

GEOFF TAYLOR VK5TY



Geoff Taylor was the longest serving President of AHARS and spent 14.5 years in office

Prepared by Lloyd Butler VK5BR (from a number of sources) on behalf of the AHARS management committee, to be included as part of the AHARS historic record.

Geoff Taylor was the longest serving President of the Adelaide Hills Amateur Radio Society (AHARS). He commenced in February 1991 and was still in office when he joined the silent keys on June 21, 2005.

In taking on the task, he continued support some of the well established AHARS yearly events such the November Electronics Sale which was previously set up in the days when Hans Smit and Alan Haines had their days in the chair.

But he also introduced some new events. Geoff and his XYL Christine built their own home away from home on a scrub block near Swan Reach. This he called "Wombaroo" and each year when the John Moyle National Field Day was held, he invited members of the Club to live in (or out) at Wombaroo and operate in the name of the club call sign (VK5BAR) from that location.

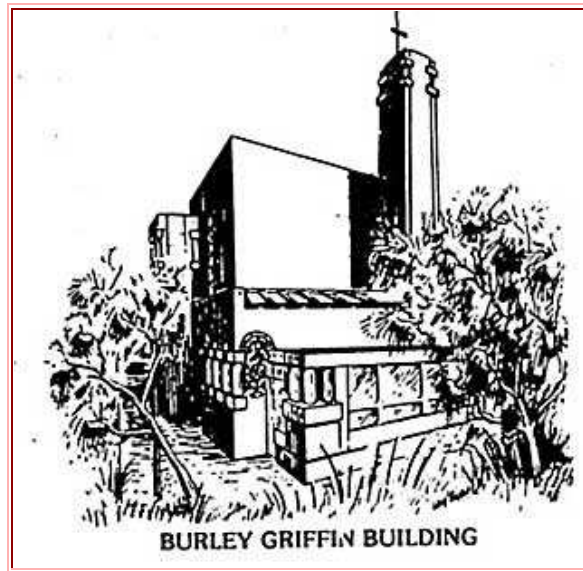


The Wombaroo Taxi

That is a little about Geoff's service to the "Club" but to look at his total dedication to Amateur Radio and his relevant achievements, we have to delve into a wider spectrum particularly involving the Wireless Institute of Australia (the WIA).

Geoff was President of the SA Division of the WIA during the period of April 1972 to April 1974 . He was granted life membership in 1988. He also served as Federal Councillor for the SA Division for 13 years.

His success story is turning a massive concrete building into a habitable headquarters for the SA Division of the WIA.. The building, designed by Architect Burley Griffin as an ornate incinerator was erected at Thebarton. It was through much of Geoff's own sweat blood and tears that great sections of concrete structure were put to the jack hammer and re-arranged.



In 1972 Geoff started the Black Forest Scout Radio Group and his interest in Scout Radio continued to the point where he filled the position of Commissioner of Scout Radio in South Australia for six years. He continued this interest right along to the time when he became President of AHARS and for a few years he arranged for AHARS to get involved in the yearly Scouts Jamboree of the Air (JOTA).

Geoff was always interested in the Wireless Institute Emergency Service (WICEN) and at one stage was a Director. After joining AHARS, he encouraged the Club members to take part with WICEN in providing radio communications for sporting events.

He was Unley Council's 2003 Citizen of the Year in recognition of services to Scouting and amateur radio.

Geoff was always interested in teaching and training. Even until his final days, he was still running classes from home to prepare potential radio amateurs for their examinations to obtain an Amateur Radio Licence. He even assembled a set of technical papers which could be used as a reference to study for the exams.

Like many of us, Geoff's interest in amateur radio followed on from a career in the electric and electronic fields. Geoff worked for about 40 years as a technical officer in the Electricity Trust of South Australia (ETSA) where he rose to a senior position in ETSA's Test and Standards Laboratory. Some of his official duties included apprentice training and no doubt this gave him the urge (and experience) to run a training course for radio amateurs.

His experience with ETSA power lines gave him plenty of confidence in climbing radio towers and he was always helping other radio amateurs with the erection or disassembly of their antenna systems.



Geoff supervising antenna erection
John Moyle Field Day March 1998

And just in case he ran out of something to do, he ran a public address system to provide sound for many local events. Geoff loved to collect vintage items of electrical and radio gear and it was always a delight to examine and discuss the operation of this old gear.

Geoff passed away whilst on a holiday in Britain. The members of the Adelaide Hills Amateur Radio Society express their sympathy to his wife Christine (VK5CTY), their four children and nine grandchildren.

REFERENCES

An obituary on Geoffrey Murray Taylor was written by Rufus (VK5YO) and Sandra Salaman and published in the Advertiser, July 23, 2005. A little more information on Geoff, particularly in relation to ETSA, can be found in that article.

Stalwart radio man signs off

Geoffrey (Geoff) Murray Taylor VK5TY
ETSA technical officer and
amateur radio godfather
Born: July 18 1929; Adelaide
Died: June 21, 2005; Britain

HIS grandfather was an Overland Telegraph operator, his father a sheep station manager who climbed tall towers to repair windmills. This might explain why Geoff had a lifelong affair with climbing towers and radio communications. Geoff lived in the same house for more than 70 years, where he went to Black Forest Primary School, and graduated to the prestige Adelaide Technical High School on North Tce.

He was accepted as a university cadet by the Adelaide Electric Supply Company (later ETSA) where he worked as a technical officer for almost 40 years until he retired early, 20 years ago. At one time, he was responsible for setting out powerlines along Marion Rd with military precision. In later life, he could not drive down Tapleys Hill at night without complaining about the "kink" in the streetlight line where the railway bridge crossed Marion Rd spoiling the effect.

Geoff rose to a senior position in ETSA's Test and Standards Laboratory.

His official duties included apprentice training, developing his latent teaching skills, which later were to help several hounded aspiring radio amateurs (HAMS) qualify for their licences.

In 1959, Geoff was infected with the amateur radio bug and after passing his exams gained his call sign VK5ZCQ, and later passed his morse code and upgraded to VK5TY. In 1972, he set up an amateur



radio station in the Black Forest Scout Hall, and in 1973 he started the Black Forest Scout Radio Group, where his teaching prowess helped many youngsters build electrical projects and obtain their amateur licences. He was still running highly successful classes with students aged from 13 to 80-plus, 35 years later.

Amateur radio has figured highly, with Geoff being president of the state division of the Wireless Institute of Australia for a period during which he chaired some torrid meetings at the Master Builders' Building on South Tce. He successfully co-opted many amateurs to renovate the Burley

Griffin Incinerator at Thebarton and change it into a unique headquarters for the local division. He represented South Australia for 13 years as a federal councillor and later became president of the Adelaide Hills Amateur Radio Society (AHSARS), a position he held to his death, during which time he was commissioner for Scout Radio in SA for six years.

Geoff was Unley Council's 2003 Citizen of the Year in recognition of services to Scouting and amateur radio.

In his "retirement", Geoff and his wife, Christine, bought a scrub block near Swan Reach "to get away from the phone". They personally built a two-storey "home from home", *Wombaroo*, in several stages over several years. It was an electronic marvel, powered by solar collectors, a windmill and occasionally a generator.

Later, they compromised their ideals and acquired a mobile phone. It has played host to many amateur radio field days, outdoor film nights showing rare old 16mm movies and hosted many visitors from home and overseas. Until recently, Geoff and Christine provided a first-class public address service at local events in partnership with another ex-ETSA man, and could not keep up with the demand.

In March, Geoff and Christine went to Britain for their long-planned holiday of a lifetime. With the holiday almost completed, Geoff unexpectedly passed away on June 21. He is survived by Christine and their children, Murray, Marian, Heather and Greta, and nine grandchildren.

**Rufus (VK5YO)
and Sandra Salaman**

READER CONTRIBUTIONS

Readers are invited to contribute obituaries. These should include dates of birth and death, and a photograph. Contributions must also include the author's telephone contact details.

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