

TOWER MOVE TO CRANBOURNE – A CRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

by Ian Jackson VK3BUF

It has now been 20 years since the GGREC shifted from Dandenong to Cranbourne. One of the milestones was the relocation of the Club's tower, which was a very complicated process. Back in 1992 I wrote a diary of events describing how we did this. After a bit of searching I found the document and have reproduced it here. It was a frustrating and bureaucratic process that took most of the year. The path through the maze was narrow because of the unique status of the land where we hold our meetings, but we got there in the end. Even reading it after all this time, still makes me want to strangle something or someone in frustration. So here it is now, a bit of GGREC history, for the first time ever in print....

03/04/92

A phone call is made to Cranbourne Council asking to whom a letter should be sent to when requesting information on a radio tower move.

06/04/92

A letter is sent to the appropriate section at Cranbourne Council indicating who we are and requesting information on correct procedure for moving our tower.

15/04/92

I receive a reply card from the Council, they say that our letter is being processed.

04/05/92

We receive a letter of reply from Cranbourne council. They tell us that as the land is Council land, held by the Department of Conservation and Environment and managed by the Recreation Reserve Committee, that we must first ask them for permission before proceeding. After which we may apply for a Town planning Permit and then a Building Permit. They will also want to know when we have our meetings, how many people attend them, what days we will be transmitting etc.

05/05/92

I ring the Secretary of the Recreation Reserve Committee and tell him of our need for their permission for our radio mast permits. He says that it must be voted upon at one of their monthly meetings, their last meeting was two days ago. They also say that they cannot deal with me directly and that I must first get the secretary of the Girl Guides to lodge a written request to them on our behalf.

05/05/92

I ring the secretary to the Girl Guides, ask her to make a request on our behalf, and promise to supply details of our proposal. She agrees to act promptly.

06/05/92

I send a letter to the Secretary of the Girl Guides, with accompanying radio tower photographs and application details so that they can apply to the Recreation Reserve Committee on our behalf.

04/06/92

I ring the Recreation Reserve Committee secretary and ask if approval for the tower was granted at their meeting. He said that they received the request from the guides, talked about it, but could not make up their mind until they meet again on the following month. He also asks if I can meet him at the Guide Hall and point out where the tower is to go.

05/06/92

I meet the Recreation Reserve Committee secretary at the Guide Hall and point to where we want the tower.

04/07/92

I ring the Recreation Reserve Committee secretary and ask if approval for the tower was granted at their meeting. He said that their meeting had been delayed a week.

11/07/92

I ring the Recreation Reserve Committee secretary and ask if approval for the tower was granted at their meeting. He said that it was and that they would send me a letter soon.

28/07/92

I receive a letter from the Recreation Reserve Committee giving us permission to install our radio mast.

28/07/92

I visit the Council Offices and try to obtain a site plan of the Guide Hall so that I can apply for a Town Planning and Building permit. They tell me that they don't have a site plan. I ask again with vigour, and they find a site plan for the Racecourse with a pinhead sized box in the corner marked Guide Hall.

I also request the correct amounts for fees involved in Town Planning and Building Permit applications. The fees were \$60 and \$20 respectively, they have to be on separate cheques made payable to the same cashier.

12/08/92

I visit the council Offices with site plans (re-drawn by myself), radio mast computations, Rec Reserve letter, several application forms and two cheques. I formally apply for Town Planning and Building permits.

I asked if the Club needed to formally advertise our desire to erect a radio mast and was told that it was not required.

17/08/92

I receive a standard letter from the Town Planning people indicating that our application is being processed.

27/08/92

I receive a note from the Building Permit section (unsigned) requesting additional information on the computations. The information sought was highly technical in nature.

05/09/92

I forward the request for information to Lionel Bell, the original architect of the Nally Tower.

01/10/92

I receive a letter from the Town Planning section which stated that they believed that the tower could be detrimental to adjacent properties and that the Permit application could not proceed until we formally advertised our intention in the Cranbourne Sun. We would have to wait a minimum of fourteen days, get a Statutory Declaration signed as proof of having advertised, and then submit this information back to the Town Planning section.

05/10/92

Richard Everett, the Club President contacted the Cranbourne Sun who quoted a \$150 fee for running the ad.

06/10/92

I visited the Town Planning section and haggled for an hour and a half at the counter while stating that the Club could barely afford \$150 for an advertisement that could not possibly affect anyone. I argued that the only adjacent property owners were the Council offices and the racecourse land, for which we already had written permission. The nearest residential plot was 150 metres away separated by many trees.

After much deliberation, I was told that it would suffice if I could get a letter of permission for the mast placement by the Tennis Club. The Tennis Club is next door to the Guide Hall and is also on the land controlled by the Recreation Reserve committee.

07/10/92

After confirming the correct correspondence address, I send a letter to the Cranbourne Tennis Club urgently requesting an endorsement for our radio mast proposal. (A reply to this request has never been received)

13/10/92

I receive a comprehensive reply from Lionel Bell highlighting references to technical journals and replies to the items in the Council letter. He also highlights an article of the cyclone that swept all communications from Samoa in 1991 with the exception of a surviving Nally Tower of identical design. The mast was then used for the next few days for emergency communications, and was the only contact point for the Island.

14/10/92

I receive a phone call from the Town Planning section, they indicate a reversal of the previous advise and continue to insist on formal advertising of our radio mast proposal in the Cranbourne Sun. I am further told that If I can get the advertisement in the Sun for November the 3rd, that I could wait the 14 day period and still make the Town Planning meeting of the 25th of November.

16/10/92

I deliver a copy of the Lionel Bell Building Permit reply to the Cranbourne Council.

19/10/92

I send (via fax) an advertisement application to the Cranbourne Sun.

30/10/92

I visit the Building Permit section at the Council offices and ask about the progress on our application. The lady at the counter checked the file and said that they were only waiting on the Town Planning permit before issuing a permit. I asked if there was any other possible causes for delay, or any other material that could be supplied by me, and was told that there were no further problems.

03/11/92

Our advertisement in the Cranbourne Sun is published

20/11/92

I go to a chemist's shop in Dandenong and get the chemist to witness a statutory declaration relating to the advertisement in the Cranbourne Sun.

23/11/92

I visit the Town Planning section and deliver the declaration and a copy of the newspaper advertisement. I request that this be processed at the town planning meeting scheduled for the 25th. I am told that there was no way that it could be included in that meeting as the agenda had been set some days ago. I then arrange for the application to be processed at the next meeting on the 9th of December.

10/12/92

I ring the Town Planning section and ask about the outcome of the Town planning meeting. I am informed that it had been passed. I ring the Building Permit section and request the finalisation of the building permit. I am told that this cannot be done as we have not supplied an answer to their second request for engineering details. I reply that I had never received this request and tell of my previous information from them that no further details were needed. They check their records and confirm that they had erroneously sent the request on the 28/11/92 to the Recreation Reserve Committee P.O. box in Cranbourne. I then ask for a fax copy of this request for additional information.

10/12/92

I receive the fax from the Council requesting further engineering details. They claim that the references to engineering manuals are correct, but that the manuals are not current editions. They also query some figures.

11/12/92

I mail a copy of the request to the architect, Lionel Bell.

15/12/92

I receive a copy of our Town Planning permit. It grants us permission, but stipulates five conditions never previously referred to. One of the conditions requires us to plant trees around the tower 'to reduce the visual impact from the Car Park'. (The Guides had already planted and staked some twenty trees and shrubs immediately surrounding the tower site, but the Council seemed to have been unaware of this.)

Another condition causes our permit to be invalid should someone be 'annoyed' by the presence of the mast. (This condition effectively invalidates the reasons given for the need to advertise our permit in the Cranbourne Sun. I was told that unless we did, that an 'annoyed' person could render our permit invalid.)

18/12/92

I receive a phone call from Lionel Bell. He states that after several attempts, that he is unable to contact the engineer who requested the information. He did manage to speak to the Building Surveyor, Mr. Ronald Walker, who stated that we could dispense with all the technical queries that have been issued to date by the Council and the computations would be accepted, provided that:

- a. A Form 10. document is served to the Dandenong Council requesting details of the history of the tower at its current Dandenong site.
- b. An inspection is made by a Cranbourne Council official of the tower at its current site to assess its general condition.

20/12/92

I contact Dave Game, one of the foundation members of the Radio Club who confirms that a legitimate building permit was obtained around 1979 for the radio mast at its present Dandenong site.

21/12/92

I visit the Dandenong Council building department and request details of the original building permit. A brief letter was drafted for me at no charge indicating that there was a valid building permit for the structure, though the computations could not be located. The man at the counter also rang the Building Surveyor at Cranbourne and informed him personally of the legitimate status of our mast. The verbal reply received was that we need only furnish a copy of the valid permit letter and an additional Statutory Declaration stating that the radio mast being installed at Cranbourne, is the same radio mast that exists on the Dandenong permit.

22/12/92

I draft a Statutory Declaration, have it witnessed and hand deliver it to the Council offices. I request that the building permit be processed.

24/12/92

The building permit is received in the mail. The task of moving the radio mast to its new site can now begin....