



September 1966



Keeping the Memory Alive

Vol 8 September 2010

**THE TRACKERS' CROCKLE**

We've now run out of NASA manned space flight missions of the sixties and seventies, so until we can come up with a new, suitable and lasting, theme (suggestions welcomed) the newsletter will be somewhat patchwork in content.

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Terence (Terry) Kierans  
Editor  
CRO Trackers  
PO Box 93  
QUINNS ROCKS WA 6030  
AUSTRALIA

Tel: 61 8 9304 6983  
email: tk@crotrak.com  
<http://crotrak.com>

## More Patches That Never Flew

*By kind permission of Eugene Dorr.*

### LEM TEST ARTICLE 8

LEM TEST ARTICLE 8 (LTA-8) was the Lunar Module complement of the 2TV-1 CSM.

It was used to conduct a simulated flight in Space Environment Simulation Laboratory chamber B more or less during the period 2TV-1 was being tested in chamber A. However, LTA-8 was not crewed during the entire course of the spacecraft test.

The assigned astronauts for this test were Jim Irwin and John Bull; but before the test was started, Bull developed sinus problems associated with pressure changes. He was replaced by his backup, Gerry Gibbons, a consulting pilot for the LM prime contractor, Grumman Aircraft.

Even though this crew change took place the patch was never altered.



An embroidered reproduction. The blue background of this patch is unembroidered velour.

No fireproof silica fibre cloth (beta cloth) version of this patch was made; so the embroidered versions that were worn had to be removed during the test.



Jim Irwin (right) and Gerry Gibbons wearing the LTA-8 patch, which is shorter than the reproduction shown above.  
*NASA photo*

## Whereabouts

**A**s 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	Jim Crossland	Geoff Hammond
Eric Ainsworth	Noel Cunningham	R Hanes
Gay Albon	F Dawes	Bea Hardman
Bill Arbery	Peter Dawson	Peter Hardwicke
Allan Barber	Peter Del Fante	Ron Harmes
John (Allan) Barber	Andrew Dempster	Anne Harvey (Brookes)
Matt Barber	Jean DeVis	D Hatch
Keith Barnard	Marilyn Dick	Gail Heileman
Barrow	Olive Dick	Stan Hills
Deidre Beaumont	Phil Dickinson	Ernie Hindley
Elizabeth Beckett	Neville Dippell	Dave Hine
Beveridge	Cheryl?Dixon	
Michael Billings	L Donkin	A Holgate
Denis Black	John Draper	Phyllis Hook (Watson)
G Bond	Mike Dresser	J Hopkins
S Boyce	Bruce Duff	Vivienne Hopper
Bill Boyle	I Dunleavy	Ted Hopper (Lawer)
B Bradley	Bob Dwyer	Deidre Howard
Phil Brindley	Dave Elliot	B Hughes
Hans Britz	J Erickson	B Hunter
Dave Brooks	Ross Eyre	D Hutchins
Charlie Brown	Martin Fenney	Ian Jones
T.F.A Brown	Ian Few	S ??? Judd
W Brown	Ian Findlay	Vera Kastropil
J Burdett	G Francis	John Keane
R Burdett	Ben Franklin	Mike Keen
Martin Burgess	David Froom	Jim Keenan
Robert Burns	Don Frost	John Kelman
Joe Cabone	Jamie Gardiner	Joy King
Joy Cameron	L Gardner	M King
Geoff Cardwell	S Garner	L King
G Carrick	C George	Roy Kjellgren
Brian Clarke	Joe George	Gloria Klarie
Brian Clifford	J Gerschwitz	Peter Kloppenburg
Keith Clifton-James	G Goodlace	Henry Larsen
Barbara Cobcroft	L Gore	Russ Leighton
Bill Comstock	Lyn Grant	G Linney
?? Coombs	Claude Granville	F Lippett
Ron Cottis	Bob Halse	Alex Liu

*The quest continues; the list never seems to get very much shorter.*

*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.

Gloria Lyon-Roberts Ross MacDonald John Mahaffey Peter Maine Roy Mallinson Bob Marr Keith Mathieson Alec Matthews K McCarson Ian McDonald S McDonald Frank McGregor Eileen McLaughlan Don McLellan Nola Meiklejohn (O'Byrne) R Miller Bill Mills Ray Mills Marilyn Milner (Gobby) John Mogg Sharon Morgan (Todd) J Murray Dennis Naylor Gloria Neal Ellie Nichols K Elton Nickerson Graham Nielsen John Noble ? O'Brien Joan Oats W Oliver Denis Owens John Paddon ??? Mrs Parkinson John Parkinson Alan Paterson ? Paull Mike Pender Wendy Petersen	Don Pettitt T Phillips Diane Pitman (Housley) John Platten Gerry Plummer D Powell M.J.K Power Wendy Puccinelli Lorna Quinn Roger Ramsden A Rees Dave Rendell Frank Rice Doug Richards D Richardson Harry Richmond Ralph Richmond Dave Rickards G Riley Brian Robinson Lynne Rosser Ted Rosser Lindsay Sage Stewart Sands Ron Sargeant Russell Schwarzer Bob Scott Michael Scott-Malcolm Lorraine Scott-Malcolm (Erlandsen) Dorcas Sefton-Bellion George Sefton-Bellion D Selby Ron Shand Fred Sharland E Sharples ? Sheehan Jeff Shuttleworth P Sims Ray Skender	George Small Lyn Smart (Willis) J Smith Mary Smith P Smith Roger Smith Bill Smythe Hazel Snook (Howse) Dave Standbury John Stanton Alex Stevenson Barbara Stephenson (Vernon) Barbara Teahan Barbara Teasdale Des Terrill Alan Thomas Christine Thomas Howard Thomas Don Thompson Jack Thompson Patsy Thompson (Nolan) L Tink Larry Tomkins Frank Toomey Mike Travell Norma Turner Ernst Uhl Tony Vingerhoets Dave Walker Mrs B Ward Tom Ward N Wardle A Watermeyer Irene West Bernie Wilbourne Garnet Wilmott Brian Wilson Ray Zatorski
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## Where Are They Now



### John Preece

I formally retired on the 7th of July after 40 years on Perth airport.

After two years in the CRO wire room (greatest job I ever had), I left and joined the Perth Airport Fire service in June 70. Then Airport Admin as a Control Centre Operator in the New International Airport and later Terminal Duty Manger from October 1986 until the day I retired..

## Where Are They Now - #2

### A Little Scruffy Note

Picture this... it's August '65 and the second year physics class at UWA are thinking of what to do over the summer after the exams in November. The most popular option is to earn some money by 'working on the wheat bins'. Somehow this wasn't for me and I seek out a small wooden building, tucked away at the south end of the campus, majestically called 'The UWA Careers Centre'. There, on various tables and a huge pin board are booklets, leaflets and announcements of career and postgraduate research opportunities the world over (and even some summer vacation jobs in the Wheatbelt).

But, a little hand-written, scruffy note fighting for visibility in the bottom right hand corner of the pin board catches my eye: 'Wanted - physics or engineering student to assist with space missions in Carnarvon - see Careers Advisor'. Wow! Can this be true? It isn't going to be as well paid as the wheat bins, but it's going to be much more exciting.

Three months later I was flying to Carnarvon with Mickey Mouse Airlines - sorry, MacRobertson Miller Airways - and the start of a great adventure. To my surprise, another physics student - third year Lorna Quinn - had also been accepted for a summer placement. Neither of us had made it known to any other students that we had applied.

Not long after we arrived at CRO, the Gemini VI-A (Wally Schirra and Tom Stafford) and Gemini VII (Jim Lovell and Frank Borman) missions were launched to perform the first rendezvous in Earth orbit. After Christmas, I did a Radio Interference Survey Project (of sorts) in between chasing L\*\*\*e F\*\*\*\*\*d around the teleprinter room at every opportunity.

On 14th February, Australia went decimal and the general store in Carnarvon high street found it quite challenging - "I think you need a spiny headed anteater

for change, but I don't know what they look like mate".

All too soon, I was back in Perth for further studies, armed with a large collection of NASA acronyms - my favourite was CADFISS: Computation And Data Flow of Integrated Sub-Systems. I followed the flight of Gemini VIII (Armstrong and Scott) in March '66 with more than usual interest, and wanted more ...

After graduating, I worked at the Deep Space Network Station at Island Lagoon, near Woomera for three years, then became an expedition scientist in Antarctica for 12 months. (I would have stayed longer but the penguins were beginning to get good looking.)

After taking a postgraduate course in space dynamics in London, I joined the European Space Agency in Paris and Noordwijk (in The Netherlands); became the first 'space expert' to work in the Lloyds Insurance Market, and then became the Engineering Manager for the flight of the first British astronaut - to the MIR space station in May 1991.

In later years, I have become an academic at the University of Kent and The Open University; teaching space science and engineering and a unique course on 'space business'.

I am now working on a mission to the South Pole of the Moon, but with a difference. In these times of global recession and huge government deficits, it is unrealistic to expect approval of public spending on new space exploration initiatives, so we have to be radical in our thinking.

Before long, we hope to announce an opportunity for everyone - the world over - to contribute; even a spiny headed anteater or two would help us on our way, and I expect we will create some new acronyms. Watch this space!

*Rodney Buckland*

## LOS

### Harry Hermans

1922-2010

Harry passed away on August 14, one day short of his 88<sup>th</sup> birthday. The funeral was at Carnarvon Cemetery on Saturday 21 August.

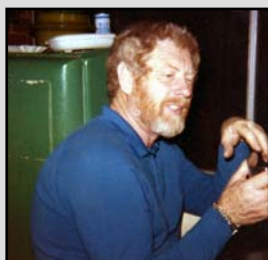
In 1963 Harry was lured from the prawning factory on Babbage Island to work at the Tracking Station in the early days of its establishment. During his stay, which lasted until the Station finally closed its doors, Harry exhibited an astronomical knowledge of the electrical distribution systems. He was a worthy recipient of the AWA 10-Year Service Award during the closing ceremony.

Harry's working life took off again at the Station when it was taken over by Radio Australia after Cyclone Tracy. His social life revolved around the Carnarvon Club, while it existed, and the AOOB.

## LOS

### Ron Ashford

1936-2010



Ron was born in Birmingham, United Kingdom and was evacuated to Bournemouth as a result of WW2.

He joined the army and was posted to Woomera in South Australia attached to the Joint Services Trials Unit (JSTU) during the period of missile testing. Whilst in Woomera he became known as "Mr Bear", a name that remained with him for the rest of his life.

He returned to the UK in 1968 before gaining an appointment with AWA at the Carnarvon Tracking Station (CRO 52). He was involved in the operations area with Apollo and Skylab missions, remaining in that position until the closure of the station in 1975.

Upon returning to Perth he joined "Television Broadcasting Communications" (TBC) fulfilling the role of technical administration for the broadcasting facilities in the Pilbara and Northern Territory.

His interest in personal computers led to him joining "Computer Age" as service manager. Following this he was employed at the Apple Centre, Perth. Uncle Ron's "Hints From The Work Bench" in-house magazine provided many solutions to users of Apple products.

In retirement years Ron, Jackie and his two sons resided in the scenic Roleystone hills where he built an A-frame home. His other interest was the environment, and as a result he joined Araluen Botanic Park as a valued volunteer.

His contribution was acknowledged with a memorial service to honour his life held on Saturday the 19th of June in the Rose Garden at Araluen.

*Courtesy Trevor Mosel*

## A Very Special Book Launch

*By Jim and Alison Gregg*

Saturday 5th June 2010 was a great day for ex-CRO Trackers and their supporters in Carnarvon. That night the Buffs Hall, scene of many a CRO Social Club triumph, was packed with Locals and returning Trackers, all there to celebrate the launch of a very special book—'*Carnarvon and Apollo: One Giant Leap for a Small Australian Town*', by Paul Dench and Alison Gregg.

So many Carnarvon friends had come to help us send the book on its way - and they'd brought friends, neighbours, family, old C'von hands and recent arrivals, with them, bringing the tally to about 130, despite unseasonal rain.

Celebrations had begun earlier with interviews on local radio and for local newspapers; and school visits to tell a new generation about that exciting time in Carnarvon's history.

Proceedings had begun earlier with interviews on local radio and for local newspapers; and school visits to tell a new generation about that exciting time in Carnarvon's history.

Proceedings were opened by Shire President Dudley Maslen speaking of the effect the Station had on the town. Then he proceeded to read to the multitude what he described as, 'A wonderful summary of those years' - in fact, the concluding chapter of the book. While an unconventional ploy, this proved an excellent guide to the book - and certainly encouraged people to buy it. He then invited Wilson Tuckey MP to carry out the formal launch.

Wilson spoke informatively and entertainingly about how it all started, and of the effects the Station and the Trackers had on the town. 'NASA's most successful orbiting vehicle' (a race-horse named St Mondray, jointly owned by Wilson and a group of Trackers) got a gong; as did the significant contribution of Trackers and their families to the social and sporting life of the town, and the outstanding technical achievements of the Station and its staff.

DE ACRO 06:05:2010

Re 'Carnarvon and Apollo'

Lift off @ L+0045.

On pad countdown hold at L-0020 due to PA systems.

Successful launch orbit achieved.

Jim

He concluded by congratulating authors Paul and Alison on the wonderful job they had made of producing a factual and entertaining book.

Both authors replied briefly, thanking the audience for being there, and acknowledging the help and support of many local individuals and groups - especially Carnarvon Shire Council and Carnarvon Rotary Club (who also catered for the launch), current and former Carnarvon residents, including Trackers, and many long-standing members of the Carnarvon community.

Complimentary copies were presented to local people who had been particularly supportive throughout the lengthy process of research, writing and finally publication - at last!

At the conclusion of a very happy and successful evening - and much to Wilson's surprise - Terry Cahill announced that Wilson had been made an Honorary Freeman of Carnarvon, and presented him with the certificate.

It was a fine conclusion to a most enjoyable event. The authors and their families remember their time in Carnarvon with great fondness and affection.

This special book launch among old friends brought many of those happy memories flooding back. Thanks so much to the Carnarvon community for making it possible.

## The Fisherman Who Rode a Horse

*Continuation of an extract from the autobiography of Ken Watters.*

The sections at the Carnarvon Tracking Station were:

- Q6 Radar. A large radar installation at the northern end of the site.
- Span. A Solar observatory near the guardhouse.
- Telemetry. A section within the T&C building.
- USB. The main command and operation transmitter and receiver for manned space flights. Also within the T&C building.
- R&RR. Scientific Tracking and Data Acquisition Network.
- Powerhouse. Separate buildings and workshops providing all the stations power requirements.

There were four large antennas. One at the Q6 Radar site and one at the T&C Building that were dish antennas similar to the antenna at the Australian owned and operated Overseas Telecommunications Corporation site which is the only remaining space tracking antenna still located at Carnarvon and we at R&RR had the remaining two. One was a large bedspread shaped antenna and the other consisted of two dishes one atop the other.

Dotted around the site were other smaller antenna arrays for sending and receiving telemetry and several very high towers that housed equipment similar to that in satellites used for calibration purposes.

The NASA Tracking Station occupied about two hundred acres on top of Browns Range immediately adjacent today's cemetery, about six miles from the town centre.

The R&R crew mixed very well both at work and socially. We seemed to have at least two social events each month, a party at one of the crew's houses once a fortnight and a Tracking Station Ball every third month at the old RAOB Hall.

The coming of the Tracking Station to Carnarvon gave the local economy a real big boost. There would have been at least two hundred employees directly employed by AWA, the stations operator, and along with their families these employees needed to be housed in town.

Areas such as Morgan Town and South Carnarvon that were formerly mangrove swamps, were being filled and new streets were being built to cater for the housing boom. At one time the Tracking Station was going to build its own swimming pool on the site but when the council learned of the hole being dug for the pool they approached the Tracking Station and a joint venture was arranged to build the pool in Carnarvon for the use of all Carnarvon residents. The hole on the Tracking Station site was filled with equipment surplus to requirements and covered over.

I settled into a life of pushing buttons, tuning receivers and taking notes. One of my duties was to change what is called the polarisation on the antenna.

*(To be continued)*



# A Very Special Book Launch Photographs



Wilson Tuckey



Some of the attendees at the launch

Photographs -  
Jim Gregg



Sabrina Dowling Giudici,  
Alison Gregg, Dudley Maslen,  
Wilson Tuckey & Paul Dench  
Sabrina is working very hard  
for the establishment of a  
Space Museum in Carnarvon.



Presenting Sue van Dongen  
with a book



Shire President makes  
presentation to Paul Dench

## LOS

### Geoff Hoad

Geoff Hoad passed way in Bingera NSW, several years ago, shortly after suffering a stroke.

He was a much respected mechanical fitter with Facilities—craftsman would be a better description of Geoff. He was equally skilled at delicate instrument work as with the overhaul of the heavy diesels, and many a time helped solve tricky problems.

He will be fondly remembered by those he helped in all departments.

Thanks to Jack Watson for the information.

*I only received this sad news shortly before going to print. — Editor*

## Social Club News December 1970

Page 14.

### "JIM"NASTICS AT Q-6

At odd times during the last few weeks, you may have observed objects, somewhat resembling large silver gooseberries or sea-mines, floating around in the Carnarvon skies.

These objects are, in fact, inflatable radar-reflective spheres known to the Network as JIMSPHERES, which are currently being released and tracked by the fearless mob at Q-6.

The FPQ-6 Radar, whose precision is matched only by the modesty of its personnel, tracks the Jimspheres from an altitude of 200 metres to the Jimspheres ceiling of 18 Kilometres (60,000 feet) and the tracking data is stored via the 4101C computer on to magnetic tape for the duration of the one hour track.

This data is sent, along with data from other ground stations throughout the world, to Marshall Space Flight Center at Goddard where a detailed analysis takes place. The resultant information yields wind shear, velocity and turbulence at various altitudes, this information being then used by designers of future rocket-propelled vehicles to ensure craft stability in the lower atmosphere. In particular for the proposed space shuttle project where the space vehicles will actually 'fly' through the lower atmosphere for recovery, this information is very important.

The technically minded might be interested in the dimensions etc. of the Jimspheres, so here they are:-

Material is aluminised mylar; Diameter when inflated is 2 metres, entire surface covered with conical roughness elements (398 in all), each of which has a base diameter of 3 inches and a height also of 3 inches.

Each sphere contains a lead ballast of 100 grams and two pressure-relief valves which ensure good stability and shape up to the Jimsphere ceiling altitude and also prevent explosion.

*To be continued*

## KEEPING THE MEMORY ALIVE



### Carnarvon Tracking Station 1964 - 1975



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**M**y sincere thanks to all of those who have contributed to the website so far; listed at: [http://crotrak.com/thank\\_you.htm](http://crotrak.com/thank_you.htm) .

There is a lot to come including more photographs from the 40th Anniversary Reunion Dinner, courtesy Trevor Housley, Tito & Joan Teraci, Margaret Hall and Max Garth. Just wish I had more than two hands.

I can arrange copying, scanning, whatever, so as to get them up on our website; you need have no fears regarding their safety.

## The Saga - Progress

### Brochure Workshop

**W**hile Paul Dench, Alison and Jim Gregg, et al, were in Carnarvon for the book launch, Sabrina organised a workshop to continue development of a brochure for use at the Tourist Information Centre.

I understand that permission has been given to use the corner of Van Dongen Park as the location of a Commemorative Wall. Also the Interpretation Boards have arrived, but final text is still to be determined; modules drafted July 2009.

### Carnarvon Space and Technology Museum

In June the Shire signed up a structural and electrical engineer to come up with a suitable plan "...to make the OTC site and buildings safe for use as a museum...". Assurance has been given that completion will be by October.

One can but hope, since the mills of bureaucracy grind exceedingly slow.



Sabrina Dowling Giudici, Paul Dench, Robin Broad (née Gregg), Alison Gregg, Jim Gregg.

# Keeping the Memory Alive

## Subscription Renewal Form 2010-2011

Name: .....

Mailing address: .....

.....

E-mail address: .....

**Amount:** \$11.00 inc. GST (For non-Australian residents — \$AU10.00 , \$AU16.00 for airmail delivery)

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money order; or

Payable to TM & VA Kierans

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Credit card - **non-Australian residents only** - (Visa/MasterCard) —www.stratapay.com ref 100426593.

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