



December 1968



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Keeping the Memory Alive

Vol 16 December 2017

# THE TRACKERS' CROCNICLE

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## Memories of the Opening of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Phase of Museum

*By the Editor*

*And I'll share something with you. Apollo 10 was the flight just before Apollo 11. I tell Neil Armstrong "We painted the white line in the sky so you wouldn't get lost." <laughing> He didn't. He didn't.*

*Today is the - what's the date today?*

*Audience: 28th.*

*26th, two days ago on my sister's birthday, we returned from the moon on Apollo 10, 47 years ago I guess. So I don't know where the time went. But remember this also - and it's because of what you did and your contributions. Everyone - everyone - who went to the moon during Apollo, including Apollo 13, has come home to talk about it. And I can promise you, those of you who might see the movie tonight, and I hope you do see it - I want to say something about it.*

*[unintelligible] said something in that movie. He said "You know, we didn't think it was gonna be that way." We never talked about it. But we all knew that some day, some time we might lose someone along the way. Everybody who went to the moon has come home to talk about it.*



Eugene Cernan inside the lunar module on the moon after his second moonwalk of the mission. His spacesuit is covered with lunar dust.

*That's a testimonial to what we can do as human beings when we put it all together. We needed you; you needed us; and it*

*happened. I'm really here to say thank you.*

*Now I've got a couple of questions for you kids. Hey! Young man!*

*<Laughter>*

*GC: I'm gonna ask you a question. Are you ready for the question? Is there any gravity on the moon?*

*<laughter>*

*GC: Alright. Tell your mums and dads and parents, is there any gravity on the moon?*

*Kids: No.*

*GC: No? Okay. Why didn't I fall off the moon?*

*Kid: There's a little bit.*

*GC: Is there any gravity in Australia? We're upside down.*

*Kid: Yeah.*

*GC: We're upside down, down here, do you know that? There's one-sixth as much gravity on the moon as there is on the earth. That's why you see us bouncing around.*

*Another question. I really ought to ask mum and dad and grandparents because they may not know. Is there any air on the moon?*

*Kids: No.*

*GC: Any air on the moon?*

*Kids: No.*

*GC: This lady's shaking her head no. Well you're right. There isn't. That's why we were wearing those crazy space suits because we got the air in them that we could breathe and keep cool and everything.*

*Now, why am I here? Do you know why I'm here guys and gals? Huh? Do you know why?*

*Kid: Nah.*

*GC: Well I'm here to say hello and say thank you. But some of these gentlemen decided it was worthwhile putting a little movie together about my life and how as a young man or a young girl at your age, I had a dream.*

*To be continued*

## Whereabouts

**A**s a result of Paul Dench supplying his "staffing list", augmented courtesy the late Brian Milne, the "Whereabouts" table of those for whom we have no contact details has expanded to more than one page.

C Abott	Cheryl? Dixon	Ian Jones
Eric Ainsworth	L Donkin	Mike Keen
Gay Albon	John Draper	Jim Keenan
Bill Arbery	Mike Dresser	John Kelman
Allan Barber	Bruce Duff	Roy Mallinson
John (Allan) Barber	I Dunleavy	Bob Marr
Matt Barber	Dave Elliot	Keith Mathieson
Keith Barnard	J Erickson	Alec Matthews
Barrow	Ian Few	K McCarson
Deidre Beaumont	Ian Findlay	Ian McDonald
Elizabeth Beckett	G Francis	S McDonald
Keith Beveridge	Ben Franklin	Frank McGregor
Michael Billings	David Froom	Eileen McLaughlan
G Bond	Jamie Gardiner	Don McLellan
S Boyce	L Gardner	Nola Meiklejohn (O'Byrne)
B Bradley	S Garner	R Miller
Phil Brindley	G Carrick	Ray Mills
Hans Britz	C George	John Mogg
Dave Brooks	Joe George	Sharon Morgan (Todd)
T.F.A Brown	Richard Govern	J Murray
W Brown	Peter Hardwicke	Dennis Naylor
J Burdett	Ron Harmes	Gloria Neal
R Burdett	Anne Harvey (Brookes)	Ellie Nichols
Robert Burns	D Hatch	K Elton Nickerson
Joy Cameron	Gail Heileman	Graham Nielsen
Geoff Cardwell	Stan Hills	John Noble
Brian Clifford	Ernie Hindley	? O'Brien
Keith Clifton-James	Dave Hine	Joan Oats
Barbara Cobcroft	A Holgate	W Oliver

*The quest continues; the list has got a bit shorter, thanks to George Allen; Sue van Dongen 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 last 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	Christine Thomas
A Rees	D Selby	Howard Thomas
Dave Rendell	Ron Shand	Don Thompson
Frank Rice	Fred Sharland	Jack Thompson
Doug Richards (Nolan)	? Sheehan	Patsy Thompson
D Richardson	Jeff Shuttleworth	Les Tink*
Harry Richmond	Ray Skender	Larry Tomkins
Ralph Richmond	George Small	Frank Toomey
Dave Rickards	Lyn Smart (Willis)	Mike Travell
G Riley	J Smith	Ernst Uhl
Brian Robinson	P Smith	Tony Vingerhoets
Lynne Rosser	Roger Smith	Dave Walker
Ted Rosser	Bill Smythe	Mrs B Ward
Lindsay Sage	Hazel Snook (Howse)	Tom Ward
Stewart Sands	Dave Standbury	N Wardle
Ron Sargeant	John Stanton	A Watermeyer

## Quotations

*"We came all this way to explore the moon, and the most important thing is that we discovered the Earth."*  
~ Bill Anders

*"When you're finally up on the moon, looking back at the earth, all these differences and nationalistic traits are pretty well going to blend and you're going to get a concept that maybe this is really one world and why the hell can't we learn to live together like decent people?"*  
~ Frank Borman

*"When I circled the moon and looked back at Earth, my outlook on life and my viewpoint of Earth changed... Earth is a spaceship, just like Apollo - and just like Apollo, the crew must learn to live and work together. We must learn to manage the resources of this world with new imagination."*  
~ James Lovell

*"Test pilots have a litmus test for evaluating problems. When something goes wrong, they ask, "Is this thing still flying?" If the answer is yes, then there's no immediate danger, no need to overreact."*  
~ Alan Bean

*"Whoopee! Man, that may have been a small one for Neil, but it's a long one for me."*  
~ Pete Conrad

*"What this country needs is not just a change OF men, but a change IN men."*  
~ Dick Gordon

## From A Carnarvon Viewpoint - ctd.

### Gemini IV

#### America's first EVA

4 - 8 June 1965 AEST

McDivitt, *"No. As a matter of fact we really haven't had the time to do much."*

Grissom, *"You haven't had any time yet, have you?"*

McDivitt, *"It's a nice spacecraft though, Gus."*

#### **Carnarvon Third Pass**

On the third pass over Carnarvon at 3:57:34 GET (0513:33 AEST) McDivitt checked,

*"We have a GO to start decompression, is that right?"*

Fendell: *"That's affirmative for decompression and a GO for EVA."*

McDivitt: *"Roger. ....call again near Hawaii."*

At 4:07:42 GET (0523:41 AEST) McDivitt announced to White on the on-board recorder,

*"We're going to vent the cabin now."*

White answered, *"Yes."*

Just over three minutes later White said,

*"We're in a vacuum now and the right suit is holding at 4 (psi = 27.6 kPa) and the flow is satisfactory. I'm not overly warm."*

McDivitt, *"Roger. We've got the cabin vent valve open.....cabin (pressure) at zero. Time to unlock the hatch."*

The astronauts began preparations for the first American spacewalk after they were given the GO for EVA over Cape Canaveral by Capcom Gus Grissom.

After depressurizing the cabin they had trouble opening the hatch - it would not unlatch because a spring failed to compress. After yanking and poking around the hatch ratchet it suddenly cracked open. Then White found it as hard to open wide in zero-g as it was on the ground back on Earth.

As White prepared to climb out he asked,

*"Am I clobbering the switches, Jim?"*

McDivitt, *"Yes, you're really all over 'em, Ed."*

Gemini IV was 193 kilometres above Hawaii at 4:23:19 GET (0539:18 AEST) when McDivitt said,

*"We're going to put you on record so the whole world can hear this later on."*

White, *"All right."*

The smooth Public Affairs voice announced,

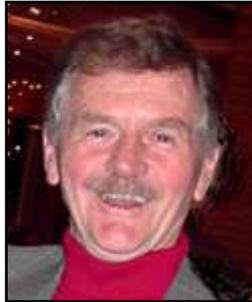
*"This is Gemini Control. Four hours and twenty four minutes into the mission. The Hawaii station has just established contact and the pilot, Jim McDivitt advises the cabin has been depressurised. It is reading zero. We are standing by for a GO from Hawaii to open the hatch.....White has opened the hatch.... he has stood up. McDivitt reports that White is standing on the seat."*

*To be continued*

## CROing about Carnarvon

*A personal reminiscence by John Ford.*

**I**n that event the duty of the barman was to vault across the counter into the thick of it and break it up, hopefully with minimal loss of dignity for all.



Rusty Forward, the senior barman, had given many years of sterling service to the Sandhurst, and he was utterly at home sailing over the bar and quieting the uproars that sometimes developed. I never saw him swing a punch, and never saw anybody swing at him; Rusty was popular and really well liked.

On the other hand I was a new boy, and not taken too seriously at first. In time, I guess it became obvious that I had no ugly prejudices, and was keen to be as easy-going as Rusty was. I suffered no serious assaults, barring a few scuffles and the odd push and shove, and enjoyed lots of belly-laughs.

The Yamatjis had a fine ability to enjoy a joke, and were unerring in their capacity to deflate self-importance, somewhat to my initial discomfort. For instance, I remember well the first (and last) time I told anybody in the front bar that I was going to work at the tracking station.

*"Oh yeah- that'll be nice. But what do they want a tracking station for? We've been doing that for years, and we don't need no bloody tracking station!"* My weak smile was met by hoots of laughter, though nearly everyone seemed to know what really went on out at CRO.

The Yamatjis had to tolerate the pretty poor conditions of their lives, but they did not for a moment accept that they were less worthy of proper attention. On the other hand, they loved a bit of cheek, and absolutely relished lusty banter.

I recall Rusty Forward giving as good as he got on numerous occasions, like being jokingly invited by a dark lady

to come on down to Chinaman's Pool and help her drink her flagon of wine, to which his reply would probably be, "Not bloody likely, girl- you'll get us stuck in the double-Gs! And they'll all be in my bum, knowing how bossy you are!"



Chinaman's Pool

She would depart in peals of laughter, delighted by the exchange; double-Gs were fiendish prickles!

Sometimes, in the evenings, parties of drinkers from the town would arrive at the Sandhurst, and in this way I was courteously introduced by Rusty to a few CRO personalities, such as Frank McGregor and Paul Linnane, for instance.

I must say it felt slightly odd, being introduced as a future tracking station colleague while being on the other side of the bar, but it was all accepted with true Carnarvon sangfroid, those fine trackers barely raising an eyebrow. I mention those two particularly, as they made an indelible impression on me.

Frank was the archetypal expatriate Scots engineer, in charge of the tracking station's own powerhouse, and devoted to his Drambuie; I'm sure the ability to drink Drambuie correctly was one of his measures of a decent man.

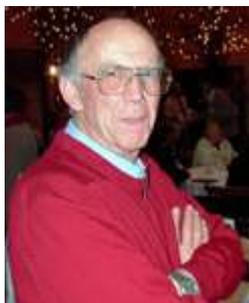
In stark contrast, senior communications technician Paul Linnane was a true-blue sardonic Australian, not averse to a Drambuie on occasion of course, but definitely more of a beer man. Equally direct, Paul was a very interesting and entertaining man, and I always enjoyed his company. LOS Frank; LOS Paul. May they both rest well.

## Extracts from "Recollections From My Years At Carnarvon"

David Johns

### The Flybys ctd.

NASA addressed the issue of live practice for the tracking stations by having several aircraft that carried recorded information and the aircraft would visit each tracking station and fly circuits near the station and transmit simulated telemetry to the station.



The transmissions were programmed to simulate the same problems that the ground stations would have to cope with during a real mission. Thus, the ground stations acquired their practice for the actual moon missions.

The flyby plane for the Apollo series was an old four-engine propeller driven Lockheed Constellation aircraft. It was big



and could carry tonnes of computers and other equipment and still had comfortable seating for about 20 passengers (the Lockheed Constellation was the main aircraft of the Qantas fleet up to about 1958 when Qantas commenced using Boeing 707 jet aircraft).

The Flyby plane would leave America and go to an overseas NASA tracking station. Some of the crew would go into the station as observers/advisors and some of the crew would operate the computers and transmitters on the plane.

The plane would fly circuits near the tracking station and transmit and receive telemetry that simulated situations that would occur during the actual moon missions. When the work was completed at that station, there may be a few rest days and then the plane would move on to another NASA tracking station.

And so the plane and its technical crew would work their way around the world, working and over-flying for a few days at each tracking station and the plane would be out of America for up to six months.

There would usually be about three or four Flyby days at Carnarvon with maybe a lay day or two and then the plane would move onto the next tracking station.

It was always a big event when the Flybys came to Carnarvon. During the visit people would work hard and party hard and a visit by a flyby crew was one of the big events on Carnarvon Tracking Station's social calendar.

The weight of the Super Constellation exceeded the allowable weight for the Carnarvon airfield so the plane would have to leave Perth very early in the morning to be over Carnarvon by 7:00 to 8:00 am, fly circuits all day at Carnarvon and then go back to Perth to land.

Carnarvon usually only saw about half of the flyby personnel. Some of the on board technical crew would fly from Perth to Carnarvon on a commercial airline and stay



at Carnarvon for the duration of the exercise and the other half of the technical crew would stay in Perth every evening and not see Carnarvon except through the window of the aircraft each day.

It seemed to me that the flyby personnel had a good life, travel in a lovely old aeroplane, be accommodated at good hotels, do interesting work and be wined and dined by the staff at each tracking station around the world - an almost glamorous existence.

Some of the younger flybys saw it that way and they partied hard and played the part but many of them saw it as just a job to be done and nothing more.

I particularly remember having an in-depth discussion with one of the older flybys at a loud party. He was about in his mid-fifties and had worked for the USAF and then NASA.

In his working life he had been in more countries than he could remember and had been on the flyby work since the moon missions commenced.

*To be continued*

## STADAN Helps Australia Into the "Space Race"

By the editor from a suggestion by Trevor Mosel

Fifty years ago, at 2:19pm Central Australian Time on Wednesday November 29, 1967, Australia made its entry into the "space club" by becoming the seventh country to successfully launch a satellite, WRESAT, and ten years after the start of the space age.



Launch took place at the Woomera Rocket Range, once the largest overland weapons test range in the Western world; now virtually abandoned.

The first stage of the launch vehicle was a Redstone rocket, the last of a batch originally sent to Woomera as part of a joint project with the US army.

This satellite itself was designed and built as a joint project between the Department of Supply (DOS) Weapons Research Establishment (WRE) and Adelaide University Physics Department.



Photo from the Adelaide Advertiser

When the WRESAT project was begun it had top level approval from the government; tracking and data acquisition services to be provided by NASA and ELDO (European Launcher Development Organisation), and use of their facilities by Britain. The data tapes were also donated by NASA.

### Telemetry

Telemetry data was transmitted at 136.350MHz with a power of only 0.1W. There were 29 channels of data, 15 for the scientific instruments and 14 for housekeeping.

Ground stations, principally STADAN, recorded the telemetry signals on tape but they were not able to decode the data. The recorded tapes had to be sent back to Australia for analysis.

Range-head verified good telemetry, followed by confirmation from Gove.

The first STADAN station to receive telemetry was Guam followed, in order by, Fairbanks, Alaska; St Johns. Newfoundland; Rosman, North Carolina; Quito, Ecuador; Lima, Peru and Santiago, Chile.

Telemetry was received at Carnarvon 25 minutes after Santiago AOS; WRESAT had completed an entire orbit, and the mission was "GO".

From information supplied by Tony Green, Carnarvon FPQ-6 also skin-tracked WRESAT for a number of orbits, but whether that was to supply data to WRE, or for practice, cannot be confirmed.

WRESAT transmitted useful data for 73 orbits with a 98.974 minutes period. It eventually completed 642 orbits before re-entry in January 1968.

*Material researched from "Silicon Chip" and Kerrie Dougherty.*

**SOCIAL CLUB NEWS April 1967**STATION NEWS

by DICK SIMONS

On Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March the station received a visit from Dr. Christopher C. Kraft and Mr. Tecwyn Roberts. Mr. Roberts is head of the Manned Flight Operations Division of Goddard Space Flight Centre, Maryland and is responsible for engineering and operational direction of the Goddard Stations. Dr. Kraft has directed all American Manned Space Flights and is the person whom remote site flight controllers respectfully address as "Flight". This was their first visit to Australia and before coming to Carnarvon they attended the opening ceremony for the Honeysuckle Creek Station at Canberra. During his visit Dr. Kraft showed some interesting coloured slides of notable manned space flight events following which he gave a short talk to station staff on the future Apollo programs.

Planning is in progress for a building for the R&RR system at Carnarvon. It is likely that the building will be commenced early in 1968, and it is expected that it will be of adequate size to accommodate all existing equipment from the vans, together with other equipment which is anticipated in the future. Details of the building lay-out and location have recently been proposed by GSFC and reviewed by WRE and Station staff.

The station is preparing to support the next Surveyor C mission in April in which Carnarvon will play a more vital role by sending realtime USB Spacecraft telemetry data via high speed data line to Tidbinbilla Deep Space Tracking Station near Canberra. Tests on the HSD have already been carried out with Tidbinbilla.

This mission is the first in a series of four planned for this year the prime objectives being to soft land the Surveyor Spacecraft on the moon, to collect scientific data and to transmit this data back to receiving stations on the earth.

- 6 -

*To be continued*

## That Clock



Thanks to Trevor Housley, of FPQ-6 radar fame, the clock mystery has been solved.

It originally adorned a wall in the FPQ-6 control room, as is displayed in the accompanying photograph (supplied by Trevor Housley).

Phil Youd now has some provenance to go along with yet another item from the Tracking Station with which to grace the Museum.

## Subscriptions & Material

My grateful thanks to those who have been generous enough to make a donation alongside their subscription renewal.

Regrettable, without their generosity we would be looking at the end of the journey for the CROnicle since the total of subscriptions alone would not break even with the cost of production.

Looking back over the years since the inception of this newsletter - in the year 2004-2005 we had 92 subscribers, this year we have 28. In between years costs, particularly postage, have risen steadily.

Also, we are in need of material relating to the Tracking Station to keep your interest. Thank you.

# Keeping the Memory Alive

## 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](#)

## APOLLO 11 50th Anniversary

The "Australian Apollo 11 Anniversary Committee" has been formed in Canberra to make sure that events to be held in Canberra and around Australia are not duplicated and to encourage local and national organisations to join in what will probably be the last major event to include workers from that exciting time.

News of the preparations will be posted on the Honeysuckle Creek web site [www.honeysucklecreek.net](http://www.honeysucklecreek.net). At the time of publishing nothing has yet been added.

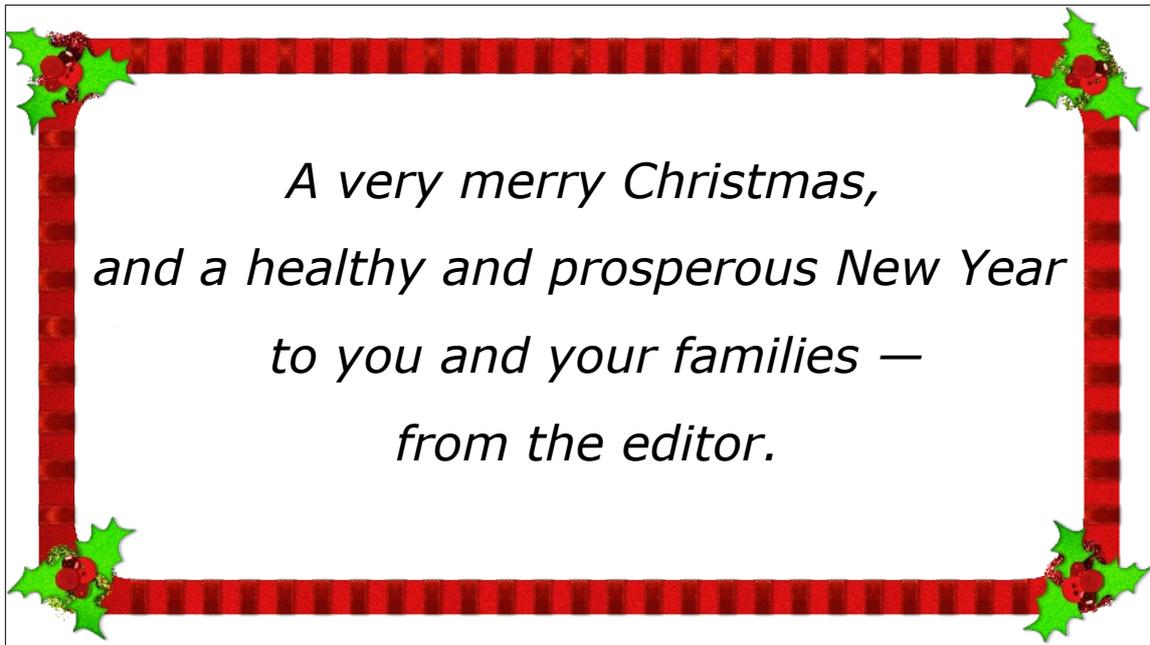
If there is sufficient interest I would be only too pleased to organise some form of reunion here in WA for CRO Trackers too.



# Keeping the Memory Alive



*"Please be informed there is  
a Santa Claus"*  
— James Lovell



If undelivered, please return to:

**CRO Trackers**