

MORSECODIANS MESSSENGER

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JANUARY 1999

MORSECODIANS - KEEPING MORSECODE

TELEGRAPHS WA 1869 -1999

*NEXT MEETING
10AM TUESDAY
FEB 23rd HYDE
PARK HOTEL*

*Please note the
above date on
your social calen-
dar.*

*Progress report on
the WA Telegraph
130th anniversary.*

*Meet and chat.
Members part-
ners friends wel-
come.*

*Plan to stay to
lunch. The Hyde
Park Hotel is re-
nowned for its fine
cuisine and pleas-
ant venue.*

That's how long it will be since the first telegram was sent in Western Australia between Perth and Fremantle and when we send the next one to commemorate this major event in telecommunications history. We are liaising with various people in Australia Post and Telstra and are progressing favourably towards the presentation of a fitting exhibition on Monday June 21st 1999. Wherever we have gone, firstly to Albany in 1997 to celebrate the 120 years connection in 1877 to the Eastern Colonies (and the world through the overland telegraph line to Darwin and undersea cables) and at Wireless Hill Telecommunications Museum at Applecross where we have a permanent display, people have shown surprise and interest in morsecode telegraphy; children especially are quite intrigued by it. Others who remember the chatter of morsecode in the background at Post Offices are nostalgically reminded how important it was in their daily lives in early times. This is how their business and social messages were conveyed for many years before telephones were invented and later before they became generally affordable to working people.

Day out at
Mandurah 17/3/99

The retired Postmasters and Managers group (JACO Club) which meets at Hickey's Tavern in Perth on the 2nd Tuesday each month have arranged a reunion at the Halls Head Tavern for lunch on Wednesday March 17th

It is anticipated that there will be a good attendance of retirees from the Rockingham/Mandurah area and points south, as well as those travelling down from Perth

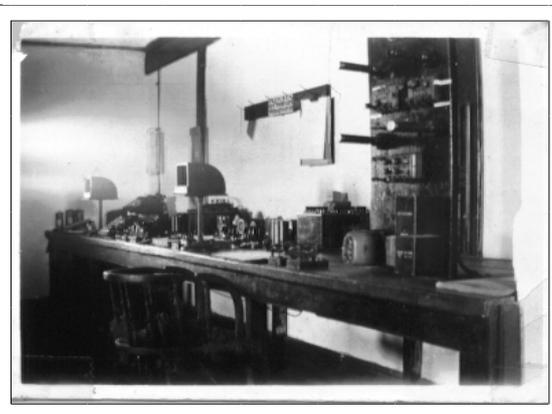
Bus seats at \$20 (nonrefundable) are available from Perth. The bus will depart from the north-eastern corner of Hay/William streets at 8.45am on the dot and return there at 4.30pm.

Terry Keays will require \$20 per head by the date of our meeting - 23/2/99 from members intending to use the chartered bus which is both airconditioned and toilet equipped.

Roebourne Tele- graphs

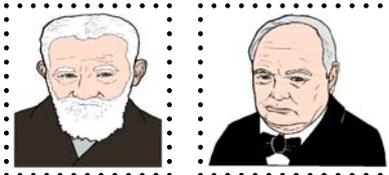
Roebourne was connected to the north-west telegraph on 1st October 1885.

It was an important repeating station for many years. Not only was it on the coastal line, there was a direct line between Roebourne and Nullagine



Roebourne Telegraphs 1939

(Photo Phil Heydon)



Telegraph Days Wit....

The following exchange of telegrams is said to have occurred between George Bernard Shaw and Winston Churchill.

“AM RESERVING TWO TICKETS FOR YOU FOR MY PREMIERE. COME AND BRING A FRIEND- IF YOU HAVE ONE”.

Churchill’s reply: “IMPOSSIBLE TO BE PRESENT FOR THE FIRST PERFORMANCE. WILL ATTEND SECOND - IF THERE IS ONE.”

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

Club Activities: On 8th November the Club provided a morse code exhibition at the Northern Corridor Radio Group’s Hamfest held at the Cyril Jackson Hall in Bassendean. The group organises an annual get together to buy, swap and sell and to meet socially for radio talk etc. We received much favourable comment and I’m sure we added to the atmosphere of the event, particularly considering most of the amateur radio people there know morse code. We sent 21 telegraph messages between sending and receiving positions. People were agreeably surprised to see their messages being received . Others were posted to destinations including one to Ireland.

INCOME TAX EXEMPTION CONFIRMED.

A submission was made to the ATO in November regarding the Fraternity’s perceived exemption from Income Tax.

A response received by our secretary on 4/1/99 reads in part, as follows:-

“We consider that the organisation is exempt from Income Tax under Item 1.1 of Section 50-5 of the “Income Tax Assessment Act 1997” on the grounds that it is charitable institution established for other purposes beneficial to the community, This statement of opinion will remain valid while the objects and activities of the organisation do not change in any material particular. Should such a change take place, you may wish to consult with us to determined whether the organisation will remain exempt.”

WIRELESS HILL MUSEUM APPLCROSS:-
Open Saturday and Sunday 2pm to 5pm. Tell your friends. There is a great display of telegraph gear and radio and other telecommunications equipment of the past. Telegraphists on duty.

Proudly Sponsored by.....



THE AUSTRALIAN
POST-TEL
INSTITUTE
(W.A.) INC.

Here lie the remains of Old Man Morse
with few to mourn that he’s run his course;
mastered by men who have left their mark,
light of the world when the world was
dark’ never to rise again.”

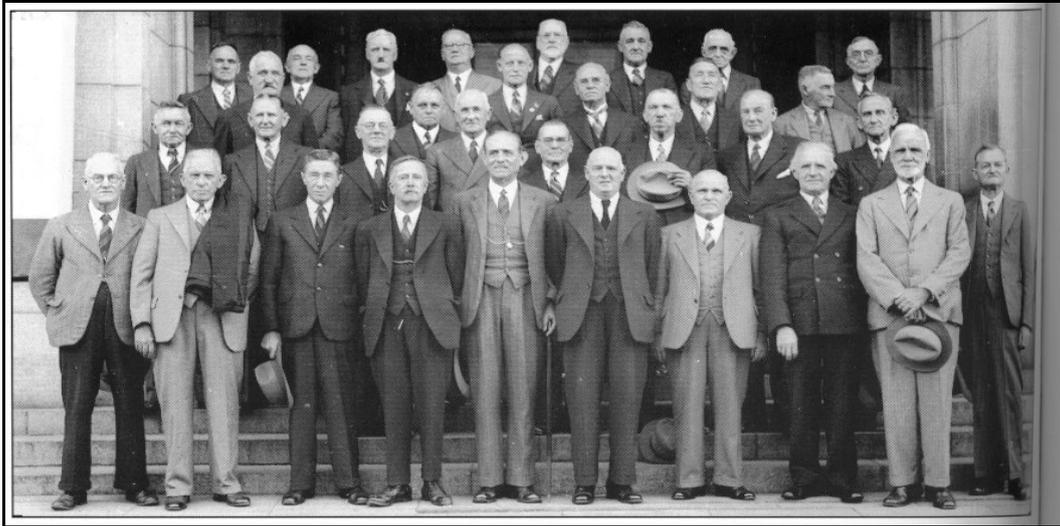
EPITAPHS FOR MORSE
(AUTHORS UNKNOWN)

Submitted by Tom Twomey March 1997
then aged 87.

You remember of course, old fellow morse
Who for years kept us under this thumb;
Who filled us with sound till our heads went around like a
swarm of bees in a drum.
You remember the men who took him by pen in the years
before automation
And the yarns galore they would tell by the score of
Of what happened at the old Eucla station

Where they would jump our of bed and give go ahead
‘ere the light of new day was dawning
And GB, they say, would be given next day
In the early hours of the morning.
Where nobody spoke or had time for a joke
or swore at the man ’tother end’
Not a man of them used a “jigger”-
30 wpm by the hand they could send.”

EARLY DAYS TELE-^{P3.} GRAPHISTS RETURNED FOR WAR EFFORT 1942 TO 1945. SOME HAD SEEN SERVICE ON EUCLA LINES 1895 TO 1916.



Retired Telegraphist's Names:-

Back row L to R: Unknown, Unknown, Tom Cain, Ernie Tombs, H G Creagh, Unknown, Horace Uglow, Marcus Clark.

In front of back row:- Dullard (Mails), Charlie Cutt, Unknown, Unknown, Unknown, Unknown.

2nd Front: Mullumby, James W Johnston, Jim Hayles, Tom Bastian, Unknown, Bill Shaw, Unknown, Unknown.

Front: Jim Purling, Larry Walsh, Jim Hancock Snr, Jim Horrigan, W J Halliday, Fred Hall, C E Felstead, Horatio J Smith, David Vincent, Tom Coles.

Caption reads:- "It was back to the old haunts for these retired post office staff on the GPO steps in Forrest Place during May 1942. They returned to work to fill gaps by employees gone to the warfronts. All sorts of other people were deployed into selected jobs by a Federal government tightening the screws of war".

(Photos from page 132 "Western Images - Western Australia in pictures from the colonial era to the present" text by Tom Austen. StGeorge Books. 1996 WA Newspapers. Printed by PK Print Pty Ltd Beaconsfield 6162.)

First Line via Albany to Eucla 1877 (Iron)

Second via Balladonia 1897 (Iron)

Third via Balladonia 1905 (Copper)

Eucla Line staff lists of the early 1900's show some of the above:-

CUTT C H	Eucla Mar 1896 to June 1896	Assistant Operator*
FELSTEAD C E	Balladonia May to Nov 1900	Postmaster
	Israelite Bay June 1916	Operator*
HANCOCK J	Eucla Oct 1895 to May 1899	Telegraphist
SHAW W H C	Balladonia Feb 1906 to Oct 1907	Telegraphist

* Before Federation, WA Colony called telegraphists, operators. Changed to telegraphists with Commonwealth.



HOT SPOT

Eucla held a temperature record of 51.1C (123.90F) March 1905.

Not now recognised due to a change in the design of weather screens

PITC visit. About 25 club members were shown around the Perth International Telecommunications Centre at Gnarara on 11th November. The visit was organised by Des Kinnersley who before retirement was Manager of the Centre. The main purpose was to see the the VIP Perth radio setup which will be closed in January 1999, but we were also given a complete tour of operations by very pleasant and helpful Telstra people who made us most welcome. Telecommunications have come a long way since the single wire/earth return telegraph system and when our daily duties were part of the the telecommunications area in the then Postmaster General's Department. We were all considerably surprised at the sheer magnitude of operations at the centre. Not only is there radio, there is the latest digital telephone exchange and it is the control point for cable and satellite communications for most of Australia. The telephone mechanic of our very early years has been replaced by what appears to us to be the "Super Tech" as the OIC telephone exchanges was later called. The mind boggles at the array of computers, satellite disc adjusters and the many other arcane procedures carried out by these super efficient officers. A most enjoyable and instructive visit and we sincerely thank Telstra and Des for their welcome to us.



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 : Club members at PITC:
 : L to R: Col Smith, Richie Bright, Syd Chick, Terry Keays,
 : Ken Knox, Allan Jolley, John Meadowcroft, David Spear,
 : Stu Macdonald, David Hynd PITC MCS Operator, Barrie
 : Field, Bernie Hall, Peter Edmunds, Jeff Pitts, and Keith
 : Walsh OIC VIP Perth Radio.
 :

Morse will sadly no longer be used in Australian coastal radio stations from midnight utc 31st January 1999 (0800 wst/1stFeb).

After the Titanic disaster in 1912, authorities evolved a system that made sure watchkeeping afloat was maintained on 500 kHz, the distress frequency.

Perth Radio, along with the other Australian coast stations will gallantly maintain the Morse service until the very last day before the new regulations come into force.

Plans to give maritime Morse a rousing send-off with a nostalgic cheerio message is timed to go out on Perth Radio at a few mins before 8am Western Australian Time on 1st February.

VIP coast station operator John Mace is hoping to send the message on a SS Titanic brass replica Marconi Key he's newly acquired from the Titanic Exhibition in Fremantle.

Those Morsecodians who have suitable radios are urged to listen to 500 kHz to hear this historic message
 HF Freqs: 8512, 12952.5 and 17816.3 kHz.

= STOP PRESS =

Our President Colin Smith, underwent a lung operation at Royal Perth Hospital on Friday 15th January.

His subsequent progress has been very encouraging and we look forward to Colin being with us at our meeting on 23rd February and for a long time thereafter.