

MORSECODIANS MESSENGER

Volume 1 Issue No 3

☎ 08 92794696

PERTH W A

MAY 1998



*From
the
Pres...*

In our own quiet way, we have done well since we formed in November 1996. Our big project, the Albany to Eucla 120th anniversary commemoration could not have been more enjoyable. It brought us together as nothing else could have done. We resurrected our old skills and proudly basked in the attention of admiring people many of whom had never heard a telegraph sounder.

It is hard to think of any event which made a greater impact on the people of Western Australia than that historic connection at 7pm on 8th December 1877. Before then a message to England could take four months by sailing ship and weeks to the other Australian colonies. In one moment, virtually world wide communication was possible by landline and cable and this marvellous technology lasted for more than 100 years. We can only reflect with grateful pleasure on being part of it in the short period of our lifetime. It is difficult to imagine anything more satisfying than being born in the telegraph era and achieving membership of that great

worldwide fraternity of morse code telegraph operators.

Since then we have established our telegraph office at Wireless Hill and on March 21st we joined with the Northern Corridor Radio Group to establish another historic connection, this time at Eucla. Barrie Field represented our club and he worked with both Adelaide and Perth Morsecodians from Eucla by telegraph, a truly great moment. We have been fortunate in gaining historical research papers thanks immensely to our member John Moynihan and will be looking at other historic dates to commemorate as they arise. I would like to record on behalf of all members a sincere word of thanks to our foundation Secretary/Treasurer Ric Cramer for the great work he did before his recent illness in establishing the Club. Unfortunately he cannot continue in this role, but his health has improved sufficiently so that he is once again an active member within the limits of his physical capabilities.

As our meetings are infrequent, our acting Secretary Terry Keays and myself are always available to talk with members if they have any ideas for the club or other concerns. CLS May 1998

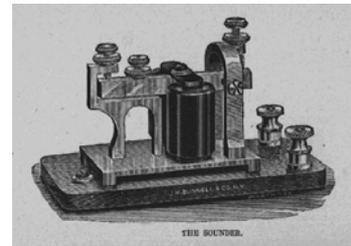
Next General Meeting

TUESDAY 16 June 1998

Time: 10am.

Venue: Hyde Park Hotel

Keep this day free and please stay for lunch to support our hosts.



EUCLA REVISITED.

The Northern Corridor Radio Group (WA) planned to travel to Eucla on the weekend of March 21st to take part in the John Moyle Field Day event, an amateur radio operation of significance. We were contacted and thoughtfully invited to take part in the exercise to commemorate the Adelaide-Eucla-Albany telegraph connection. Barrie Field represented our Club and we were fortunate to be able to work by landline telegraph direct from Eucla with both Adelaide and Perth morsecodians. Messages were exchanged and a day of nostalgia ensued. After all this was the place where it all happened between 1877 and 1927.

Our South Australian colleagues were very pleased that we contacted them and so were we. Barrie voted it a great weekend.

We enjoyed being part of it.

VALE: Jack Cramer

Jack passed away on 27th February 1998, age 89. Morse code and repeaters were his life for many years. He commenced his service at Pt Hedland as a Telegraph Messenger at the age of 14 in 1923 and retired 50 years later from the position of Postmaster Gr 5 Geraldton.

A great telegraphist and keen supporter of this club, Jack was always active in public life and his efforts were successful in raising funds for many worthy causes. Our sympathy goes out to his son Ric, daughter Bernadette, brother Dick and other members of his family.

Membership: As at the 1st of May, we have 114 members with 28 connected to dialup.

CLUB DIAL UP PRACTICE SET

The dial up set is available for use to any member who wishes to try their hand at morse connection. Please contact our Secretary to ar-



Albany Mayor Annette Knight and AJL Meadowcroft Albany November 1997

WORD COUNT

The counting of words was often the cause for much discontentment. The phone started to ring. "Telegraphs", was the reply. A gentleman's voice started, "Ah yes. Now as it happens I am going to send a telegram and would appreciate some guidance. Perhaps you might inform me if the word lawn mower is one or two words?" The reply was, "Two words." The gentleman continued, "Is that so. Well then perhaps you could tell me, if I went to purchase a lawn mower, would I get it in one or two parts?" The sheer logic of the old gentleman's reasoning was unanswerable.

WAR TIME TELEGRAMS

In 1942, 26,000 telegrams were lodged at Perth GPO off the liner Queen Mary in a bag, very much like a cattle-feed bag. These had first to be censored, then transmitted to the various states using the Murray Multiplex system which gave a total of 12 transmitting arms, that is 12 men, one on each arm, they had cleared 20,000 messages by 0900 hours.

They had started at 1800 hours and worked through the night. The telegrams were from departing troops.



The 2nd (1898) Telegraph Station Eucla

Some of the original logs at Eucla are held in the Commonwealth Archives at Victoria Park. Following are some of the entries:-
1906 Log shows working duplex. Reference noted to "Kept going both sides".

Log 6/12/1906 "Not coming too good when quadding- Better triplex".

Log 12/12/1906. References to clearing Coolgardie first. (Apparently working morse at the time).

Log April 15 1907. "3pm-6p. Worked OK all round. Inward biz all clear at 5p and 5.20p Perth time to us. About 70 on hand for E states . (Sounds like manual repeating between states is still being done because lines are bad.)

6.15p All OK. About 70 on hand for Adelaide. Well up to and from Perth. 7pm Perth clear."



The Morsecodians Fraternity (WA) wishes to thank the Management and Staff of the Australian Post-Tel Institute for their continuing support of our activities and valuable assistance in producing this Newsletter.

MORSE CODES.

A very interesting area. There have been many codes and variations since Samuel Morse and Alfred Vail made the first telegraph connection in 1844. The most important to us in Australia is our current code which is known as the Continental or International code. Prior to Federation, telegraphists in the Eastern States of Australia used the American code which is known as Morse Code (American) U S A & Canada Landline. Morsecode clubs in America generally use American Morse, but anyone on Radio uses International, so there are people competent in both codes there. Parts of the American Code were and are still used (by us) in a minor way in Australia. For instance, the American O (. .) two separate dots) is often used when saying OK . . _ _ and you have no doubt heard RR for repeating figures etc.

In the publication "Ninety Years of Telegraph Progress" by J C Harrison (Melbourne 30th April 1945) the following appears:-

"Telegraph Code: Prior to 1897, the telegraph code used on morse channels in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland differed somewhat from the Universal code adopted by the International Telegraph Union, but was identical with that used in the United States of America. At the Intercolonial Postal and Telegraph Conference which met at Sydney in November, 1896, it was urged that the code adopted by the International Telegraph Union was preferable to the code then in use in the States mentioned and that all the members of the Union were bound to introduce the code recognised by the Union. This course was agreed to, 1st July 1897, being fixed as the date for the change. The new code was introduced in Victoria on 1st August 1897. Since that date only minor changes have been made to the International code and those concern only certain miscellaneous symbols."

Differences in the American code (alphabet) are :-

C	. . .	dot dot space dot
F	. _ .dot	dash dot (Intl R)
J	_ . .	dash dot dash dot (Intl C)
L	___	long dash (equal to 2 dashes)
O	. .	dot space dot
P	5 dots
Q	. . _ .	dot dot dash dot (Intl F)
R	. . .	dot space dot dot
X	. _ ..	dot dash dot dot (Intl L)
Y	dot dot space dot dot
Z	3 dots space dot

The other letters are the same in International Morse. Some practice in the different signals is suggested before you attempt a dial-up connection with fellow Morsecode people in the US and Canada.

One of our contacts in the US Mr Bill Dunbar, Past President of the Morsecode Telegraph Club of America, commented concerning American Morse:-

"You know, I believe you gents would enjoy knowing that code. It is twenty percent faster than International, and due to the space-letters, has a lilt and syncopation which is very attractive. I first learned International Morse in the Army, in 1943, then converted that experience to landline telegraphy in 1946. In 1957, when the railways were phasing out telegraphy, I got a ham radio ticket so as to continue code use. I still use both codes, but must confess that American Morse is my favorite."

What you read in a telegram depends on where you stood. A lawyer who unexpectedly won a difficult case for a client wired: JUSTICE HAS TRIUMPHED. The client replied: APPEAL CASE AT ONCE.

In a medium that depended on brevity, the smallest error could be a Freudian blip. The wife of a Hollywood director who was on location with a foxy leading lady received this: HAVING A WONDERFUL TIME WISH YOU WERE HER

Dial up Tapes.

Both WU and BM have received and made audio tapes using our normal Dial-up sets. It is a convenient easy and cheap way to correspond with distant Dial-up acquaintances when phone call charges are a barrier to communication.

The connections only take a few minutes to set up. You need a cassette tape recorder with a speaker-out socket and a mic-in socket also a phone line socket (Dick Smith catalogue F5118) and a 620 ohm resistor (R0569) and a short

length of two conductor cable. Also a miniature 3.5mm line plug to fit your tape recorder sockets.

Connect the resistor to terminals 2 and 6 of your new phone socket, also the free ends of the cable to those terminals.

Connect the miniature plug to the other end of the cable. Disconnect the phone plug of your Dial-up unit from the phone wall socket and connect that plug into your new phone socket and plug your new miniature plug into your mic socket of the tape recorder.

You always record tapes on modem Originate mode, so press Record and make a short tape. To listen to

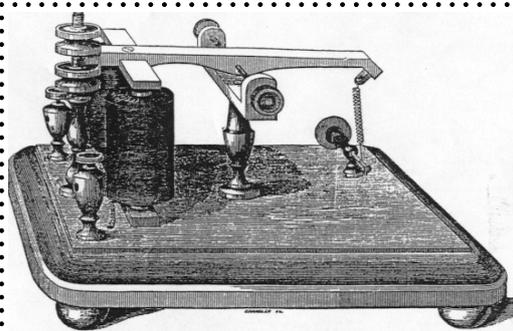
that tape, change the miniature plug to speaker-out socket, switch your modem to Answer mode and press play.

It is normal to make a short voice greetings message with a microphone at the start of the tape then connect in the Dial-up equipment.

You may have to adjust the volume control of tape recorder to receive the sounder clacks.

If the above instructions are not clear or you wish me to make up an interface for you, call Larry on 9255 2280.

A typical Telegraphist??



Early sounder. From History, Theory, and Practice of the Electric Telegraph, by George B. Prescott, Boston 1864



Telegraph Offices which opened in Western Australia 100 years ago in 1898. (History from John Moynihan)

Town	Date	District
Western Shaw	Jan 15	Pilbarra (sic)
Winning Pool	Feb 2	Gascoyne
Plympton	Mar 14	Fremantle
Murrin Murrin	Mar 28	Nth Coolgardie
Bayswater	Aug 1	Swan
Abbott's (sic)	Aug 17	Murchison
Armadale	Sep 1	Canning
Warrawoona	Sep 22	Pilbarra (sic)
Coalville	Sep 24	Wellington
Peak Hill	Oct 10	Gascoyne
South Perth	Nov 7	Perth
Pt Hedland	Nov 28	North West
Victoria Park	Dec 1	Perth

Wireless Hill Telegraph Office 1998
(Ken Knox pictured below.)

