

WIA ARCHIVE

Not long after the WIA moved to its new premises in Bayswater, Victoria, the opportunity to bring historical material together, presented itself. Material had been previously kept in a commercial store and individual's houses for many years.

This coincided with initial planning for the Centenary of Amateur Radio celebrations and with it, the need to confirm aspects of the Institute's history.

Two previous Federal Presidents, David Wardlaw, VK3ADW and Peter Wolfenden, VK3RV, commenced the initial document sorting, seeking historical clues necessary to help to prepare for the forthcoming WIA Centenary celebrations.

It quickly became apparent that there was a massive amount of information locked away in the numerous boxes and that some sort of indexing and filing was necessary. Jenny VK5ANW, "volunteered" to help out with inputting data into an embryonic data base, which has now grown significantly.

The sorting and cataloguing helped immensely in the preparation of "*An Arena of Wonder*", published in serialised form in Amateur Radio during 2010. Many photographs were also "discovered" which not only helped support the magazine article, but were also useful for publicity material and the WIA Centenary celebrations in Canberra.

The National Office frequently receives enquiries about early amateurs, their call signs, locations etc., so it was decided to commence scanning the earliest call books commencing with the 1914 call book, "Wireless in Australia", a copy of which, in almost mint condition, was found in one of the long sealed boxes. Reference to entries in the call book within the Amateur Radio article, generated a number of responses and brought about further historical information from both amateurs and members of the public (courtesy of browsing facilities at the local newsagent!)

Recently Ian, VK3IFM has offered to help the Archive in a number of areas including the scanning of later editions of the call book. Most scanned copies are searchable pdf files which will speed up searching processes. The collection of scanned call books is now steadily growing.

So where are we at with the development of the WIA Archive?

The short answer is that we still have much work to do – and will for many more years! Many single sheets of paper still have to be read and accessed. A question which needs to be answered at every turn is, "why did someone originally decide to keep this particular piece of paper?" At times the answer is obvious, but frequently it is more obscure and requires knowledge of the history of the subject matter. The risk, of course is that something important to our history, may be inadvertently disposed of! But a positive start has been made and our shelves are starting to fill with "ordered" material.

During the “100th year”, many documents and articles were received as a result of the “*Call for Articles*” column in AR. Some submissions have been, or will be published in the magazine, but all will be kept in the archives to assist those researching at some later date. Thank you again to all who submitted material.

You may be able to help preserve our history by forwarding historical information, particularly relating to activities within Australia. If you were an office bearer of the Institute, or one of the more active clubs, you may have copies of official correspondence with the old PMG’s Department relating to early special permits, e.g. for modes like RTTY, ATV, Moon Bounce or early repeaters. Even copies of OT’s licences and permits are worth preserving. Please consider forwarding them to the WIA Archive. *****

The Institute’s Archive, is rapidly developing into not only a source of historical material relating to the development of amateur radio in Australia, but also radio communication in this part of the world generally. If you can help, please contact the National Office or Peter at vk3rv@wia.org.au

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