History the SA Division of the Wireless Institute of Australia between 1980 and 2004 when the Division was dissolved

Assembled by Lloyd Butler VK5BR
(Updated April 20 2015)

Introduction

The history of the SA Division of the Wireless Institute of Australia (WIA) has been well recorded up to around 1980 by the article written by Marlene Austin, published in "Amateur Radio" October 1985 (ref.4) and up to 1977 by the sections 2 and 3 of the book "History of Radio in South Australia" by John. F. Ross (ref. 5). To follow on with the history, this article discusses activity within the Division from that 1980 era to 2004 when the Division was dissolved and its members absorbed into the new Federal WIA.

The information in the article was assembled from a number of sources. Much of the detail concerning dates of events and operations of the Division was taken from copies of the SA Journal published by the Division. Some of the events of the early 1980 era were also found in the column 5/8th Wave in 1980 issues of Amateur Radio. A number of events recorded were compiled from members contributions. (Refer "Contributions" at the foot of the article).

The Divisional Council

The SA Division of the WIA was controlled by its Divisional Council formed in 1919, long before 1980 which is the start of this particular article. However to talk about the history of the 1980-2004 era, we need to initially outline a little about the formation of the Council as it was operating around the decade starting in 1980 and beyond.

The official occupants of Council were elected each year at the AGM held in April of each year. Apart from the normal appointed officials, there were a number of different functions carried out by the Division which also called for the appointment of sub-committees, or specific members of the Division to carry out or direct these tasks. Specific functions included the WICEN representation, the QSL Bureau, the weekly Broadcast and Call Back operation, the publication of the SA WIA Journal, the Intruder Watch, Repeater and Beacon operation, and selected divisions of amateur radio such as amateur satellites and packet radio. Further details of some of these functions will be discussed further on under specific headings.

SA Division Council in the 1989-90

Back row from left :John Mckellar VK5BJM, Ian Watson VK5KIA, Ben Broadbent VK5ABE, Bill Wardrop VK5AWM, & Hans Van Der Zalm VK5KHZ

Seated from left: Alan Mallabone VK5NNM, Jenny Warrington VK5ANW, Don McDonald VK5ADD, & Rowland Bruce VK5OU.

(Bob Allan VK5BJA & Peter Maddern VK5PRM were not present.)

The President of the Division was elected under the Constitution for a maximum of two years. No doubt as a result of that condition, the occupant of that office changed quite a bit. For the years of 1980 to 2004, the Presidents were: Ian Hunt (1980), John Mitchell (1981), Bill Wardrop (1982-83), Dick Boxall1984-85), Jenny Warrington (1986-87), Don McDonald (1988-89), Roland Bruce (1990-91), Bob Allen (1992-93), Garry Herden (1994-95), Peter Watts (1996-97), Ian Hunt (1997-98), Jim McLachlan 1999-2000), David Minchin (2001), Trevor Quick (2002-03), and finally Jim McLachlan in 2004 when the Division was dissolved.

For the same period, the Secretaries were Bill Wardrop (1980-81), David Clegg 1982-83), Jenny Warrington (1984-85), Don McDonald (1986-87), Hans Van Der Zalm (1988-89), John McKeller (1991), Roland Bruce (1992), Maurie Hooper (1993-96), Graham Wiseman (1997), Merve Millar (1998), and David Minchin (1999). Also for the same period, Treasurers were John Butler (1980-83), Graham Radcliff (1984-86), Bill Wardrop (1987-93), Charlie McEachern (1994-96), Joe Burford (1997-98), John Butler (1999-2000), and Trevor Quick (2001-2004).

Another important office was that of the Federal Councillor whose job was to represent the Division and the radio amateurs of South Australia at Federal WIA meetings. Members who have served as Federal Councillor during 1981 to 1999 are: Gerry Preston VK5PI (1981), Jenny Warrington VK5ANW (1981-84), David Clegg VK5AMK (1984-85), Roland Bruce VK5OU (1985-88), Bill Wardropp VK5AWM (1989-94), Bob Allan VK5BJA (1995), Grant Willis VK5ZWI (1996-97), Ian Watson VK5KIA (1998) and Jim McLachlan VK5NB (1998-99).

Records have not been located for office of Secretary, and Federal Councillor beyond 1999. However there is a record that Mark Spooner VK5AVQ was the meeting Minutes Secretary from 2001 to 2004. It is also understood that David Box VK5OV and Jim McLachlan VK5NB functioned as Federal Councillors in the 2000 to 2004 period, but precise dates have not been confirmed

There have been at least 17 life members appointed over the life of the Division. In the 1980 to 2004 period, Henry Andersson VK8HA was appointed in 1989, Jenny Warrington VK5ANW and Bill Wardrop VK5AWM were both appointed in August 1990 and Garry Herden VK5ZK and Murray Burford, VK5ZQ were both appointed in July 1997.

Note that Henry Anderson is from the Northern Territory region which has been considered part of the South Australian Division by the Federal WIA. (In 1984, Henry Anderson accompanied David Clegg VK5AMK and Jenny Warrington to the Federal Convention to put the case for making VK8 a separate Division. (The motion was lost.)

General meetings for all members of the Division were normally held on the fourth Tuesday evening of the month. At least one monthly meeting was allocated as a Buy and Sell night. Another night was commonly reserved to display members equipment. In December, a Christmas social was held in which spouses and friends were invited. Thebarton Assembly Hall was a popular venue for the Christmas social night during the 1980's. Other general meeting nights were allocated to technical talks or talks related to Amateur Radio.

The Burley Griffin Headquarters of the SA Division WIA had been opened in April 1977 and was the usual venue for general meetings until 1999. During the 1980s, the headquarters was a going concern and a hive of activity. On Buy and sell nights, the main meeting room was packed out with radio amateurs. Various members took on the task of auctioneer. John Mitchell VK5JM was a popular auctioneer, assisted by John Butler VK5NX. Steve Stephenson VK5ZB will be remembered as a regular clerk of the day.

Many popular technical talks were arranged. The following list is fairly complete for the 1980's but whilst we know that technical talks still continued up to the Unley venue period, the list is not complete for the 1990 to 2004 period:

Oct 28, 1980 Talk on the New Regulations Handbook by Rob Gurr VK5RG.
Nov 20, 1980 Extended Length VHF Dipole by Phil Williams VK5NN
(At the Illingworth Hall, Goodwood)
Nov 25, 1980 Talk on Microprocessors by Clive Pearson VK5PE.
Feb 24, 1981 Heart/Lung Resuscitation by Bill Nelson, Dept. of Communications
June 24, 1981 Amateur TV by John Ingham VK5KG
June 22, 1982 Amateur Radio in the USA by Ian Hunt VK5QX
May 24, 1982 Printed Circuit Board Production by Barry S Playford from Teknic
Feb 22, 1983 Getting Started in Amateur TV by Bill Simester VK5TV
March 22, 1983 Getting Started Amateur in Satellites by Graham Radcliff VK5AGR &
Colin Hurst VK5HI.
Aug 23 1983 Mountain Expedition to Himalayas by Terry Ryan.
May 24, 1983 Getting Started in RTTY by John Mitchell VK5JM
Oct 25, 1983 Effect on Radio Amateur if the Bomb falls by Dr.John Coulter.
Dec 6, 1983 Video Tape of China Travels by Wally Watkins VK2DEW
Feb 26, 1985 Map Reading by Ted Dobrzynski
Aug 1985 Aussat by John Mitchell VK5JM
Oct 23, 1985 Amateur Microwaves by Des Clift VK5ZO
Nov 27, 1985 What to expect when the RI calls by Geoff Carter DOC
April 1987 AGM & Video of opening BGB 10 years earlier
Aug 25, 1987 Amateur Radio Tourist Guide to San Francisco by Ross Forbes WB6GFJ
Oct 27, 1987 Speaker from Ionospheric Prediction Service.
Feb 23 1988 Latest in Micro-technology from Philips by Ray Dobson VK5DI
Mar 22 1988 Radio Comms during WW2 by Des Smith VK5LS (He was with French Resistance)
May 24 1988 Thick film Hybrids from Philips by Ray Dobson VK5DI
Aug 1988 How the WIA is Organised by Peter Gamble VK3YRP, Fed. President WIA
Oct 1988 Adventures in the Antarctic by Mark Spooner VK5AVQ
Feb 27, 1990 Mobile Installations by Ian Hunt VK5QX
Dec 7 1993 A DX Expedition around Cook Islands by John Cashen VK5AI.
Nov 1997 Production of Electric Power by Andrew Wauchope of Power Gen. Corp.
Sept 2001 History of Coaxial Connectors by Mark Spooner VK5AVQ
May 2002 Introduction to Digital TV by John Harris VK5EV
Undefined date (circa 2001/2004) Demonstration of WICEN field equipment by John Butler VK5NX

The Sunday Morning Broadcast and Call Back

For years on Sunday mornings , various members volunteered to operate the Source transmitter on 1.8 MHz in the Burley Griffin Building (BGB) for the Division Broadcast and later call back. This was repeated on other bands by others through their own radio QTHs. John Butler VK5NX was always on hand to ensure that the equipment at the BGB was maintained and kept operational. In 1980, the Broadcast Officer or the broadcast voice of the station VK5WI, was Paul Lawson VK5SL. From April 1981, Chris Whitehorn commenced as the Broadcast Officer and carried through to 1985 when Peter Barlow took over extending into 1986. However Peter died in June 1986 and was replaced by Arthur Tanner VK5AAR. Kevin May VK5IV was Broadcast Officer from mid 1986 to 1991 when Murray Burford VK5ZQ then took on the task.

The broadcast programme was pre-recorded on magnetic tape by the Broadcast Officer. It was replayed at 9.00 am. on the 1.8 MHz Source transmitter by the operator at the BGB. In later years, the tape was replaced by digital recording means.

At the end of the broadcast, a call back operation was initiated on each band by the operator of the transmitting and receiving equipment on that band. A Broadcast Roster Officer was appointed each year to ensure that someone was on the roster to operate the 1.8 MHz BGB equipment for each weekly broadcast and call back. Also there was a need to ensure that someone was available to carry out the repeat operation on each other band. Sam Nichols VK5TZ was Broadcast Roster Officer from 1980 to 1986 and Chris Whitehorn from 1986 to 2000+.

An automated broadcast server system commenced operation in 2005 and was relocated to a new site in 2011. The system is designed to play the National news from VK1WIA and the Local news files at 9.00 am each Sunday and relay to the prime Adelaide VHF repeater VK5RAD without human intervention.
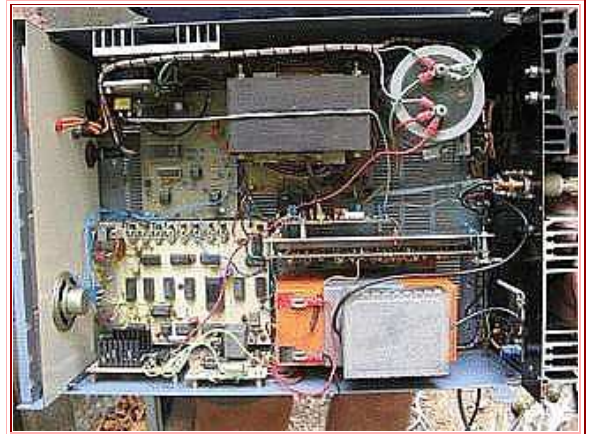
The Beacons and Repeaters

There are various radio beacons and repeaters operating within the SA region. Some of these have been financed and maintained by regional radio amateur groups. But many of these have been aided with finance from the SA Division of WIA.

An article in the March 1981 issue of the Journal describes "Bertie", a 28 MHz (10 metre) beacon built in 1980 by a team consisting of Michael McCarthy VK5NMC, Chris Owen VK5UH, Trevor Day VK5ATR, Andrew Parfitt VK5NPF and Merve Millar VK5MX. The Beacon VK5WI, installed at the the BGB, was first put on the air on December 5, 1980. Reports of its reception came in from as far as USA and Europe. It also found use as a 6 metre beacon.

In late 1992, the North East Radio Club set out to build a 2 metre Morse Training Beacon. The transmitter, was mainly the design of Rick Grivell VK5GV, and the Morse Keyer the design of Charlie McEacherm VK5KDK. It was assembled by a number of the members of the Club and installed at Mt. Lofty. The beacon operated on 145.650 MHz, originally intended to be call sign VK5RCW became VK5VF. Details of the transmitter, and its programme format, can be found on the Club Web site.

In June 1993, the WIA President reported increased repeater activity around the Adelaide area: Elizabeth Club had commissioned voice repeaters on 2 m & 70 cm and added a Packet Bulletin Board; York Peninsular Group had commisioned a 2 M voice repeater in Lochiel area, north of Port Wakefield; South Coast Club had relocated its Voice repeater at Willunga Hill for better southern coverage; and the SA Packet Users Group had worked towards a more reliable path to the east and an upgrading of the VK5WI Bulletin Board to keep up with user demand.

The Morse Training Beacon Transmitter

In October 1994, it was reported that the SA Division then held (and paid the licence) for 17 repeaters, 1 beacon, and 3 amateur stations, the latest of these being a repeater VK5RLH near Lochiel. Members from the Division have directly maintained some of these including the 2 metre beacon and 2 metre repeater station (VK5RAD) at Mt Lofty.

In February 1996, it was reported by David Minchin VK5KK that the maintenance team now had new beacon transmitters operating on 70, 23, 13 and 3 cm at Mt. Lofty, in addition to those existing on 6 and 2 metres. The original beacons had been operating since the 1960s. A report on the Internet by Mark Spooner VK5AVQ and David Minchin, dated April 1998, includes another two beacons on 9 and 6 cm. All the beacons at Mt. Lofty have the call sign VK5VF. More information on the beacons is available in reference 7, a text written by Mark and David.

The 2 metre repeater VK5RHO was operational from Houghton in the Adelaide Hills from the 1970's and financed by the Division. In 2002, it was decided that the Division was not able to continue financial support and the repeater was taken over by the North East Radio Club. The Club relocated the repeater at a new location 2 Km south of the original site.

In January 2005, following the winding up of the S.A. Division, the ownership and maintenance of the 2 Metre repeater station at Mt Lofty was accepted from WIA by the Adelaide Hills Amateur Radio Society (AHARS).

Much of our discussion has been about the direct involvement by members of the SA Division in installing and maintaining repeaters. However, numerous repeaters have also been installed, by various regional groups of radio amateurs, particularly in the State country areas. By 2009, the metropolitan extended areas were covered by two 6 metre FM repeaters, five 2 metre FM repeaters, one 2 metre RTTY repeater and seven 70 cm FM repeaters. Also covering a range of country areas, there were fourteen 2 metre FM repeaters, and three 70 cm FM repeaters.

Added to the lists of beacons and voice repeater stations is also the network set up for the Packet Radio.

Publications and The South Australian Wireless Institute Journal

By the year 1980, the Division had produced 18 volumes of its own journal, starting in 1959, and at the rate of up to 5 issues per year. This continued to year 2000 with volume 38 and possibly beyond. The journal was managed, prepared, printed and copies sorted by the Division's own amateur radio members who clearly put a lot of voluntary effort into its operation. Much of the specific detail in this article was gleaned from snippets of information in issues of the Divisional journal.

A list of editors from 1980 onward, has been compiled from information published in issues of the journal:
Murray Smith VK5TC - October 1981 to June 1982
Graham I/les VK5AT - October 1983 to March 1984
Bill Wardrop VK5AWM - August 1984 to April 1985
Trevor Lowe VK5ZIJ - August 1986 to December 1991
Maurie Hooper VK5EA - February 1993 to December 1996
Colwyn Low VK5UE - June 1997 to February 2000
Also listed was John Butler VK5NX as technical editor between August 1982 and April 1985.

Some gaps in dates are either because a few volumes were not fully complete or the information required was not included in some of journal issues.

Some idea of the work put in to produce the journal is given in an article on the operation by Murray Smith in the SA Journal of April 1982. He describes how there is a production team, himself as editor, Darrel Thiselton VK5IN as the printer, Ross Dow VK5KF as the envelope printer and envelope distributor, and Bob Stephenson VK5SC as the collator. There were also other helpers, a team who went to the BGB to assist with the collating prior to mailing.

The 1981/82 Journal editor, Murray Smith VK5TC,
and Printer Darry Thiselton VK5IN

Collating the Journal
at the Burley Griffin Building in 1982

Introduction to the article by Marlene Austin
The First Sixty Years - 1918-1980
Amateur Radio Oct. 1985, Page 27

The Division also prepared the 5/8 news column, SA and NT Division news, for publishing in the WIA journal "Amateur Radio". Jenny Warrington was dominant in preparing the column in the 1980s. Some of the events recorded in this article were extracted from her column. Roland Bruce carried on the column between 1991 and 1994 and Ian Hunt between 1997 and 1999.

A Publications Officer was also appointed to manage and sell books concerning amateur radio and related technical information. John Mount VK5EV was Publications Officer from 1980 to 1983, John Gardiner VK5KJG from 1984 to 1989, and Ian Watson VK5KIA from 1996 to 1997.

On her own initiative, and with the approval of the Division, Marlene Austin VK5QO sifted through the Divison minutes and other records, to research the history of the Division. She started the research in April 1982 and finished in August 1984. She prepared a book in chronological form of the history which covered sixty years of the SA Division of the WIA from 1919 to 1980. In celebration of the 75th anniversary of the WIA, this history was published as an article in the October1985 issue of Amateur Radio.

Equipment Supplies

An Equipment Supply Committee has continued to operate and obtain components for the Division amateurs. Co-opted Committee members attended the monthly Division meetings with their components and kits for special projects. Early members of the Equipment Supply Committee were Dick Boxall VK5ARZ (1983), David Clegg VK5AMK (1984-87), and Ian Bedson VK5ZBA (1987-89)). Further on, Mark Spooner VK5AVQ and Dave Minchin VK5KK have been involved for many years going back as early as 1990.
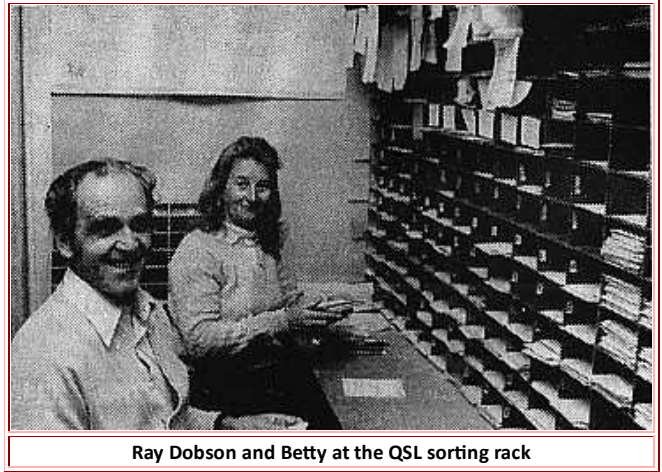
Ever since the AHARS first ran their yearly November Electronics Sale in 1986, the Equipment Supply Committee have provided a trading table at that and other similar trading events.

The QSL Bureau

The Division always operated a QSL Bureau and George Luxon operated this over a long period going back before 1980 for 50 years. Ray Dobson VK5DI took over the operation in 1980.

In the SA WIA journal of December 1981, it was reported that Ray and his wife Betty sorted and distributed around 4000 to 5000 cards each month and sent cards to 30 to 40 countries every 2 to 3 months. Just looking at the photo of the sorting rack gives some idea of the magnitude of the task.

Further down the track, John Gough VK5QD carried on from 1984 to 1989, Roland Bruce VK5OU from 1989 to 1991, Alan Roocroft VK5ZN from 1991 to 1993 and John Vaiciulis VK5FOX from 1993 to 2000 or beyond.

Ray Dobson and Betty at the QSL sorting rack

Intruder Watch

Another important appointment in the Division is that of Intruder Watch, whose function is to monitor the amateur bands to detect unauthorised use of the bands and interference caused by users of the bands. This function was carried out by the following in the 1980 to 2000 era: Leith Cotton VK5LG (1980-82), Colin Ralph VK5KCR (1982-84), Lindsay Collins VK5GZ (1984-92), and John Harris VK5ZRH (1993-2000+).

The SA/NT Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee also reported to the Divisional Council on any technical matters which could affect Amateur Radio. A typical example is that of Pager Interference or any other interference from a source outside of the amateur radio domain. A chairman was appointed to lead the Committee. Our list of chairmen is probably not complete, but Bob Allen VK5BJA is recorded for 1987, Grant Willis VK5ZWI for 1995-96, and David Minchin VK5KK for 1997.

Radio in Scouts

WIA at Woodhouse Scouts Camp in 1988
From left, Peter Koen, Bob Dodd VK5ADR,
Don McDonald VK5ADD (Commissioner for Scouts),
& Jenny Warrington VK5ANW (WIA Divisional President),

The WIA has always assisted scouting in radio communications. The following, from the Division, have operated as Commissioner for Scouts: Geoff Taylor VK5TY (1980-83) Don McDonald VK5ADD (1984-89), & Peter Koen (1991-94). Peter Koen died in January 1995. Dean Whitehorn VK5ZDW carried on scout activities from June 1997 to 2000+.

Jamboree of the Air (JOTA) is a yearly event in which licenced radio amateurs engage scouts in radio communication using the amateur's radio equipment. This event has been supported by the SA Division through its membership.

Special Events

Various Special Events have been organised by the Division from time to time. Many of these events are aimed at advertising amateur radio and spreading the word that amateur radio is interesting hobby and one which distributes knowledge in the fields of radio communication.

Following are recorded events organised by the Division:

In 1980, the Division won the Remembrance contest for another second year in a row. The Division already held the record for the greatest number of consecutive wins in a row.

In 1981, an Amateur Radio Display for disabled persons was arranged by Steve Mahoney VK5AIM, John Hample VK5JS and Lindsey Collins VK5NLC.

In March 1982, a team led by Bill Wardrop VK5AWM, David Clegg VK5AMK and Jenny Warrington VK5ANW, set up a working station on the Festival Plaza as part of the 12th Adelaide Festival of Arts.
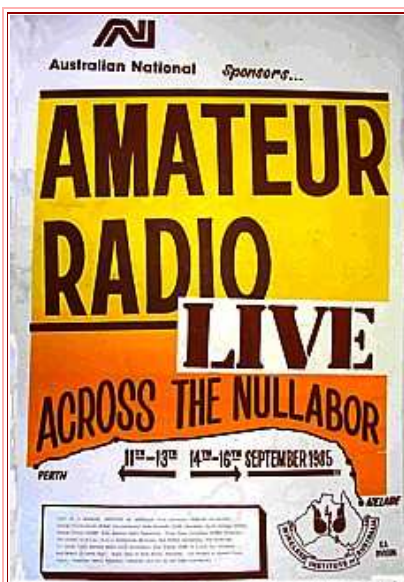
In the later months of 1984, there was a News Electronic Show at the Morphettville Race Course. WIA had a stand at this event.

In May 1985, a Display of Amateur equipment was provided at the Adelaide GPO to introduce a stamped envelope celebrating the 75th birthday of the start of the WIA in Australia. A special call sign VK75A was also issued over the 13th to 26th of the month, for the event. A further display to promote Amateur Radio was provided at the Renaissance Centre in June 1985.

WIA 75 Years Display at the Adelaide GPO with David Clegg VK5AHA, Jenny Warrington VK5ANW, & Jack VK5EV

In September 1985, Australian National Railways set up a cross country train to Perth, across the Nullabor Desert and back, to mark the 150 years from the first rail crossing of the Nullabor. Our radio amateurs were on board with radio equipment to demonstrate amateur communications. Active participants were were Graham Horlin-Smith VK5AQZ (Co-ordinator), Alan Roocroft VK5ZN, Keith Pettman VK5NAX, Graham Prince VK5BGP and Peter Koen VK5BPA. The event was supported by a number of commercial sponsors.

Poster of Amateur Radio on board the Train across the Nullabor, September 1985

Peter Thomas VK5ZPT, Jenny Warrington VK5ANW and John Hampel VK5SJ with the display of vintage radio equipment at the Colonial Picnic

In November 1985, the Division provided a Display at the SA Hobby Fair.

In December 1986, Peter Thomas VK5ZPT, Jenny Warrington VK5ANW and John Hampel VK5SJ set up a display of vintage radio equipment at the Colonial Picnic to mark the closing of South Australian Jubilee Year.

In 1986, an amateur radio display organised by John Hampel VK5SJ was set at the Marion Library to celebrate the centenary of naming of the Marion Library. An on the air hook-up with Mayors of other towns was also set up during the Marion Council's celebrations. This was carried out in the radio shack of Bob Murphy VK5MM.

In 1988, an amateur radio station display was set up at Port Adelaide, manned by the Port Adelaide Radio Club, to Mark the arrival of Tall Sailing Ships at Port Adelaide. The ships were on their way to Sydney to celebrate the bi-centenary of the First Fleet in 1788, with Captain Arthur Philip to found the colony of New South Wales.

**Members of the Port Adelaide Radio Club manned a radio display to mark
the Bi-Centennial visit of tall ships to visit Port Adelaide in 1988
Watched by WIA members Christine Taylor VK5CTY and Geoff Taylor VK5TY.**

In May 1989, a display radio station was set up for 10 days at the International Expo at Wayville

During 1991 an Amateur Radio Week was arranged with a team of operators visiting shopping centres of Tea Tree Plaza, Arndale and Marion. The historic file of the North East Club shows that their members assisted to provide a display at the Tea Tree Plaza.

During 1993, the Division was involved in a "Hobby Fair" at Centennial Hall and a "Life Be In It" fun day at Bonython Park. Also on Sunday October 24, they shared a "Leisure Day in the Park" with the Scouts.

Early 1994, a visit was made to the old Coastal Radio Station VIA at Reynella, now the home and radio QTH of Harro Krause VK5HK.

In October 1994, a group led by Tony VK5WC put on a Radio Display at "Leisure Day in the Park". Some 80,000 people attended that event.

In May 1995, four Division Councillors made a visit to Meninge to present the G.A.Taylor Medal Award to Eric Jamieson VK5LP. For many years, Eric was the presenter of the "Amateur Radio " column "VHF/UHF - An Expanding World". The award presentation was carried out by the Division President, Garry Herden VK5ZK.

**Presentation of G.A. Taylor Award in 1995 to Eric Jamieson VK5LP
at Meninge by Garry Herden VK5ZK**

On January 20, 1999, by arrangement with SA Division of WIA, Astronaut Andy Thomas gave a presentation to Radio Amateurs at the City of West Torrens Council offices. This included a "preamble" followed by his flight video concerning the Mir Space Station and discussion following questions. Andy flew on the Mir Space Station from 22 Jan,1998 until 12 June,1998.

Also of particular interest is Tony Hutchinson VK5ZAI, located at Kingston in the South East of South Australia. Tony set up an Amateur Radio ground station which had interactive communications with the space station providing communication between school students, and the space station, and communication between Andy Thomas and his Adelaide family.

In Nov. 2000, Tony was invited to join the telebridge team for the International Space Station (ISS). This team consisted of nine amateur radio stations around the world, set up to support space station crew members wishing to speak to their family members, and making educational school contacts with the ISS.

**Andy Thomas (centre) at the Presentation in 1999
with Rob Gurr VK5RG and John Elliott VK5EMI**

**Computer Controlled
Satellite Tracking
Antennas at VK5ZAI**

It was the general practice for the Division to arrange a WIA picnic during each year. The Bridgewater Oval was a common venue for the picnic.

For many years, the Amateur Radio Old Timers arranged a Luncheon at the end of each year. Ray Deane VK5RK was the original main stay in organising this function which he did almost to the time when he became a Silent Key in October 2010. Ron Coat VK5RV then took on the task. Typical venues were the Woodville Football Club and the West Beach Airport Social Club Hall. In more recent years, the Marion Hotel has been the venue.

Technical Symposiums

A number of Technical Symposiums have been arranged by several of the Radio Clubs. Whilst most of these were not instigated by the WIA, they were available to all radio Amateurs in South Australia.

The first of these symposiums were organised by the South Coast Radio Club on Saturday July 24, 1993 at the Kingston TAFE College, O'Halloran Hill. The event was convened by Grant Willis VK5ZWI (VK5GR) and addresses were given by various speakers on 160 metre equipment, Packet Radio, 23 cm Band, VLF/LF techniques, Microwaves, Short Waves, Satellites, WICEN and Home Brew antennas. A second symposium was conducted by the South Coast Club at the same location on September 17, 1994. More detail of this second event can be found in the August 1994 issue of SA WIA Journal.

On Saturday October 2, 2004, a further Symposium was organised by members of the North East Radio Club on behalf of the Central Region of the WIA. This was held at the Heights Primary School, Modbury Heights. The event was hosted by John Dawes VK5BJE and technical addresses included the following:
Rex Moncur VK7MO on Digital Enhancement of VHF signals.
Doug McArthur VK3UM on Earth/Moon/Earth (EME) techniques,
Joe Kasser VK3WU/G3ZCZ on Computers for Amateur Radio,
& David Giles VK5DG on Amateur Satellites.

On September 19, 2010, the Adelaide Hills Radio Society Club held a Technical Symposium at the Belair Community Hall.
Key Speakers were:
Drew Diamond VK3XU - Home Brew Ideas, LF & MF Experiments
Phil Harman VK6APH - HPSDR High Performance Software Designed Radio
Keith Gooley VK5OQ & Ian Crawford VK5ZD - Microwave Antenna Construction Techniques
Rob Gurr VK5RG - Early SSB Techniques
More details of this can be found in the History section of the Club web site.

WICEN

The Wireless Institute Civil Emergency Network (WICEN) South Australia Division operates as a separate identity under the auspices of the Wireless Institute of Australia. WICEN is a group of volunteer Radio Amateurs who provide their time and radio equipment to other emergency groups to enable the transmission of voice and data messages from mobile field bases to a central control.

Whilst members of WICEN have not necessarily been members of the SA Division of the WIA, many of their active members have also been active officials within SA Division of WIA. WICEN officials regularly reported their operations to meetings of the Division and worked hand in hand with those of the WIA. In the 1980's, the lists of the WICEN officials were reported regularly in the SA Division Journal.

Early Directors of WICEN, for which we have records, were John Mitchell VK5JM - 1981 to 1988, Bill Wardrop VK5AWM - 1984 & 1985, Graham I*ll*es VK5AT - 1988 & 1989, Ian Watson VK5KIA - 1990, and Phil Pavey VK5PV - 1996 & 1997.

Amateur Radio Clubs and Special Groups

Over the years, Amateur Radio Clubs have been formed in different suburban and country areas of the State. Whilst most have an affiliation with the WIA by membership of the SA Division of the WIA, they operate independent to that of the WIA Division with their own organised structure. The largest of these clubs is the Adelaide Hills Amateur Radio Society which, by 2013, had built up to around 155 members.

There are also groups formed which specialise in a specific area of amateur radio technology such as Packet Radio, VHF or Communications Satellites. Such groups may, or may not, consider themselves to be part of the WIA umbrella.

Radio Club Conventions

In more recent years, the SA Division of WIA has organised Conventions to co-ordinate the common interest and activities of the WIA and the Amateur Radio Clubs. The first Convention was held at "Parnanga" Leisure Centre, O'Sullivan's Beach in April 1984. The second Convention was held at the same venue in 1985 where Bill Rice VK3ABP was a guest speaker representing Federal Executive.

Other venues include Cooranga Campsite & Conference Centre at Aldinga Beach, Douglas Scrub Guide Camp near McLaren vale (1994,1995, & 1996), and Ridgehaven Primary School. In 2001 it was held at the St. Johns Centre, Unley. Records of the Adelaide Hills Amateur Radio Society show that they sent a delegate to the Convention in 1986, 1987, 1989, 1991, 1996 and further years as late as 2009. (The SA WIA Journal, Dec, 1989, also confirms that there was a meeting arranged in 1990).

Club Convention 1985 at O'Sullivan Beach
Roland Bruce (Fed Councillor)
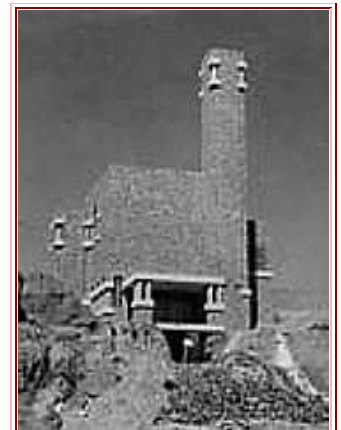**Bill Wardrop VK5ANW (in Chair)**
Don McDonald VK5ADD

Lunch Break at Club Convention 1989
SA WIA President Don McDonald VK5ADD with
Guest of Honor & Fed. Office Manager Bill Roper
VK3ARZ

The Downward attendance curve

In the early years of the WIA Burley Griffin meetings (and certainly in the 1980's) member attendance at general meetings was at a high. However as the years rolled by, the attendance at monthly meetings at the BGB gradually decayed. One reason for this was the increase in activity of Radio Clubs and the tendency for amateurs to support their Club near their local suburban area rather than attend meetings of the WIA. There was also a period, when at Divisional general meetings in the late 1990's, some unfortunate heated discussions discouraged a few members from attending.

In the 1970s, a lot of sweat and blood had been spent by a group of the WIA members to transform the concrete Burley Griffin incinerator into a headquarters for the SA Division of the WIA. The building was owned by the Hindmarsh Corporation and the day came when the WIA had to vacate the premises following a change in ownership. The event followed a move within SA to combine some of the area councils. In around 1997, the Hindmarsh Corporation was combined with the West Torrens Council to become the City of West Torrens and Thebarton.

The Burley Griffin Building,
origin as an Incinerator

Around 1995, it became clear to the Council of the SA WIA Division that there was an aim to sell the property. Right from the initial occupation, the Division had the benefit of a long term lease. This expired and they were forced into short term leases with possible eviction after a short term. They initially had the lease extended to June 1996 and then progressive shorter 6 month terms. There was also continuing pressure from the Councils to increase the cost of the lease. By 1998, it was clear that they would have to move out, which they did. The last meeting of the Division in the Burley Griffin building was held on the 22nd of June, 1999.

It is of interest that when the BCB was originally opened as the WIA headquarters in March 1977 and the opening plaque was unveiled, Garry Herden VK5ZK was the President. After closing the BGB for the WIA, Garry had custody of the plaque until it was presented to Federal President Michael Oven, VK3KI, at the 100th anniversary of the WIA in Canberra in May 2010. The plaque is now held in the WIA archives.

The loss of the BGB as a permanent meeting place was probably another reason for a downward trend in numbers at general meetings. But it was also noted by the WIA Council of that time, that there had always been a problem for members, attending the BGB, to find sufficient car parking space in the adjacent streets.

A lot of radio gear had been accumulated over the years. The loss of a permanent headquarters for the Division and a place to store this gear, led to the disposal of surplus items. Also lost was the permanent home to house the 1.8 MHz transmitting equipment and operating room for the regular Sunday morning broadcast. To continue broadcasting, this equipment was moved to the Water Tower at Elizabeth South which was previously a meeting venue and radio base for the Elizabeth Radio Club. By the time the move occurred in 1999, the VHF Group was in control of the Water Tower. The Elizabeth Radio Club then took over the responsibility of running the WIA Broadcast. A 28 MHz beacon which was installed at the BGB was also moved, in this case to the Barossa Radio Club repeater site.

In 1996 and early 1997, some issues were raised by a number of members concerning the Constitution and its possible interpretation in running the Division. A Special General meeting was called and as a result, the Divisional Council appointed a sub-committee to assemble an amended Constitution. In December 1998, after 18 months of preparation, the new Draft was submitted to the membership for examination. The last AGM in the Burley Griffin Building was held on April 27, 1999. The Draft was endorsed at that AGM, subject to a final spelling check and the acceptance by the Corporate Affairs authority. (The SA Division of the WIA was an incorporated organisation). It is not clear whether the new Constitution was ultimately submitted and approved by the Authority. Of course, the need for the new constitution would have run out in four years time when the Division was dissolved in 2004.

Despite perturbations in the operation of the Division, such as change of venues, the Sunday broadcast was still maintained, even after the Division was dissolved and its members were inducted into the new National WIA.
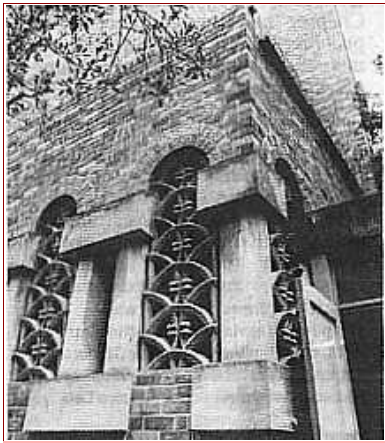
New Venues

During the period leading up to time when the Burley Griffin Building had to be vacated, the Council had looked at other possible meeting sites. In 1996 they tried out two meetings at the Thebarton Senior Collage, Ashley Street, Torrensville. But the loss of the Burley Griffin building finally led to further meetings of the Division at the Reedbeds Community Centre, Phelps Crescent, Fulham. General meetings probably commenced there in July or August 1999. The last meeting was held at the Reedbeds on April 24, 2001.

The meeting place was later changed to St. Johns Hall, 18 Arthur St, Unley. The first meeting at Unley was held on May 22, 2001. (It was noted that at this meeting, attendance had fallen to about 16). The Division Council worked hard to keep the Division going and still organised excellent speakers to address the monthly meetings. But at this last venue, attendance at the meetings seemed to have fallen to numbers mainly consisting of the active committee members plus just a few rank and file members.

There were a number of members from WIA (SA) who were very interested in the activities of WICEN. This particular group did a lot to hold the SA Division together when interest in the SA Division WIA meetings waned. Despite the low attendance at Unley, there were some interesting talks arranged on various subjects. For example, John Butler VK5NX gave a demonstration and talk, at the Unley venue, on his excellent assembly of equipment for WICEN trials.

In 2004, the Wireless Institute re-organised to become a National body, Divisions were dissolved and previous members of the Divisions (including SA Division) became members of the National body. The last AGM of the SA Division was held in April, 2004. The last Divisional meeting was held on May 25, 2004 to discuss the reformation of the WIA and decisions that had to be made.

The Burley Griffin Building today

Following the dissolution of the Division, the WIA Constitution has provided for an SA Advisory Committee made up of previous members of the Divisional Council. After 3 years, the Constitution allowed for election of the Advisory Committee by WIA members living in the South Australian region. The Committee is made up of three elected members and one member nominated by the WIA Board. Term of office is three years, commencing in the October of the year the member is elected. For the WIA Advisory Committee Regulations 2007, see Ref.8.

Functions of the Committee include promotion of amateur radio, the WIA , and membership of WIA, the liaison with affiliated Clubs, organise conferences of affiliated Clubs and other tasks as authorised by the WIA Board. As at October 2013, the SA committee members were Peter Reichelt VK5APR (chairman), Ben Broadbent VK5BB, Trevor Quick VL5ATQ, and David Clegg VK5KC (WIA Board nominee).

But what has happened to the heritage Burley Griffin Building today? It was reported in the "Advertiser", June 2013 as being used as an artist's studio.

Past Presidents at the wind up meeting of the SA Division of the WIA at the Blackwood RSL in 2004.

Back from left:
Garry Herden VK5ZK (1975-76 & 94-95), Murray Burford VK5ZQ (1967), Geoff Taylor VK5TY (1972-73), Peter Watts VK5ZFW/5PX (1996), Jim McLachlan VK5NB (1999-2000)

Front from left:
Ian Hunt VK5QX (1979-80, 1997-98), Phil Williams VK5NN (1963-64), Jenny Wardrop VK5ANW (1986-87)

Despite the loss of a unique South Australian Division of the WIA in South Australia, the number of licenced radio amateurs in the State has grown. The amateurs now find representation in the many amateur radio clubs which now exist and through the Federal body of the WIA. Some of the Clubs have written up their own history and Internet reference to their articles is given in a list at the end of this document.

Summary

The article is an outline of the history of the South Australian Division of the Wireless Institute of Australia between 1980 and dissolution in 2004. The history carries through from that recorded by Marlene Austin between the inception of the WIA and 1980 and that recorded by John F Ross on the History of Radio in South Australia up to 1977.

In the decade commencing in 1980, the Division had become a very vibrant organisation with interesting general meetings well attended by members. The activity of Amateur radio expanded with the advance into the next decade. Amateur Radio Clubs with regional separation also formed and expanded building up membership with their own particular fields of activity.

The effect of all this was less interest in the SA Division of the WIA as a centralised body and the attendance at the general meetings of the Division waned. The Burley Griffin Building had been a headquarters and meeting place and its loss to the Division in 1999 was probably a semi-final blow to membership attendance.

But in the wind was the proposal for re-organisation to one central WIA body and in 2004 the State Divisions of the WIA ceased to function as Divisions.

References

1. The South Australian Wireless Institute Journal: Volume 19, 1980 to Volume 38, 2000.

2. Journal "Amateur Radio", Wireless Institute of Australia, 1980 series, "Five Eighth Wave" column.

3. VK Callbook, Wireless Institute of Australia, yearly publication 1980 to 2004.

4. . The First Sixty Years 1919-1980" By Marlene Austin VK5QO, original bound copies, limited distribution - Published in "Amateur Radio" October 1985, pages 27-33 (Five-Eighth Wave Edition). Re-edited for the Internet, 2013. **http://www.qsl.net/vk5br/WIA_SA_History.htm**

5. A History of Radio in South Australia 1897 -1977" by John.F.Ross, Sections 2 and 3.

6. A chart held by the Federal Historian listing SA Division Presidents and other official positions, prepared by Trevor Quick VK5ATQ and Jenny Wardrop VK5ANW.

7. Information on the VK5 VHF,UHF & SHF Beacons in South Australia, prepared in 1998 by Mark Spooner VK5AVQ, and David Minchin VK5KK. Refer: http://members.ozemail.com.au/~tecknolt/mtlofty.htm

8. **WIA Advisory Committee Regulations 19-03-07**

Other History References for Amateur Radio in South Australia

North East Radio Club **http://vk5bbs.ampr.org/pages/histroy.htm**
http://nerc.vk5bbs.ampr.org/l2_pages/history2.html

Adelaide Hills Amateur Radio Society **http://www.ahars.com.au/history/**

Amateur Radio in Murray bridge **http://users.tpg.com.au/users/ldbutler/MBridge.htm**

Lower Murray Amateur Radio Club **http://www.qsl.net/vk5br/LowerMurray.htm**

South East Radio Group **http://serg.mountgambier.org/history.html**

Contributions

Several contributions have been made to assist in making up various sections of the article. Information received from Garry Herden VK5ZK, Rob Gurr VK5RG and Jenny Wardrop VK5ANW is acknowledged. Jenny also supplied several of the photographs of SA Division events from her own personal album of amateur radio history.

The loan of the SA Division Journal collection held by the WIA Archives via the WIA historian Peter Wolfendon VK3RV, and other assistance from the historian, was vital in assembling a large amount of the information which has been recorded.

If any other member has any further information which could be added to the record, this would be gratefully received.