

MORSECODIANS MESSENGER

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

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12 JANUARY 1998

Club Raffle On-Line Dial-up Morse Set - Club Funds Boosted by \$375.

The raffle for the full dial-up set was drawn at our last General Meeting on 1st September and was won by Barrie Field. Barrie was away up north at the time and we did not know what he wanted to do with his prize which was probably a worse-case scenario seeing that he had made up the gear and needed another set like an extra hole in the head. In the absence of his instructions, we left it to Barrie who later advised that it was always intended that if by chance he won it, it would be donated to the Club. Similar intentions were notified by others who bought raffle tickets and already had sets. We thought of drawing it again, but it has been decided that it be kept on the Club inventory for the present and loaned to people interested in going on line to let them try it out, see how it works and whether they would like to continue with a connection. If they do, renewed efforts would be made to secure the necessary gear which is around if you're lucky enough to turn it up. Some people we understand have the ability to make sounders and keys and these avenues can be pursued. Barrie suggested that he add a buzzer circuit to the board so it can be used either with a sounder or buzzer by the click of a switch and this has been done. This should be handy for some members who can use either means depending on their experience.

So if you are interested, please contact the Sec. and we will list those who apply and arrange use of the set for several weeks trial and then pass on to the next person on the list. You need nothing other than your existing phone socket to connect it to. A list of dial-up connections will accompany the set.

OUR NEXT GENERAL MEETING:

At the Hyde Park Hotel Tuesday
3rd February 1998 at 10 am.

Note your diary. It's time we had another get together for a yarn and to meet new members. After our successful Albany/Eucla commemoration, we have lots to talk about. Plan to stay for lunch. The Management and staff at the Hyde Park do a lot for us and deserve our support in their business.



Pictured at Albany: Senior active member Ern Walker (88). Background Keith McK Clark.

ALBANY/EUCLA 120 YEARS ANNIVERSARY

We enjoyed a wonderful atmosphere celebrating the 120th Anniversary of the Albany/Eucla connection and were supported by the Town of Albany with the Mayor opening proceedings exchanging messages with the Mayor of Melville at Wireless Hill Museum Applecross, our Perth station. A great social weekend was enjoyed by all and the reaction of the people who visited our venues was most gratifying. Many had never heard a telegraph sounder. We received almost \$500 in donations and handled a total of nearly 500 messages, i.e. 261 lodged and 230 received over the 2 days. We had circuits between stations at the Old PO Albany, Whaleworld Albany, Wireless Hill Perth, Eden Killer Whale museum and Canberra. Phil McGrath at Eden connected others for messages in their area. A very successful conclusion to a year of planning. (Cont p4)

Poem by Frank Spruhan. "Johnny Dear"

The balance sheet drawn up by Jack Moore for a recent "Sparks" Fraternity Smoke Social disclosed that twenty pounds had been expended on beer and one shilling on lemonade, which suggested the following lines:

"Arrah, now be aisy wid your 'soft' stuff, Johnnie dear,
Shure 'tis blushin at the praises of our virtues that we are.
Did they catch you while you snoozed - or were you
- well - confused

When they foisted it upon you - slyly wedged
Amongst the beer?
'Tis no wondther we felt crook when the hard tack we forsook,
Shure there's no support at all, me bhoy, in foreign trash so queer.
All our wits played telephone and our feet got out of tune,
When we got a whiff of ginger pop from somewhere in the rear.
So never mind your uplift stuff - we're satisfied with beer, Ochone, Johnnie dear."

PROFILE OF A TELEGRAPHIST IN 1875

Despite frequent complaints by press and merchants of the day (circa 1875) concerning the imperfections of the Telegraph Service and its delays, it was the industrious and lonely Telegraph Operator, often at obscure repeater stations in the centre of the continent or on its southern-most border, who got the cables through.

Telegraphists, both urban and outback, made up a new and distinctive group in Colonial society. Drawn usually from well-educated or aspiring backgrounds, they grew out of the dynamic new technology, developed technical skills and often possessed scientific knowledge and some scholarly attainments.

"The Telegraph Operator is brain work requiring close and unremitting application", one professor summed up the new calling. "The mental effort involved in receiving from a sounder was exactly similar to that in which a shorthand writer was engaged when reporting a speaker verbatim, and it took as long to train a good Telegraph Operator as a good reporter".

In order to do his work intelligently, the Telegraphist "must be well in touch with the politician, the sportsman and the man of commerce; and after becoming an expert manipulator of the key, he must acquaint himself with technical duties. It should also be remembered that the most delicate and momentous secrets are entrusted to his discretion, and his work is of a highly confidential character".

Telegraphists were an elite. In city and suburban post and telegraph offices they occupied a position between the manipulative classes of telegraph messenger, letter carrier and postal sorter, and the managerial classes of Supervisor, Postmaster and Superintendent. Their training and skills, and the sense of commitment that their duties inspired, turned them into a cohesive group with conventions and "in-house" codes and jokes and a deep sense of camaraderie.

Better educated than most other members of the public service, urban Telegraphists showed their middle class alliance by dressing fashionably. Dapper in gloves and brightly coloured waistcoats, they completed their ensemble with a cane. Even in the inland's torrid heat, there were few concessions to comfortable dress. The Telegraphists at Eucla confronted each other across the border partition sartorially correct in flannel trousers, white shirts, ties and the ornate Victorian waistcoat.

From page 66 "A History of Telecommunications".

VALE

We regret to record the passing of esteemed members:-

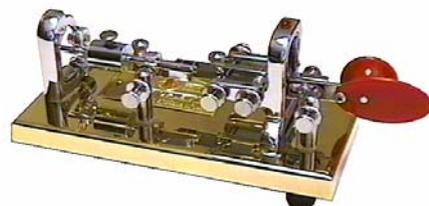
Doug Buchanan
Fred Glossop
Kevin Heydon &
Colin Schofield

WA Morsecodians will mostly likely have worked with or been associated with these members during their working lives. We extend our sincere sympathy to their families.

The Morsecodians Fraternity of WA (Inc) wishes to acknowledge the valuable help and support given to us by the Australian Post-Tel Institute.



At Whaleworld Albany Telegraph Office. L-R Richie Bright (back view) Frank Fletcher, Ken (Colonel) Knox, 2 Visitors, Don Tyler. (Rear) Claire & Ern Walker,



SUNDAY BROADCAST.

Morsecodian News Bulletin now available on Dial-up through Larry Rice.

When: On Sundays, between 0700 and 2300 hours local time.

Where: (08) 9255-2716

HOW: Select ORIGINATE (CCITT V21 300baud) as you would to initiate a standard dial-up call. Dial the above number, the distant modem will auto-answer and pick up your call.

An answer-tone will immediately sound for 3 seconds so it is imperative that you switch from phone to modem straight away after hearing the tone, otherwise the modems may not connect. Reception is as normal via your sounder so have your key closed. The news bulletin is of a repetitious nature, so you may join it half way through - wait till the end, then it will commence from the beginning. It will operate unattended and is receive only to caller. When you have heard enough, clear the call and the system will re-set for the next caller.

Reports average around 20 minutes. News items and any comments are welcome to Larry on (08) 9255-2280.

Ric's Almost Back.

After a long sojourn in hospital, our indefatigable Secretary/Treas. Ric Cramer is getting better. He went into hospital on September 4th for a leg operation which was successful but complications developed otherwise and he has spent a long 4 months recovering. We are pleased he is sounding like his old self again and we sincerely hope his

History: Samuel Morse's first practical morse instrument consisted of a comb (or "portrule") with 'teeth' spaced at intervals in conformity with a code. The comb was passed beneath a contact lever so that it made and broke an electric circuit. The pulses of current passed through an electromagnet, causing it to deflect a lever carrying a pencil, thus producing an undulating line on a paper tape moved by clockwork to record the signals received.

In a practical application of these ideas Alfred Vail, an associate of Morse, discarded the "portrule" in favour of a

History: (Cont'd)

and it was later found that the signals could be reliably interpreted by ear from the sound of the movements of the electromagnet armature. Recording was also discarded, not to be revived until much later. After initial government support, a full scale demonstration between Washington D C and Baltimore Md was given in 1844, but when this was withdrawn, support was enlisted to form a company in

Eucla Reunion

A proposed Eucla reunion is being organised for September 1999. It is the 50th anniversary since the Gurney family purchased the old Eucla Telegraph Station and pastoral lease, then in later years received the motel lease.

Anyone connected with the Gurney families or the Eucla area who are interested in attending or requiring further information should contact Harvey Gurney Eucla via Norseman

TELEGRAPH: from the Greek

.....
tele, "far", graphein, "to

Wheatstone System:

With the commercial development of the telegraph in the late 1840s it became obvious that the manual sending methods of forming the code signals directly were unable to exploit the full capabilities of the transmission lines, and the attention of many inventors was turned to increasing the speed of signaling and providing more convenient means of generating and recording signals.

The Wheatstone system (1858) employed perforated tape to operate the transmitting mechanism, which was driven by clockwork and later by electric motor. The Morse signals were received by an "inker" in which an inked wheel marked the dots and dashes on a moving tape.

When first brought into use in the 1860s the system was capable of about 70 words per minute, but by the early 1900s it had been developed to 300-400



Albany/Eucla 120th Anniversary Official Opening Albany Inter Colonial Telecommunications Museum. L-R Col Smith, Barrie Field, Annette Knight, Mayor of

Albany/Eucla (Cont'd. from P1)

Attendance:-

Richie Bright, Jeff & Val Campbell, Keith McKenzie-Clark, Barrie and Gwen Field, Frank Fletcher, Ted & Pat Gaudet, Alec & Nora Grant, Jack Grogan, Max Hansen, Phil & Doris Heydon, Colin & Dallas Hopkins, Bill & Carol Hunter, Terry & Kath Keays, Bernie Keeley, Ken & Thelma Knox, John Meadowcroft, John & Naomi O'Keefe, Larry & Nola Rice, Colin & Barbara Smith, Chas & Allison Spalding, Ernie & Grace Tonkinson, Don & Lorraine Tyler, Ernie & Claire Walker & Bruce Walker.

Attendance at Wireless Hill was provided by:

Gus Allender
Peter Edmunds
Allan Jolley
Jeff Pitts &
Wal Whitney

Note:

A video of the Albany weekend was produced by Alec Grant and will be shown at our meeting on 3rd Feb.

At Albany PO. Col Smith President
WA Morsecodians.



Quote from T K Fitchett
(Author of books on ships)

“The Vanished Fleet” etc.

“No field of human endeavour survives unless it continues to fulfil a need. The Australian coastal passenger service prospered mightily when it was of primary importance to the public, but like the sailing ship and the horse-drawn vehicle, it languished and died after it had served its purpose.”

So right, and applicable to telegraphy. It served its

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: WIRELESS HILL: The Club commenced operations at Wireless :
: Hill on 13th December 1997. Two operators are rostered each :
: Saturday and Sunday from 2pm to 5pm to coincide with the :
: hours provided by the Museum. So far, it has been rather quiet :
: but with some advertising we expect it to become more lively. :
: Call up the operators for a morse chat and practice. Phone :
: numbers are 93169514 and 93169515. :
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And we thought we had it hard!!

Charles (Chuck) F Dayley of Spokane Washington State US, a member of an American Telegraphers Club has frequent contact by email with Secretary Ric and Pres Col. A bit of history from him.

“When I worked my first telegraph job beginning officially at 6pm July 29 1941, for the Great Northern Railroad, I worked in an interlocking plant, a junction with another railroad, and a main line station on the railroad. My trembling hands touched the key and adjusted the main line sounder that evening. I only worked there a few weeks when I was transferred, but we worked 7 days a week then with no overtime for the 6th and 7th days, nor did we have such things as medical insurance, sick leave, compassionate leave, compensation leave and whatever goes on in the modern work place.”

At Albany PO Bill Hunter and
Col Hopkins.



At Whaleworld Ken Knox, Ern
Walker and Frank Fletcher.



ALBANY

EUCLA

120

YEARS

1997

P4