The official newsletter of the Morsecodians Fraternity of Western Australia (Inc.)

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Morsecodeians

Keeping Morse-code

Alive

NEXT MEETING

The Italian Club

15th June 2009 10 am

Please note the time and date for our next get-together. Members and non-members welcome.

Thanks to API, our sponsor.
Problem: Insufficient lighting at a USA football game.

Solution. Someone with burning newspapers in each hand standing behind the reporter (left) who is relaying the story to the telegraphist using a jigger (right).

(camera flash creating temporary artificial light for photo)

This message was received by Telegraphist Sgt R.J. Williams 3409 whilst serving with the 52nd. Btn. in France. Better know as 'Jim' to his Post Office colleagues, he was a telegraphist in Kalgoorlie before joining the A.I.F. in 1915. After the war finished he resumed with the PMG and retired in 1955 as Postmaster Gr.5 Kalgoorlie after 50 years of service.

Morsecodian Phil McGrath types up a welcome telegram received for the Governor of NSW Her Excellency Prof. Marie Bashir from the morsecodians at the Tamworth Country Music Festival during her visit to the Eden Killer Whale Museum on 17th January 2009.

Link: http://www.killerwhalemuseum.com.au
Kalamunda History Village "Celebration Day" May 3rd 2009

Morsecodian staff on duty:- Charlie Spalding, Ken Knox, Don Tyler, Allan Greenslade and Brian Willis. Also attending were former Tg tech CTO Ron Silverlock (89 years old) and former PM Kala Robert Lodge.

The original post-office building was the operating location having been relocated from its original site on Railway Road/Mead St to the present location in the History village in 1975. It was a well supported event helped by good weather and a full programme for visitors to enjoy. Barrie Field’s new picnic set worked marvellously.

101 messages were handled with Ken staying on until the magical ‘ton’ was achieved!

Alice Springs Heritage week 18-24th April 2009

Morsecodians in attendance were: Alan Jolley, Brian Mullins, Ron McDonald, Leo Nette and ably assisted by Mal Gillies. Traffic figures. from Alice Springs: 464 — to Alice Springs 418.

Locally, to Col Hopkins telegraph office 52 — to Armadale outpost telegraph office 35. (who left the key open?)

This small electrical instrument (galvanometer) was manufactured in the 1860’s and is still in perfect working order. It is identical to the galvanometer used by Sir Charles Todd during the construction phase of the Overland Telegraph Line and is possibly the same instrument. Enquiries ... indicate this may be the world’s oldest working electrical meter.
RESTORING A SIMPLEX AUTO JIGGER

By Herman Willemsen VK2IXV Morsecodian; Morse key collector; R/O on decommissioned destroyer (now a Museum ship) Vampire/VK2CCV; Former R/O and Manager OTC Coast Radio Stations.

In December 2008 I bought a Simplex Auto on eBay for $50. It was a useless wreck of a key and that is being an understatement. The bridge was buckled and most of its inners had gone, as the picture shows.

Missing were the pendulum’s bar, main-spring, weight, dot assembly and post. In addition the other missing items were the damper post’s screw-and-knurled nut, one spring, 3 knurled nuts and the long dot spring. It also featured a metal thumb piece. Its restoration took from December 2008 till March 2009. I replaced the metal thumb piece with a bakelite one, got rid of the rust on the base and then repainted it. I further replaced the cracked rubber feet, the dried-out insulating sleeves through the base, the dried-out rubber washers and some of my very clever telegraphy friends helped me to reproduce the other missing hardware.

As you can see from the picture, this Simplex Auto # 869 (birth date circa 1928) and apparently the third model of Leo Cohen’s standard Simplex Autos, now looks whole again, works like a charm and occupies a special place amongst my other Simplex Autos.

If you think that # 869 is an early Cohen, what about my # 186? It is one of Cohen’s first Simplex Autos. I would say its birth date is early 1920. Notice the 4 posts and the cut-out on the bridge. This cut-out allows access to a knurled nut-with-spring. This nut varies the tension on the dash-side, when the operator presses the handle to the left. I acquired this jigger in December 2008 from a key collector in Colombia South America.

It seems that Leo Cohen’s jiggers are known all over the world, although we know very little about Leo himself.

“Telegraph Wires” tee-shirt.

http://www.donestore.com/viewproduct.asp?productid=448&categoryid=49

On April 27th 2009, to honour Sam Morse’s birthday, the “GOOGLE” logo was replaced with:

The Picnic Set constructed by Barrie Field.
Turkey Creek. Opened 13.09.1897. Closed Thu 04.01.1978 by Mr AR (Tony) Shaw, Acting Senior Lines Officer, Port Hedland vice George McGowan.

In 1995 DOLA Geographic Names Section told me that place was renamed Turkey Creek (Warmun) 17.03.1980 & again renamed Warmun (Turkey Creek) 10.09.1990.

I met Tony Shaw in the 70s as we were then both working in North West Engineering Section for a few years.

I was appointed engineer Jan 1959. First posting was to Northern Engineering Div, Midland Junction.

DE was Merv Mundy. One day Merv came out of his office, steaming. He had receive a call from the Editor of "On The Line" at Melbourne HQ asking for detail of one of Ron Langridge’s escapades, of which he (Merv) had no knowledge. As had been told to Merv - some time previous line was down TCk- Wyndham due to heavy flooding. RL was alleged to have tied a pole & other items to his horse, and took off for Wyndham. Merv was livid on two counts (a) that if this had happened he should have been made aware of the matter at the time & (b) Especially - the previous year someone had got lost in the north & there was a very large scale search to locate missing person. Merv then issued a directive, of which he had a copy, that no PMG man was to travel on his own unless certain protocols were followed. RL had done his own thing!! Nobody then knew, or wanted to know, how true story was.

Lot of comment - knowing RL we wouldn't be surprised.

In the 1980s I was dealing with the then Editor of "On The Line" about -whatever- & asked him if he had any records of Ron & horse as above. Came back to me a few days later advising couldn't find anything.

In 1955 I was a Senior Tech at Donnybrook, which took in Balingup. The PM there was a jolly fellow, he & his wife treated me well. Can't remember his name but he was always called Mac. [Ed: Kenneth Osborne McLoughlin]

Happened to mention he was at Wyndham from 1923, I was interested as my father was a policeman there 1916-1921 (& Dby, FitzXing to 1923). Mac told me that during his stay, Wyndham PO held the national record for the amount of money dispatched through teleg MOs.

This was the only quick way for the many employees of meatworks to send money to family etc down south. Thus the Wyn PO held large sums of cash at times. I asked Mac 'weren't you concerned someone would break into PO and steal this cash?' His reply was simply along the lines of ‘where could anybody go from there with the loot?’

I appreciated his comment at the time, but even more so when I got to see Wyndham myself in the 1970s.

During the time I was at Mid Jct with Northern Div was not possible to talk north of Carnarvon or Meeka, was all telegram or snail mail. Had a lot of good fun one way or the other during that time. Was looking after a team of linemen under Maurie Hubbard laying the cables PO to RX & TX for the Perth-Derby radio- telephone & also undergrounding local subs lines.

From the time MH lodged a telegram at D it was on my Mid Jct PO upstairs desk in 20 mins. When this had gone on for a couple of weeks was remarking on this Brian Riessen with whom I shared an office. Brian gave me a knowing look & commented along the lines 'look at who is at the head of the stairs'. It was our typist, Jennie, who was very attractive, ergo the telegram boys never dawdled in delivering tgs from Dby & others I was dealing with. The R/T was cut over couple of months after I moved on as Nor Div relocated to Geraldton August 1959.

PS: Must admit to some curiosity re the comment re L Carroll at Katanning.

If you enjoyed reading the recollections from John M as I did, why not put pen to paper / fingers to the keyboard and pass your recollections and memories to the editor for the next Messenger newsletter.

Memories are precious, don't lose 'em—share 'em!
John Morgan 1911 – 2009

Jack Morgan was born in Moora on the 13th September 1911. He was one of eight children, whose Welsh parents ran a small dairy. At the age of six he helped an older brother to deliver milk in Moora until the school bell chimed indicating it was time to attend school.

On his 14th birthday Jack started work at the Moora Post Office and with the help of Monty Taylor soon became proficient in the art of Morse Telegraphy. Appointments were hard to obtain in those days and Jack did relief work for several years at various town in WA before being accepted as a Telegraphist in Training in 1935. He then moved to Shenton Park from where he would often cycle to work.

Jack spent all his working life of 45 years in Telegraphs apart from a few years when he was an Instructor in the Postal Training School. Known affectionately as ‘Black Jack’ he was very methodical and meticulous in his ways and many of our members can be thankful to him for his dedicated instruction on Traffic and Technical Telegraphy. He was also a first class hand on the Morse key, something he never lost even when well into his eighties.

Jack rose through the ranks to Supervisor Grade 3 (later designated Traffic Officer) and under the Assistant Superintendent of Telegraphs was responsible for the staffing and operation of the Chief Telegraph Office. He retired in 1971. In 1972 Jack was invested with the Imperial Service Medal for service to the Commonwealth.

As a young man Jack was a good all round athlete and played football in Moora and later with the Postal Institute team in Perth. Both Jack and his second wife Gwen were keen tennis players and golfers and played at the Onslow Park Tennis Club in Shenton Park and Gosnells Golf Club. Later, they moved to Walkiki and joined the Rockingham Golf and Tennis Clubs. After Gwen passed away, Jack moved to Tanby Hall Aged Care Facility where his love of music came to the fore, especially hymns and Welsh songs, but he also had quite a collection of all types of music. After 4 years at Tanby, Jack passed peacefully away early this year at the age of 97. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him. GB Jack.

LET US NOT FORGET WHO GAVE US TELEGRAPHY, THE TELEGRAPH PIONEERS.

McGowan, Samuel Walker (1829 - 1887)

Born in Ireland, emigrated to Canada with his parents, gained practical experience with several telegraph companies in North America. Sailed to Australia, arriving in Melbourne in 1853 intending to form a private company to provide telegraphic linkage between Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide as well as the goldfields which fell through. In September 1853 tenders were called for the construction of an experimental line between Melbourne and Williamstown and McGowan’s was accepted. On 1 March 1854 he was appointed general superintendent of the Electric Telegraph Department of Victoria and two days later the first telegraph service south of the equator was opened. By December the experimental line had been extended to Geelong. In 1857 all main centres were connected and lines radiated from Melbourne westwards to Portland and northwards to the Murray River, and by the end of October telegraph communication between those three capital cities flowed freely.

From Australian Dictionary of Biography.
Coming Events 2009

August 2nd  Northern Corridor Radio Group's WA Hamfest.
Cyril Jackson Rec Centre, Fisher St, Ashfield.  Telegraph Display.

August 30th  Australia Post Bi-Centenary - Telegraph Display

Sep-Oct  Perth Royal Show - See Roster.

Proposed Perth Royal Show Roster

Sat. 26th  Greenslade*  Jolley*  Keays*  Tyler D*  Spalding  Macdonald
Sun. 27th  Bright*  Hopkins*  Knox*  Fathers  Rice  Stephens
Mon. 28th  Allender*  Edmunds*  Field  Ravenscroft  Whitney  Squires
Tues 29th  Greenslade*  Jolley*  Spear  Fathers  Gregan
Wed. 30th  Meadowcroft*  Pitts*  Willis*  Tyler R  Darroch  Gregan
Thur. 1st  Bright*  Hopkins*  Keays*  Field  Sinclair
Fri. 2nd  Greenslade*  Tyler D*  Murray  Ravenscroft  McShane
Sat. 3rd  Meadowcroft*  Edmunds*  Allender*  Sinclair  Spalding  Whitney

This is a preliminary roster. If any member wishes to change, delete or have their name included, please ring Ken Knox on 9450-5060.
A more final roster will be posted with gate passes in September. *=