GOLDEN JUBILEE

Jim Linton, VK3PC 4 Ansett Court, Forest Hill, Vic 3131

The official journal of the Wireless Institute of Australia — Amateur Radio - was born fifty years ago this month. It was fathered by forward-thinking WIA members who nursed it through its pre-World War 2 childhood.

On the outbreak of hostilities AR was saved from death by another group of radio amateurs which nurtured the magazine through most difficult times

It survived and soon after the war reached adolescence, blossomed into adulthood, weathered the times of change and in 1983 has attained a maturity that should see it around for as long as the hobby of amateur radio exists.

In researching this article it became clear that one man can be rightly described as "The Father of AR" - Harry Kinnear (ex VK3KN

Later in this biography of AR Harry's own recollections of the early days are reproduced in his words - but now let us have a look at what others have to say about the magazine.

HOW DID IT ALL BEGIN?

Bob Anderson VK3WY, Assistant VK3 Divisional Secretary 1930-33 and Secretary 1933-47, remembers that there used to be a rongoed publication of a few pages put out by Cedric Searl, late VK3ARX. Bob said this publication was done in a humourous style and in his opinion it could not really be called a forerunner of AR. "When it stopped being produced it gave a glimmer of the idea that a magazine was desirable. A magazine was

talked about at meetings a number of times." He said those on the VK3 Divisional Council gave it much thought and a lot of hard work was carried out by Harry Kinnear, Vaughan Marshall, Bill Gronow and himself

Bob said: "The financial aspect gave us a worry. Various ideas and thoughts were pooled and we worked out that it could be

"The main theme in the back of our minds was that the ARRI was centred around OST. the ARRL journal. It was felt we should do the same thing in Australia." He said a magazine was seen as desirable

for its Public Relations value, "We thought it would help keep the Institute together and get publicity for the Institute. "Over the years, prior to 1933, it was felt that

amateur radio in Australia could do with Public Relations. There were some stories in the daily papers, but the hobby was not generally taken

seriously. "There was a weekly column in Listener In" about amateur radio. But it was thought a

"It was quite a time-consuming problem.

COMMITTEE MEETS TO DESIGN THE COVER The first cover design was decided at a

meeting in the home of Bill Sones who was involved in WIA activites and was a Vice-President on the Victorian Divisional Council.

Those who attended this historic meeting in 1933 were Bill Gronow VK3WG and Vaughan Marchall VK3UK

Bill Gronow, VK3 Divisional President 1935-41, Federal President 1939, 1947-50 and 1954, recently recalled: "Bill Sones was not an amateur, he used to write a page on shortwave listening matters for Listener In.

"He was interested in the setting up of the magazine and had quite a bit to do with the Council discussions on it, but I don't think he took any actual part in its preparation because of his connections with Listener In.

The magazine committee for the first edition was editor Harry Kinnear, sub-editors Bill Gronow, and Vaughan Marshall, When Bill Sones stepped out of AR affairs Jim Marsland, late VK3NY, joined as committee secretary.

Bill Gronow said: "Harry and I did most of the advertising selling - but it got too big for us and we couldn't cope.

"When printing of the magazine was transferred from Wilke & Co to Elsum Printing Company, in 1934, Elsum took over the advertising selling.

Bill Gronow became editor in 1936, a position he held until January 1941. Enlistment in the RAAF of most of the magazine committee and with the Victorian Division unable to continue publication the February 1941 issue did not appear.

A new committee was formed and AR was resuscitated with a war-time hand duplicated issue until September 1945.

The war-time committee included Tom Hogan as editor, Jim Marsland and Herb Stevens VK3JO, VK3 Divisional President

It was the job of Herb to have the names and addresses written on the AR wrappers and bundle them up for the divisions to distribute. Reaching back into his memory he recollects: "The first issue during the war-time was the worst, none of us had been completely

familiar with a duplicator. "We had to sort out the good copies from the spoilt ones - believe me there were plenty of spoils.

Some of the committee had a conference with

the representative of the duplicator firm to see if things were being done right."

Anyone who has used the type of duplicator used by the committee knows all too well that spoils are a fact of life

Herb said everyone involved with the wartime AR felt if was important to keep the magazine going.

He said: "The magazine was particularly important during war-time when membership dwindled, people were away at war, and we saw it as a way of keeping in touch.

We couldn't communicate by radio. A nucleus kept it going with the feeling that at the end of the war there would be renewed interest and with a magazine helping to get things going after the war.

"It let those overseas know that the WIA continued during the war. Those in the services who received it appreciated notes about fellow amateurs in the services and what they were doing.

One had to be careful because of censorship, and not say exactly whereabouts overseas they were."

EXCEMBER IN, 1999 AMATEUR BASIS

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| Air B | force as a Wireless Operator. My ag | | |
| is | years", I hold the A.O.P.C. and ca | | |
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send and receive at w.p.m." I gm contable for immediate war service Signed

Address

The magazine kept the spirit of the hobby alive, despite the officially imposed radio silence, and united amateurs in a determination to get back on air at the end of the war. Just try and imagine printing about 600 copies of AR, wrapping, addressing and posting them, all by hand

The war-time issues had up to sixteen pages and to fill the pages must have been no easy task - remember that there were no active radio amateurs because their equipment was compulsorily put into sealed boxes.

The widow of Jim Marsland, Mrs Elva Marsland remembers vividly the production of the war-time AR on a hand-operated duplicator at her home in Camberwell She said her late husband and the others

took two consecutive Saturdays a month turning out the magazine pages. During that four and a half year period Mrs

Marsland was the tea-lady for the "printing office" and assisted in the collation of pages. Mrs Marsland said the magazine was sent free to servicemen who were radio amateurs before the war and appreciation for this was received from the men stationed overseas



Hogan prepare another edition of AR during the war years.

Jim Marsland's involvement with AR covered a life-time of positions including editor and he also served as the secretary of the WIA's Federal Executive.

In tribute to him Bill Gronow said: "Jim was undoubtedly one of the most loval and hardworking members of the war-time committee

"The fellars did a fine job in keeping the magazine going. Tom Hogan, editor, was a marvellous person, confined to a wheelchair always a cheerful bloke.

"I imagine getting the magazine out at that time would not have been easy - to get enough copy for one thing.

Bill said he believed having AR going was a great help after the war, a concept of what was wanted, and all the fellars coming back "full of vim and vigour" to get back to normal.



Marsland, Charlie Quinn and Tom Hogan.

"The hobby was a bit of a dream for many servicemen. I think most of us had built about fifty transmitters in our own minds as a sort of a sideline if we had time to think about it. Bill Gronow has some firm views on the worth and role of AR. He said: "The magazine is essential to hold the WIA together. Without it you would have a very disjointed Wireless Institute because of the different states and

"It's not all that easy to hold a big show together unless you've got communication the magazine provides it.

"Today's amateurs owe a lot to AR - it bound them together, co-ordinated the activities, and was the only way to inform both the active and inactive amateur.

"I would say that the Institute could cut out a lot of things - but not AR - it's vital. It was October 1945 when AR resumed normal issues and the advertisers who previously supported the magazine gave their support again.

The basic format and content changed little over the following years, but every issue had something for everyone

Up until February 1972 the Victorian Division of the WIA produced the magazine and for reasons including the financial burden it imposed, AR was handed over to the Federal Office.

The person who would have had the longest direct association with AR is Ron Higginbotham VK3RN.

He helped with the war-time issues before joining the army. After the war he renewed his association by doing the linotyping for the magazine from 1947-49, being a line operator at the printing firm - The Richmond Chronicle

In mid-1949 The Richmond Chronicle took over the printing of the magazine with Ron doing the work.

He was a member of the WIA publications committee 1947-64 and The Richmond Chronicle continued printing AR up until March 1973

Ron said the war-time AR ensured that the magazine returned to normal printing after the war and that was what those involved with the war issues were hoping.

He is in a unique position due to his long association with AR to be able to comment with authority on its troubles and development over the years.

Ron said it is an essential item to have a

house journal, particularly these days because there are so many facets of the hobby. He said: "Finance was one difficulty and the

Federal Convention wouldn't give more money to help with AR production. "There were many requests over the years from members to improve the paper quality

from the newsprint it was printed on. "Advertising revenue increased allowing the quality of paper to progressively be

improved to an art quality. First came the war surplus disposals gear which was extremely useful to radio amateurs

and of a quality and price that could only have been dreamed of before the war There were transmitters, receivers, transceivers, ATU's, and a wide range of bits and

pieces easily adapted for amateur purposes. Then later there were commercially made items aimed at radio amateurs such as the Geloso VFO's, then Geloso receivers and transmitters

The real "black-box" age started with the Swan and Galaxy transceivers that appeared in various models. Eddystone receivers, Johnson Matchbox ATU's, Johnson transceivers and then came the now familiar Yaesu transceivers Not only AR revenue from advertising was

helped by the "black-boxes" according to Ron, but those amateurs off the air had their interest in the hobby "re-kindled" after reading about the commercial gear. However the "black-boxes" had an adverse

effect on AR with a downturn in technical articles because amateurs were just not building things. Ron is a WIA Life Member, and on his

retirement from the Publications Committee in 1964 the committee decided, in recognition of his long service, to re-name the Editor's Award for the best technical article - The Ron Higginbotham Award. The scope of this award has changed since

to reflect a downturn in the number of technical articles being supplied to the magazine.

THE MAGAZINE IN THE 1980s Since 1972 the magazine has been under

the full control of the WIA Federal Body. Those who have kept a close watch on our

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Typical AR Advertising of the 1930 era.

received a facelift and generally widened its news content

This "maturing" process was under the editorship of Bruce Bathols VK3UV, Editor 1977-82

An eight member publications committee meets once a month to review the last edition of the magazine and plan future articles including those on technical topics and equipment reviews. There is a paid contractor for production and a paid advertising representative

Bruce said he saw the editor's job as "sole control and responsibility" for the magazine.

"The editor ensures what goes into the magazine relates to Institute policy." Bruce said responsibility for individual columns is with the contributing editors on an

"honour system" However it was the editor's role to make sure those regular contributors were aware of policy and any borderline cases which appear

in their copy is drawn to their attention. He said the purpose of the magazine was: "Basically a forum for members, an avenue to publish members thoughts and their experiments - and Institute policy".

He explained the part advertising plays. Without any advertising the section of the WIA membership subscription which pays for

AR production covers forty eight pages. Advertising revenue increases the pages by ten to twelve, and pays for the extra production costs and remuneration for the advertising

salesman. The editor keeps an eye on the advertising - bearing in mind consumer or Trade Practice Regulations, which may be in force.

Bruce said: "We would never knowingly advertise anything illegal." WIA members have also been quick to react

This month he is given the highest recognition available from the WIA -

The Victorian Division of the Institute made Mr Kinnear a Life Member in recognition of his outstanding service to amateur radio. being a past Divisional President and the farsighted attitude he had in pushing for an Institute journal.

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His contemporaries have described him as the "driving force" behind getting the magazine going.

The name "Amateur Radio" for the magazine was Harry's own idea and he said recently that although it sounded corny - it was most appropriate.

He recalls in his own words those early days of the magazine:

Dear Jim.

Many thanks for your letter regarding your project of writing about the history of "AR".

My Amateur Licence No 944 was gained in 1932. I had been a member of the WIA Victorian Division for a year or so prior to that. In the schooling days at Kelvin Hall, I think, I met some very good mates and after getting on the air became interested in the administrative side of the Institute.

Somehow I found myself a member of the VK3 Council and early in 1933 promoted the idea of having a house magazine. Of course I found myself with the job of getting it going.

We had a bunch of magazine fellows who were very enthusiastic. The writing of editorials was easy at first and shared by the team.

The gleaning of technical information was a lot harder. It was essential to have a good stock-pile of such things.

Max Howden, Geo Glover, Bill Gronow., Vaughan Marshall and many others helped me to keep well supplied. Sometimes it was necessary at the regular monthly meetings to thump the table in an exhortational technique.



for CB radio and have written to the editor with their complaints

Obviously those who put their complaints in writing feel that AR magazine is only for the hobby of amateur radio.

The letters to the editor help the editor keep in touch with readers' views and their worthy ideas are reflected in the magazine. Bruce said the magazine's most popular

section is the Hamads with many WIA members reading them before looking at other pages. The VHF Notes, How's DX column, and

other regular pages also have their following,

but as is usual with publications the editorial comment would be the last or least read. The magazine has an important role that most WIA members are not aware of -getting

the message into the hands of non-members. AR is sent on a reciprocal basis to the radio

societies and bodies in about forty countries. including NZART, RGSB and ARRL It also, within Australia, reaches into

government departments and private enterprises in the communications field. Libraries and technical schools also subscribe to the Institute's journal.

THE FATHER OF AMATEUR RADIO MAGAZINE On researching this article it was the

consensus among those involved in the past history of the magazine that one person could rightly be described as the father of the Institute's journal. Harry Kinnear, VK4AVJ, VK3 President

1934-35, 1945-47, Federal Vice-President 1953, was AR editor for 1933-36.

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Area D. X. Science & Co., bit Mich. Left, Security (See 17th), Sees, Michael Co. M. L. E. Kannald. Early on the RAAF Wireless Reserve came in and occupied a number of pages. The original format measured about 8" x 5" — we could not afford photo's in those days and even the cost of line-blocks was tough but

Advertising was mainly my job as I had opportunities during my travelling around the city to make contacts. Max Howden ran a regular advertisement for crystals which stated, inter alia, "All Xtals tested to a Pentode

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AWA were regulars - and very generous with their donations of equipment, particularly hi-voltage triodes. These were of course prizes in the various competitions we ran.

One hardware firm, Thos Warburton, at our request stocked and advertised hard-drawn "stretchless" copper antenna wire, and next door to them was Warburton Franki, Bill Gronow was in charge of their Weston Meter sales. His company Zephyr Products was later to be a very good advertiser.

I had the honour of ultimately being President of VK3 Division. We had our meetings in the large lecture room at Melbourne Tech, with full houses quite frequently and plenty of heckling from the back benches.

How I would like to be back on the air again for a natter on old times. But to go on the air in these modern times and get involved in

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************** technical discussions, as we used to, would be a real hassie.

I wish you every success with the AR fifty vears story.

Harry Kinnear

* Listener In was a weekly paper that was devoted to wireless in Victoria.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: The following people have helped the author with this article - Bob Anderson, Bruce Bathols, Peter Dodd, Gavin Douglas, Bill Gronow, Ron Higginbotham, Max Hull, Harry Kinnear, Vaughan Marshall, Mrs Elva Marsland, Ken McLachlan, Herb Stevens, Barry Wilton.