



MORSECODIANS MESSENGER



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

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Morsecodians



*Keeping Morse-code
Alive*

Alice Springs – Heritage Week – 2007



From "Centralian Advocate" 27/4/2007

This year's reactivating of the Alice Springs Old Telegraph Station, hosted by the Sydney Morsecodians as their contribution to the NT Heritage Week activities, took place from the 21st to 29th April. Invited to attend at the Alice were:- Tom Collins (Sydney) John Houlder (Canberra) Phil McGrath (Eden) and our own Terry Keays.

Statistically, this year's traffic was a bit down on previous years, being 830 sent and 387 received at Alice Springs. The Friday night, however, was only 10 messages down on 2006, although only 500 people attended this year compared to 800 last year. On the Friday night, 67 messages were sent to Armadale (staffed by Ken Knox, Allan Greenslade, Alan Jolley and Charlie Spalding), whilst Colin Hopkins and Jeff Pitts received 96 at Col's place.

Being able to use WA after Sydney Powerhouse Museum hours, made life very easy for the Alice Springs continent on the final Saturday.

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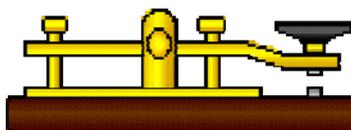
NEXT MEETING

**Hyde Park Hotel
18th Jun 2007 10 am**

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

api leisure lifestyle

Thanks to API, our sponsor.



Alice Springs – Heritage Week – 2007

continued.

After a moderately busy day settling in at the Telegraph Station on Saturday 21st, the Morsecodians were hosted by the local National Trust folk, along with Parks and Wildlife representatives, to a reception held in the exercise yard of the old gaol in town, this being the oldest surviving building within the townsite.

The function was organised as an official opening to Heritage Week and also to recognise the joint contributions of the Morsecodians and staff from Parks and Wildlife at the Old Telegraph Station over the years—particularly as the theme for this year's NT Heritage Week was 'Communications'.

On the Tuesday night, Parks and Wildlife staff, in recognition of their association with Morsecodians over the years, hosted a function in the courtyard of the old barracks building at the Telegraph Station, during which we were plied with plenty of lovely food, plus drinks.

During the evening Stuart Traynor, currently Manager of both the Darwin Wildlife Park and the Botanical Gardens (but who in 1989 was an interpretive officer with Parks and Wildlife in Alice Springs—and was then and remains now an ardent supporter of the Morsecodians efforts) made a presentation to the Morsecodians in recognition of their contribution in every year from and including 1989.

The item presented was the top of an oppenheimer pole complete with insulator and wire from the O/T line, embedded into a wooden cross-arm upon which is a plaque dedicated to the Morsecodians 1989—2007. John Houlder suitably responded to the presentation, being at pains to stress Morsecodians appreciation of the ongoing assistance so readily forthcoming from Parks and Wildlife staff.



When invited to speak, I gave a brief outline of the significance to WA of our tapping into the O/T line in 1877 plus the unusual telegraph events regarding the NIGIS operation and the Monte Bello atomic tests. Back in the Alice, we were again hosted by Parks and Wildlife to pizza and drinks around the campfire after 'GB' on Friday night. Thanks Rick!

My report would be incomplete without mentioning the invaluable back-up support provided to us all by John Houlder's wife, Jan. Whether it be trips to the shops for supplies for 'the bachelors', ferrying lunches around at busy times, Jan was always there when needed. Thanks from us all, Jan!!

Both socially and 'work-wise', my trip to Alice Springs is one of those things in life one wouldn't want to miss the opportunity of enjoying. The camaraderie with people from like backgrounds and with like interests (even in politics) was stimulating and most enjoyable. I have stored away many happy memories to enjoy for a long time to come.

Terry Keys



John Houlder on duty.

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The Heritage Council of Western Australia placed a notice in local newspapers in April 2007, advising that awards would be made available to organisations who had shown outstanding commitment and contribution to heritage conservation in Western Australia. The awards would also highlight the value of preserving this important part of our culture.

As a result of this notice, an application was submitted on behalf of The Morsecodians Fraternity of Western Australia (Inc).

We have now been advised that we have been nominated for a 2007 Heritage Council Award, which will be presented at a special awards ceremony to be held on May 20th.

A report of the presentation ceremony to be attended by President Terry and his wife Kath will be given in the next Messenger.

Link. http://www.heritage.wa.gov.au/n_awards.html



Souvenir TELEGRAM

This Telegram has been transmitted by Morse Code
to various Morsecodian Volunteers through out Australia



The 9 participants in WA sharing receiving traffic after 5 pm EST were Gus Allender, Richie Bright, Peter Edmunds, Barrie Field, Col Hopkins, Alan Jolley, Terry Keays, Ken Knox and John Meadowcroft.

They received approximately 200 telegrams.

Should there be others requiring reimbursements for postage, please contact Ken Knox prior to upcoming meeting.

Make your own sounder.

Design and construct a telegraph sounder—copiously illustrated with videos and text.

The link below also explains how to get the sounder you've just constructed to tap out upto-the-minute news reports direct from the internet.

<http://steampunkworkshop.com/telegraph.shtml>



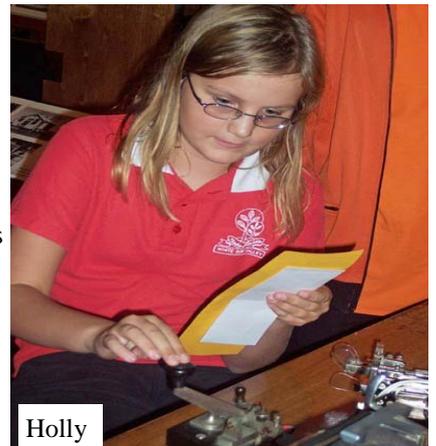
Inspect a morse code exhibition —Melville Discovery Centre 2007

A group of gifted primary school students are using dots and dashes to connect the past with the present at Melville Discovery Centre (MDC).

As part of the PEAC (Primary Extension Academic Challenge) program, eight students from seven local primary schools have researched and prepared an exhibition about the history of Morse Code, which will be displayed at MDC from 20 April to 20 July. The exhibition includes artefacts, photos, posters, worksheets and a pamphlet.

City of Melville Mayor Katherine Jackson opened the exhibition and said "The students studied and documented the development and uses of Morse Code during their 10-week PEAC course titled *Night at the Museum*. They went behind the scenes at Wireless Hill Telecommunications Museum with local Morsecodians Ken Knox and Alan Jolley and Local History Officer Suzanne Hope to learn about Morse Code. Wireless Hill was the site of the Applecross Wireless Station, built by the Federal Government in 1912. The station used Morse Code to communicate with ships off the Australian coast and played a key telecommunications link between Western Australia, other parts of Australia and the world."

Ken and Alan then demonstrated how morse is used in transmitting and receiving.



Mayor Jackson said through the Morse Code project, the students had gained experience in collecting information, collating and presenting a story. "In doing this, they have learnt more about their communities, local history and the significance of Wireless Hill," she said, adding "The exhibition will be stored away and re-exhibited in 2012 for the Centenary of Wireless Hill."

Link: <http://www.melvillecity.com.au/news-folder/inspect-a-morse-code-exhibition-at-melville-discovery-centre>

Thanks to the City of Melville for allowing the "*Messenger*" to use text and photo of Holly in this article.

75th anniversary of the original opening of the Sydney Harbour bridge - 18/3/2007



In 1932, on the original opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, a telegraph line was working from North Pylon to South Pylon (no Morsecodians then so it must have been a rostered job for the day).

In 2007, on the 75th anniversary, Sydney Morsecodians offered to man a morse line across the bridge.

Their offer was declined so they set up a spot on Observatory Hill (which is at the south end of the bridge) and passed traffic lodged by the public between 2 tables—suitably named '*North Pylon*' and '*South Pylon*'.

Jack Gibson joined the throng to walk over the bridge and he hustled up some traffic. They had a very busy day.

Congrats to the Sydney Morsecodians for a well designed form and envelope.

Ken Knox.

ROYAL SHOW - 2007

The Royal Agricultural Show is fast approaching and once again we have been asked to provide an exhibition of Morse Telegraphy there. Unfortunately our numbers are steadily dwindling and it is becoming increasingly difficult to staff this very popular display. Last year we also had to contend with members being sick.

To operate effectively we need at least four members (preferably five) on each of the eight show days and this means that of our current list of volunteers, most will have to attend on at least three days or more each.

Even if your operating skills are not what they used to be, you can still provide valuable assistance with the hundreds of people who visit our stand each day. Visitors often need help with composing messages or just with explanations and this is very difficult to do whilst operating the circuit. (The older we get the better we used to be).

If you are able to assist in any way, even if only for one day, please contact Ken Knox on 08 9450 5069 and he will roster you on a day which suits you.

The Royal Show runs from Saturday 29th September until Saturday 6th October inclusive and free entry passes to the show grounds will be provided.

PS - please advise Ken as early as possible if available as names are required for issue of free passes.

The NIGIS operation.

At our February meeting, life member **Ric Crameri** lamented the reluctance of the family of our late member **Reg Thomas** to allow Fraternity officials to at least peruse and then possibly, assuming their agreement, to copy a document Reg had prepared regarding the NIGIS operation conducted from Carnarvon during WWII.

Ric's words, reproduced below, probably reflect the view of most members:-

"A half century ago I was fortunate to be working with Reg (R.A.N.) Thomas at Carnarvon post office. Reg participated in the famous NIGIS operation and he showed me a report on the operation. It was a superb report and typical of Reg's exactness.

Ever since the formation of the Morsecodians Fraternity in Western Australia, I have considered that the report would be a most suitable record for the Fraternity to have as an historic reminder of the famous post office morse operation as well as an eminently suitable dedication of our brother postmaster Reg.

Reg was a highly respected officer. He was the only WA postmaster to receive the PMG Order of Merit. Perhaps his family might one day allow the Fraternity to honour Reg in this manner? "

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Reg's member history file briefly touches the subject:

"At Carnarvon during 1945 I was one of three operators selected to transmit by morse direct to the GPO Melbourne, secret information monitored by a radio post established by the Netherlands Indies Information Service on the first floor of the Port Hotel in Carnarvon. Extended periods on the morse key often resulted in an aching arm or shoulder as near perfect morse signals were neseccary (*sp*) to transmit the foreign language."

signed R.A.N Thomas

NETHERLANDS INDIES GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICE.

CARNARVON.

DATE OF INCEPTION OF SERVICE.

12th. Dec'r. '43.

TOTAL NO. OF WORDS TRANSMITTED TO

31st. May 1945, 1,013,902. Wds.

TOTAL AMOUNT OF REVENUE DERIVED THEREFROM.

£4315-19-2d.

VALE—Tom Sargent.

Tom passed away on the 10th of February 2007, age 70.

He commenced his service with the Department as a Telegraph Messenger at Armadale and received his formal telegraphist training in 1954. Apart from a short spell in Kalgoorlie, Tom spent the years 1954 to 1979 in the Perth CTO as a telegraphist and then later on as a supervisor. In 1979 he transferred to the position of OIC of the SPAN network, a teleprinter system that distributed telephone work orders to the various sections of Telecom. It was from this position that Tom retired in 1989. Tom was well known for his skill as a morse operator. Probably what is less well known however, was his ability to repair and restore telegraph equipment and many of the exhibits at the Armadale Replica Post Office are the result of his painstaking work and attention to detail. He was particularly good with jiggers and was able to coax many a faulty machine back into good working order.

Tom was always very supportive of Morsecodian activities and he was prepared to go anywhere at any time to assist in making our projects a success. His knowledge and enthusiasm will be missed by us all. Our sincere sympathy is extended to Teresa and family.

GB Tom



WALTER LEWIS DUNHAM

Born 12 September 1883 York

Died 23 May 1953 Bunbury

My Grandfather started his career in the York Post Office at the age of 16 years in December 1899 as a Cadet on an annual salary of 50 pounds.

I can remember him telling me that to get into the Post Office his father had to pay an amount of money.

1901 The records show in he was still at York.

1906 The records show in he is a Assistant at Broad Arrow the date of transfer apparently being 1 March 1901. In Wise's WA Post Office Directory he is listed as having the telephone on at Broad Arrow.

1907 He is an Assistant at Katanning, then to Eucla. Then he left Eucla and continued his cadetship at the Perth GPO and then he went to Eucla again.

1909 Now at Eucla. Walter is listed as a Telegraphist, also listed was Andrew, Archibald and John Cruikshank. Andrew (Andy) eventually married Ann Dunham (Dot). Of interest Andy Cruikshank eventually became Head of the Taxation Department in Western Australia. A L. Looney was listed as a witness at his wedding. I wonder whether he also worked in the Post Office.

Written by Jean Stallwood (nee Andrew) granddaughter of Walter Dunham Phone 9364 6708

More next issue

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Vice-President	John Meadowcroft	(08) 9386 6636
Secretary	Richie Bright	(08) 9276 6936
Asst. Secretary	Allan Greenslade	(08) 9390 5410

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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VALE— Ernest R. Tonkinson

It is with regret that we record the death of Ernest R. Tonkinson.

Ernie saw service in the metro area as well as in various country towns from Meekatharra in the north to Denmark in the south.

He retired from the position of Postmaster Narrogin and moved to Albany where he passed away recently aged 80.

Ernie was an outstanding sportsman excelling in football and cricket. During the period 1949-1952 he played football for Subiaco in the WAFL.

As a cricketer he was an automatic selection for the API interstate carnival team for many years and was deemed to have a permanent booking.

Ernie will be sadly missed by his colleagues who extend their sincere sympathy to his wife Grace and his family.

GB Ern.