

East SIG Report – July 2019

Frank Maher opened the July meeting followed by an unusually short Q&A conducted by **George Skarbek**.

Q: Has anyone examined the new Services Agreement with MicroSoft?

A: No.

As there were no further questions, George posed the question “how do you get accurate time?” George’s new watch, a Seiko Astron Solar GPS (figure 1) is always accurate as it continually links to GPS satellites to maintain accurate time and even adjusts for leap seconds. (A leap second refers to the periodical addition of one second to the Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) in order to keep clocks throughout the world synchronized with the Earth's ever-slowng rotation. The next leap second is planned for 2020). The Seiko’s clock hands automatically adjust to the local time anywhere in the world with the touch of a single button. The watch receives all its power from any light sources, which it absorbs through the dial. Unfortunately daylight saving time does require a manual adjustment. The battery life is expected to last ten to fifteen years and the watch has a 3 year guarantee. For those who don’t have a Seiko watch like George’s, there are other ways to determine accurate time.



Figure 1 - Seiko Astron Solar GPS

Website www.time.is displays the current time using official atomic clock time. The time displayed is at your current location and is accurate to the nearest second. The time displayed takes up the full width of the screen as shown in Figure 2 and the time updates each second.



Figure 2 – Time.is current time display

Scroll further down the web page and click on a city from a list of the world’s major cities (figure 3) to display that cities current time. A new windows for that city opens and displays additional time information including Time Zone, Daylight Savings dates, Sunrise & Sunset time, Day length, Solar noon (i.e. when the sun is at its maximum elevation and crosses the local meridian) & the difference between current local time and solar time.



Figure 3 – Time.is World Cities list

Melbourne is not displayed on the cities list (Figure 3), but if you click on Sydney, a new window opens where Melbourne can be selected from a list of Australia’s 25 largest cities. Select Melbourne and the window seen in Figure 4 opens and displays a wealth of time based information for Melbourne.

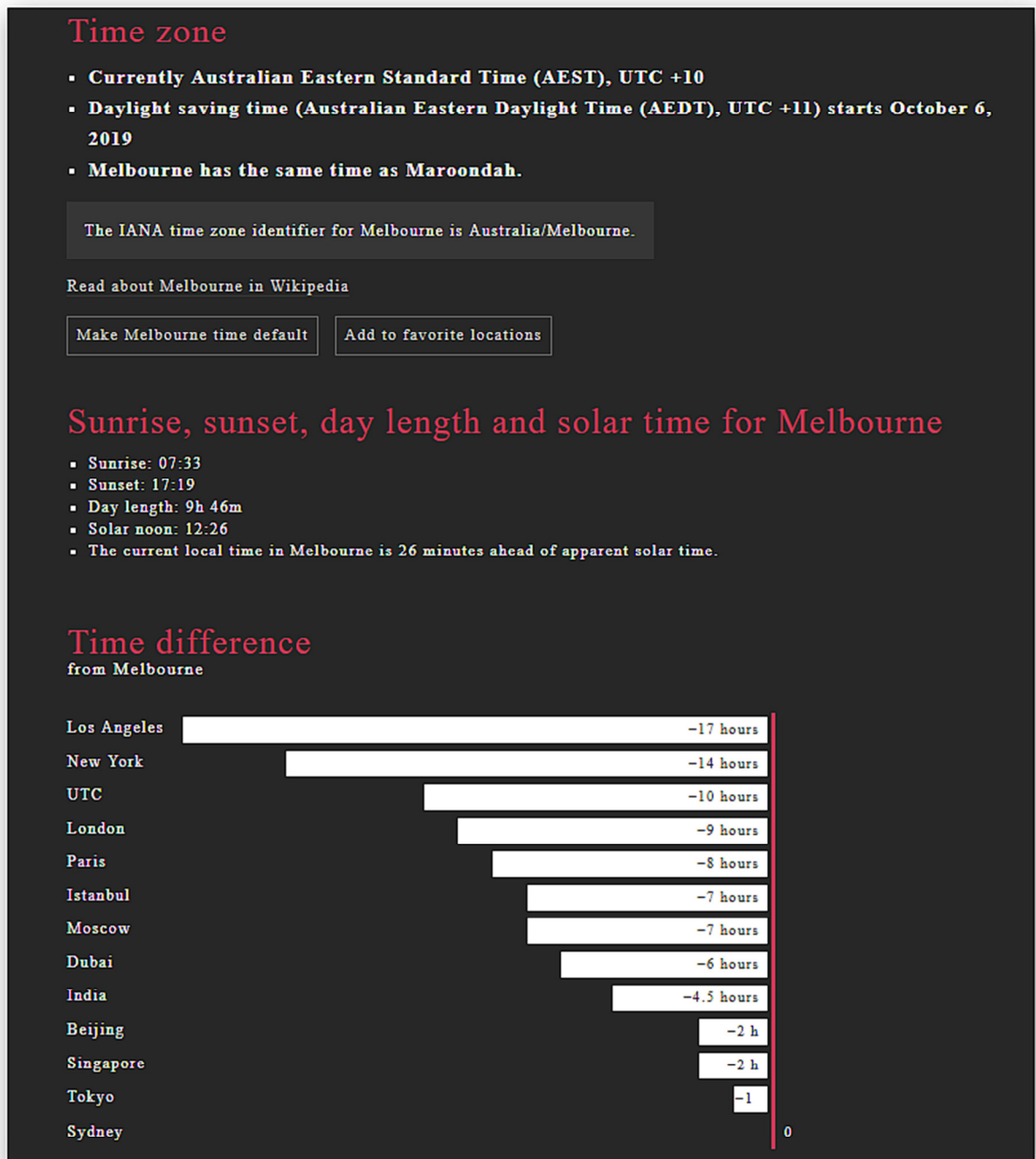


Figure 4 – Melbourne’s window for 14th July 2019.

Before the internet, accurate time was obtained through the PMG’s talking clock service. This service was staffed by a team of women working in half hour shifts who would read out, “at the third stroke it will be ...”. The service was computerised in 1954 and is still available today. Apart from those wanting accurate time to set their watches and clocks, this service was vital for surveyors and mariners when calculating longitude using astronomical observations.

The talking clock still exists and is accessed by phoning 1194. Every 10 seconds a recorded voice gives the current time. e.g. For the time displayed in figure 2 you would hear “at the third stroke it will be seven, twenty three and fourth seconds, beep, beep, beep”. The talking clock always announces the current time from where the call originates.

To compare the two time services, George phoned the talking clock to check its time against that displayed on the www.time.is website. Audience members could not pick any difference between the two. Reference https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speaking_clock#Australia

George then spoke about a health watch (model number N56) he recently purchased for \$71 from Austock. The health watch links to his Android smart phone via an App using Bluetooth. Main features of the watch are heart rate, blood pressure & sleep monitoring, notifications & messages from the phone and of course time and date. The watch came with the choice of 2 bands and features 5 different display faces similar to those shown in figure 5.

The watch was purchased to check heart rhythm as a cheap monitoring option to be used between medical appointments. Various reports including heart rate can be downloaded and printed. Until the various reports can be discussed with his GP, George could not vouch for the accuracy of the data, so would not go as far as recommending the N56 at this time. The heart rate measurements taken appear fairly accurate but George is unsure about the blood pressure readings, even though they are fairly constant over multiple measurements.



Figure 5 – A similar health watch to the N56 purchased by George.

After a break **Dave Botherway** presented some "Forgotten" Features in Windows 10.

First up Dave showed where to find the scenic images displayed when Windows first boots up. These images change almost daily and many would be suitable to display as your desktop wallpaper, one of which Dave is currently using for his desktop wallpaper.

The images are stored on your computer but are not evident as such or easy to locate. Firstly up you need to display hidden files in File Explorer. Drill down in your C drive to *Users* → “*Your Name*” → *AppData* → *Local* → *Packages* → *Microsoft.Windows.ContentDeliveryManager_cw5.....* → *Local State* → *Assets*.

The image files you're after are found in the Assets folder. The files have long meaningless file names comprising both alpha and numeric characters, but no file extension. As these files cannot be viewed in the current format, Dave suggested copying them to a work folder and then add a .jpg extension to the files using DOS. I tested this on my computer and found 102 files in my Assets folder. I copied the files to a work folder and used IrfanView's batch conversion function to add a jpg extension to all the files. The new jpg files were a mixture of scenic pictures in landscape and portrait format and graphics images. From here some sorting, renaming and deleting will be necessary to keep only the scenic image files I wish to retain. I was disappointed that not all the scenes shown when booting my computer were found in the Assets folder.

Hint: As there are a large number of folders under the "Packages" folder, all with long complicated names, Dave suggested the following easier option to locate the Assets folder. Navigate to the "Local" folder in File Explorer (see path above) and search for "Assets" from the Windows search box top right of File Explorer. From here the Assets folder can be opened and files displayed.

The first "forgotten" feature Dave covered was first introduced in Windows 8 and is **File History**. File History is very useful for recovering early versions of a file when you need to go back to an earlier version. It works like a backup by taking snapshots of your files at pre-determined intervals as you work on a file. The file needs to be stored in a folder on an external drive, USB or home network. Over time File History builds up an archive of past versions of your documents that you can recover if needed. The date and time is appended to the file name which helps if you need to go back to an earlier version of say a Word or Excel document.

File History needs to be activated by selecting *Settings* → *Update & Security* → *Backup* → *Back up using File History* and select *Add a Drive* to select where backups are to be stored.

The second "forgotten" feature Dave covered was **Windows Timelines**. This feature was first introduced in Windows 10 version 1803 and is opened by clicking **Task View** on the Windows Taskbar. Timelines is on by default and is an easy way to open programs worked on recently. Click the Task View icon and thumbnails displaying miniature versions of all current running apps are displayed. Timelines appears immediately below the thumbnails of the running apps and displays large icons of documents and web pages you've opened and edited recently. These files are organizing according to the date the file was accessed.

When you click on one of the large icons under Timelines the file for that thumbnail opens. This can be a quicker alternative to opening the file from File Explorer or the program normally used to open the file. Timelines is particularly useful when you don't remember where the file was stored or when you've forgotten the file name.

If you allow your activity history to be sent to MicroSoft, Timelines will display files accessed over the last month. For those users who don't allow this, only the last 7 days file activity is displayed. Options and accounts can be updated by selecting *Settings* → *Privacy* → *Activity History*.

Neil Muller