

Morsecodians - Keeping Morsecode Alive

NEXT MEETING

10am Monday 26th FEBRUARY 2001 HYDE PARK HOTEL

all welcome.



We remember.....

Colin Leslie Smith

Inaugural President 1996-2001 Passed away 11th January 2001. An untiring President, committed and dedicated to the aims of the Fraternity, an outstanding stalwart of the club motto "Keeping Morsecode alive".

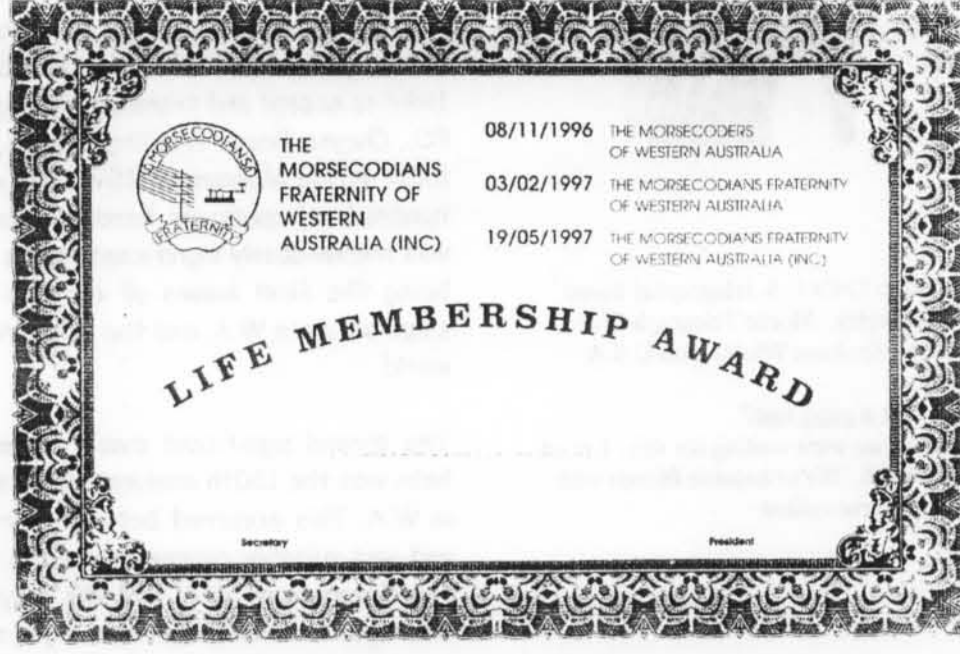
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We remember.....

Frank Fletcher

Passed away 16th October 2000. A fixer in the PMG, showed miraculous power to solve problems others would have given up on. Nothing was too difficult to achieve and no effort was too much for Frank. He will be greatly missed in the Fraternity for his organisational skills.

LIFE MEMBERSHIPS AWARDED



On 16th October 2000, we conferred life memberships on the following members:

COLIN SMITH: Our first President.

Amongst many other attributes, nominated for possessing desirable qualities of honesty of purpose, dedication in promoting interest in our craft of telegraphy, fairness and just in all dealings, not being a "slacker" and overall a "true blue operator" whose recent challenge had been to learn American Morse.

BARRIE FIELD: Our Technical Officer.

Without Barrie's expertise and the many hours spent creating our dial-up sets, we would be a Morsecodian Fraternity without morse. Nominated for distinctions such as exemplary conduct way beyond the call of duty, not only the hours he has put in but his willingness to help out.

RICARDO CRAMERI: Our first Secretary/Treasurer.

An excellent P.R. man, nominated for Ric's enthusiasm and eagerness especially being instrumental in starting the ball rolling in organising the inaugural meeting on 8th November 1996 culminating in the Morsecoders of W.A., later the Morsecodian Fraternity of W.A. Although along the way was hit by a debilitating illness, his approach is always positive and he has without exception been able to make the best of things.

COL'S INVOLVEMENT IN MORSECODIANS' FRATERNITY

Colin was involved in preliminary discussions and arrangements with a handful of other former morse men, which culminated in an inaugural meeting being held on 8th November 1996 to officially form a club. At that time there were only five "dial-up" morse sets in W.A. The formation took place as hoped, with 13 inaugural members and Colin being elected as president, a position he was admirably filled until now.

The initial club steadily evolved, under Colin's leadership, to become known as "The Morsecodians Fraternity of Western Australia (Inc)" from May 1997, at which time membership had already grown to 87 and there were a dozen or more morse sets in operation. Today's membership is 142. 36 members operate their own dial-up morse sets from home. The Fraternity also has sets installed at Wireless Hill Telecommunications Museum and at the Armadale Outpost Heritage Centre, which are operated by Morsecodians on a weekly basis.

Colin presided over two major commemorations of morse code in WA. The first of these was the 120th anniversary of the connection of Albany to Eucla by morse in 1877, with members travelling to Albany in November 1997 to accept and transmit messages by morse code between Albany old PO., Cheyne Beach Whaling Station, Wireless Hill in Applecross and Eden Killer Whale Museum in NSW. The weekend event was well supported and hundreds of messages handled. The original event being commemorated was tremendously significant to the people of the colony of W.A. in 1877, being the first means of communication faster than horses or sailing ships between W.A. and the other Australian colonies and the rest of the world.

The second significant event commemorated during Colin's time at the helm was the 130th anniversary of the first message sent by morse code in W.A. This occurred between Perth and Fremantle on 21st June 1869 and was suitably commemorated in June 1999 with the participation of the Governor of W.A. and the Mayor of Fremantle. Again, hundreds of messages were handled from eager members of the public, when the Fraternity set up shop in public areas of the Perth GPO and Fremantle Post Office.

Despite failing health during the past two years and more, Colin's contribution to his beloved morse club continued unabated. As editor of the "Morsecodian Messenger", distributed widely in W.A. and selectively Australia-wide, Colin has set a standard which will be difficult for his successor to emulate.

TELEGRAPH TRIVIA

The electro-magnet relay used on the first morse line erected in 1844 between Baltimore and Washington weighed 150 lbs., whereas the relays used on PMG morse simplex lines 100 years later weighed less than 2-1/2 lbs. each.

The Morsecodians Fraternity of Western Australia (Inc.) President: Colin Smith Secretary/Treas: Terry Keays 39 Cumberland Way BASSENDEAN WA 6054 ☎ 08 9279 4696

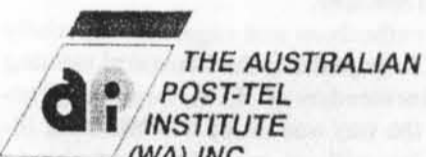


Email from Col's U.S. telegrapher friend Charles Dayley, Morse Telegraph Club president, Spokane Washington U.S.A. chapter: Title "Lost a good man".

Of course we were waiting for this. Let us stay in touch. We've become friends with the WA Morsecodians.

PMG career of the late Frank Fletcher

At aged 15, Easter 1936, joined PMG Dept. At 16, transferred to Kalgoorlie as postman. Spent W.W.II in the RAAF and returning to the Post Office afterwards, and through the levels of PMG to become Postmaster 1953 Port Hedland, then Pemberton, 1960 to NSW, 1963 Parkes, 1965 Sutherland, 1966 Kalgoorlie, 1976 Fremantle. Frank retired on 11th November 1980.



RETIREES BUS EXCURSION

WEDNESDAY 28th MARCH 2001

Ahoy fellow retirees!

March 2000 foray to Halls Head for lunch with our sou'west colleagues was a memorable day with 63 folk turning up.

It's on again!

Bus leaves 8.30 am from bus bay William Street (near Hay St Mall) Return by 5 pm

We meet our other colleagues at the Halls Head Tavern Mandurah for a sumptuous meal as previously experienced.

Morsecodians and postmasters particularly welcome.

If not going by own transport, please join us on bus by sending a \$25 cheque to:

Ric Crameri Unit 21-59 Wasley St North Perth WA 6006 Phone 08 9328 6123

Email ricardo1@iinet.net.au

Our colleagues from the sou'west will join with us to ensure another enjoyable re-union.

Refreshments available on bus, we will travel via Canning Highway & Fremantle you can be picked up and dropped off en route.

SPECIAL FEDERATION TELEGRAPH EVENT PLANNED FOR 2001. CELEBRATION OF 100 YEARS OF COMMUNICATION.

NSW asked WA to participate in this special Federation commemorative telegraph linkup as this state was the last jigsaw piece to slot into place when voters finally agreed to join a union of states in 1900 via a referendum only after Queen Victoria gave her royal assent to a changed constitution.

Every decade since 1901 when we had already 47 years of morse code telegraphy, has a story to tell in the progressive development of this country's telecommunications. At the outset, a key, relay and inking register were in use, the ink-wheel revolving in a small well of ink, the wheel registering the dots and dashes on a moving paper strip. Later on it was found that the movements of the register armature could be readily interpreted as audible dots and dashes, thus the morse sounder was evolved. Telex, Tress and computer-based telegram systems all followed consistent with rapidly changing technological advances.

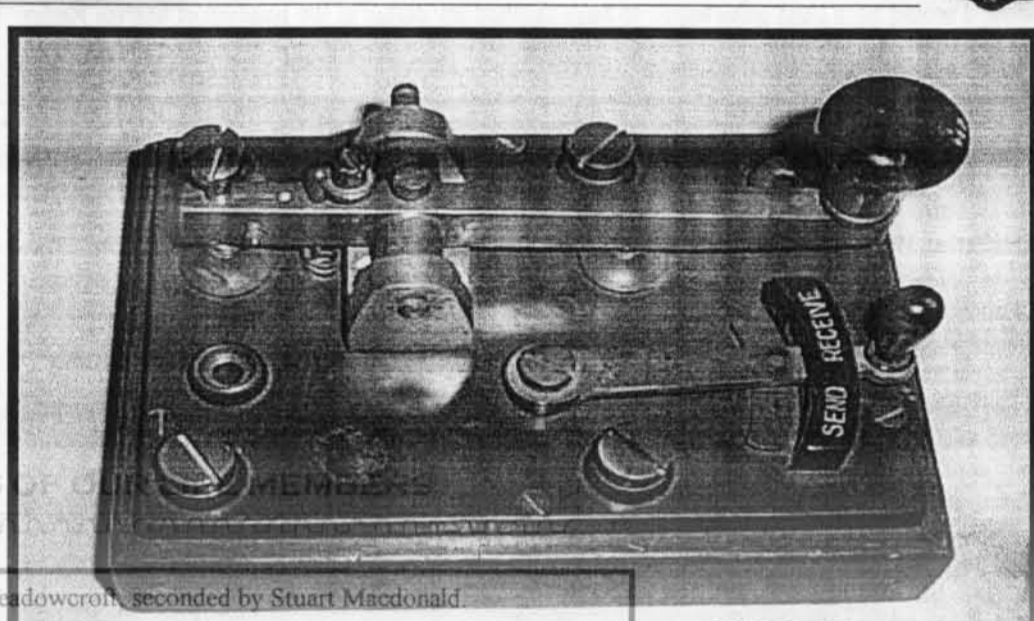
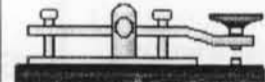
The event will signify 100 years of communication with morse and teleprinter circuits. Monday-Saturday inclusive May 7th - 12th 2001. Working both ways Perth GPO to the Maritime Museum in Darling Harbour, Sydney. 3 phone lines have been requested, 2 morse and 1 teleprinter line. Messages will be accepted from the public at both ends of the line.

The big guns is closed to HMAS Vampire, a daring-class destroyer built in 1956 representing the era of big guns superseded now by the modern missile navy. Volunteers operate HMAS Vampire's amateur radio station VK2CCV from the bridge wireless office every Saturday from 0000 hours to 0600 hours UTC. The Maritime Museum is on Sydney's tourist trail which should ensure plenty of potential telegram lodgments from visitors.

=ATTENDANCE ROSTER= AS WELL AS ORGANISING THE WIRELESS HILL ROSTER, KEN KNOX IS UNDERTAKING THE STAFFING AND ROSTERS OF THE FEDERATION EVENT. AT OUR NEXT GENERAL MEETING, KEN WILL BE TAKING A LIST OF MEMBERS WISHING TO ATTEND PERTH GPO MAY 7TH TO 12TH 2001. MEMBERS NOT ABLE TO ATTEND THE MEETING BUT INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN THE EVENT, GIVE KEN A RING TO REGISTER YOUR AVAILABILITY AND MENTION IN WHICH CAPACITY YOU CAN ASSIST AND WHAT DAYS YOU CAN ATTEND.

In addition to the on-line circuits, the event sub-committee has detailed 1 local morse circuit in-house with 2 dial-ups and 1 local teleprinter circuit in-house with 2 machines (Siemens M100). Outgoing messages by teleprinter will be punched up offline on 5-unit tape. The in-house machine circuit is intended for hands-on use by visitors when not required for offline message preparation. It should be an exciting and fruitful week long event for all participants -

don't miss it.



COLIN SMITH - nominated by John Meadowcroft, seconded by Stuart Macdonald

Date birth: 15th April 1927. Date comm. temp. telegraph messenger Subiaco approx. 15th May 1941. Date appointed: telegraph messenger Subiaco 30th May 1941. Date ceased: 4th July 1986, divisional manager Northern Division Australia Post, Midland Post Office. Telegraph messenger Subiaco May 1941. A/g Postal Clerk Subiaco June 1942. T.I.T CTO Perth Jan 1943. Postal Clerk 4th Div Cue June 1946. Postal Clerk 3rd div Midland Junc Oct 1948. Postal Clerk 3rd Div Metro Relief May 1950. President WA branch 3rd Division Telegraphists and Postal Clerks Union 1952-1957. Clerk to District Inspector Narrogin Aug 1957. Inspector Narrogin Jan 1966. District Postal Manager Narrogin Nov 1968. Divn. Manager Northern Divn. Geraldton Apr 1978. Divisional Manager Northern Divn. Midland May 1985. Colin retired 4th July 1986.

BARRIE FIELD - Nominated by Ken Knox, seconded by Syd Chick.

I joined the Post Office, Albany as temporary Telegraph Messenger in the PMG Dept at age 14, in 1944. 1945 became permanent. I began learning morse in Feb 1944 and in March 1945 was sending and receiving official traffic. Transferred circa 1945 to Tambellup then circa 1946 to Dumbleyung as Postal Assistant. In 1947 sat for and passed 20 wpm tests and was selected for training as Telegraphist. 1948 Telegraphist Training School, later 1948 appointed as Telegraphist, passing barrier exam in 1949. 1949-1952 Telegraphist, GPO Perth. 1952 transferred to Engineering Divn as acting Technician Broadcasting. Circa 1955 passed Technicians exam and obtained 1st class marine radio operators certificate. 1956 transferred to Radio Branch Perth as Assistant Radio Inspector. 1959 qualified as Radio Inspector, 3rd Division. 1956-1976 During this period, I occupied a variety of positions in the Radio Branch, and in fact did every duty of all the positions in the branch, ranging from setting and marking examinations, marine surveyors duties, O.I.C. of the International Radio Monitoring Station, O.I.C. of Interference Investigation, Assistant Superintendent, Acting Superintendent and Manager of Type Testing Laboratory. 1976 Department changed name to Dept of Communications and I was appointed State Manager. During this period I could hit a fly speck at 20 feet with my rubber stamp, could sign documents all day long without R.S.I. Fatigue, did constant battle with four different union reps in the office. 1988 Feb. Retired and was sure glad to go.

HIGHLIGHTS OF MY CAREER Without a doubt it was as the Marine Radio Surveyor at Fremantle. It was my job to inspect and certify in writing that all the radio and electronic gear on ships of all nationalities was working as prescribed and met the British, Australian and International regulations. During this time I met and worked with thousands of Captains and Radio Officers from all over the world. Had it not been that the Department forced me to accept a promotion, very against my wishes, to the position of Assistant Superintendent, I would have been quite happy to have finished my career in the position of Marine Radio Surveyor.

RICARDO CRAMERI - Nominated by Ritchie Bright, seconded by Phil Heydon..

DOB 17.3.1937 Third generation post office man: Grandfather William Leonard Crameri was Telegraph Messenger in Cossack at Federation. Father William John worked for 50 years with PMG Department and was a Telegraphist of note. My uncle Valentine Roy Crameri was a post office Telegraphist and also served with distinction with the RAF during WW2 in England and with RAAF Middle East as a radio operator. My uncle Richard Ernest, Postmaster and morse man. I joined the PMG Dept in 1953 at Geraldton as a Telegraph Messenger and attended 1955 Postal Training School. Served as Postal Clerk in Nor'west (morse duties) Port Hedland and Carnarvon. Several years on sou'west relief staff then 2nd in charge Post Office Moora. Appointed as first Postmaster Exmouth and spent an exciting six years during which time U.S.N. established the VLF communications base at Nor'west Cape. Appointed Postmaster at North Fremantle, Mundaring, Aberdeen Street, Inglewood, Balga, Northlands, Mirrabooka, Perth St Georges Terrace. I attended the 1981 International Society of Postmaster convention in Montreal. As Postmaster I have opened four new post offices. Founded the Morsecodians' Fraternity of Western Australia and its newsletter.

HALLS CREEK

The Kimberley Society needs to raise \$85,000 to build a protective roof over the mud brick ruins of the old Halls Creek post office.

An 80-page book about the old town, written especially for the appeal, will be given to everyone who donates \$20 or more (not tax deductible), and donations about \$100 will be recorded on a panel at the site (unless anonymity is requested).

Cheques can be made out to either the National Trust of Australia (WA) - for 100 percent tax-deductible donations - or to Kimberley Society (for all other donations).

Contact: Old Halls Creek Post Office Appeal, PO Box 8471 Perth Business Centre Perth 6849. Telephone Cathie Clements (08) 9272 3308.

E-mail: clement@q-net.net.au

=STOP PRESS=

Our members again staffing Alice Springs this year.

Ken Knox and Barrie Field were delighted to have been asked to staff the historic telegraph station at Alice Springs this year for the inaugural week long hook-up week commencing 23rd April 2001 with a new location at the Maritime Museum in Darling Harbour,