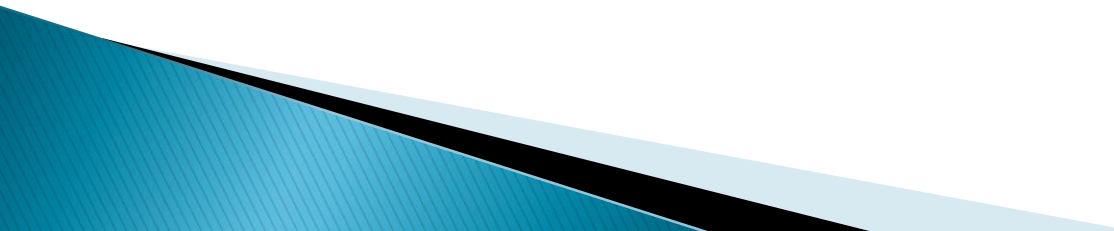


My Life with Ron (1965 - 2003)

Warning!

- ▶ Some comments and/or images may offend some people.
 - ▶ This will be either deliberate or just due to my lack of tact.
 - ▶ In either case, I make no apologies.
 - ▶ I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Jessica Chapman in gaining access to the digital image archives of the ATNF.
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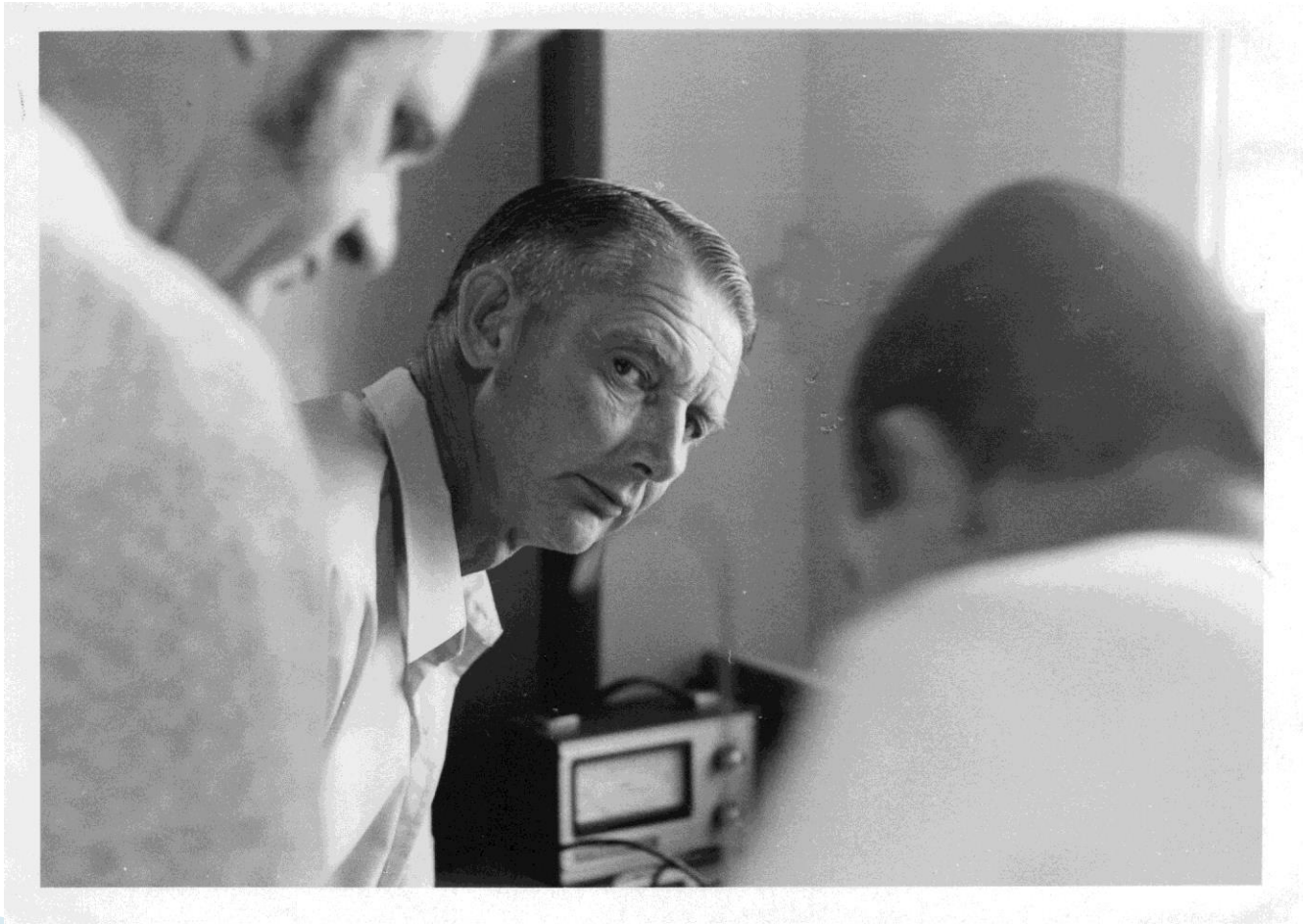
Early Days

- ▶ It all started in the mid 1960's, when Ron and Jay were both stationed at CSIRO's 64 metre Radio Telescope at Parkes under the auspices of John Bolton. I joined the Receiver group in 1965 working for Brian Cooper and spent long periods at Parkes installing receivers.
- ▶ When I initially met Jay, my first impressions were of a young, intelligent lady who looked to have impeccable taste.
- ▶ Alas this proved to be entirely incorrect, as I later found out she was married to Ron!

Jay in the mid-sixties.



John Gatenby Bolton (1922–93) and the “Look”.



Ron in the mid-sixties with the intercom, he looks like he's not too sure whether to speak into it or eat it.



After leaving Parkes in 1967, he spent the next 20 years at Caltech, the Institute of Theoretical astronomy in Cambridge, the Kapetyn Lab in Groningen, Netherlands and finally to NRAO in the USA where he served as Director of the VLA (1980–87).

- ▶ In the meantime, I found myself working on a CSIRO microwave aircraft landing system called “Interscan” for several years. I then took “Leave of Absence” from CSIRO and went to work for NRAO in Greenbank, West Virginia before returning to Australia to resume work on receivers for the Parkes Radio telescope.
- ▶ Our paths finally crossed again in the mid 1980’s when I was the Project Manager for the AT construction phase and Ron served on the Steering Committee.

ATNF construction phase

- ▶ As a member of our Steering Committee Ron was invaluable with his insights on the requirements for National Facilities.
- ▶ As you are all aware Ron missed out on the “Shrinking Violet” gene, so we all paid very close attention to what he had to say.

This is how he looked when he arrived to take over the ATNF in 1988. A comparison with later photos clearly demonstrates what age can do to one's looks!



A rare photo of the other applicant for the Directors job. It made Bob Frater's selection a bit easier.



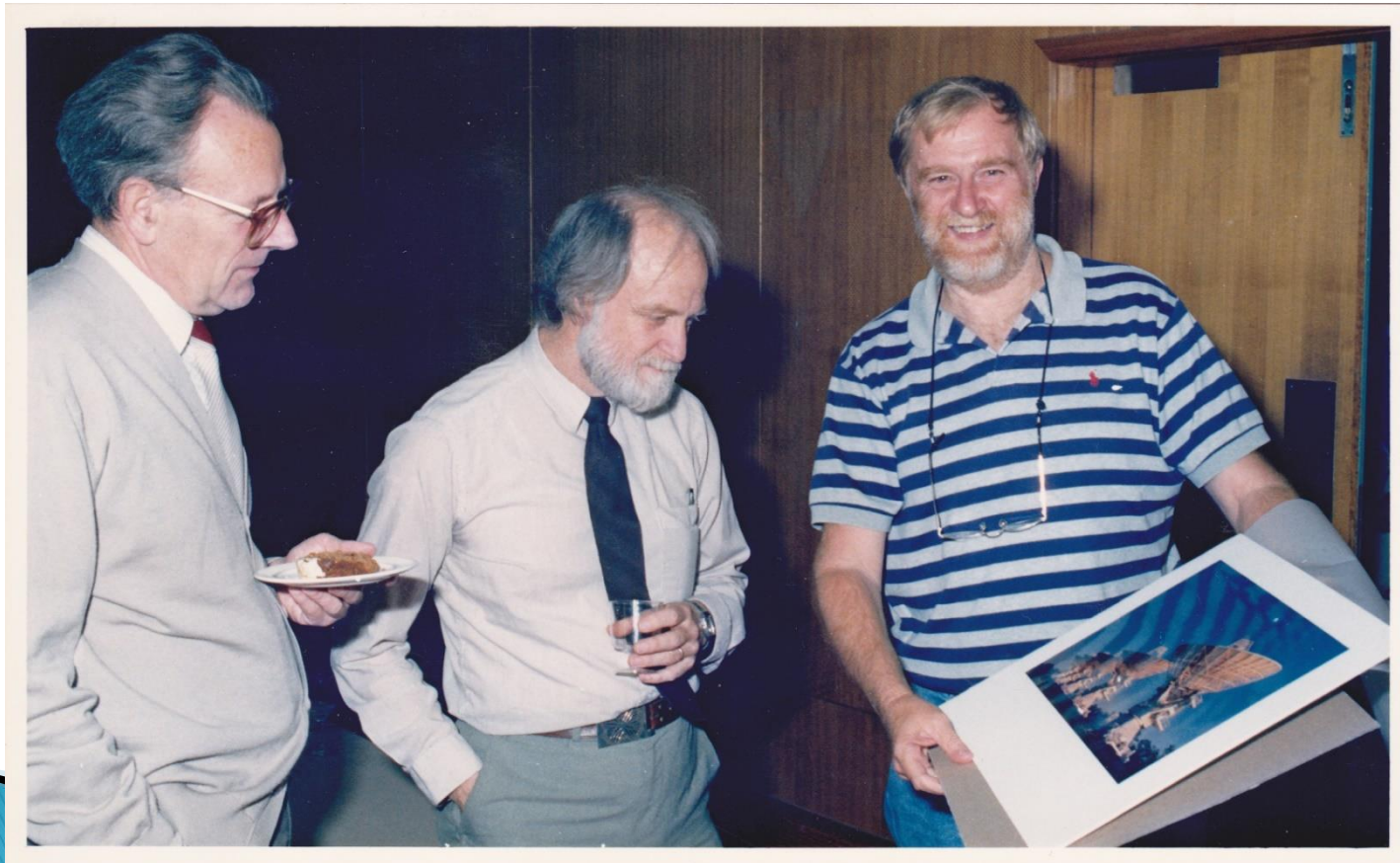
- **As foundation Director of the ATNF:**

- ▶ Ron was appointed as the ATNF foundation Director in 1988 and served in this role till he resigned in 2003.
- ▶ One of his initial tasks was to change the ethos of the CSIRO staff from one that “Owned” the Parkes Telescope to that of a group “Operating” a National Facility. Believe me it was no easy feat.
- ▶ It was during these initial years that some staff felt that Ron had a short fuse!
- ▶ I disagreed entirely because in my opinion he had:

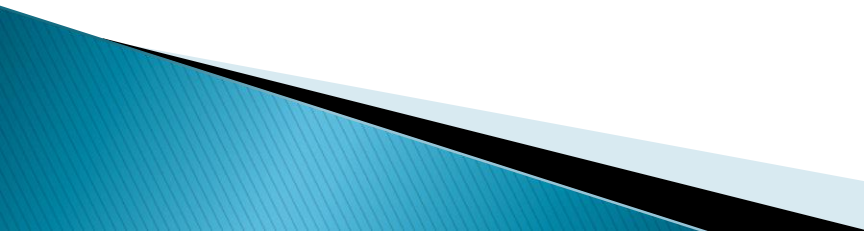
NO FUSE!



Ron and I with Nicholas Guoth (MWP) on Nicholas's retirement in 1992. Nicholas was an Engineer/Project Manager par excellence and we owe him a great debt for imparting many of his skills to us during the construction period.



ATNF Director, Deputy Director and Assistant Director

- ▶ Soon after Ron was appointed Director of the ATNF, he appointed John Whiteoak as Deputy Director and I got the Bronze Medal with the Assistant Directorship.
 - ▶ From my perspective this arrangement worked perfectly.
 - ▶ Wot, no Business Manager, Lawyers etc. etc. I hear you cry.
 - ▶ Of course, this arrangement would not be acceptable to present day CSIRO.
 - ▶ Mainly on the grounds that it worked!
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Ron in the mid 90's, at the top of his game.



In 1994 CSIRO suffered major budget cuts and Ron immediately cut back on our morning teas. This is the “After” image



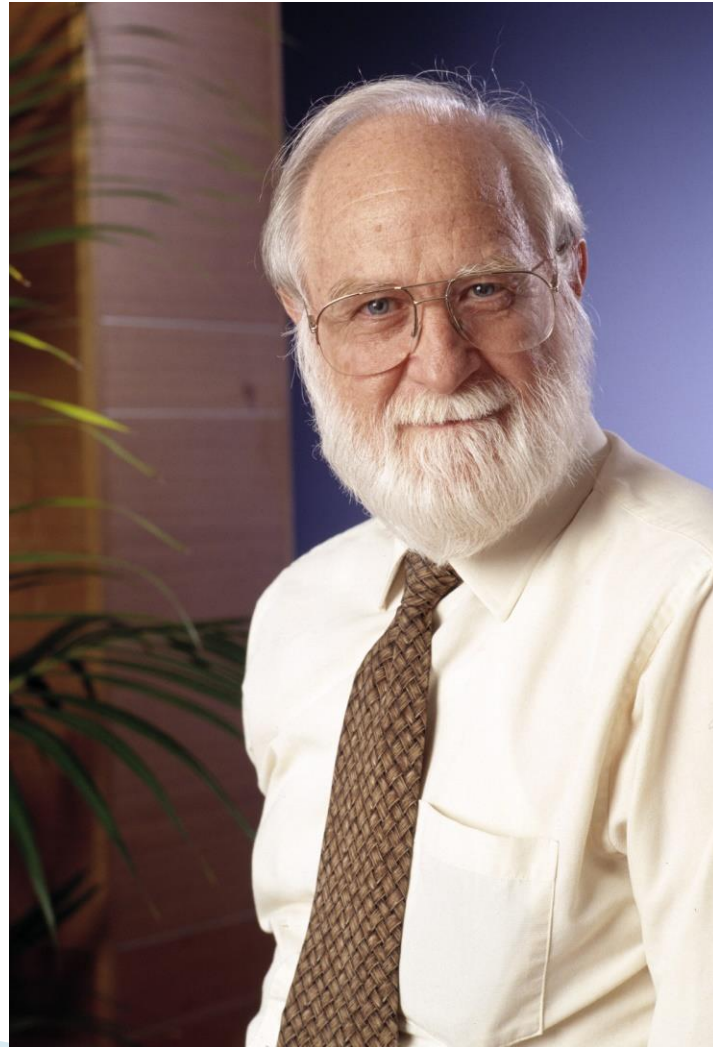
Leadership skills

- ▶ Ron brought to CSIRO many of the skills he had acquired as VLA Director.
- ▶ Firstly he empowered both Observatory sites (Narrabri and Parkes) by rotating our senior management meetings to the Observatories and involving them in the decision making process.
- ▶ He introduced survey's for visiting astronomers to measure our performance in such areas as receiver reliability, on-line computing, data reduction software, on site accommodation, etc. etc.
- ▶ Secondly he spoke regularly to all staff informing them of what our goals were for the upcoming period.
- ▶ As a spectator it was obvious to me, that when he spoke all levels of staff listened. This was quite a change from the usual sermons delivered by senior management. Bob Frater excluded.
- ▶ When CSIRO introduced staff surveys to measure morale, it was no surprise that out of 22 Divisions, the ATNF staff morale results topped the list, year after year.

Ray Norris, on learning that Ron had just put him in charge of the ATNF's overseas travel budget. Well, some dreams can come true!



Ron around 2002, looks like a man who's just completed a job well done. A view backed up by his staff!



My resignation letter

- ▶ “On a personal note, I would like to thank you for your outstanding leadership and friendship over the past 15 years. We haven’t always agreed on all issues but that was the great strength of our relationship”.
 - ▶ I have been fortunate in my career to have been mentored by many outstanding leaders and I rank Ron up there with the best of them. His passion, drive and dedication brought out the best in all of us.
 - ▶ Finally, I hope my talk will have demonstrated what Ron had to put up with (namely me) during his time as Director of the ATNF.
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