



July 1969



June 1965



June 1966



Keeping the Memory Alive

Vol 11 June 2014

THE TRACKERS' CROCKLE

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45th Anniversary Reunion Dinner Cancellation

Regrettably my appeal for ticket purchases
has met with very little response.

So it is with much disappointment that I have to advise that the
45th Anniversary Reunion Dinner has been cancelled.

Those who have already booked, whom I thank,
will receive a full refund in due course.

I trust that this is not a portent for the future of
The Trackers'CRONicle.

The Gemini III Brawl?

By Paul Dench

Essentially the hoo-hah was in the USA.

CRO had just five participants - Lewis Wainwright (Station Director), Bill Kempees (TLM Supervising Engineer), Paul Dench (PCM Senior Engineer), Danny Hunter ('Simulation' CapCom), and Pete Conrad ('Mission' CapCom).

Once the responsibilities were established there was only me involved, re-patching the CapCom meters to and fro... but a lot of gossip all around the station.

As the PCM Supervising Engineer I was responsible for the PCM-1 and PCM-2 telemetry systems and the configuration of the four control room consoles. The consoles had already been configured properly to Gemini III mission documentation so I was surprised when Pete Conrad asked me to change the location of about half-a-dozen read-outs on the CapCom console. I wasn't sure what I should do.

I consulted with my boss, Bill Kempees, TLM Supervising Engineer.

Soon the two of us were consulting with Lewis Wainwright, Station Director, in his office. It was decided I should comply with Conrad's request until Lewis received further clarification from Mission Control.

I changed the CapCom configuration in about half-an-hour. It required removing an approximately 650cm by 400cm panel from each of PCM-1 and PCM-2 and re-plugging the required six or so connections. It was not long before Danny Hunter, the Flight Team Leader quite rightly protested, and the rest is history – an international furor.

For the rest of the mission I changed the connections quite frequently to meet the respective needs of Danny Hunter for simulations and Pete Conrad for the live mission. No other reconfigurations were required.

Naturally it was a big hoo-hah and all sorts of rumours circulated around CRO, but all it really amounted to was an arrangement between Pete Conrad, Danny Hunter and me.

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	L Donkin	John Keane
Eric Ainsworth	John Draper	Mike Keen
Gay Albon	Mike Dresser	Jim Keenan
Bill Arbery	Bruce Duff	John Kelman
Allan Barber	I Dunleavy	Roy Mallinson
John (Allan) Barber	Dave Elliot	Bob Marr
Matt Barber	J Erickson	Keith Mathieson
Keith Barnard	Ian Few	Alec Matthews
Barrow	Ian Findlay	K McCarson
Deidre Beaumont	G Francis	Ian McDonald
Elizabeth Beckett	Ben Franklin	S McDonald
Keith Beveridge	David Froom	Frank McGregor
Michael Billings	Jamie Gardiner	Eileen McLaughlan
G Bond	L Gardner	Don McLellan
S Boyce	S Garner	Nola Meiklejohn (O'Byrne)
Bill Boyle	G Carrick	R Miller
B Bradley	C George	Ray Mills
Phil Brindley	Joe George	Marilyn Milner (Gobby)
Hans Britz	Richard Govern	John Mogg
Dave Brooks	Brian Gray	Sharon Morgan (Todd)
T.F.A Brown	Terry Haggett	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
John Cawthrey	Ernie Hindley	? O'Brien
Brian Clifford	Dave Hine	Joan Oats
Keith Clifton-James	A Holgate	W Oliver
Barbara Cobcroft	Phyllis Hook (Watson)	Denis Owens
Jim Crossland	J Hopkins	John Paddon
Noel Cunningham	Vivienne Lawer (Hopper)	Diane Pitman (Housley)
F Dawes	Deidre Howard	John Platten
Andrew Dempster	B Hughes	D Powell
Jean DeVis	Ed Humphreys	M.J.K Power
Marilyn Dick	B Hunter	Wendy Puccinelli
Olive Dick	D Hutchins	Lorna Quinn
Neville Dippell	Ian Jones	
Cheryl? Dixon	Vera Kastropil	

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 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	? Sheehan	Patsy Thompson (Nolan)
D Richardson	Jeff Shuttleworth	Larry Tomkins
Harry Richmond	Ray Skender	Frank Toomey
Ralp Richmond	Lyn Smart (Willis)	Mike Travell
Dave Rickards	J Smith	Ernst Uhl
G Riley	George Small	Tony Vingerhoets
Brian Robinson	P Smith	Dave Walker
Lynne Rosser	Roger Smith	Tom Ward
Ted Rosser	Dave Standbury	Mrs B Ward
Lindsay Sage	John Stanton	N Wardle
Stewart Sands	Bill Smythe	A Watermeyer
Ron Sargeant	Hazel Snook (Howse)	Irene West
Bob Scott	Barbara Stephenson (Vernon)	Bernie Wilbourne
Lorraine Scott-Malcolm (Erlandsen)	Barbara Teahan	Glen Williamson
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 the 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

He recalled to me: "I remember flying in to Carnarvon the first time on MacRobertson Miller Airlines and the chap coming back and opening up the door and throwing my bags out on the red dirt and saying, 'See you on the way back, mate,' and off they went. That was at the end of about 54 hours of travelling.

I checked into the hotel and asked the girl behind the desk did she have a reservation for a Lieutenant Commander Conrad? She said, 'Upstairs on the second floor; take the first room that's made up and let me know the number on the way out!'"

GEMINI III - THE FIRST MANNED GEMINI FLIGHT.

Command Pilot : Virgil 'Gus' Grissom.

Pilot : John Young.

Backup crew:

Command Pilot : Walter Schirra.

Pilot : Thomas Stafford.

Fact Box.

Gemini spacecraft number 3.

Callsign: Molly Brown.

Launch: 1424:00 UT 0924:00 UEST Tuesday 23 March 1965 (0024 AEST Wednesday 24 March 1965)

Splashdown: 1916:31 UT Tuesday 23 March 1965 (0516:31 AEST 24 March 1965)

Splashdown location: 22° 26'N by 70° 51'W

Mission duration: 4 hours 52 minutes 31 seconds

Inclination: 32.6°

Orbits: 3 orbits

Apogee: 224.2 kilometres.

Perigee: 161.2 kilometres.

Period: 88.3 minutes.

Total distance travelled: 128,748 kilometres.

Spacecraft weight: 3,236.9 kilograms

A threatening tropical storm detected off the north west coast of Australia by the Tiros satellite moved away from Carnarvon and by launch day the daily afternoon sea breeze was blowing steadily over the town as the station staff were picked up by the little gray Commer buses dashing among the houses.

The busses raced up to sun baked Brown's Range to drop us at the main T & C (Telemetry and Control) building where we escaped from the heat and sand outside, first grabbing a cup of tea or coffee and cooling off in the refreshing air-conditioning before spreading among the equipment to begin running through the final checklists.

To be continued

The Carnarvon Space Festival ctd.

"Since our splashdown in the Pacific I have come to realise that more than the rocks that we brought back or the experiments that we left, the true value of Apollo is the amazing story of innovation and teamwork that went into overcoming all the obstacles to reach the Moon. That effort was driven in part by competition, in part by scientific discovery.

Every one on Earth felt they had participated in this incredible journey as we landed and walked on another celestial body for the first time in the history of mankind. And that feeling of participation that brought together humanity holds a value beyond measure.

The world welcomed us back from the Moon as heroes, however I understood that people were not cheering for three guys but for what we represented - that, by coming together we had accomplished the impossible.

It's been forty-two years since Neil and I walked on the Moon and I still have an adventurous spirit today. I've been up to the North Pole on a Russian nuclear icebreaker, and down 3,810 metres, or approximately two miles, to the ocean floor to see the Titanic, and that was in a French little yellow submarine. My favourite thing to do on this planet is to scuba dive and to try and do it at least a couple of times a year as my schedule allows.

Here I am on a trip to the Galapagos Islands. My son Andy took this photo of me hitching a ride on a whale shark - don't you try that.

These days I continue my efforts as a global statesman for space for our future in space, and have two suggested guiding principles for our space venture. Number one: a continuously human presence in space, and two - global leadership in space.



Photograph - Schellie-Jayne Price

This morning I met a group of trackers in Perth before boarding our charter flight. I was amazed to find that some of them had travelled from the east coast of Australia. Tonight I welcome those trackers back to Carnarvon and I would like to sincerely thank them for all their efforts in the Gemini and Apollo days, and for travelling to be here tonight for this special evening."

The party finished about 2130 and we returned back to our hotel where I sat down in the bar and yarned with some trackers. As I was thinking of going to bed the hotel brought out two large platters of prawns and oysters and a big bowl of potato chips - all free.

Morning of Saturday 23 June at 0900 we boarded our two buses and headed off on a tour around Carnarvon. The town has changed dramatically from when I lived here. Gone was the frontier town and its welcoming drunken rusty steel arch and bare light bulbs, the weathering camel wool wagon relics by the side of the road, the red sand and desert scrub I remember.

Everywhere the impression was green - gardens, lush lawns, trees, modern buildings. Our tour began with the mile long jetty and its museum. The jetty was in use when I was living here, with the train going out to meet the ships.

To be continued

WA's part in the moon shot, concluded

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.



Tracking station director R.P. Jacomb (STADIR is his 'short' title) takes a breather near one of his responsibilities, a 30ft Apollo unified S-Band system scanner which belts out up to 20kw of power.

Next biggest thing on the skyline to the Apollo dish antenna is the king-size 29ft. span of the mighty FPQ-6, radar. This electronic monster stands to the north in solitary splendor on a reinforced concrete tower, looking for all the world like a monstrous strutted golf tee on a sugar cube.

This is one of, the most accurate tracking radars in the world, listing distance and angular position to a yard, way out in black space. The agile FPQ-6 can track any spacecraft fitted with an electronic beacon. It can also button onto a Gemini or Apollo manned craft by following signals bouncing off the capsule's metal surface. This is just another facet of the joint Department of Supply-NASA diamond gleaming among Carnarvon's sand hills. Technically called a long-range high acquisition radar, it can finger 32,000 miles out into space, from Earth. Incidentally, all information collected at Carnarvon from the speeding capsule is sent to the Manned Space Flight Control Centre in Houston, Texas, during actual mission passes.

After all groups of passes within Carnarvon's range, the Brown Range gear has to be set up again and a rigid lead-in procedure adopted for the next group of passes.

(Regretfully the rest of this article is currently “not found”).

Quotations

“It suddenly struck me that that tiny pea, pretty and blue, was the Earth. I put up my thumb and shut one eye, and my thumb blotted out the planet Earth. I didn't feel like a giant. I felt very, very small.”

~Neil Armstrong

“The world itself looks cleaner and so much more beautiful. Maybe we can make it that way - the way God intended it to be - by giving everyone, eventually, that new perspective from out in space.”

~Roger Chaffee

“From out there on the moon, international politics looks so petty. You want to grab a politician by the scruff of the neck, drag him a quarter of a million miles out, and say, “Look at that, you son of a bitch.”

~Ed Mitchell

The Fisherman Who Rode a Horse

Continuation of an extract from the autobiography of Ken Watters.

Fortunately Carnarvon did all the right things and no harm was done. I stand to be corrected but it was found after investigation that our ground communications to Perth used the top wire of a sheep station's boundary fence for part of the way, apparently the wire between telegraph poles running across the property had come down and the station hands had jury rigged the wire to the fence. This fence had been cut during the spaceflight and Carnarvon lost communication with Perth and hence on to America. NASA immediately had what was known as a Troposcatter transmission system installed between Carnarvon and Geraldton.

This was probably the forerunner of a microwave communication system but worked on lower frequencies and relied solely on the horse-power of the signal being transmitted to blast its way through. The following year the Australian government agreed to build the OTC Satellite Earth Station whose antennas still dominate Carnarvon's eastern skyline and this site provided dependable communication between Carnarvon and Houston in Texas and the rest of the world.

Talking of Texas a team of Americans arrived to set up a laser cannon alongside the R&RR Bedsread antenna. A local contractor had spent several weeks preparing a huge concrete pad to mount the laser canon on. It was amazing the concrete pad would have been several feet deep. I was learned later that the laser beam had such a narrow beam width that the slightest vibration in the ground would deflect the beam 100's of yards away from its target hence the solid concrete base. The team eventually arrived to mount the laser cannon and shared our crew room facilities.

Americans always seemed to be a little up themselves to me and these guys were no different it was very difficult to get a conversation out of them. I did manage to find that Carnarvon had been chosen as the site to trial satellite tracking with laser because of the predominantly clear skies. The idea of mounting the laser alongside the R&RR antenna was because it had such a narrow beam width they need to lock the laser canon onto the bedsread antenna and do a search within the bedsread's beam-width while the antenna was locked onto the satellite.

Hitting a satellite in orbit would be a little like shooting a rabbit in the eye from 20 miles away. Well eventually after a couple of weeks of shooting away they finally hit a satellite and there was much jubilation. I was on day shift with them when the big day arrived and they returned to the crew room slapping each other on the back and in obvious high spirits.

"Who won lotteries"? I asked as they gathered around the table.

"Better than lotteries sonny. We finally hit a target".

"Right on. Now would you Yanks like a coffee to celebrate"? I asked as I got up to put the kettle on.

The atmosphere developed a sudden chill and I got no response. They sat together yakking away leaving myself and John to drink our coffee in silence.

To be continued

Social Club News - February 1969

FEBRUARY 1969

EDITORIAL

With this issue, the magazine is presented in a new cover which has been supplied by AWA Head Office to a design prepared by Station staff. With better quality paper used for the magazine, I am sure you will agree that the presentation is greatly improved.

Since the last issue, a new Social Club Committee has been elected, I take this opportunity of asking for your support for the President and Committee for 1969. They are an energetic lot, particularly the Treasurer, who should have no trouble in squeezing the dues (juice) out of members.

Other events which have occurred over the past few months include the departure from the Station of Lewis Wainwright and the arrival of the new Station Director, Mr. Ray Jacomb. We extend a welcome to the new Stadir and his wife and look forward to making their acquaintance at future social club activities.

I would like to thank all those who contributed articles for this issue, but would like to see more sketches in future issues. Surely somebody on the Station has the ability to comment on Station activities!!!!

Recollections, concluded.

By Alan Gilham

Fortunately I had worked out the position on the horizon from Bermuda's geographical location and assured him it would in about 10–15 minutes. This turned out to be a very good estimate and we acquired the rocket in that time.

On the 27th January 1967 we were preparing for a real network simulation when we had the news that the capsule had caught fire and the astronauts had perished. I think we were all stunned by this event and the Apollo program was halted for an indefinite time. At that time it had become evident that both my sons needed to be in a good educational establishment, so I prepared myself and family to return to UK. In the event this turned out to be a good decision since

both boys obtained degrees in Mathematics from Emmanuel College Cambridge, the elder boy also obtaining a Masters degree in Astrophysics.

In early November 1967 we made our last trip to Perth, this was not without incident as when we had a "comfort stop" we were confronted with two 6 foot kangaroos. We sold the car to our old bank manager who was now in Perth. There was another bank employee from Carnarvon in Perth who advised us on our money transactions to our advantage — Harold Wilson's famous "Pound in your pocket" speech happened just before we bought Sterling!

We shipped home on the Canberra, visiting South Africa and the Canary Islands on the way; it was a fitting end to what was really a unique experience.

Photographs Wanted

Phil Youd is planning a Trackers Tribute room at the new, augmented, museum. He would like photographs (copied or scanned - not originals) of Trackers taken while they were at the Station; not necessarily at work; together with details. Fishing, sailing, partying or just plain drinking.

It is planned to display these photographs on the wall opposite to the video display in which quite a few Trackers featured.

Photographs should be sent to:

hitsradio@bigpond.au or phil@carnarvonmuseum.org.au

The Editor

Opening of Museum - Phase 2

Good news from Eventscorp. They have granted the museum a nice amount of money to bring Australian Astronaut Andy Thomas out from the US to open "Phase Two" of the museum in September. So jot the dates down now. **Friday September 19 and Saturday September 20** to be in Carnarvon.

In the evening of Sept 19 it is planned to host our Cocktail Party fundraiser at the Woolshed at the Carnarvon Civic Centre. The idea of this instead of holding the function up at the museum is to save money. I would prefer to have it on site at the museum, but to hold it up there requires hiring a large marquee. The one we hired last time cost \$36,000. so you see why we aren't doing that this time around.

Subscription Renewal

Subscription Renewal 2014 - 2015

Name:

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.....

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Amount: \$11.00 (E-mail (pdf) in colour); \$13.80 (b&w postal delivery)
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ref 100426593.

(Please print name in “Comments”)

Signed:

Name:
(please print)

Date:

Souvenirs of 45th Anniversary

Those of you who purchased dinner tickets will also receive, as a courtesy, a souvenir which would have been available for free to all at the proposed dinner. Anyone else who would like to purchase one of these unique, hand embroidered, place mats should contact the editor for details. The cost will be \$5.00 each, excluding postage.

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](#)

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

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