of a group of Melbourne companies just to keep her hand in. Everyone who knows Val will be happy for her.

(Incidentally, Val was one of the fastest blushers in the East. With some of the characters in the York Street office it's a wonder that she didn't have a permanently rubicund complexion. Ed.)

BUT ON A SADDER NOTE -

MRS. SUE HOUSLEY passed away on 14th April this year and was buried next to her husband, TREVOR, in Kew Cemetery on 18th April. Sue was 71 years old and it seems hard to believe that Trevor preceded her 15 years ago.

AMBROSE LINELEY (JIM) DONNELLY died on 4th May 1984. Jim joined OTCA after transferring from the PMG's Dept. in March 1947 where he worked as a clerk in the Personnel and Administration areas until 1966, when he became our Staff Officer until 1968. From then until he retired in 1973 he was our Staff and Industrial Officer.

Our condolences go to both families.

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THE PHANTOM FINGER STRIKES AGAIN

By ANDO.

John Lee's article, "THE PHANTOM FINGER" (P. 38, April issue "NEWSLETTER"), was instrumental in jogging my memory-bank re the early days of the International Telex Service located on the ground floor of the old Spring Street office, Sydney.

INTLX was in its youth. The channels being used were radio channels and therefore subject to the vagaries of sunspot activity, particularly those to London. With the approach of the summer months you could bet your boots that the channels to London would ZFO (fade out) around 4pm and would not be commercial again until approximately 6pm.

When this happened there was nothing else to do but put each booking on a RAP BASIS, that is, "I will recall you", when contact was re-established. Where possible we would try to forestall the obvious question, "How long will it be?", by advising the customer that we did not anticipate regaining communication until around 6pm, and then quote the delay beyond that time, depending on the number of bookings ahead of his. We tried to work on a "first come - first served" basis.

The moment details of the call had been booked I would go through my little act in rattling off a standard message,

"SORRY, WE HAVE LOST CONTACT WITH LONDON AND DO NOT ANTICIPATE CONTACT BEING RESTORED BEFORE 6PM. YOUR DELAY TIME BEYOND 6PM IS ESTIMATED AT ABOUT 30 MINUTES." I WILL RAP YOU SOONEST."

It got so that one could transmit the standard message with Auto-speed transmission.

Well, one night, just like any other night, I was rattling off the message when, my horrified eyes revealed that the Phantom Finger had inadvertently added an E to the RAP.

They say that in one split second the entire life of a drowning man flashes before his eyes.

It's true.

In that split second I visualised the Public Complaint being received by the Traffic Manager; of being frog-marched between two lines of jeering operators; of being stripped of my rubber stamp; of the Traffic Superintendent breaking my Government issue Biro across his knee and hurling the pieces down at my feet in a final gesture of contempt; of being evicted from the Operating Room never to know the feel of a Morse key again.

A correction ... I must make a correction ... but it is too late.

Already a reply is coming back from the other end. Slowly, almost with sexy connotations, the letters take form on the telex roll

H O W   D E L I G H T F U L ....

My shocked brain is brought to full alert. My eyes scan the booking docket ... my heart gives a joyous leap ... I know the firm ... I know the operator ... it's not a sheila ... it's a bloke ... what's more I know him well ... I'm saved.

Of course, that was over thirty years ago ... what with the change in sexual standards a remark like that from a bloke could send me scurrying for home and safety with many a backward glance ... if you know what I mean.

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THIS IS YOUR LIFE - THE CONTINUING STORY OF ELLIS SMELLIE

One Saturday night, a station owner from forty miles out lamented not being met. Ellis told him to come up to the station on Sunday morning to get through to his home station via the "galah session" on Sunday mornings. Induction from one line to another would carry a telephone conversation and everybody came in on it. At long last a reply came back saying they were coming in for him. He was delighted, saying it would save him twenty pounds. He then gave Ellis a tip of sixpence which Ellis politely declined.

The wheat season was longer at Maryborough than at Wycheproof and Ellis went there to help. On his way he was given a letter to the station master at Maryborough by a Mr. Jebb of Inglewood. At Maryborough his main work was the telegraph and assisting the booking clerk, Mr. Harrison. He was also in demand by the Good's clerk, the Head Porter, the Extract clerk and the Station Master for the writing of all his letters etc. One very important thing for Ellis was for a man named Fred Black to join the railways as a telegraph operator in the main operating room at Spencer Street station. Fred Black's morse was astoundingly easy to read. This was because as a soldier at Queenscliffe he had used a heliograph to pass messages by morse code to the ships. The gap on the key of the heliograph was about six times greater than the gap on the key used in the railways. The space between the dots and the space between the dashes were longer than any other operators. We will meet Fred Black later in Ballarat.

The Maryborough railway station was to be at Ballarat East. A change in government brought the member for Maryborough in as The Minister for Railways. He enhanced Maryborough with this outstanding edifice. It had a dome and a flagpole. One windy evening the Head Porter could not take his flag down because it had been wrapped around the dome full length. All hands were gazing upwards from the ground puzzled as to what to do. Now Ellis had climbed trees in "the best park in Victoria" which was on the banks of the Loddon river right near his home. He stole quietly up the stairs out onto the dome with his feet on the gutter and his body lying against the slats. Inch by inch he went around until he reached the end of the flag. Then he rolled the flag up as he went. After he had rolled up about half the flag, a roar came from the ground, "come down off there, let go the flag and come down at once". But Ellis calmly continued on till he had brought the flag down, ignoring the hand of the Head Porter who had come up to stop him from falling. Ellis was quite amused when he came down to see the pallid faces of all the station staff who had watched the act.

Ellis boarded with a Porter and his wife. Also there was an old maid who sometimes stopped the clock before she went to bed. "The poor little thing ticking away all night and no-one here". She was a damned old nuisance!

One evening the fire bell rang. Ellis set off towards the town at top speed. When he came back the fire in the house next door had been put out.

On the finish of the busy wheat season, Mr. Taylor, the Station Master, dictated a letter for Ellis to write to the Staff Superintendent. It was to the effect that Ellis should be retained in the railways and tried out in a more responsible position, praising him very much. After that

letter was sent, Ellis then gave Mr. Taylor, the letter of introduction from Mr. Jebb. He was really upset that the letter had not been handed to him on first meeting. "I could have done so much for you", he lamented, "why did you not give it to me earlier?" Ellis replied, "I earned all those good things you said."

Ellis's next station was Wodonga where he sold tickets, handled parcels, cloakroom and had everything to do with all the livestock which came from NSW into Victoria. He allotted trucks to stock agents who detrained horses, sheep and cattle at Wodonga for a spell and reloaded them onto the wider gauge Victorian trucks. On one occasion, a half drunken, very large man, came in and demanded a large horse truck to be attached to an express train. Ellis told him that all the trucks were booked out. "Reallot one to me", he ordered. "I am the Commissioner of Police and have bought police horses". Ellis stood his ground. "No," he said. "You must arrange that with one of the stock agents. I will not do it". He stormed around the place until one of the agents offered to give him a truck. The man Ellis took the place of at Wodonga was Stan Goble, a station master's son, a brilliant telegraphist and later a famous aviator. At sixteen, Ellis was the youngest ever, supernumerary acting clerk, on two shillings a day and one shilling a day living away allowance. He also paid guards, engine drivers, shunters, etc. their wages and was in full charge of the station when alone. Once, when Ellis was standing on the platform, he watched on the rails in front of him, a shunter step between two express carriages to couple them up. He had forgotten that the carriages had steel buffers right across them and nowhere for him to stand. He watched the agony on the face of the shunter, as those buffers crushed him. To his embarrassment, Ellis roared out laughing, but also it took him only ten minutes with the aid of the engine driver and guard to have that man on his way to the Albury Hospital. He died on the journey.

When Stan Goble left, he had to make up money owing on parcels. Jim Wraith, an 18 year old college graduate, and Ellis decided no credit would be given. Seeing a large important looking man coming out of the parcels room with a parcel under his arm, Ellis asked him, "please give that to me". The man refused, saying he was the Manager of Dalgettys and he would pay later, but finally he gave the parcel back. About three months later, Mr. Shields excitedly told Ellis he had "done it". He had persuaded the Directors to take Ellis on Dalgetty's staff ignoring that he had left school at 12 years and was not a college boy. When Ellis refused to join Dalgettys, Mr. Shields pointed out that it would make a fool of him, "but you should have asked me first", was the only answer he got. Even though Mr. Shields said he was not only a Manager, but was also a Director of the company and would look after him. That finished it because Ellis would never be patronised.

The railways decided to appoint six boys as telegraph operators on the permanent staff. Ellis applied and got the job. It helped that one of the three men who interviewed him was the man who had handled all the correspondence regarding stock movement on the railways and knew Ellis's work quite well.

The assistant station master, Binns, had a habit of greeting people and walking them up in front of the bar of the refreshment room. It paid off. At no cost to him, he was never fully sober. He always wanted Jim or

Ellis to do his goods clerical work and this was not to their liking. About a year after Ellis had left Wodonga, he and Stan Goble came back to an enquiry. Binns had been demoted and was appealing. At the enquiry Ellis asked permission to put a question to Binns. It was "did I ever refuse to do anything you asked me to do?" Binns had a brilliant brain and his answer was a classic. It was, "well! I can't say you ever refused. But you did it in such a hang-dog, disagreeable and dirty sort of way, that I would much rather to do it myself, than ask you." Ellis roared out laughing, turned to the board and said, "I admit that." Binns won his appeal.

Mail from England was unloaded from the ship at Fremantle and carried by train to Sydney. It would pass through Wodonga on a Sunday at any time between 8 a.m. and midnight. So the clerk on duty had to go to the station every few hours to find out when it would come through. But the payment was fixed from the time the train left Chiltern till it arrived back from Albury. This amounted to four pence halfpenny about one sixth of Ellis's day's pay. Railway balances were made monthly. For the first month Ellis had not included the waybills from NSW towns, where the stock had left during the last three days of the month and arrived at Wodonga during the first three days of the next month. This caused his balance to be over 300 pounds short. When this was noticed, a detective was asked to keep his eye on Ellis and the district inspector came up. When the missing waybills were included, all was well.

Ellis was now on seven hours a day using the morse code in the Spencer Street operating room at Melbourne and thoroughly enjoying the work. The other five lads were mostly station masters' sons or the sons of post masters, but Ellis was the only one who had actually been paid for operating a telegraph line. He had had four years at it. This caused Mr. Doyle, the inspector, to try Ellis out on the fastest lines in the office. He passed the test and Doyle recommended to the commissioners that he be paid more than the others. This was refused. Doyle then sent Ellis to Ballarat, relieving. This caused a union row as no-one at Ballarat was under 168 pounds per year and Ellis was on 40 pounds per year. It finally came to, "was he competent?" and he went to Ballarat under a cloud. They tried to prove Ellis was incompetent, but that proved awkward to do. A colleague at Ballarat, Wally McCarter, told Ellis the Spencer Street men were bedevilling him. This woke Ellis up to the fact but they could not tell his "fist" from Wally's. So, he told them he was Wally and Ellis was another shift. The farce soon petered out and Ellis took it out on some of them by sending faster than they could receive especially to a man named Teddy Lucas. Ellis was glad at the extra money as relieving expenses were more than his salary. The four single men at Ballarat took Ellis to the same lodging house as they were at in order to make changes of shift easy, but they did their best to give him hell. The Leader of this was Fred Black. After about three weeks, when about 15 guests were at dinner, Fred Black told of his learning morse at the Queenscliffe fort. At Queenscliffe, he had for a couple of years, met and fell in love with, a girl named Snow, of Ballarat. In order to meet her again, he had joined the railways and asked for a transfer to Ballarat. He never got over being told by the Butler at the Snow home that Miss Snow was not at home. Fred spoke at length of being treated so badly by Harrison at Maryborough that he had decided to leave the railways. This he did not do because another man at Maryborough assisted him in every way and talked him out of it. On hearing this, Ellis said, "did he say tr 12" (which meant a train report), and then gave details of the form, a yellow form 4" X 8".

Also he assisted in other ways. On hearing this his girlfriend sitting next to him, said to Ellis, "how did you know that?" "Because I was that lad. It was I that stopped Fred Black resigning." "And he has been treating you so badly" said the girl. Fred Black stood up quickly, his chair fell over backwards and he left the table, and from then on, Fred Black was his best friend.

The others all followed his lead, and made the rest of his stay in Ballarat most enjoyable.

A proud moment for Ellis, was when his mother related to him what Mr. Harris had told her. Mr. Harris was a supervisor at Spencer Street, and a brother of a Mrs. Burge, their neighbour. It was that Ellis was the best lad that had ever been in the office.

For a while Ellis was at Princes Bridge Railway Station in a small operating room. It was for taking in telegrams from the public which took up very little time. There was both a sounder and a register. By careful examination of his sending on the tape of the register, Ellis found 11 blemishes. When he left Princes Bridge, he had reduced them to two. They were a short dash on the "T" and short dash on the "A", but they were hard to find. He also used a wide open key, hardly any spring tension and, above all, his thumb under the knob to lift the key. This was to imitate the excellent morse of Fred Black who had learnt on a heliograph. From then on he was told his morse was easy to read. His salary was 40 pounds, 50 pounds then 60 pounds per year.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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GONE FISHIN'

By AL BRUNSDEN  
Former Bell (Canada)  
Employee (Ret.)

Fishing stories always make good copy and I don't think this is any exception. From time to time our people receive information per correspondence from friends and acquaintances, as was the case with this article. It should bring tears to the eyes of any fisherman.

"I think it is about time I told you about the full story of my trip to Takis. Here it is.

Being a member of Canadian Executive Service Overseas attached to P&T, Rabaul, I was asked if I would like to go on a barge trip to Takis to deliver diesel generator fuel to one of our mountain-top sites. With the opportunity of a short one day sea voyage and a chance to do some fishing, reported to be the best in PNG I accepted immediately. (Mistake No. 1).

The barge was scheduled to leave at midnight and the arrangements were to have the drums of diesel, a 2,000 gallon water tank for the mountain top, plus an antennae and associated equipment loaded after lunch that same day. We were to meet at 11 p.m. that night on the wharf to get settled for our midnight departure. Besides the boat crew there was myself, one P&T foreman and four labourers.



I arrived at 11 pm with my fishing gear, food, etc., and besides the boat crew I was the only one there. At 11.30 pm the foreman arrived and wanted to know where everyone was. I then told him that the drums of fuel were loaded but there was no sign of the 2,000 gallon water tank, and no antennae. He then took off in search of everyone. At 11.50 pm his men arrived in a four-wheel drive truck that was also to go to transport the fuel to the mountain-top. They, in turn, wanted to take off in search of the foreman, but I convinced them to wait and shortly afterward the foreman showed up and we all started searching the wharf for the missing gear. We couldn't find it, so we loaded the truck and took off, making a late departure of 1.30 am.

After an hour at sea the excitement of leaving died down and I decided to get bedded down for a little sleep. As I had no air mattress or waterproof sleeping bag I had decided to bring along a folding "Chaise longue" and a blanket. (Mistake No. 2). I then laid myself down on the chair, which was situated near the rail, covered myself with my blanket and enjoyed the warm tropical breezes.

As we were now entering open seas the water began to rise and, being a flat-bottomed boat, we began to rock a little, and the sea began splashing over the side. I quickly moved inboard and positioned myself against the wheelhouse. Then the rain came, and being a well-used boat the roof was not as good as it once was, and all I could do was lie there under a wet blanket and hope for the rain to stop.

At daylight, about 5 am, the rain stopped and without any sleep I decided to get up and watch the scenery and wait for the sunrise. Never having been on a voyage like this I hadn't thought of bringing along a change of clothes. (Mistake No. 3).

As it was not getting lighter, off in the distance we could see a small coastal freighter with a large water tank on the cabin roof. We laughingly joked that there was our missing 2,000 gallon tank.

The sea was now nice and calm and the warm sun had dried out my clothes. From then on until we landed at Takis it turned out to be a pleasant trip. We landed about 9.30 that morning.

We could not hold the barge at the end of the wharf due to the tide, so being a shallow draft we beached it and dropped down the front ramp onto the shore. The men put down planks to drive the four-wheel drive off first, but the truck missed the planks, the back bumper caught on the ramp with the rear wheels about one foot off the ground. After a lot of confusion and some beetle nut chewing the labourers lifted the truck up and placed the planks under the wheels. The foreman asked me if I wanted to drive with him and another man to the mountain-top to take food to the two men staying on the mountain-top, and also to bring back the other truck from there to start transporting the drums of fuel which were now being unloaded from the barge. This sounded like a good idea, as I could then come back and do some serious fishing from the end of the wharf. (Mistake No. 4).

On our way up the mountain we seemed to be getting stuck a lot, and I looked out the window to see if all 4 wheels were spinning. We got out and looked under and believe it or not, the drive shaft from the gear box was missing to the front wheels. We found out later the mechanic had taken

it off to put on another truck and had not told any one about it. We travelled on a little further and became hopelessly stuck.

After more bettle nut chewing the foreman asked me if I would mind walking to the mountain-top (which was not very far, by his standards) and bring back the other truck with the 2 men there with shovels, while he and the other man stayed there to try to free this truck. This seemed like the only thing to do so I agreed (Mistake No. 5). I then asked for the key to the other truck and a horrified look came on his face as he told me he had left it back in Rabaul.

Feeling dejected I started walking and the ruts in the trail were filled with mud and I began falling a lot. I was soon sweating profusely in the humid jungle. At one point when I fell I laid in the cool mud to rest a while but this was short lived as just behind me a large snake was crossing my path and it seemed about as big around as a litre paint container. I did not see how long it was as I started off on a dead run. I lost track of time and I honestly thought I would die before I reached the top. After reaching the top I washed, and had a drink of water. So I was able to return down the mountain with the two men with their shovels.

On the way down near the stranded truck we heard crashing noises in the jungle, and by this time my mind was imagining all sorts of things. All I could think of was Japanese soldiers left over from WW2, armed with rifles and swords. It turned out it was the two men from the stranded truck with bush knives taking a short cut up the mountain. They asked if I would turn around and go up the mountain and help them push start the other truck to get it started as being a deisel it needed no ignition key. I told them to go to hell as I was going back to the stuck truck and sit in the cab and rest. (See, No mistake this time).

Before I got back to the truck it started to rain and as you know when it rains in the tropics the rain comes down like a solid wall of water. As I reached the truck I could not open the door as it was locked and I can never understand why they locked the door and took the key with them. I decided to crawl under the truck for a little protection but soon the mud and water was flowing about six inches deep. If I was going to drown I was going to do it in clean water so I got out and stood in the rain. As I looked skyward at the solid wall of water coming down I prayed aloud "What have I done to deserve all this".

After a couple of hours wait I became quite chilled and I was thinking of walking back to the boat when I heard an engine noise and about 30 feet away there was the other truck coming back. Just about then I broke down and cried with happiness.

I stayed in the truck while the 4 of them got it unstuck but why I stayed in the truck going backwards I will never know, as there was no place to turn around. On the way down the foreman wanted to know if I wanted to stop and pick pineapples growing alongside the trail but my reply was to keep this bloody thing going and do not stop till we get to the boat. After many hair raising experiences we arrived back at the boat and loaded both vehicles for the return trip. The Captain informed me he had to make a decision whether to stay all night or take off as he had to clear the coral reef by 5.30 as it was now 5.20. He then said there was something on the

wharf for me, and there sure enough was our 2,000 gallon water tank. It turned out it was the one on the small coastal freighter and the men back in Rabaul had put it on the wrong boat. I then had all my wet clothes off and wrapped myself in the blanket and settled down to a nice moonlight trip back to Rabaul, but I was just too exhausted to sleep.

We arrived back at midnight and the foreman drove me home and I entered the house and quickly threw my unused fishing gear in the corner. My wife then said "Where is all the fish?" My reply was to shut up and pour me the rest of our Canadian whiskey as I needed a good drink.

After things quietened down a bit in the office, the Radio Supervisor came to me asking if I wanted to go with him on a helicopter chartered to go to Takis to transport the drums of diesel and a 2,000 gallon water tank from the wharf to the mountain-top. I declined, with thanks, saying there was too much for me to do at the office and then I went Home to a good afternoon's sleep. (See, once again no mistakes).

As you can imagine it was quite a harrowing experience but when I returned to Canada, and sit with my fishing pole in my hand, I will think about all the experiences I have had in Papua New Guinea, but you can rest assured that this one will be foremost in my mind.

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A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

FOREWORD

By J. F. MOYNIHAN  
(PERTH W.A.)

In April 1979, Western Australia's sesquicentennial year, the Institution of Engineers Australia held their Diamond Jubilee Conference in Perth. In association with that Conference an historical photographic display featuring the major disciplines of engineering was mounted at Perth Concert Hall. I completed the first issue of this list at that time as an aid to putting together the "Communications" photo display.

Since then I have updated the list at various times, also adding information about the past as it became known to me. It is my intention to go on updating/adding in the future.

This issue (issue 4) is the first to be distributed. I would welcome any comment at one of the following:

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- 1869 Perth-Fremantle telegraph opened by the Western Australian Telegraph (WAT) Company (21.6.1869).
- 1870 WA's Legislative Council agrees to proposal by private individuals to expand telegraph system. Subsequently the Electro-Magnetic Telegraph (EMT) Company issue a prospectus.
- 1871 . February: EMT Coy buy out WAT Coy's only line is Perth-Fremantle.
- . March: Post Office Department takes over operation of telegraph system and is retitled Post & Telegraph (P&T) Department. EMT Coy still owned existing lines and equipment and built new lines.
- 1873 WA Government buy out EMT Coy, so P&T Department become sole owners and operators of WA's telegraph system (1.1.1873).
- 1877 Intercolonial Telegraph opened via Eucla and Albany giving access to other Australian colonies and the rest of the world (8.12.1877).
- 1878 Successful trial of telephone working over the line between Perth and Fremantle Telegraph Offices (March 1878). This is 2 years after Bell invented the telephone.
- 1887 First telephone exchange opened in Wellington Street, Perth (1.12.1887). Fremantle exchange opened early 1888 (1.2.1888).
- 1889 Submarine telegraph cable from Java landed at Broome giving Western Australia direct international link (9.4.1889).
- 1893 Telegraph line reaches Wyndham in the far north of WA (17.1.1893).
- 1896 A second telegraph wire is erected between WA and South Australia. This runs via Eucla and Norseman to terminate at Coolgardie. (A third wire follows this same route in 1905).
- 1899 Wireless experiments carried out by Post and Telegraph Department at Perth. Signals cover 1.2 kilometres (Oct. 1899).
- 1901 WA's Post & Telegraph Department ceases operation as such and becomes part of the newly formed Postmaster-General's Department of the Commonwealth of Australia (1.3.1901). 162 telegraph stations and 11 telephone exchanges are handed over to the Commonwealth.
- 1901 A cable from Africa, via Cocos Island, is landed at Cottesloe near Fremantle by the Eastern Extension Coy (1.11.1901). The cable was extended from Cottesloe to Adelaide a few months later (1.3.1902). This linked Australia into the "Red Chain" of submarine telegraph cables around the British Empire.
- 1912 Coastal radio station opened at Applecross to serve shipping. Officially opened for business on 30.9.1912 although the installation had not been formally accepted by the Commonwealth Government.

- 1913-14 Coastal radio stations opened at Wyndham, Broome, Roebourne, Geraldton and Esperance.
- 1914 Due mainly to lack of business the Broome-Java telegraph cable service is discontinued (31.3.1914).
- 1914 WA's first automatic telephone exchange, Central Exchange, opened in Murray Street, Perth (26.9.1914).
- 1924 First radio broadcast in WA made from Station 6WF (4.6.1924), then owned privately by Westralian Farmers Ltd (hence the WF).
- 1926 Telegraph machines introduced sounding the distant death knell of the Morse Key. First installation is Perth-Kalgoorlie (July 1926) followed by Perth-Fremantle (Dec 1926).
- 1926 The Eastern Extension Coy land a second submarine telegraph cable from Cocos Island at Cottesloa (16.3.1926). This is a high speed cable and cannot be used to its full extent until PMG erect new east-west wires in 1927.
- 1926 The terminal of Eastern Extension Coy's cables is moved from Perth city to a new cable station at Cottesloe beach.
- 1927 The first electronic apparatus is introduced into WA's telephone network. This is a voice frequency repeater at Merredin whose prime purpose was to serve calls on the Perth-Kalgoorlie telephone trunk line (19.1.1927).
- 1927 Three new PMG telegraph wires opened along the transcontinental railway route. These replace three wires on the original east-west telegraph route via Eucla (20.3.1927).
- 1928 The era of long distance trunk calls within WA heralded with the introduction of a single circuit open wire Carrier Telephone System, Perth-Geraldton (25.10.1928).
- 1929 PMG Department take over technical side of Radio Station 6WF (1.9.1929). Programmes are supplied under contract by the Australian Broadcasting Company.
- 1930 First East-West telephone conversation from Perth (18.12.1930).
- 1930 First Carrier Telegraph System placed in service in WA. This is from Perth to Adelaide (Dec. 1930).
- 1932 Australian Broadcasting Commission is formed and takes over non-technical side of National Broadcasting Stations (1.7.1932).
- 1932 6WF radio transmitter moved to present site at Hamersley (14.12.1932).
- 1933 First radio programme relay link established between Adelaide and Perth. This works in one directly one, east-west (12.6.1933).

- 1935 Rural automatic exchanges introduced, initially at Brunswick Junction (17.7.1935), Dowerin (6.8.1935) and Broomehill (28.8.1935).
- 1935-36 The Royal Flying Doctor Service (then known as Australian Aerial Medical Service) open radio base stations at Port Hedland (30.10.1935) and Wyndham (2.9.1936). These work to outstations fitted with pedal wireless. Then as now the Kimberleys were run by the Victorian Section of the Service.
- 1936 Of all the telephone exchanges in Australia which had existed at Federation (1901), Rottnest Island is the last to be taken over by the PMG Department (1.4.1936).
- 1936-37 The first three-circuit open wire Carrier Telephone System is opened between Perth and Kalgoorlie (Dec. 1936). This is followed by Perth-Geraldton (1.3.1937).
- 1937 Western Australians send most telegrams per head of population in the world.
- 1942 Cable and Wireless Ltd. take over the Cottesloe cable station from the Eastern Extension Coy.
- 1942 Reversible radio program relay link established with Eastern States. (One way link of 1933 is scrapped). Radio programmes may be relayed in either direction, but only in one direction at a time (October 1942).
- 1946-47 The Overseas Telecommunications Commission, Australia (OTC) is formed (1946) and begins operations on 1.2.1947. OTC take over Australia's coastal radio and international telecommunications. In WA this includes Applecross radio station and the Cottesloe cable station.
- 1947 Radio programme carrier relay link established with Eastern States. When used together with apparatus installed in 1942, this allows programmes to be relayed in both directions at once for the first time (1.7.1947).
- 1950 Picturegram service established between Perth and other capital cities (29.5.1950).
- 1953 Perth becomes the first capital city in Australia with an all automatic telephone system. This happened when City Beach Exchange was automated (30.9.1953).
- 1954 The first two twelve-circuit open wire Carrier Telephone Systems are completed about the same time (Feb. 1954). These are Perth-Kalgoorlie and Kalgoorlie-Port Augusta. Initially, six circuits are through connected Perth-Kalgoorlie-Port Augusta, etc. The second six were initially used Perth-Kalgoorlie only, but they were converted to Eastern States circuits mid-1955.

- 1958      Multimetering is introduced on calls from Rockingham, Safety Bay and Medina to Perth metropolitan telephone subscribers. This is a forerunner of STD.
- 1959      First television station opened, TVW 7 (17.10.1959) followed by ABW 2 (7.5.1960), and STW 9 (12.9.1965).
- 1959      Perth-Derby radio telephone system opened. It is now possible to talk north of Carnarvon and Meekatharra (27.10.1959).
- 1959      A start is made on rebuilding the open wire telegraph route to the Pilbara. Ultimately this brings open wire telephony to the Pilbara (1960-61) and Kimberleys (1965-68).
- 1959      TRESS - short for Teleprinter Reperforator Switching System - begins mechanisation of the public telegraph service. With this system telegrams are transmitted between Post and Telegraph Offices by automatic means.
- 1960      Extended Local Service Area (ELSA) is introduced throughout Australia (1.5.1960). This increases the distance over which a local telephone call can be made for a unit fee.
- 1963      The last land line Morse Code circuit in Australia is replaced by machine telegraphs at Wyndham and Halls Creek (May 1963).
- 1963      The first ARF type crossbar automatic telephone exchange opened at Scarborough (7.11.1963). This foreshadowed the era of STD, ISD, pushbutton dialling and other improved services.
- 1965      WA's first coaxial cable system is completed between Perth and Bunbury.
- 1966      Subscriber Trunk Dialling (STD) introduced within the State (10.10.1966).
- 1966      Automatic telex is introduced simultaneously in all States of Australia (26.6.1966).
- 1966      With the advent of other international communication systems the OTC cable station at Cottesloe is closed (31.7.1966).
- 1966      OTC satellite earth station opened at Carnarvon.
- 1967      OTC open radio installation at Gnangara (1967). Initially, it only served the NASA APOLLO space flights but later it took over coastal radio from Applecross and other functions.
- 1968      Open wire telephone circuits reach Wyndham in the northern extreme of WA (5.2.1968).
- 1968      OTC close Applecross coastal radio station (1.7.1968).
- 1969      First live out-of-State television broadcast seen by Western Australians when man first lands on moon (21.7.1969). Picture is taken from a satellite by OTC's Carnarvon earth station and fed to Perth on the PMG's just completed Perth-Carnarvon coaxial cable.

- 1969 Satellite circuits are introduced for telephone traffic between WA and Eastern States. This is to relieve pressure of traffic until the E-W microwave system is placed in service. It is the first time in the free world that satellite circuits are used for intracontinental telephone circuits (20.11.1969).
- 1970 The 2300 kilometre East-West microwave trunk system brought into service enabling STD to other States and nation-wide live TV programme relays (9.7.1970).
- 1971 The coaxial cable reaches Port Hedland bringing STD and later, TV, to the Pilbara.
- 1975 Colour television introduced throughout Australia (1.3.1975).
- 1975 The Postmaster General's Department ceases to exist and is replaced by Telecom Australia and Australia Post (1.7.1975).
- 1976 Radio Australia is re-located from Darwin to Carnarvon (7.3.1976).
- 1976 International Subscriber Dialling (ISD) introduced to Perth area (1.4.1976).
- 1976 Solar power is first used by Telecom in WA. This powers minor open wire carrier telephone repeaters at Roy Hill and Kumarina in the Pilbara (April 1976).
- 1977 The University of WA open the State's first FM (frequency modulated) radio station, 6UJS (1.4.1977). This is also WA's first stereo radio station.
- 1977 Telefinder service opened at Perth (19.12.1977).
- 1978 Wellington telecommunications building is opened in Perth. It will provide WA's major communications requirements well into the 21st century.
- 1979 First ARE-11 type (processor controlled) crossbar local exchange commissioned at Bulwer.
- 1980 WA's first Stored Programme Controlled (SPC) 10C trunk exchange is placed in service at Wellington (6.8.1980).
- 1980 WA and Australia's first Remote Area TV stations fed by satellite signal are opened at Exmouth, Onslow and Broome (28.9.1980).
- 1982 Port Hedland-Derby Section of Kimberley Microwave System opened (4.11.1982). This brings STD and other modern facilities to the West Kimberleys and is the world's longest solar power microwave system.

END