MORSECODIANS MESSENGER

The official newsletter of the Morsecodians Fraternity of Western Australia (Inc.) *Editor:* **Larry Rice**

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Morsecodians *Keeping Morsecode Alive*

2nd-9th October 2004

Year 2004, total messages transmitted = 1856, average per operating day (8) = 232.
Comparison from previous years:-
Year 2003, total messages transmitted = 1372, average per operating day (8) = 171.
Year 2002, total messages transmitted = 1471, average per operating day (9) = 163.

Richie Bright keying and Alan Jolley receiving.

Terry Keays receiving with Barrie Field holding his coat

Thanks to API, our sponsor.

api leisure lifestyle

NEXT MEETING

Hyde Park Hotel 21st February 2005 10am

ACCESSION OF THE TELSTRA HISTORICAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS COLLECTION

Further to the report on the above in the ***Morsecodians Messenger*** of Feb. 2004, we became aware in May 2004 that the accession of the collection had begun. Telstra has contracted an archivist with curatorial experience, Ms Lisa Enright, to perform this task. She is to provide a report to Telstra on how to pave the way forward for the future of the Telstra Collection, pockets of other collections and the associated volunteer groups. After extensive travel throughout country Victoria by Ms Enright, a meeting of interested bodies was called at Hawthorn Vic. where invitees were given the opportunity to ask questions as well as Lisa explaining her role with the project. Despite previous indications that we would be kept informed of future developments, none of the above was conveyed to us and the meeting was confined to 24 invitees, all from Victoria.

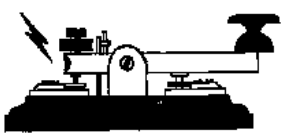
As our contact in Melbourne had moved on to another position and his replacement was unknown, we approached Telstra's Corporate Affairs Department in Perth with a view to having them represent our case. But after meeting with their Public Relations Officer and receiving promises of help it became obvious that he was also having difficulty in making any headway. It was then decided we should seek ministerial help.

After several false starts we were directed to Senator The Hon. Helen Coonan, Federal Minister for Arts, who we supplied with full details of events to date and photocopies of relevant documents including some produced by local telecommunications historians Roger Buddrige and John Moynihan. We also supplied drop copies to The Hon. Sheila McHale MLA Minister for Culture and the Arts, and Senator the Hon. Rod Kemp, Federal Minister for Arts and Sport. With the exception of that to Senator Kemp the receipt of these reports has been acknowledged.

A further letter was received from Sheila McHale on the 10th September 04 which reads in part:
"At the time of dispersal of the Post and Telegraph Museum's collection, following closure of the museum in 1988, a small number of items (15 in total) were passed to the Western Australian Museum. These items included office materials, a telegram pouch and belt and linesmen's safety harness. It is unfortunate that the original tape, recording the first telegram transmission in WA in 1869, was not transferred to the State collection at that time. Staff at the WA Museum are now looking into the location of this item, and other potentially significant material, with the relevant people in Melbourne to see if this material can be returned to the State collection in WA".

Since then we received a telephone call from Ms Lisa Enright during which the Telstra Collection was discussed at length. It appears she has a good knowledge of the various items of telecommunications equipment. She said that Telstra was keen to return significant items relevant to each State and that she was working closely with Ms Anne Delroy from the WA Museum on what items would be needed to make up a representative display. We have been assured that when material is returned to Western Australia, the W.A. Museum will find a home for it. However, first the collection must be collated and this would be a very big task. Whether items donated on long term loan by individuals could be identified and returned would be difficult.

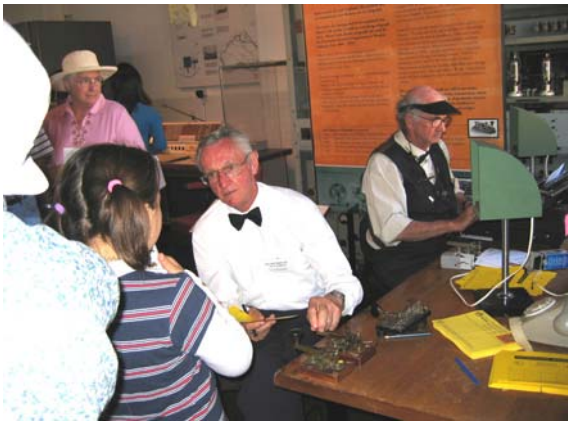
At last there appears a glimmer of hope that historical artifacts, which rightly belong in Western Australia, will be returned.



WIRELESS HILL OPEN DAY 16th October 2004

The Wireless Hill coastal radio station closed down in 1963 and its operations were transferred to the Perth International Telecommunications Centre (VIP) at Gnangara, a northern suburb of Perth. From Gnangara shore-ship communication was maintained until 2359 hours UTC 31st January 1999 when the station ceased all morse operations.

Teleprinters were an added attraction at this event which was popular both with the youngsters and people who remembered using them on Telex.



Richie and 'the Colonel' doing their stuff.

MIDLAND RAILWAY WORKSHOPS OPEN DAY 24th October 2004.

Don Tyler

Larry Rice trying out the donated key.

This year, we moved from the pattern shop to the boiler room and we found ourselves operating amongst old bottles, Avery scales and early 1900 printing presses.
During the session, morsecodian staff had the pleasure of accepting on behalf of the Fraternity a donation of a brass morse key on a wooden base with closer from Mr Jack Watson of Watermans Bay.
Our secretary has sent a letter of thanks and appreciation of the generous donation. Jack was an exhibitor at the railway workshops demonstrating his old LE Velocette motorcycle known by motorbike aficionados as a 'police noddy bike'.

Off topic but… why Noddy? Police regulations in UK in the 50's required policemen on patrol to salute to their superiors. When the LE Velocette was introduced, riders were given the dispensation to nod with the head instead of taking a hand off the handlebar to salute!

Alan Jolley asks a question: When they start digging up William St., I wonder if they will strike a perfectly good stretch of brass pipe and won't have a clue what it is or was for?
[This was the pipe that] passed heaps of "Press" telegrams from the CTO on the 3rd floor of the GPO to Newspaper House in St. Georges Tce by this tube.
It was put in (no idea when) to save the telegram boys continually going back and forth with press traffic for the "West". It was a single tube with a reverse air flow arrangement whereby telegrams could be passed via the tube.
If they do dig it up and sell the brass they should just about get enough in scrap to at least pay for the new station under William St.

back of GPO Forrest Place

The back of the GPO now seen as the old Myer building has been demolished for the new underground rail station on the cnr of William and Murray Streets.

The grand opening of the General Post Office Forrest Place was by His Excellency the Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia on 26th Sept. 1923. A precise history of the establishment and growth of the Post and Telegraph Department in Western Australia was engrossed on parchment and placed under the foundation stone at the time of its laying by the Hon the Minister for Home Affairs W. O. Archibald Esq on 8th October 1915.
The history commenced: "Although the first stone of the town of Perth was publicly laid on the 12th August 1829 when the population of the Colony numbered 1,000 souls, no provision appears to have been made for the receipt and delivery of mails; but early in the thirties Mr Charles Macfaull, who was the publisher of the "Perth Gazette" was appointed Postmaster, his remuneration consisting of the amount paid for the transmission of each letter."

Tamworth Country Music Festival

14th January—23rd January 2005.

Rostered on Eastern States Time, 15 WA telegraphists received telegraph traffic from the Telstra marquee in Tamworth over the 9 day event.

2 locations were staffed, Armadale Outpost was open for traffic on Tuesdays and weekends, Markalinga House was used for the other days.

Traffic received = 420 including overseas, split between:-
Armadale Outpost = 129 Markalinga House = 291.

By comparison in 2004 Armadale received 549 messages.

Yee-hah.

Eyre equipment demonstration at next meeting

At the forthcoming meeting on 21st Feb, Barrie Field will be displaying and demonstrating the equipment to be installed at Eyre before the end of the year. The equipment will be:

A morse code set with key, oscillator and sounder that the public can use to "have a go".

A novel sender where visitors to Eyre can press a red button and it will automatically send *'WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT*" in either radio morse or sounder morse switch-selectable.

An automatic morse sender which runs for about 40 minutes with a digital text display so visitors can see the text of morse being sent.

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I believe we should heartily applaud Barrie for his commitment to this commendable project. (Ed.)

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Meetings are held on the 3rd Monday in February, June and October each year in the Hyde Park Hotel North Perth.
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