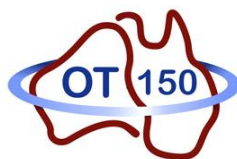


## March Newsletter



Overland Telegraph  
150th Anniversary  
1872-2022

*As advised in an earlier email, OT-150 (Overland Telegraph Line Sesquicentennial) will be emailing you at the beginning of each month until August*

***If you wish to withdraw from this email list, please advise by return email... thank-you***

[www.ot150.net](http://www.ot150.net)

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First, we welcome on board our OT-150 colleagues from the Northern Territory. We now have 10 events happening “north of the border” to add to the 10 listed “south of the border”.

The main activity of the OT-250 Committee and a number of its members has been the creation of a website to list event details, tell the Overland Telegraph story and engage in research and support for those interested in Australia’s greatest infrastructure project of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

This email will concentrate on content of the website, featuring the large amount of material that has been created. The highlights are categorised by their place in the website menu:

### **Events**

(SA) UniSA has come on board as a sponsor, making their largest auditorium available for the OT-150 Symposium planned for late July. There will be a packed speakers’ rostrum and up to 300 attendees.

(NT) as mentioned, 10 events are planned with more details to follow

### **Gallery (images)**

There are 4 categories of images; people, places, events and other. The images are copies of photographs generally available through our libraries. They’re included as ‘scene setters’ to visually describe the era of the OT. Included are old images of telegraph stations, work camps, politicians, workers, camel and horse trains in the desert, etc.. OT-150 Author Derek Pugh has also made available current images of OT stations, illustrating their life in the 21<sup>st</sup> C.

### **Library**

The Library pages of the website highlight a key feature of OT-150, the creation of new material and the salvaging of key documents and other resources relating to the OT story

### **Key Dates**

A comprehensive listing in both calendar and chronological order of significant dates related to the funding, staffing and building of the Overland Telegraph Line. The featured “news item” for March reads:

*11 March 1871*

*The work parties have crossed the imposing southern ridge of the MacDonnell Ranges, taking the Overland Telegraph through Temple Bar Gap (renamed*

*Honeymoon Gap in 1942). Surveyor William Mills travels about 12 kilometres east and follows a dry riverbed north. He finds a number of waterholes and names the largest the Alice Spring after Mrs Todd. The reliable water supply will make this a suitable location for a Telegraph Station.*

### **Telegrams**

Downloadable Telegrams are typically 1-3 pages each, and are written by OT-150 enthusiasts.

Topics covered so far include:

|                                    |                             |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| The First and Last Poles           | The Joining of the Wires    |
| Recriminations!                    | The Building Process        |
| A family Connection in Adelaide    | How Did the Telegraph Work? |
| Casualties                         | Open for Business           |
| Charles Todd: a Biographical Error |                             |

In the Telegram “The Building Process”, Andrew Crouch writes:

*In the Southern and Central Sections, camels were included in the mix. Although they had only been introduced to the outback in numbers in 1865, Charles Todd was keen to use them on the telegraph line project. Pastoralist Thomas Elder had imported both animals and drivers from Afghanistan in the 1860s, and Todd hired camels from his station at Beltana. These animals were invaluable because of their great carrying capacity and endurance. The only problem was that they terrified the horses*

### **Resources – for Researchers**

Downloadable reference resources for researchers include:

|                                    |                                    |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| List of Overland Telegraph Workers | List of Diaries and Other Sources  |
| Determination of the Meeting Point | South Australian Newsprint 1870-72 |

The SA Newsprint lists all 358 news articles found in the S.A. press 1870-72 that relate to the OT. Each article is accessible with one click to the full text in National Library TROVE system. For instance, the South Australian Register on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June, 1870 reports that:

*(Police) have discovered that (Aboriginals) can convert (telegraph) wire into fishhooks, many of which, manufactured in a very ingenious way, have been found in their possession*

### **Resources for Presenters**

These are presentation aids for those creating materials for their OT-150 activity. Included are versions of the OT-150 logo, an OT-150 QR code, a free Eventbrite listing service, brief outlines of Charles Todd’s professional activities (beyond just the OT), Todd presentation aids and copies of branding logos for both OT-150 and Todd

### **News Articles**

Significant news articles are listed and downloadable, such as Todd’s very early plans for the line. In June 1870, Todd set a very optimistic completion date just 18 months out. In reality, it over-ran that target by 8 months.:

*The cable line would be completed by the end of the year 1871..... As to the cost of maintenance, (Todd) did not anticipate it would be more than £6,000 or £7,000 a year, and ....he estimated 25 messages each way per day.*

And interesting adverts are illustrated

**OVERLAND TELEGRAPH.  
MOSQUITO TENTS AND CLOTHING.**

I FITTED OUT a LARGE NUMBER of the NORTHERN TERRITORY PARTIES with CLOTHING and OUTFITTINGS, and made it my Special Business to ascertain the proper description of TENT most suitable where Sandflies and Mosquitoes abound. I am happy to state that I have succeeded, and can now show a TENT for 11s. 6d. which is STRONGLY RECOMMENDED by many of those who have used them in the Northern Territory, and are now taking with them another supply. CALL and SEE THEM; also my STOCK of CLOTHING and OUTFITTINGS, which CANNOT BE SURPASSED in Town for CHEAPNESS and DURABILITY. Advance orders Cashed without Discount.

**GLASGOW HOUSE,**

**G. C. SHIERLAW, 29½ AND 31, HINDLEY-STREET.**

225bce

*South Australian Register, 8 Sep 1870, p. 2*

## Monographs and Web Sites

These resources in the Library are under development

The website is viewable in both desktop (landscape) and mobile (portrait) mode, though some portions of the mobile site lag the development of the desktop version.

**The OT-150 Committee is very interested in hosting on the website the work of its community members. Any material you have developed or discovered that you believe will be of interest, please contact us on [info@ot150.net](mailto:info@ot150.net)**