



December 1968



December 1972



Keeping the Memory Alive

Vol 11 December 2013

THE TRACKERS'

C R O N I C L E

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45th Anniversary Reunion Dinner

Saturday, 19th July 2014

It's closer than you think.

Bridgeleigh Reception Centre, Wanneroo, WA

Tickets, @ \$50 per head,
have been on sale from November 2013.

I know that sounds a bit premature,
but I have to find a \$500 deposit by January.

An order form is attached / enclosed.

LOS



Max Garth

October 31 2013

Aged 83

Mentor to fishermen

Loyal friend to many



Between 1965 and 1975 I worked at the NASA Tracking Station at Browns Range, Carnarvon, Western Australia. During those years I was part of the ground support team for the Gemini and Apollo series of NASA space missions...

The highest point of my life is not anything to do with fishing, although that was pretty heady, but was being part of the support team for the Apollo 11 mission when man stepped onto the moon for the first time. That was history, and a very significant bit of history at that. In my opinion it was the greatest achievement of the human race. That event, man's first real venture into space, surpassed everything else; the development of language and writing and the invention of the wheel or, and this takes some tossing, Mr Kreh's "*Deceiver*". I heard, and saw, that "*One small step for man, a giant leap for mankind*" real time on the communications link...

"*The Angling Art of Fly Fishing in Saltwater*". —by Max Garth

A high spot for Carnarvon sport fishing in 1971 was a real team effort - an international triumph by a team of Trackers fishing in big launches skippered and owned by locals. "*It all began when the ... Tracking Station at Ascension Island challenged the Bermuda Tracking Station to a game fishing contest. Bermuda, sitting on one of the best fishing grounds in the world, passed the challenge along ... Soon the teletypes began to run hot as one station after another accepted the challenge*".

Goldstone asked for a handicap as the water in their river ran "*several feet under the surface*" rather like the Gascoyne River in Carnarvon. Honeysuckle Creek declined because the trout they could catch would "*be too small even for the bait bucket*". Hawaii reported its status as "*GO for PSADM*" (Piscatorial Search and Destroy Mission)...

"*Carnarvon and Apollo - One giant leap for a town*". — by Paul Dench and Alison Gregg

Whereabouts

As a result of Paul Dench supplying his "staffing list", augmented courtesy Brian Milne, the "Whereabouts" table of those for whom we have no contact details has expanded to more than one page. Thanks to those who have sent updates.

C Abott	Cheryl? Dixon	Mike Keen
Eric Ainsworth	L Donkin	Jim Keenan
Gay Albon	John Draper	John Kelman
Bill Arbery	Mike Dresser	Roy Mallinson
Allan Barber	Bruce Duff	Bob Marr
John (Allan) Barber	I Dunleavy	Keith Mathieson
Matt Barber	Dave Elliot	Alec Matthews
Keith Barnard	J Erickson	K McCarson
Barrow	Ian Few	Ian McDonald
Deidre Beaumont	Ian Findlay	S McDonald
Elizabeth Beckett	G Francis	Frank McGregor
Keith Beveridge	Ben Franklin	Eileen McLaughlan
Michael Billings	David Froom	Don McLellan
G Bond	Jamie Gardiner	Nola Meiklejohn (O'Byrne)
S Boyce	L Gardner	R Miller
Bill Boyle	S Garner	Ray Mills
B Bradley	G Carrick	Marilyn Milner (Gobby)
Phil Brindley	C George	John Mogg
Hans Britz	Joe George	Sharon Morgan (Todd)
Dave Brooks	Peter Hardwicke	J Murray
T.F.A Brown	Ron Harmes	Dennis Naylor
W Brown	Anne Harvey (Brookes)	Gloria Neal
J Burdett	D Hatch	Ellie Nichols
R Burdett	Gail Heileman	K Elton Nickerson
Robert Burns	Stan Hills	Graham Nielsen
Joy Cameron	Ernie Hindley	John Noble
Geoff Cardwell	Dave Hine	? O'Brien
Brian Clifford	A Holgate	Joan Oats
Keith Clifton-James	Phyllis Hook (Watson)	W Oliver
Barbara Cobcroft	J Hopkins	Denis Owens
Jim Crossland	Vivienne Lawer (Hopper)	John Paddon
Noel Cunningham	Deidre Howard	Diane Pitman (Housley)
F Dawes	B Hughes	John Platten
Andrew Dempster	B Hunter	Gerry Plummer
Jean DeVis	D Hutchins	D Powell
Marilyn Dick	Ian Jones	M.J.K Power
Olive Dick	Vera Kastropil	Wendy Puccinelli
Neville Dippell	John Keane	Lorna Quinn

The quest continues; the list has got a bit shorter, thanks to George Allen et al.

I have been given information concerning the possible whereabouts of a few of these, but so far have not been successful in obtaining, or confirming, details. The Reunion Dinner brought out some missing persons, but there are also a few who do not wish to be contacted.

Whereabouts ctd.

Roger Ramsden	George Sefton-Bellion	Alan Thomas
A Rees	D Selby	Christine Thomas
Dave Rendell	Ron Shand	Howard Thomas
Frank Rice	Fred Sharland	Don Thompson
Doug Richards	? Sheehan	Jack Thompson
D Richardson	Jeff Shuttleworth	Patsy Thompson (Nolan)
Harry Richmond	Ray Skender	Larry Tomkins
Ralp Richmond	Lyn Smart (Willis)	Frank Toomey
Dave Rickards	J Smith	Mike Travell
G Riley	George Small	Ernst Uhl
Brian Robinson	P Smith	Tony Vingerhoets
Lynne Rosser	Roger Smith	Dave Walker
Ted Rosser	Dave Standbury	Mrs B Ward
Lindsay Sage	John Stanton	Tom Ward
Stewart Sands	Bill Smythe	N Wardle
Ron Sargeant	Hazel Snook (Howse)	A Watermeyer
Bob Scott	Barbara Stephenson (Vernon)	Irene West
Lorraine Scott-Malcolm (Erlandsen)	Barbara Teahan	Bernie Wilbourne
Michael Scott-Malcolm	Barbara Teasdale	Garnet Wilmott
Russell Schwarzer	Des Terrill	Brian Wilson
Dorcas Sefton-Bellion		Ray Zatorski

Catch the Buzz

The "Catch the Buzz!" DVDs are now available for sale at the museum. Cost is \$22.00 plus postage. It features:



- Carnarvon Airport Welcome;
- Kids Q & A;
- Cocktail Party, which includes Buzz's inspirational speech, and
- Opening of museum

It is a great memento if you were there; if you weren't ...you'll wish you were! But at least now you'll feel part of one of Carnarvon's biggest events.

Please order through our website at:

<http://www.carnarvonmuseum.org.au/buzz.html>



From A Carnarvon Viewpoint - ctd.

Gemini III

The first Gemini manned flight.

24 March 1965 AEST

By Hamish Lindsay

Picked up by the USS Lake Champlain after its 19 minute sub-orbital flight, the engineers found the spacecraft and its contents in good shape. Modifications to the Titan rocket's fuel distribution system dampened the violent oscillations that had been experienced just after launch, so now Gemini was ready to fly man. The first mission was planned to be Gemini III, with Gus Grissom and John Young.

The crew.

Originally Deke Slayton had chosen Alan Shepard to command this flight with Tom Stafford as Pilot, but in May 1963 Shepard went down with Ménière's Syndrome; excessive fluid pressure in his left inner ear which caused dizziness, ringing, vomiting, and sometimes dropped him to the floor. So he was grounded, and joined Slayton organising the astronaut corps, but determined to get back on flight status as soon as possible. He became somewhat moody and unpredictable and became known as the Icy Commander or Smilin' Al according to his mood. Gaye Alford, his secretary, would warn callers which mood to expect by hanging either a scowling picture or a cheerful portrait outside his door.

Slayton announced that Gus Grissom would command Gemini III, with John Young as his pilot just after the GLV-1 trial flight was declared a success.

Virgil Ivan "Gus" Grissom. Aged 38 for this flight, Grissom was born on 3 April 1926 in the small town of Mitchell, Indiana. He graduated from the Mitchell High School and received a BSc. in Mechanical Engineering from Purdue University. In 1952 he flew 100 combat missions in Korea. In April 1959 he was selected as one of the original Mercury 7 astronauts. He was the second American to fly in space in a 15 minute sub-orbital flight in the Mercury Project. He nearly drowned when the hatch blew off his spacecraft after landing, and he had to swim for his life. The rescue team were busy trying to salvage the spacecraft before it sank, and ignored the frantically waving, sinking astronaut; luckily he was rescued in the nick of time by a helicopter that spotted his predicament. This Gemini flight made him the first astronaut to fly in space twice. He logged more than 4,600 flying time, 3500 of them in jets. He was tragically killed in the Apollo 1 fire on 27 January 1967.

John Watts Young. Aged 34 years for this flight, Young was born on 24 September 1930 in San Francisco. He attended Orlando High School, Florida, and received his BSc. in aeronautical engineering with highest honours from Georgia Institute of Technology in 1952. He was a naval officer, serving on a destroyer in the Korean War, a test pilot and aeronautical engineer. He joined NASA in 1962, specializing in environmental control systems, pressure suits, and survival gear.

From Gemini III he went on to the longest career of any astronaut, with two Gemini missions, twice to the Moon in Apollo and two Shuttle flights. He was Chief of the Astronaut Office from 1974 to 1987. He retired from NASA in December 2004. Young has logged more than 15,000 hours flying time in props, jets, helicopters, rocket jets, and his six space flights totalled 835 hours.

Gemini III's Call Sign Molly Brown.

Following his near drowning episode in the second Mercury manned flight, Grissom was granted permission to call his spacecraft *Molly Brown* after a Titanic lady survivor and the stage show *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*. Grissom said, "This time nothing's going to sink out from under us." Grissom's spacecraft was the first and last one to be named in the Gemini Program. NASA officials were aghast at the choice of name, saying it lacked dignity, but when they heard his second choice was *Titanic* they promptly agreed to *Molly Brown*.

To be continued

The Carnarvon Space Festival ctd.

"Due to the seating order, Neil, Mike and me, I was the last to board the Command Module. While Neil and Mike took the elevator up to the top to enter the spacecraft I stood two flights down... alone... on the gantry. I could see the sunrise coming up over the waves of Cocoa Beach, and I thought that how wonderful my life had been up to this point..." general laughter from audience, "... and the many things that had worked out along the way to put me in the right position at the right time", **clapping from audience.**

"Now at 9.32 am the engines ignited with over 7 million pounds of thrust, to lift 3,000 tons of spacecraft, fuel, equipment and three astronauts. We were getting about seven inches to



the gallon", **general laughter.**

"As we cleared the gantry and rocketed skyward, we were pressed in our seats as the rapid acceleration of the rocket increased our body weight. Within three minutes we were 45 miles high, now experiencing four g's, travelling at nearly 6,500 miles an hour (10,460 kilometres an hour). By 12 minutes we were travelling at over 17,000 miles an hour (27,358 kilometres an hour), the speed required to orbit the Earth.

For three hours we orbited our home as we ran through checklists and

ensured everything was working. Then we fired the engine that accelerated us to 25,000 miles per hour (40,232 kilometres per hour) on a trajectory bound for the Moon.

On the eight day round trip the three of us lived in the space capsule about the size of a standard automobile interior. On day three we fired our engine to slow us down for the Moon's gravity to capture us and put us into lunar orbit. Another tricky engine burn put us in the right orbit, now for landing. We'd estimated about a 60% chance of landing successfully, but with a 95% chance of returning home safely. We kind of liked that!

Thirteen orbits of the Moon later, on the morning of Sunday, July 20, 1969, Neil and I entered the lunar landing craft we had named the Eagle, and separated from the Command Module Columbia, where Mike remained.

Piloting our powered descent to the Moon's Sea of Tranquillity was the most complicated and critical aspect of the whole mission.



As we descended we saw that our landing site was full of boulders so we continued manoeuvring to find a safe area to land.

To be continued

WA's part in the moon shot

From a Supplement to Weekend News — Courtesy Jack Watson



"Reporter John Perry and photographer Phil Martin flew to Carnarvon to show the part WA will play in putting the first man on the moon.

THERE'S a cheeky speck of a bird in the middle of Brown Range among the sand hills, who parks himself on a \$22 million space-age tracking station and calls 'DIDya get drrunk . . . DIDya get drrunk?' until he's either hoarse or fed up.

He's bedded down tonight, somewhere amid the mammoth dish antennae, the snap-blinking red and amber strobe lights which mark Carnarvon Tracking Station.

Strung beads of light glow in the town across the swamp. A dog yips now and then among the plantations. Cheerful noise, car headlamps and the odd shout mark the whereabouts of an extrovert Sandhurst pub with its entourage of bearded, barefoot whites and shiny Aborigines.

This division of life is dramatic.

One side enjoys darts, a beer-damp bar counter and uninhibited repartee. The other half breathes through air-conditioned lungs, strictly disciplined and working almost silently to split-second timing dictated by an atomic clock.

A dog squats in the back of a mud-spattered utility outside the pub, chewing determinedly at a slab of raw, still bloody meat.

And somewhere in space, three men are shooting for the moon ...

The moon. Tonight it will be a thin sliver of silver-if you can see it at all. It will set long before midnight. Somewhere on that thin slice, on Monday afternoon, should

step 38-year-old U.S. Navy Commander Neil Armstrong; the first Man on the Moon.

Those drinkers down at the tin-roofed Sandhurst probably don't take much heed of the fact that a few miles from their half-empty glasses is a vital link in a chain of command and communication with Armstrong and his fellow-moon-stepper Ed Aldrin.

Phil Martin and I spent two days and a night with the Carnarvon crew while they were at pre-mission readiness for Apollo 11. On the operational side of the 'Dallas City Limits' sign in the main block's corridor, we saw and heard the station's electronic heartbeat.

Born in June 1964, the Carnarvon Tracking Station has grown like Topsy to become one of the biggest tracking stations in a NASA network enmeshing the world. It cost \$2.25 million to carve this place out of low sandhills west of Carnarvon town. Gear worth \$20 million has been shifted in and it takes about \$1.75 million a year to make it tick.

Come with us now, and see what happens at Carnarvon when men venture into space ...

Nerve centre of the complex is the Telemetry and Control block, with a 30ft-span dish antenna looming outside.

On the walls inside are 'Thanks a lot, Carnarvon,' autographed colored pictures, signed by some of the astronauts who have left their hand-prints in concrete slabs near a futuristic fountain on the station's front lawn."

To be continued

The Fisherman Who Rode a Horse

Continuation of an extract from the autobiography of Ken Watters.

Half way through one track of this satellite Mr. Simons our engineer walked into the receiver van and saw that I was not in auto-track and before I could say anything he reached across and pushed the auto-track button. We lost the satellite signal and had to obtain permission from *Woomera* to track the next pass in manual mode.

The technicians that had come out from *England* were mostly on three year contracts and if they were to leave before their time was up they had to repay all of their own relocation costs. John Sharples our resident comedian and cartoonist had eight months of his contract to go when he decided he wanted to leave. He sent his wife back to *England* then proceeded to try and have himself fired.

Every morning we would arrive at work and race up to the huge white boards at the entrance to the crew room and at the entrance to the *T&C Administration* building to find what new political/anti *NASA*/anti-establishment cartoons had appeared during the night. Dick Simons our immediate superior had the promised office built adjacent to our crew room and this featured prominently in most cartoons. One cartoon that really has stuck in my memory was of the outside walls of this office absolutely covered with cartoons and Mr. Simons hanging out the door calling, "*Sharples get your backside in here on the double*".

It seemed that administration was a wake up to John's intentions to have himself fired and let him get away with absolute murder. In the end John just refused to come to work. As we drove past his flat on the highway we could see all these flags flying with *anti-NASA* slogans posted all over the fence facing the road. It was eventually agreed that Admin would give John six months reduction in his contract and he came back to work for another month before departing for *England*. He was real fun to work with after that, he doubled his efforts at being the resident clown. He was up the antenna one day taking a turn at changing the polarity and all we could hear in our headsets was a running commentary on the surrounding scenery.

"*To the North of me I can see*", a long pause, "*Nothing*".

"*To the South of me I can see*", a long pause, "*Nothing*".

"*To the East of me I can see*", a long pause, "*Nothing*".

"*To the West of me I can see*", a long pause, "*Nothing*".

To be continued

Social Club News - February 1969

SOCIAL NEWS

We extend a very warm 'welcome' to our new Trackers. They are:-
The more interesting half first)

Deidre Beaumont	-	Range & Range Rate
Vera Kastropil	-	SPAN
Evonne Martell	-	Computers
Janette Radford	-	Comms
Rosemary Moran	-	SPAN
Peta Findlater	-	Range & Range Rate
Verica Milanovic	-	Range & Range Rate

(The other half)

Eugene Fagan	-	Telemetry
Gary Leach	-	Facilities
Ralph Richmond	-	Facilities
Tony Vingerhoets	-	Facilities
Mike Keen	-	USB
Colin Foster	-	USB
John Parkinson	-	Range & Range Rate
Jim Cleary	-	USB
Peter Gardines	-	Space Comms

"GONE TO GREENER PASTURES"

Paula Horn - left the Station for a very good reason!
She has just given birth to a daughter,
KATRINA, Mother and child are doing very
well, (it is well known that Dad spent a
few anxious days a while ago:)

Bill Hoare - Left at the end of 1968, Is now working
in Kwinana.

Pam Lewis - Finally managed to drag herself away from
the Station after many years of service.
Everyone wishes her all the best for the
future.

Peter Kent - got restless and managed to get himself
transferred to North Ryde.

Neil McBain - returned to the metropolis, and recently
informed us by telegram that he is the proud
Dad of a prospective Statesman, footballer,
cricketer, etc. Of course, we wish them all
the best too. (We shall be watching the
headlines in regard to Junior:)

To be continued

Recollections ctd.

By Alan Gilham

One of the first missions we undertook was to gather information from a Saturn rocket on the behaviour of rocket fuel when in orbit. The TV pictures we obtained had a surreal quality about them especially when in free fall an 'ullage' rocket was fired to send the fuel to the rocket engines.

When we were given our first Lunar Orbiter mission it was quite a thrilling experience made more memorable when at a distance of 25,000 nautical miles the other radars on site lost contact and we announced that "USB was still in contact" and remained so until it passed round the other side of the moon. This more than made up for the Moonraker comments!!

At about this time I was asked to see if a device could be made to check for any discrepancies in the Pseudo Random Number ranging equipment when we had Lunar Missions. I thought about this and came up with some circuitry made of the standard logical circuits used. I never used it myself being on leave when it was used but apparently it functioned OK and did pick out generated errors successfully, which was a good job since I could not remember how I had worked it out!

We were allocated leave, expenses paid to Perth twice a year and a long distance trip once a year so we usually took ourselves off to Perth for a week staying in what was then The Terminal Motor Lodge and watching Star Trek on television, what luxury! There was no television reception in Carnarvon although I recall in Fong's Chinese emporium there was one which showed mostly interference patterns although I gather occasionally they could actually see a program.

On one holiday we toured the South West as far as Albany and the karri forests, I actually climbed the 220ft "Gloucester Tree" which had a fire lookout post on the top, and how I managed to crawl into the hut on the top I don't know but the view was worth it. We camped in the Porongorups near to Castle Rock; this photograph taken there still graces our sitting room.



Carnarvon was classed as a desert area since it had less than an inch of rain per year but in 1966 we had a cyclone whose centre passed some 80 miles north and brought with it torrential rain.

We battened down the house and waited, when we discovered it was not going to be too traumatic we went out on to the verandah and watched the rain teeming down, I suddenly realised it was pure water cascading down the pipes and filled a kettle and some saucepans with it and made some tea, it tasted delicious. The tap water in Carnarvon was pumped up from the river bed and tasted of "red earth" the rain water by contrast was veritable nectar.

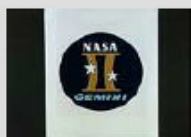
When the rain ceased we went, in company with many other townspeople to ten-mile bridge to watch the river flood.



The flood water carried a huge amount of debris with it consisting of all manner of trees and sundry small animals. The flood left enough water depth for us to use the river as a swimming area for quite a few weeks, and then it dwindled into a small pool by the pumping station.

To be continued

KEEPING THE MEMORY ALIVE



Carnarvon Tracking Station 1964 - 1975



Present Day

[Click for full size](#)

Mick and Sue Coffey's Carnarvon Steel Supplies of Cornish St Carnarvon fabricated and donated the sign

Signwriting generously donated by W&K Painting of Egan St, Carnarvon

Photograph by Phil Youd - Edited by Terence Kierans

[Click here to commence entry to the original station](#)

My sincere thanks to all of those who have contributed to the website so far;
listed at: http://crotrak.com/thank_you.htm.

A call goes out, yet again, for material. I can arrange copying, scanning, whatever, so as to get them uploaded to our website, or published in The CRONicle; you need have no fears regarding their safety.

LOS




Rosemary Williams (née Moran)

Passed away
September 2013



Keeping the Memory Alive

*"And from the crew of Apollo 8,
we close with good night, good luck, a Merry Christmas,
and God bless all of you - all of you on the good Earth."
— Frank Borman*



*A very merry Christmas
and
a healthy and prosperous New Year
to you and your families
from the editor.*

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