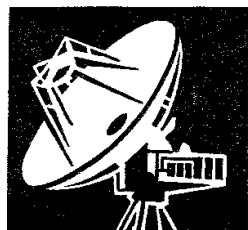


RESEARCH LAB REPORTER



PRODUCED BY RESEARCH LABORATORIES, 59 LITTLE COLLINS STREET, MELBOURNE

"RESEARCH LAB. REPORTER"

IN MEMORIAM

SIDNEY HERBERT WITT

the first Head of the Laboratories from 1923-1945, died suddenly on 28th June, 1973, aged 81 years.

ERIC PERCIVAL WRIGHT

immediate successor to the late Mr. Witt to head the Laboratories from 1945-1953, died suddenly on 25th July, 1973, aged 74 years.

Since their retirements, each had provided invaluable assistance in the preparation of the historical story of the Laboratories and their demise just prior to our Golden Jubilee celebrations has saddened us all.

We of the Laboratories extend our sincere sympathy to Mrs Witt, Mrs Wright and families in their very sad and sudden loss.

OUR GOLDEN JUBILEE

The events which marked our Golden Jubilee have now come to a close, and many will be relieved to settle down to our more usual routine. We can all take pride in the success of these events and most will agree in retrospect, that the effort was well worth while.

It was every gratifying to receive the compliments and congratulations of our visitors. These were delivered publicly by our Minister, the Director-General, and by the international and local speakers at the Symposium, and many other people from all corners of the telecommunications world complimented us on the excellence with which we displayed our activities during the Open Days.

In particular is the following letter from Mr Ken Witt, son of the late S.H. Witt:-

"Thank you very much for a remarkable presentation of the finest equipment available. My father would have been proud of you all. I quote his last sentence from his paper "International Aspects of Telecommunications", "One of the stimulating facts is the opportunity one has of meeting personally and working with some remarkable men and women".

Here also are a few quotes from some letters of congratulations given to illustrate my point.

"The inspection of some Research activities, the subject matter of the Seminar lectures, and the arrangements made for all events should be a cause for pride for all who participated." "It was refreshing to sense the feeling (of "belonging") amongst those demonstrated the many phases of Lab activity. With such people, I am sure that you and your modern adventurers can face the future with confidence." "A brief note to thank you and your staff for the excellent show you put on and for the way you looked after your guests can appreciate the time and effort put into your Open Days most grateful for the opportunity to see "inside" the Laboratories." "..... thank you for the opportunity to visit the Research Laboratories last week. This was my third visit over a

space of 25 years, and although I was able to visit only C and S in the time, I was amazed at the work displayed. It was coupled too with such a fine spirit and enthusiastic outlook by the fellows involved."

It was also pleasing to see old colleagues returning to the Laboratories and retaining their interest in the Laboratories in their retirement. Congratulations are sent to all staff, both in the Laboratories and elsewhere in the Department, who contributed to the success of our Golden Jubilee celebrations. There is no doubt that the public image of the Laboratories in particular, and of the Australian Post Office in general, has been enhanced by these events.

Golden Jubilee Birthdays

It is most appropriate during this period that we send greetings to the following who have already celebrated or are due to celebrate the golden jubilee anniversary of their birth: -

In chronological order

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 1. Hec Ruddell | 7. Harry Ellis |
| 2. Karl Engelhardt | 8. Jim Lucas |
| 3. Otto Lobert | 9. Bob Kett |
| 4. Dick Slade | 10. Les Murfett |
| 5. Alan O'Rourke | 11. Gerry Flatau |
| 6. Ian Dew | 12. Rollo Brett |

We also send birthday greetings to one lady member of the Labs. whose name we do not publish. She knows and we know but at least the age of chivalry is not dead.

Our Golden Jubilee year seems an appropriate time to publish some stories of the early and more recent days of the Laboratories when it appeared that the staff not only worked hard but also, at times, played hard. For these following stories, I am indebted to both "old timers" in the Labs. and several of our retired officers who have taken the time either to write or telephone me.

* * * *

One particularly long field exercise produced many rolls of recorder chart. These charts together with the sheets of graphical analysis were placed carefully into a cardboard box in the rear of the vehicle used to transport the party from their 'digs' to the field site. On their arrival the boys were stunned to find only the empty box. So began the most intensive and dramatic paper chase, or rather search, in the history of the Labs as miles of roadside scrub country was scoured. Every piece of paper was meticulously checked (and what a variety there was). Ultimately the graphs etc. were located but more than one staff member aged several years during those few hours.

* * * *

In the early 30's in the Frequency Standards area due to the lack of a suitable oven, a refrigerator was obtained for the purpose of housing specific items of equipment which required to be maintained at atmospheric pressure. In order that this equipment was kept under close temperature control the refrigerator was placed in an inconspicuous area of the laboratory where the engineer-in-charge recorded punctual readings twice per day, early in the morning and late in the afternoon. Now there was a rugged character in the area who was interested in having a glass of amber tonic from time to time and of course in those days refrigeration in the home was somewhat of a luxury.

Therefore this character deposited his rations in the lab. refrigerator but would take them out just prior to the daily readings. Was it any wonder that the engineer was perplexed at the variations in temperature that occurred continuously.

* * * *

At Mount Oberon, Wilson's Promontory, the research project team slept soundly in the radio link station at the top of the summit. The typical roaring winter gale was at its height with rain, 70 knot winds and sleet whilst inside the only noise audible above the gale was the rhythmic thump of the heavy diesel engine supplying power. Outside the isolated "thing" was rocking back and forth in anger. The following morning, the staff on a customary visit observed that the "thing" was gone. It was discovered that the little wooden hut (without occupant) had gone over the sheer drop of the mountain which explains why to this day the trees and shrubs grow very green and healthy.

* * * *

In the 40's humidity cabinets weren't as common as they are now; so the Physics groups were apt to make do with a galvanised bucket of water and an electric immersion heater. On Friday evenings it was off with the Main Switch and home. On one occasion an enthusiastic radio engineer came in on Saturday and worked all day in the adjoining room, turning off his switches prior to returning home. Shortly afterwards, a building guard (peace officer - this was war time) tracking down a burning smell, discovered a red hot bucket slowly descending through the floor boards of the top floor into the ceiling below.

* * * *

There may be some still with us who remember the engineer who had the fluorescent lights in his office at Poster House changed to pink so they would match his peaches and cream complexion.

Not so many years ago a passer-by in the corridor at Block A noticed the late Bill Otto, Bill Williamson and Otto Lobert sitting in various poses staring silently at a weird piece of equipment. Several hours later the same passer-by perceived that they had not changed positions. When asked the reason, the reply was "It just won't laze".

* * * *

On a remote Bass Strait island the propagation team was celebrating the successful conclusion of a particularly arduous field trial. The venue was the ramshackle hostelry. The revels were quite decorous at first but deteriorated rapidly as the night went on and on the arrival of an old spotlight kangaroo shooter, the conspiratorial plan was put into action. The project leader, a most popular type, broached, not wisely, the "top shelf" and around midnight was gently helped to his cot, an ancient brass bedstead type. Next morning, on his awakening, to his horror he was confronted with five white leghorns perched asleep on the foot of his bedstead whilst tucked in cosily beside him was a full grown, very furry, kangaroo decked out in a set of tattered old pyjamas. He swore off the demon rum for quite some time.

* * * *

In the old Model Shop in the early 30's Geoff Mitchell was working on top of a 6ft. step ladder while another member of the Shop was polishing a three pronged toasting fork on a high speed buff wheel some distance away. Suddenly the fork caught in the buff wheel. The cry went out "everybody duck". Geoff dropped to the floor in a flash, fortunately, as the fork sped like an arrow and became imbedded into the step ladder. Robin Hood couldn't have done better.

* * * *

During the early 40's many of the Labs. members were engaged in developing prototype radar equipment. This work included a transmitter which operated at a higher frequency than was generally in use at the time, and at a very high peak power output.

Strong rumours were circulating that exposure to the resultant radiation would cause sterility; so you could imagine the relief when it became known that additions were expected in the Pitkethly, Killey and other families of those in the groups carrying out this work.

* * * *

Alan Adamson was installing equipment on a searchlight at the St. Kilda Cricket Ground in conjunction with the Department of Army. Jim Fisher was in charge of the project and had given Alan "the rounds of the Kitchen" a few days earlier because he had gone ahead and completed a particular job before Jim had had the opportunity to inspect the work. Alan was advised to do only what he was told and nothing more until authorised. Subsequently he went off to instal carbons in the searchlight arc system with specific instructions to do nothing until the Army Officer arrived. Well that's exactly what Alan did. Unfortunately the Army Officer had overlooked the appointment and after reclining in the barracks all day Alan rang Jim Fisher at 4.45 p.m. and acquainted him with the situation. Initially Jim exploded but soon saw the funny side especially when Alan drew his attention to the fact that he had followed his instructions to the T.

* * * *

After a long haul from Melbourne the heavily laden convoy of Lab vehicles finally rolled to a stop in the darkness at a well known agricultural college. This was to be their home for the next six weeks whilst conducting tests from the top of nearby Mt. Major. Imagine their surprise when, instead of the usual welcome, they were met by sullen hostile faces and the greeting "B.....y P.M.G." It wasn't until later they learned that the Radio Licensing boys had made a recent surprise visit on the college to discover a large number of unlicensed receivers. However various radios began to trickle back into circulation during the next few days from hiding places in ceilings, haystacks, etc. and ultimately the Labs staff were accepted by the students as being only remotely related to the Licensing Branch.

The old Propagation Division (now Unguided Media) staff have many tales to relate of incidents at remote stations and on journeys hither and thither. They could tell of a plane missed because of a faulty ignition lock on a Lab vehicle; of people awaiting for days without a change of clothing, because their luggage had been off-loaded at Canberra instead of Sydney, or at Sydney instead of Casino:

There was one occasion when a certain member of the staff slept through the air terminal announcement and his luggage went to Adelaide thence on the train to Cook whilst he managed finally to reach Adelaide without even a tooth brush.

* * * *

Some of life's unpredictable minor diversions were the telephone calls from the watchmen (particularly during the middle of the night). A few samples:-

The front door came off its hinges when he slammed it on the way out. Or, worse still, he had left all his great bunches of keys inside and couldn't gain access to retrieve them.

* * * *

A chap who says his name is is here practising his trombone(?), has he permission? (he didn't, but I'm sure his neighbours would be pleased).

* * * *

The third floor is full of smoke which is coming from a beaker on the sink; will it explode?

* * * *

There's a loud hum pervading the building, sounds like a bomb at the ready (turned out to be a noisy circuit breaker in the main switchboard).

* * * *

A large tank of water on the second floor is overflowing, flooding the floor and trickling through onto the radio receivers on the floor below.

He can't get into the building to do his check, because, in his haste, he's broken off his key in the lock or someone has vandalised the lock with a match.

* * * *

There was the night the watching contractors lost their man. Against instructions he had used the lift, which broke down, and he wasn't found until morning (that was before the emergency telephone was installed in the lift).

* * * *

Not so long ago, there was a call from the Police at Russell Street, - "We have a young lady here who is in rather a state, after working overtime she left her newly acquired diamond engagement ring in the washroom. Her fiance was persuaded not to try to climb in a window, so she could be let in to search". That particular trip into town concluded with a very radiant little blonde displaying a large diamond (very quickly insured) and happy relief on the face of the fiance.

* * * *

All the way from the U.K. comes the following story from Harry Hyamson whom many will recall from his days in the Radio Section (old style!) of the Labs in 1950's and early 60's. Harry is now with G.E.C. in Coventry.

"I now live in the English Midlands so that there's a gulf of distance as well as time from my days as a young engineer in the Research Laboratories. In casting my mind back I can still raise an inward smile at some of my experiences doing propagation measurements on radio hops which were later to be used in the broadband network. Perhaps these experiences helped to convey to me that qualities additional to those learnt in the course of academic training are sometimes needed to achieve a practical result. For example, the qualities of ingenuity and improvisation: in struggling with excessive interference from a badly screened microwave signal

generator on Mt. Gray, Goulburn, my friend Murray Lane overcame the problem by encasing the offending instrument within a handy empty four gallon kerosene tin, soldering up all joints. Having accomplished this feat, the 3 cm received signal level was still unaccountably low by many decibels. All our efforts were defeated until at least we discovered the reason; a spider had made its home within a wave-guide around the receiver mixer crystal! Perhaps the central heating afforded by the microwave oscillator energy was attractive to the enterprising arachnid!

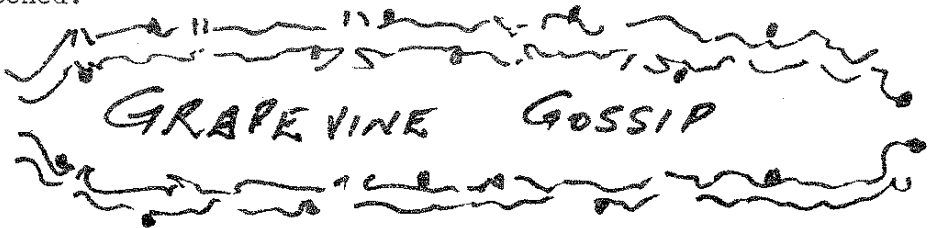
Another trying incident occurred on a mountain north of Launceston, a possible southern terminal for the Bass Strait system. We had worked hard to get our VHF receiving station established in time for signal recording to commence on Friday evening and run over the weekend; this was significant because of the limited time available. All was well by the late afternoon - antenna aligned, receiver calibrated only the recorder pen to fill with ink when calamity struck. In transferring the pen to the recorder it slipped from cold fingers down a hole about one inch in diameter and two feet deep which had been made by a stake, now removed. In the darkening winter's gloom, illumined only by a flickering kerosene lamp we dug down - but the pen had vanished; and we had no spare. It was a thoroughly dejected and silent engineer and technician who drove the twenty odd miles back to Launceston where I went to the trunk station and got through to my Divisional Engineer in Melbourne over the King Island radio link. After reporting the disaster and asking for a replacement pen as soon as possible I braced myself for a "roasting". Instead of this, my boss was understanding and encouraging; and my loyalty was raised a notch."

* * * *

In conclusion, perhaps this tale is most appropriate as it concerns our Open Days 1969. Rollo Brett asked the organisers to send an invitation to our ex-Director-General, F.P. O'Grady to attend to the VIP session but he omitted to tell them that F.P. O'G was residing in South Australia. Our people look up the telephone directory and found an F. O'Grady living in Balwyn and sent him an invitation, which in due course he accepted.

On the day of the VIP session, a little man turned up and collected Mr. F. O'Grady's name tag and joined the party. The Departmental people were somewhat surprised, as you could imagine, but managed to retain their composure and treated him as if he was the other F. O'Grady.

Subsequently it was discovered that he held a minor executive position in the textile industry but the Post Office had certainly won a friend even if he was a little puzzled about how it all happened.



According to Kevin Curley, the most popular exhibit during "Open Days" was Kevin Bartlett (for his autograph).

* * * *

There is not a theatre in Melbourne that could have matched the pulchritude of the Labs hostesses in attendance at the Symposium held at the Union Building, Melbourne University. Carmel Amott and Chris Emmett form Block A and the Voice/Ear team of Chris Marshall Judi Adshead, Jan Barber and Kerrie Jones (You lucky fella! Ron Wood).

To top off the hospitality for the V.I.P. and I.P. visits we had Virginia Wells, Emma Morandi and Ann Blakely as hat check girls in the F.P. O'Grady Reading Room.

* * * *

Before we close the newsround on the Golden Jubilee Celebrations we would be amiss if we did not recognise the great efforts of Mary Evans as Girl Friday to Graeme Kidd. Mary did a splendid job prior to and during the Open Days and now commences her maternity leave from C.O.B. 31.8.73.

We wish you well Mary and eagerly await the big news in October.

* * * *

Some people have all the luck! Carla Borst had to go to Perth for six weeks to provide relief for the Library Officer in that State.

* * * *

Congratulations to Harvey Sabine, Solid State and Quantum Electronics whose thesis "Surface Acoustic Wave Scattering at a Periodically Mass-loaded Surface" has been accepted for his Ph.D.

* * * *

Also we heartily congratulate Greg WONG-HEE, Design (Special Projects). Greg's design for a universal swivel vice won him the Special Honourable Mention Certificate in the 1973 Apprentice Week Craftsmanship Awards.

* * * *

Ian Macfarlane, Devices and Techniques, is vitally concerned with the metric conversion - particularly with paper sizes. When lunch wraps go metric how will this affect his eight rounds of morning tea.

* * * *

ANNUAL BALL

Aylesbury Court, Brighton, was packed as usual to celebrate the Ball of the Golden Jubilee of the Laboratories. The official guests were Mr. and Mrs Harris, Mr. and Mrs Turnbull and Mr and Mrs Gravell. Unfortunately the Director-General had picked up a winter virus and he and Mrs Lane were last minute withdrawals. First prize of the evening went to Mrs Max Cassidy at Rollo Brett's table and when the same table won two bottles of wine at supper there were loud voices that the draw was rigged. At 2.00 a.m. the floor was

still packed with dancers and the band obliged by rendering one extra bracket to conclude the function. The Ball Committee already has about 100 bookings for the 1974 Ball which, incidentally, will be held on 2nd August next year.

* * * *

CLASSIFIEDS

WANTED URGENTLY

Oh where Oh where can the library books be
They were issued but can't be located
The total thats missing is 183
Leaving the library staff very frustrated.

Contact : Merl Cuzens 7935

* * * *

WANTED TO SELL

Kitchen Table, Octagonal, 4ft. diameter, antiqued top, brown gold - \$20.00.

Contact : Ashley Conroy 7904

* * * *

240V Cassette Transport, Stereo Heads record, replay and erase
P.C. Board and hardware - \$37.00. O.N.O.

Contact : Dave Thompson 7045

MARRIAGES

Unguided Media Ian Ridge to Imelda Murphy.

(Impetuous young gent followed Imelda to New Zealand to win her hand).

* * * *

Block T Admin Group Geoff Gebhardt to Sue Harris.

(A quiet lad, took the big step last May - we only found out late July).

* * * *

Electrical Standards Colin Flood to Gloria Broadway.

* * * *

Electrical Standards Peter Loy to Sylvano Giras.

* * * *

BIRTHS

Procurement Group to Lee and Michael Shanahan, a daughter Louise Anne.

* * * *

APPRECIATION

Graeme Monaghan (ex-ADP Block F) Admin. Services Block A wishes to thank his many colleagues in the Labs. for their messages of condolence following the death of his father.

* * * *

Welcome to:-

Garth Lamb Vacation Student from U.K.
 Peter Garde Engineer Class 1, Switching & Signalling
 Alva Wheeler Assistant Grade 1
 Pat Van Dyk Steno-Secretary
 Don Pritchard Building Clerk Block W

* * * *

Farewell to:-

Heather Wilson Typist, who decided it was too long a day commuting from Cranbourne and has accepted a "country" position closer to home.

John Lewis Who has been promoted as Engineer Class 3, Engineering Management Systems. John's technical known-how and humour will be sadly missed. For the time being, however, he will still be partly attached to us in his role of Metric Executive Officer.

Roman Olesnicky Who transferred to WRE South Australia for domestic reasons.

Lawry Melton Who after 12 months L.W.O.P. and a lot of deliberation has resigned to continue in his present post at the Southampton University and at the same time enjoy the regular contact with both families. Lawry's knowledge and his ever ready assistance are a great loss to the Labs but there is a faint hope we may still see him back again late 1975.

Bob Evans The happy-go-lucky redhead who was offsider to Alva Allen. Bob has accepted a more lucrative position, closer to home.

$$x^2 + y^2 =$$

?

16

1928

$\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{10} =$ Postwork? Pours $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4}$

1. With thanks(?) to Max Casley. (7622S)

Find the number x and y in the following sequence: -
110, 20, 12, x, 6, y,

* * * *

2. From Peter Hicks. (7333)

A man has 10 pairs of shoes. He takes out four shoes at random. What is the possibility of him getting at least one matching pair?

* * * *

3. Smith said to Jones, "I just bought four tyres at \$21.78 a piece, and I noted a curious thing. The total was \$87.12, the price of a tyre in reverse order." "Isn't that a coincidence?" said Jones. "The other day I bought some radiators (no, not one or four) and I remarked the same thing."

How much does a radiator cost and how many did Jones buy?

* * * *

EDITOR'S NOTE

This note introduces your new Editor, Ted Scates, who is well known to most of you. I take this opportunity to say farewell to those I could not see personally before I leave to take up duty in the National Telecommunications Plan Sub-Division. I'll certainly miss the atmosphere and co-operation generated within the Labs.

Cheers,
Ashley Conroy
Ashley Conroy.