



## A TELECOMMUNICATIONS STALWART

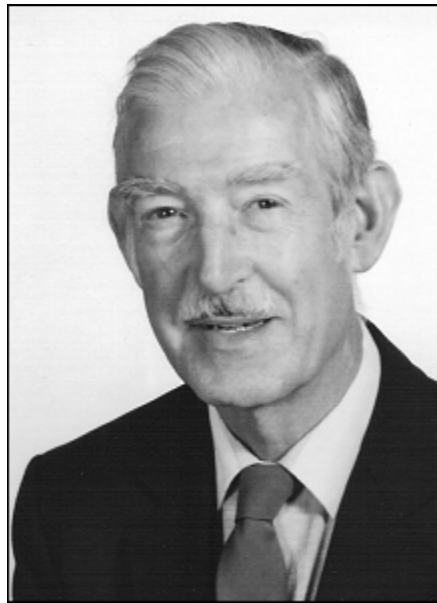
RON KITCHENN: 1920 – 2010

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**Blair Feenaghty**

*Telecommunications Journal of Australia*

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**Ron Kitchenn**

Ronald Grayley Kitchenn was born in Letchworth, Hertfordshire on 17 March 1920 and educated at Pixmore County Council and Letchworth Grammar Schools.

He joined the British Post Office as a Youth-in-Training in 1936 and studied part time to achieve the degree of BSc (Engineering), from London University in 1948, leaving in 1951 to join the Australian Post Office (APO). His service with the BPO covered all fields of communications and included seven years with the Engineer-in-Chief's Office in the Telegraphs, Training (as Lecturer in Transmission) and Local Lines and Wire Broadcasting Branches. While in the latter Branch, as Executive Engineer, he was awarded the British Institution of Radio Engineers (now the Institution of Electronic and Radio Engineers) 1951 premium for "the most outstanding paper in the field of broadcasting" published in that Institution's Journal. He was Secretary for an IEE Sub-Section, a member of the British IRE Programmes and Papers Committee and a member of that Institution's General Council.

In 1951 he joined the APO's NSW Radio Section working with National and commercial broadcasting stations and studios until 1955, when after a period as Divisional Engineer, Engineering Studies, NSW, he transferred to Radio Section in Central Office, moving to Headquarters Planning as Sectional Engineer, Trunk Networks in January, 1958. Here, as one of the notable 'Forty Philosophers', he was responsible for the determination of transmission performance objectives and planning rules for the public and private telecommunication networks provided by the APO.

In the international sphere, Ron was active in the CCITT (International Consultative Council for Telegraphy and Telephony – the technical arm of the International Telecommunications Union) as Special Rapporteur for studies on the transmission characteristics of circuits in the switched international network and on stability and echo. His expertise and character were recognised by his election as Vice-Chairman of CCITT Study Group XVI for the study period 1976-80.

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TSA AND TJA

Ron Kitchenn is remembered particularly by the *Telecommunications Journal of Australia* and the ACS-TSA not only for his frequent contributions to the Journal, but primarily for his 13 years as General Secretary of the Telecommunication Society of Australia.

Ron was originally appointed Secretary of the Postal Electrical Society of Victoria in 1958, then in its 50th year of existence, at a time when the 23-year-old *Telecommunication Journal of Australia* was ailing through lack of readers and contributors. Ron quickly observed that although the Journal had had a national reputation ever since publication commenced in 1935, had drawn papers from all over Australia and was widely distributed overseas, it was produced by a Victorian Society with no formal interstate connections.

The Telecommunication Society of Australia was formed to take over from the Postal Electrical Society of Victoria in October 1959; and Ron became its first General Secretary. Under his guidance it was decided to modernise the Journal, and as a consequence the circulation was almost trebled in the following two years, placing it on a sound financial footing and with its world-wide reputation greatly enhanced. A few years later the sister Journal, *Australian Telecommunication Research*, was founded to publish the more academic papers of the Society.

Ron retired in mid-1982 after some 30 years of service with the Postmaster General's Department and Telecom Australia. When he relinquished his post as General Secretary in 1972, the TSA awarded him an Honorary Life Membership in appreciation of his contributions to the Society.

## RON'S OTHER INTERESTS

Ron was active in many other fields – he was a former Secretary and first Life Member of the Diamond Valley Bushwalking Club, a former secretary of the Superannuated Commonwealth Officers' Association (SCOA) and an active and articulate worker in DOGS – the Australian Council for the Defence of Government Schools. An accomplished public speaker, Ron was a highly esteemed Freeman of Rostrum who contributed generously in all positions for over 50 years, including National President in 1981-83. Rostrum Victoria named its premier public speaking award the Ron Kitchenn Trophy, and as recently as July 2010 Ron was able not only to present the trophy to the current year's winner, but also to make a well-received humorous speech titled “Sprites in the Night”.



**Ron Kitchen presents the 2010 Ron Kitchenn Trophy to Nick Adams**

Ron was also an enthusiastic practitioner of one of the minor arts, filling the role of Foodmaster of the Wine and Food Society of the APO/ Telecom Headquarters. The members came to highly esteem Ron's palate and views on good eating, as well as his seriousness and dedication. Energetic in all his activities, some of his colleagues fondly recollect the speed at which he walked, exhausting companions many years his junior.

In his professional life Ron was an outstanding mentor – his courtesy and consideration for younger engineers who did not share his deep understanding of transmission theory was greatly appreciated. Ron was one of those rare people who are able to be precise without being pedantic, and who leavened his outstanding knowledge and understanding with humour.



**Ron exercising his palate in Paris**

We reproduce below some verse (Ron would never have claimed it as poetry!) which accompanied a paper he wrote for the Journal back in 1977:

## **THE LOSS ACROSS A HYBRID**

The loss across a hybrid's of a very funny sort.  
The theory says it's three dB from two to four-wire port;  
It's also three from four to two, so I hope you will agree  
That from four to two, then back to four, the loss is two times three.

So six dB's the smallest loss between the four-wire ports,  
But another factor intervenes to cause some second thoughts.  
You see, transformers are not pure (at least, this side of heaven)  
So the minimum's always more than six –in fact, it's close to seven.

It's fortunate for stability there's another loss in store  
Which adds to the three plus three plus one and makes transhybrid more.

Balance return loss is the name, so, according to reports,  
You add it to the seven to give the loss between the four-wire ports.

If balance  $Z$  and two-wire  $Z$  are equal, one to t'other  
Then balance return loss's infinite and so's transhybrid, brother.  
'Cos when you add infinity to seven dB, you see,  
Infinity is still the sum, mathematicians will agree.

But in real life this case is rare; we can ignore it, I am sure:  
'Tween five and thirty's more the mark; transhybrid loss is seven more.  
So that's the way we work it out; but alas, it isn't good enough  
For cases where precise results are needed, not too rough.

Three other factors enter now if you really want precision:  
Two you add, and one subtract, before you end your mission.  
Reflection losses, these three are, and the first two we define  
Are 'tween balance  $Z$  and four-wire  $Z$  and 'tween (four-wire  $Z$ ), ( $Z$  line)

You've added those? That's very good. Now take the other pair:  
Reflection loss 'tween balance and line; subtract it, then you're there!  
These three reflection losses•are usually rather small  
And for many, many cases can be neglected, after all

They'll mostly total rather less than 2 dB or so  
But three times this is sometimes found so you cannot always throw  
Those little error terms away when working on your slate  
To calculate trans-hybrid loss, so consider well their fate!

Ron is survived by his wife, Beryl; two sons Ian and Guy; a daughter-in law Carol; two grandsons and two great grandsons.

The *Telecommunications Journal of Australia* and ACS/TSA would like to express their great appreciation of the life and work of Ron Kitchenn and to offer our condolences to the members of his family.

*Blair Feenaghty is Executive Editor of the Telecommunications Journal of Australia and was a colleague of Ron Kitchenn in the late 1960s and early 1970s.*

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