

April 2019



Vicroads Association Newsletter No.208



Membership of the Association is available to all who have been members of VicRoads or forerunner organisations or the spouse of deceased members and bestows on them all the rights of the Rules of Association. Current cost of membership is a once only fee of \$30 plus a joining fee of \$5. Enquiries about membership or receipt of the Newsletter by e-mail should be directed to the Secretary at 60 Denmark Street Kew 3101 or by phone or e-mail as shown in the footer below.

Dear Members,

Many of you tell me how much you enjoy reading the newsletter but you have to remember I don't write it all.

Take this newsletter for instance. I have included a very tender tribute to Albert Winnett written by his wife Patricia. Pat writes about meeting Albert and forging their lives together. As you will see there were trials that would test the best of us but through it all there was a great love and humour that lasted for life. It moved me to tears. Most of us were aware that Al lived under the deepening cloud of Alzheimer's disease but Pat wrote a 'This is Your Life' book for Al late in his life. Touchingly, she recalled how Al enjoyed the book because it was always new to him each time he read it.

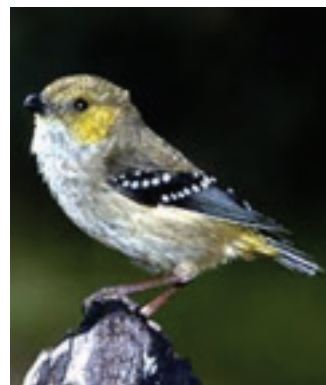
I have also included an excerpt from her book about the travails of living in Cabramurra when Al worked on the Snowy Mountains scheme.

And then there is the roller coaster ride we have all been enjoying describing John Wright's adventures in Papua New Guinea. He heaps adventure on adventure and he tells his story with unerring honesty and with an uncanny memory. Another good thing about this is that there is still more to come! I love exclamation marks!

I am grateful to Pat and John for sharing these experiences with us. I cannot take any credit for their contributions.

Our family again had our annual camping holiday in Ben Boyd National Park. We were lucky in that the weather was warm but more importantly, there was no wind. Every year nature changes the look of the place. A lot of the sprawling acacia on the beach has been washed away and the wildlife was quite different – including for the first time, deer. There has been considerable logging in the adjacent state forest and I suspect that the deer have wandered into the national park.

There were lyrebirds too – in the camping ground and we were lucky enough to see the full male display. The goanna population was reduced but the kangaroos, wallabies and possums meant we had to batten down our food each night. We also had a pair of spotted pardalotes in the branches overhanging our tent. Very beautiful little birds.



Spotted Pardalote

But my favourite time was each morning when many of the children came across to our campsite in the morning for me to read A. A. Milne poems to them. I was surprised that most of them had never heard them but they loved the cadence and rhythm as I did when my father read them to me. I felt very important and quite nostalgic. Their favourite was the one about the old sailor who didn't know what to do.

David Jellie
President and Editor

Dates for your diary

Our program for the remainder of 2019 is as follows. We will provide further details of visits in later newsletters and remind members of upcoming events via email notices. If you are not on our email list, and you have email, please let us know our address. If you do not have email and you would like to come along, please contact the Secretary.

2019			
April	Monday 8	12 noon	Occasional Lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel
	Monday 15	10 am	Visit to Office of Projects Victoria and ARRB 80A Turner Street, Port Melbourne
May	Monday 6	TBA	Visit to Airport Rail Link
June	Monday 3	12 noon	Occasional Lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel
	Monday 17	TBA	Visit to Melbourne Suburban Rail Loop
July	Monday 29	TBA	Visit to West Gate Tunnel Project
August	Monday 12	12 noon	Occasional Lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel
September	11 and 12		Visit to Ballarat Regional Office
October	Monday 7	12 noon	Occasional Lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel
	Thursday 10	6 pm	Drinks and dinner at Waverley RSL
	Monday 28	10 am	Visit to North East Link Project
November	Monday 25	12 noon	Occasional Lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel
December	TBA		Christmas luncheon
2020			
February	Monday 10	12 noon	Occasional Lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel
	Friday 28		Golf Day

Please note the new date for the visit to Office of Projects Victoria on 15 April. The reason for the change was that the new Chief Executive wanted to make the presentation. Please also note that some of these visits may change so please check the dates and notices in future newsletters.

What's coming up

Occasional Lunch — Shoppingtown Hotel — Monday 8th April and Monday 3rd June, 2019

Bookings are not essential, but it would help with arrangements if you can let Kelvin York know on 9438 1028 if you can attend. We hope to see you there.

Visit to the Office of Projects Victoria (OPV) and Australian Road Research Board (ARRB) — Monday 25th March, 2019, at 9.45 am for 10 am

We propose to conduct this meeting at the ARRB's office at 80A Turner Street, Port Melbourne. The visit will be for two hours during which we will have a presentation by the CEO's of each organization and a tour of ARRB's new facilities. After the tour we will go to a local pub or café for lunch.

Please be there by about 9.45 am because it is likely that there will be security arrangements to be observed.

There is onsite parking for those travelling by car. For those of you who want to travel by public transport the Fisherman's Bend bus leaves Southern Cross Station at Collins Street and after 12 stops get off on the corner of Salmon Street and Turner Street and ARRB's office is a five minute walk from there. (300 m).

I wrote in the last newsletter about Victoria investing \$10.1 billion a year in infrastructure over the next four years. No doubt this will be the main basis of OPV's presentation. It will also be interesting to learn of ARRB's activities and see their new office/laboratories.

Visit to Melbourne Airport Rail Link — Monday 6th May, 2019

The timing and location of this visit are still being negotiated and we will inform members of precise details via email once they are set. Please refer to the previous newsletter for details about the project.

What's been happening

VicRoads Association Golf Day

We had seven members competing this year for the trophy plus eight Green Acres members. For the first time we had a tie – Ken Mathers and Jim Webber both 39 had points. They were followed by John Ford and Ken Vickery on 32 and Howard Hughes on 30. Other members who played were Neil Tull and Doug Thompson.

Last year's winner Roy Gilmour, who returned from work in Indonesia on the morning of the golf, came across for the presentations. Roy is also a member at Green Acres.

Vic West was the best of the Green Acres members with 36 points, closely followed by Kelly Masters on 35 and John Doyle on 32.



The joint winners – Jim Webber and Ken Mathers



John Ford, Howard Hughes, Neil Tull, Ken Vickery, Jim Webber and Ken Mathers

Vale

Albert Winnett

In the last newsletter I informed you about the death of Albert Winnett early in 2018. His wife Pat wrote the following obituary to Albert recalling her memories of him.

In 1954 my family travelled to Sydney to attend the Davis Cup, and mutual Winnett and Shannon friends gave a party, where we met. I think we fell in love at first sight. We spent the next day together on Bondi Beach, then I went back to Queensland and Al returned to the Tumut area where he was working on a big seven mile road building contract with his father Will, and brothers Watty and Alex.

I told my parents about meeting this terrific young man in Sydney in – I thought – King's Cross. They were very uneasy about me meeting someone in King's Cross, but they were relieved to find out later that it was actually somewhere in Double Bay.

Letters flew backwards and forwards between us, and in April I came south for my first visit to Holbrook to meet Al's parents. I stayed with his mother, Collie, at Berwin. I was awed by Collie's cooking skills. She would cook six sponge cakes at once in her big wood stove and then set off to a CWA meeting with six perfect cakes.

I was also awed at the knitting skills of my future sisters-in-law Marj and Fay. Coming from a hot climate, I had never ever touched a knitting needle so they set to work teaching me.

Later in the year, Al came to Queensland to visit and meet my parents. We lived on a cattle property near Clermont. Driving back to Mackay with my brother, we were trapped between two flooded creeks. We abandoned the car and walked some five miles in pouring rain across black soil paddocks in the dark, aiming for the spot of light from the Braeside homestead. We crossed the flooded creek near the house hanging on to the fence, and uninvited, we became guests of the Perrys, who made us very welcome. I took only a toothbrush and my precious engagement ring. We stayed there for a week. Food was running short so Ron Perry and my brother, Fergie, introduced poor Al to killing and scalding a pig. Manhandling a huge slippery pig with boiling water splashing everywhere is tricky, and unless the scald is just right, the hair won't scrape off. Their scald was a disaster. Ferg wanted to throw the pig back in the creek and kill another one. We ended up eating some pretty hairy chops. I put ointment on all their burns. So this was Al's introduction to North Queensland.

Al's parents attended the weddings of three sons in the next months – Max and Elaine in Temora, NSW, in September, Al and I in Mackay, Queensland, in December, and Jim and Anne in Melbourne the following February.

When I think of Al, there are many words that easily and clearly come to mind. Words such as gentleness, patience, loyalty and diligence are remembered along with his quiet wisdom and the immense pride he had in his family. He was more than a gentleman. He was a gentle man. He had a love for theatre, books and travel, a love that he instilled in his children. But above all he loved his family and was a devoted husband.

Our three elder daughters were born during our Snowy days. Roger is the only Queenslander, born in Mackay, and our small Jeannie was a late-comer in Melbourne.

Al was a happy and enthusiastic engineer all his working life, and an equally enthusiastic committee member of the Heritage Engineers Association. He initiated their recognition of the Lake Goldsmith Steam Association, and also the iconic windmill. Whatever interest he pursued, it was a lifelong commitment, and he gave unstintingly of time and support. His movie camera club – there were working bees to maintain their property, regular lawn mowing, repairs etc. His Victoria Park tennis club – again, the regular working bees, hosing the courts, stowing nets etc. Wherever we lived, he worked hard renovating and improving our homes and gardens – our first home was at Tumut, then we lived in a portable Snowy building at Cabramurra. If you Google Cabramurra Lupins, you will see a sheet of blooms spreading from the site of our former garden.

As the Snowy Scheme was winding down, we moved to Mackay to be nearer my family. Al was a busy Deputy City Engineer. Upgrading the main streets, the famous old Jubilee tree had to be moved. Al's career hung in the balance for the next month until new leaves appeared. The local paper featured front page running reports.



Patricia and Albert

Our home in Mackay was on a hillside, so he built magnificent stone retaining walls. Extra rooms were excavated underneath and Al made a big playroom for the children.

Returning to Melbourne in 1968, Al worked for a time with Roche Bros before re-joining Vic Roads, formerly the Country Roads Board. With secondary schooling coming up, we bought an older home on a big block of land in Kew, quite impressive at the front, but tending to elderly collapse at the rear. Al re-stumped and constantly painted and repaired our home. The bathroom still operated with a chip heater.

We shared with the family the sad death of our youngest daughter Jeannie in 1979. Long days of hard work renovating the garden all the following year was a blessing for us, preparing for Penny and Chris's wedding reception. Al built a studio for me, and a beautiful curved pergola, after levelling a long, sloping lawn, ready for a big marquee in the back garden. The year after, the marquee was erected again for Belinda and Tony's wedding reception.

In retirement years, we subdivided the deep allotment. Penny and Chris bought the old home and we moved, literally, into the vegetable patch. This was another marvellous project for Al, helping with building our new home and creating a courtyard garden. We paved the whole area with red brick squares. I drew a carefully shaded pencil diagram showing the sequence of brick laying, and Al liked the drawing so much he rushed off and bought some cream bricks, which to my fury ended up as a swastika design. Roger offered to jack hammer the whole area up and start again.

Al dearly loved the grandchildren who came into our life in these years, and was intensely interested in all their activities growing up, camera always ready.



Bob Gooch

Al came late to learning to use a computer, but he worked hard at Swinburne courses, and achieved certificates of competency. But already the insidious disease that had shadowed his later years was affecting his memory, and he found it more and more difficult to remember new things. The second great tragedy of our married life was the loss of our Penny, and sadder still that by this time Al's memory was too limited to realise it.

If I am pressed to say why I loved him, I feel it can only be explained by replying in the words of Michel de Montaigne: "Because it was he; because it was me."

Robert Frank (Bob) Gooch



Bob's daughter has informed us that Bob died in January at the age of 92. Although he left the CRB many years ago he has remained a long-term member of the association and he kept in touch with us intermittently about various matters.

Bob was born in Kyneton in 1927 but after his father died in 1941 there were complications with the estate and Bob's mother and her two teenage sons had to shift to Melbourne where she took in boarders and did ironing jobs to make ends meet. He did well at school in maths and science and he first entered the workforce working in a bank. He hated it. When he submitted his resignation, his boss was furious and threatened that he would make sure he never worked in a bank again – a prospect that no doubt pleased Bob immensely.

As a young man, he undertook theological studies and learnt to fly small aircraft (biplanes). He married Betty in 1948 and they settled in Mentone. He studied at night for his Diploma of Civil Engineering while he was working for the CRB as a surveyor's assistant. After graduation he became involved in the design and construction of bridges and he also played a major role in setting up the pre-casting yards in the CRB which manufactured concrete components for bridges.

In 1962 Bob was transferred to Bairnsdale Division where he worked until 1970. Bob and his family became very involved in the local community including golfing, yachting and the local church. He was also a member of the CRB's Construction Regiment and he regularly went off to Puckapunyal and other places as part of his army responsibilities.

In 1967 he and another engineer from Bairnsdale, Paddy Byrne, went to Flores in Indonesia for a year under an AusAID program to design and build bridges on the island – replacing many of the bridges which were damaged in a cyclone. They lived the very simple life of the local people and their presence was warmly embraced by the local population.. They were the only foreigners living there at the time. Bob commented later that the debriefing they underwent in Canberra on their return was more like an interrogation about the Indonesian political situation rather than the bridges they built. They were advised not to tell anyone about the discussions held.



In 1970 Bob was posted to Warrnambool as the Assistant Divisional Engineer. However in 1979 Bob was ordained into the church and he shifted to Cooktown in North Queensland where he became the locum priest/pilot of the Carpentaria Aerial Mission. He shifted to Thursday Island as the Registrar from 1985 to 1987. In 1987 he retired to Julatten in North Queensland and he and Betty continued their community involvement and assisted in establishing and running the Julatten Library. Wherever they went, Bob and Betty were renowned for their generosity and hospitality. Their house was always open to everyone. In 2010 Betty died and Bob shifted to Mossman. He established the Men's Shed in Mossman and he enjoyed the company of the men he spent time with there.

He developed a degenerative lung disease, COPD, and in 2017 he was hospitalized but after a slow recovery he became very dependent on external services and care. His daughter shifted there to provide support for him but his lung disease and age were beginning to affect his cognitive capacity. He continued to enjoy the small pleasures in life – music, computer games, Sudoku, time with friends and complaining about politicians.

He realized with happiness and relief that his time to join Betty was imminent and he was happy to be home when his life slipped away. He left a note that said "At my funeral there are to be no long faces or sadness that I have finally gone. No solemn, sombre music. Everyone is to be happy for me, to celebrate that I am now whole, free, happy and rejoicing – with Betty again, AT LAST. Its got to be like a party!"

Chris Fox

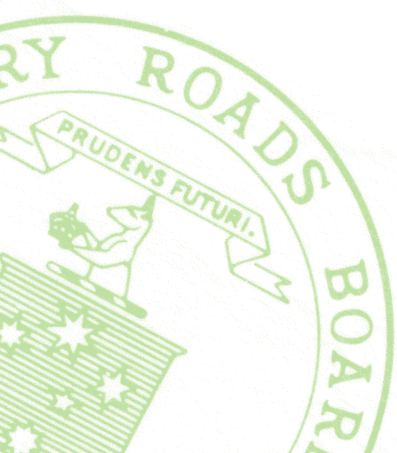
Chris died in January 2019. I first met Chris at the Country Roads Board but lost touch with him when he went off to the newly formed RTA while I remained with the newly formed RCA. Chris was a talented man but he left his mark not in engineering, but in the health sector.

He was the Chief Executive of the Peninsula Health Care Network (which evolved into Peninsula Health) from 1995 to 2000 and was the first Chief Executive of Eastern Health from 2000 to 2003. He served in that same capacity in Central Bayside Community Health from 2003 to 2017.

He was 67 years old. We extend our sympathies to his friends and family.

Dorothy Underwood

Dorothy, Robin's wife, died early in February. We extend our sympathies to their daughters, Cathy and Jenny.



News from our members

Bruce and Marj Addis

Who would believe it? Marj turned 100 on 17 January. She received cards from the Queen, The Prime Minister, the Premier, the Governor General, the Governor and her two Members of Parliament – as well as friends and family. The one she enjoyed the most was from the Governor of Victoria. It said:

"Dear Mrs Addis,

I am delighted to congratulate you on achieving the milestone of your 100th birthday on 17 January 2019.

I can only marvel at the history you have witnessed across an era of so much change, the richness of your experience, wisdom and, no doubt, your resilience.

I hope that you are able to celebrate this special birthday in good health and in the company of family and friends.

My husband, Tony, joins me in sending you every best wish and the Peace and Prosperity of our State motto.

With warmest regards

Linda Dessau"

I also liked this letter. It expresses genuine warmth.

Ros and Peter Lowe accompanied me to see Marj and Bruce in February. They were both in good form and we had a great chat about our CRB and Bridge Branch days. However I felt a little out of it as I was the only one who did not attend the funeral of the CRB in the garden outside the Materials Research building. In fact Peter was the undertaker while the rest were mourners.

As most of you will know, Marj is blind. She told us that she knew she would become blind when she was a child but she copes with it wonderfully well and of course Bruce has become her eyes. They are still in their home in Templestowe and Bruce does all the cooking and caring. They have been married for 43 years and Bruce said that it was the best decision he made in his life.

Incidentally, I still treasure a letter Bruce wrote to me after we had finished the construction of the West Gate Freeway.

They send their best wishes to everyone.



Bruce and Marj

Pat Winnett on Snowy Days


I mentioned that Pat Winnett had written a 'This is Your Life' book for Al and below is what she wrote about their time living in Cabrumurra in the Snowy Mountains.

'The Winnett and Sons contracting company completed a major contract for the Forestry Commission (seven and a half miles of mountain roads out of Tumut soon after our marriage in 1955, and then continued building more roads around the Hume Weir for the CRB in connection with the raising of the Hume Weir. The three brothers, their wives and children lived in caravans close to the job until the firm disbanded when father Will retired.

Al joined the Field Construction section of the Snowy Mountains Authority as the executive engineer in charge of Field Force B, the upper Tumut portion of the scheme. He headed a staff of 19 engineers and 350 day labour personnel, and we lived in a portable three bedroom house in Cabramurra, with Penny, then a toddler. Belinda was born later in the Tumut District Hospital, and Robyn in the Cooma hospital. (The matron at the Tumut hospital developed typhoid and the hospital was closed the week before Robyn was due to arrive, so we had to hurriedly make arrangements with Cooma. Cabramurra was a very bonded community. Everyone was much the same age, with small children, everyone lived in exactly the same sort of accommodation. Some with bigger families had an impressive extra bedroom added. All the men were engineers or geologists. Social gatherings tended to find all the men gathered in a tight group reliving their working days. Once an American wife eyed off this situation and said bitterly "Back home, he'd be shot."

Engineer's salaries were never high compared with other professions, and the Snowy men went to court over this matter. The judge asked Sir William Hudson if he agreed that his engineers were worth much more than they were paid, and Sir William said fiercely of course they were worth more than their salaries. How else could any business survive? The case was dismissed. The resident American engineers' salaries were much higher than even Sir William, who received about \$6000 in the 60s. At one gathering, the Utah engineer opened his mail, which included his tax bill. He said very loudly "Say, you guys sure know how to tax a guy – \$3000." There was an appalled silence while people figured out his probable salary.

An appalling steep ski run, 2000 ft straight down, was built and enthusiastically used by residents, especially the born-on-skis European staff. It was floodlit for night use, but the snow would become solid ice at night and was not for the faint-hearted. Al enjoyed skiing on weekends in the daytime only. The children, never using stocks, darted around and past the adults at breakneck speeds. The gentle slopes of snow in our yard were enough for me....



Al rocketed around steep tracks in the snow in his Landrover. He was responsible for construction and building roads over the Great Divide between Tumut Pond Dam and Khancoban, 27 miles of transmission line access, airstrips, concrete foundation works for the switching stations, maintenance and construction and shifting of houses for townships such as Thiess Village and Yellowbog. Snow clearing for roads had to be organised on a 24-hour shift basis. The Snowy Mountains Authority introduced the use of safety belts to Australia, and it was instant dismissal if anyone disregarded the strict rule to wear them. Another of Al's tasks was building the Tooma aqueducts, which involved miles of concrete pressure pipes placed underground in some of the most rugged country in Australia. These fed extra water to the power station. Each cusec (cubic feet per second) represented a pound's worth of electricity generated. Later a sightseer climbed up the slope above one of these roads to take a photograph, his foot slipped on what he at first thought was undergrowth, and then he realised it was metal. It was the long lost Southern Cloud, which had disappeared in a storm some fifty years ago. The little plane was flying from Melbourne to Sydney with a good weather forecast – no wireless in those days – and no one could warn them of the wild weather developing over the Snowy Mountains.

In the summer, Cabramurra could look quite shabby, with faded and peeling paint on buildings, and trees and shrubs with broken branches, but once the snow came, it became a winter wonderland. Icicles hung from gutters, and wings of ice formed on every surface. The overhead telephone wires could be tubes two feet in diameter, people were careful not to stand under them in case a lethal chunk of ice fell. The ice also built up on window screens. Only a dim green light would filter through. I would pour boiling water on them to try to get a bit of light into the house.

John Wright's Odyssey (Continued)

The Peugeot

Because we did not yet have much in the way of liquid funds to buy a car, Alan Marsh kindly loaned us the £30 deposit we needed on a second-hand Peugeot 403, which we bought from Ernie Kriewaldt's service station in Boroko. Expatriate Dutchman Ernie Kriewaldt was as crooked as every other used car salesman I had ever met and convinced us that if we didn't buy it, it would be months before something as good and cheap turned up on the small, local market. We paid it off over 12 months.


As it turned out, the 1962 Peugeot was larger but not a lot better than the dog of a Fiat 600 my father had made me purchase. The upholstery was some sort of very hard, ridged vinyl that made your bum ache after a drive of any reasonable duration. It had no ignition key – just a big button on the dash you pushed to make it start. You could not lock it because it had no key, so anybody could steal it if they wished. Nobody wanted to steal it.

Early one wild stormy morning, the roof of a near neighbour's house blew off, and the family piled into our house in their pyjamas. We were still in bed. No one was hurt luckily so we all got on with breakfast. Later they collected some clothes and stayed with us for weeks. We became lifelong friends.

It was necessary to keep a cold tap running in the bathroom though the winter, so the water supply did not freeze. Helpful visitors were inclined to carefully turn off the tap. If the water froze in the underground pipes, it was a major disaster and meant possibly months without running water. The vulnerable bit before the pipe went underground would naturally freeze first, and there were several nights when we were out in the snow in dressing gowns and gumboots desperately pouring hot water on the pipe, luckily just in time. Al collected the frozen washing one afternoon and helpfully tried to fold the nappies, and was taken aback when they snapped in half like a biscuit!

It was a very short growing season for gardening, and not many flowers matured before early April snowstorms shredded them. Shrubs were broken back to miserable stumps by the weight of ice on their branches. Lupins with their big parsnip-like roots were ready to move quickly, usually December or January when the snow melted, and were in full bloom in a couple of weeks. Al was a keen gardener, and industriously planted lots of their roots round our house, and years later, long after the Snowy houses at Cabramurra had been taken off to Talbingo, we revisited our old site and the lupins had multiplied into a sheet of colour hundreds of yards across. I hope those plants are still there, still spreading down the valley.'

The engine must have been on its last legs when we bought it because before long the big ends were rattling. Corrosion from the salty atmosphere at the beach would soon eat large holes in the rear floor and James used them to pee out of when we went to the Drive-in theatre. Like our flat, the car had no air con – only the open window. The charging system was also on its way out, because the battery was always going flat at the most inconvenient times and places. Eventually, we had to buy a new alternator from Ernie that cost almost as much as the car had. About six months before we left Port Moresby, one of the front transverse leaf springs broke and I lived in fear of the rest of them suddenly giving way. To be fair, the car had the most wonderful hand brake, which would always lock up the rear wheels on the steepest grade.



We found the car's lack of strength a bit of a worry. Once, when we drove it to Alan Marsh's place in Sogeri, it balked at the final, steep curve at the very end of the Rouna Gorge. We had to back right off and take a high-speed run at it in order to continue our journey.

The most terrifying experience came when I was exploring a potential car trial route up Mt Lawes via a narrow access track to the OTC Repeater station on its summit. One of my car club friends was with me as we climbed higher and higher up the narrow, unsealed track. Eventually, the car ran out of puff in first gear and ground to a halt before starting to roll backwards. Half of Papua seemed to be spread out below us on the passenger side, and if we had gone over the edge I would have had time to make an entire Act of Contrition before hitting something hard. I applied the brakes, but the car started skidding backwards on the loose surface, and this was when my passenger's nerve failed him and he abandoned the car. I had my door open, ready to bail out but managed to hold my nerve and control the reverse skid for perhaps 100 metres before I reached a comparatively level section. It was a near thing and I could not criticise my passenger when he shakily re-joined me.

The other major difficulty we had, in common with most other vehicle owners was the filthy petrol available in Port Moresby. Despite using in-line fuel filters, the carburettor would regularly become completely clogged with mud and the car would simply stop. I always carried tools and quickly reached the stage where I could remove all of the carburettor jets and blow the mud out of them – in complete darkness.

Notwithstanding all of these failings, including an exhaust muffler¹ that let more fumes out of the holes in its sides than from the pipe at the end, the car nevertheless managed to pass its 1966 annual roadworthy inspection by an earnest New Guinean Police constable. I had borrowed some reasonable tyres and stood in front of the car so that the cop would not see the broken leaf spring. I had also stretched rubber mats to cover the holes in the rear floor. When he asked me to rev the engine I gave it the gentlest blip to hide the clatter of the big ends and the roar of the worn-out muffler. The prior addition of some very thick engine oil helped considerably in this endeavour. Amazingly, he passed the car as roadworthy.

The Car Club

Early in 1965, I join the local car club. Its next activity was going to be a hill climb at Mt Eriama, where a newly constructed, unsealed access road off the Sogeri main road about 10 miles out of town, followed a serpentine route up a steep hill to a new water storage and treatment facility.

I volunteered to produce a map of the course, which hadn't been used by the Club before, and later paced out the course and used a compass to produce a worthwhile map for the members, who named its most prominent bends and corners. I was invited to become the Club's acting secretary and was introduced to the other members of the executive, including the president, Bill Chapman, the owner of two pharmacies in Port Moresby, the Vice President Ron Roach, who was a detective, and Treasurer Noel Chay who worked with the Public Works Department. Other people who became our good friends were Kevin and Dianne Hollamby, Bill Crawley and Bob and Fay Gray.

The Club House

When I joined the Club, it had no formal meeting place, and our gatherings were mainly held at venues such as the Aviat Club. In 1966, the Club resolved to construct a club house next to the go-kart track. Plans were drawn up showing a bar room adjacent to a main meeting room. I became the Club's Licensee and attended regular meetings with the Police and the Territory Administration to keep up to date on the finer points of licencing, including the treatment of minors.



Not long after the clubhouse was commissioned, thieves cut a large hole through the inner wall to access the locked, separate bar area and stole most of the club's grog from the refrigerator. The club handyman resolved to discourage any further attacks and inserted steel mesh into the wall space, which he then connected to the mains electricity. A short while later a club member found the outer door open and upon entering the club discovered a large, heavy-duty electric drill lying on the floor. There was a blackened and burnt area on the barroom wall. Outside, there were drag marks indicating that the (unconscious or dead) drill operator had been removed from the scene. The club was never burgled again.

Our involvement in the club was to become a major part of our social life in Port Moresby and brought us into contact with many interesting people:

Ron Roach and PNG Internal Security

Ron was a very interesting guy. Slim, in his 30s with a moustache. He was a detective with the Special Branch of the local Police and kept an eye on people entering the country as well as politically active locals.

1 Even brand-new mufflers rarely lasted more than a year because of the salty air and the humidity, so there was hardly any real incentive to fit them.



When I invited the Car Club committee to have its next meeting at our flat, Ron said that he already knew where I lived because it was his business to know about every new person entering the Territory. When we got off the plane on 5th January, we were herded into the Immigration building where a thin, moustachioed guy in a khaki shirt and shorts gave us all a hard look before allowing us to move on. It was Ron. We did not require passports because Papua was an Australian Territory (with the same legal status of the Northern Territory) and hence we had no need of photographic identification. Although Ron didn't say so, I suspected that he had photos of everyone on the plane, presumably provided in advance by ASIO in conjunction with their vetting of our PNG Entry Permit applications. I still wonder how they had been obtained.

I once spotted Ron and some of his fellow officers lying on a hillside above a native political meeting at Koki Market and using a telephoto lens to photograph the speakers. The Special Branch would track these guys down, bundle them onto planes heading to the other side of the island and forbid the airlines from carrying them back. Sometimes they raided our servants' quarters in the wee small hours to grab hausbois and wontoks suspected of petty crime or political activity.

Ron's activities were not always appreciated. In 1966, he and his wife were invited for dinner aboard a Chinese ship in Port Moresby Harbour. I gather that Ron had made things difficult for powerful people behind the shipping line by disrupting smuggling activities at the docks. The dinner was apparently excellent, but in the wee small hours Ron became desperately ill and his wife rushed him to hospital where apparently, his heart stopped several times and Ron had an amazing out-of-body experience in which he left the operating theatre and accurately described what was happening in the corridor outside. It was strongly suspected that he had been given a subtle poison that would make his heart stop. Only his wife's action in taking him to hospital saved him.

I had several brushes with internal security. After Tania arrived I would often take James out for drives at weekends so that Sylvia could have a sleep during the day. About the only worthwhile place to visit was the airport, because there were so many interesting things always going on there, which I will describe separately. However, my frequent trips there did not go unnoticed and one of my close friends, Kevin Hollamby, who worked for the Sub-District office on Ela Beach, told me that he had been 'asked' to discretely enquire from me as to my reasons for visiting the airport so often.

Later on, when I applied to become the Car Club's liquor licensee I was told by a fellow Car Club member who worked for the Administration that my 'vetting' by the authorities actually went back as far as my primary schools. When I expressed disbelief, he named two of them.

In 1966, Sylvia put on a surprise birthday party for me. One of the guests, who was a friend of Bob Frame, was a solicitor who was stopping over in PM on his way to Rabaul to take up a practice there. He told us that ASIO had asked him to routinely reveal to them all the details of all of his clients and their legal affairs. He told them to get stuffed.

Bob and Faye Gray

Our friendship with Bob and Faye almost cost us our lives. We would sometimes visit them in their house on the western slope of Tuaguba, high up above Konedobu. On this occasion we were at their house when Faye, who was a bit of a drama queen, told us about her recent encounter with a native who had exposed himself to her. This was obviously a cause for great trepidation, so Bob had obtained a pistol so that she could defend herself in his absence should a similar event occur.

We were sitting in their lounge room having a drink when James, now about 2 years old, emerged from their bedroom holding a large, fully loaded revolver with both hands in the approved fashion and with his finger on the trigger – and was pointing it at us. Had a large Taipan slithered into the room, I doubt that we would have been more horrified. Sylvia very calmly asked James to give her the gun, which mercifully he did. His fingers may not have been strong enough to pull the trigger, and the gun was too heavy for him to hold with one hand. What was truly amazing was that as far as we knew, James had never seen a gun before, and yet...

I accompanied Bob and Faye on the first 300 km car trial as their navigator, using the office mechanical calculator to work out average speeds for the various legs of the trial. Bob and Faye were unrepentant gossipmongers, and one needed to be very careful what you told them about personal things. Nevertheless, some of the stuff they told us about certain people in the club, including the Treasurer, was too good not to repeat. As fate would have it, the Treasurer rang me up one night threatening to sue us over what we had told somebody about him. So, we had no choice but to confess to him who had told us – the Greys. And thus ended a beautiful friendship.

Other World War 2 reminders

Bill Chapman – relic hunter

Bill was our pharmacist in Boroko, a few doors from the doctor's surgery we used to visit. When we had a problem with James sucking his thumb, Bill recommended painting his thumbnail with bitter aloes. James kept right on sucking it – bitter taste and all. We gave up worrying about it.

Bill was not only the President of the Car Club; he was also instrumental in setting up a museum of WW2 aircraft from crash sites he and others had located. I once went out on an early morning vehicle convoy with him and a bunch of other guys – including some WW2 veterans from PNG, looking at old airfields and crash sites around the town. At one of these, Durand I think, there was a pile of old supercharger parts from the Lockheed Lightning fighter aircraft that were based there. There were seven aerodromes around Port Moresby in WW2 including the current International Airport, then named Jackson's Strip, or 7-Mile. The Car Club was located beside the main runway of Ward's Strip or 5-Mile, as was the drive-in theatre. We used the old runway for standing quarter mile competitions, amongst other things. According to Wikipedia, Wards was the busiest airfield in the entire Southern Hemisphere in 1943. It was used by transport, heavy bomber and fighter aircraft.

One of the older Club members, Neil Kendrick, who knew my brother Geoffrey from the Air Force, told me of seeing two US Tomahawk fighters take off from the strip early in the morning, on their way to intercept incoming Japanese aircraft. Both had barely become airborne when their engines cut out and they crashed not far from the end of the strip. Both pilots were killed because they had forgotten to drain the condensation from their fuel tanks before starting their engines.

Radiating out from Wards Strip were the overgrown remains of an enormous meandering system of taxiways and lunette shaped, earthen blast mounds built to protect large parked aircraft from bomb damage during Japanese air raids.

In the official war history, Bill had read about a Zero fighter being shot down at 7-Mile. Using separate witness accounts, he had pinpointed the exact site of the crash and dug up a rudder pedal and a piece of the plane bearing the Rising Sun symbol. He told us about how he had found wreckage from a USAF B24 Liberator returning from a mission that had collided in mid-air with a Zero escorting a Japanese bombing raid, with both planes crashing to the ground near Burns Peak at the edge of the then township.

Bill also told us about a Patrol Officer leading a group of native officers on a patrol on the remote south coast of Papua. The group was walking through thick, high kunai grass when the leader blundered into the side of a Mitchell bomber that had obviously landed there during the fighting and had remained there undiscovered for 20 years. The plane had been badly shot up but the pilot had managed to land it before he and the crew succumbed to their wounds. His body was still seated at the controls, which were still in working order. Despite the plane's exposure to the elements for nearly 20 years, most of the markings and decals were still readable.

The Pruth

If you stood at the top of Lawes Road hill on a clear day and looked out over the Coral Sea you could just see two dark, triangular shapes jutting out from the line of surf denoting the outer reef. It was all that remained of the German freighter Pruth, which set sail from Port Moresby Harbour one evening in December 1923. She was on a voyage from New York to Cairns, via Port Moresby. The ship correctly followed the designated channel around Paga Point and across Walter Bay on its way out to the open sea at Basilisk Passage – a navigable break in the reef. For whatever reason, the Pruth missed the final turn that would take it through Basilisk Passage and instead, continued straight on, piling into the outer reef and becoming irretrievably stuck. The hulk sat there right up until World War 2, when the Japanese bombers started to use it as a navigation aid to line themselves up with the gap between Paga and Tuaguba Hills and emerge right over the Port. The RAAF eventually destroyed the hulk in anti-shipping exercises with Beaufighters.

To be continued ...

News from VicRoads

There have been two very important announcements by VicRoads CEO, Michael Malouf, sent out to VicRoads staff in the last few days of February. They are reproduced below.

Resignation (26 February)

Dear All,

It's with mixed emotions that I am advising you that I am finishing up with VicRoads. As you may know I was asked to take on this role with a clear directive; to identify what needs to be done to position VicRoads for the future, and then set in place the things required to deliver that future.

These things are now in place.

The progress we have made together over the last year has been fantastic. We have a new operating model and we have set up several new essential functions to deliver on this operating model. Our focus on this organisational transformation is strong and through our priority projects we have progressed significantly in:

- Reviewing our financial needs and sustainability
- Establishing a stronger focus on asset management and statutory planning
- Centralising major decisions about the road network that relate to the Big Build, growth corridors and significant policies
- Improving the performance of our metro and greater Melbourne roads, and keeping up with the suburban population growth and;
- Improving network performance and our management of planned and unplanned disruptions.

I am proud of the work we have done together. Even though I knew it was a big job and I would be here only for a short

term, the place has definitely reached right under my skin. Your dedication and commitment to serving the Victorian public is second to none. The work we need to do, our willingness to do it, the challenges we face, what we provide the community and most of all the many passionate people here have made it a privilege to lead VicRoads.

I am optimistic that VicRoads will continue this work to really define and build our capability, capacity in our role as network operator and manager and continue to grow the reputation and relationships we need.

Thank you to my executive team who have supported me every step of the way. And thanks to all of you for your willingness to embrace the changes necessary to transform what we do. I have been impressed with the level of commitment and resilience of the organisation to forge on no matter what the challenge.

I leave feeling connected to this place and privileged to have had the opportunity to work with a group of people that really care about the difference they can make.

My last day will be Friday 1st of March at which time Robyn Seymour will be stepping into the CE role. I could not have been more supported by Robyn as my Deputy CE and I wish her all the very best in taking VicRoads forward to meet the challenges that lie ahead. Lou Perry will be acting Deputy Chief Executive.

I wish you all well and have no doubt our paths will cross.

Registration and Licensing split from VicRoads (21 February 2019)

Dear Staff,

As you would be aware over the last few years there have been discussions about linking Registration and Licensing (R&L) Services with Services Victoria. Today in Parliament our Minister, Jaala Pulford confirmed that the Government will now commence work to transfer R&L Services to Service Victoria.

Service Victoria was created to provide Victorians with a one-stop-shop for the community to easily transact with government across the breadth of its services. With VicRoads processing over 26 million transactions every year, we are one of the most frequently accessed Government Services.

We have been progressively responding to a growth in the volume of customer interactions, new technology and increased customer expectations. Our Minister praised the dedication and commitment of our Customer Service staff

who are doing their level best within significant system and time constraints to meet the needs of the community. In some ways Services Victoria is the next stage in this journey to effectively meet these demands not only just for our agency but across government.

Minister Pulford acknowledged that this will be a significant and complex change and has directed VicRoads and DoT to prepare for the transfer of R&L Services to Service Victoria. VicRoads will work with key stakeholders and staff to support the transfer and enable it to occur as efficiently and smoothly as possible. Most importantly the impact on our staff will be front and foremost as we work with Services Victoria for as smooth a transition as possible.

More detailed information will be provided as we commence work with DoT and Services Victoria on the implementation of this transfer. At this stage we don't have the detail but we will certainly communicate as often and openly as we can.



VicRoads is helping to provide portable housing

In a first-of-its-kind initiative in Victoria, VicRoads has leased some of its unused land in Melbourne's inner west to provide affordable housing to low-income adults and families.

The Harris Housing Transportable Project is a partnership between VicRoads, Launch Housing, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and philanthropic donors Geoff and Brad Harris. Launch Housing will place 57 one-bedroom transportable studio apartments on nine vacant sites on Ballarat Road in Footscray and Maidstone.

VicRoads has leased the land on a peppercorn lease of \$1 per year, and DHHS has then subleased the land to Launch Housing.

The tenants will include people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness including older women and men on low incomes and women escaping family violence.

The accommodation will enable tenants to live privately and independently in their own self-contained space with their own courtyard, cooking facilities, toilets and right to tenure. The units are being built in Horsham and will be transported by road to multiple sites in Footscray and Maidstone early in 2019. It is expected the first tenants will move in around January 2019.

Brad and Geoff Harris have provided a major philanthropic donation of \$4 million to fund most of the building costs.

If, after five years, VicRoads needs the land back to widen Ballarat Road, VicRoads will identify other land options that could be suitable for the transportable housing to be relocated. There is also a provision requiring VicRoads to give a minimum of 12 months' notice should it need to terminate the lease.



Road Safety

Victoria has recorded its lowest number of road deaths since records began, thanks in part to the work of VicRoads and other Towards Zero partner agencies.

214 people died on Victorian roads in 2018. That's 45 fewer than in 2017 and 29 fewer than the previous record low of 243 in 2013. One of the most notable trends from the past year has been the reduction in the deaths on high-speed regional roads. Regional roads claimed the most lives in 2017, with 156 deaths – that number dropped to 108 in 2018.

A contributing factor to the lower numbers is the rollout of flexible safety barriers on the state's highest-risk roads as part of the Safe System Road Infrastructure program (SSRIP). With around 1500 km of barriers installed and thousands of barrier hits recorded on regional roads across the state, this infrastructure is reducing the severity of crashes and saving lives.

While the record low road deaths in 2018 highlights that the strategy is moving in the right direction with its approach to road safety, there is no room for complacency. This year VicRoads will continue the roll out of flexible safety barriers, along with a range of other of new technologies and proven safety features on roads across the state as part of ongoing efforts to make the State's roads safer.

The Victorian Government's \$1.4-billion four-year Towards Zero Action Plan reached the half way mark in 2018, aiming to reduce the number of lives lost on our roads to fewer than 200 by 2020.

At the time of writing this (mid-February) 41 lives have been lost on Victoria's roads compared to 25 at the same time last year – up 64%. Drivers killed are up 100%, motorcyclists 200% and pedestrians up 100% (from a low base) but passengers are slightly down. Unless this trend can be reversed it looks as if we won't reach the target of less than 200.

Improved Safety for Cyclists and Pedestrians

\$100 million of the Towards Zero Action Plan has been allocated to making roads safer for pedestrians and cyclists – the most vulnerable road users.

When cyclists are involved in a crash with a vehicle, they're at a high risk of being severely injured or killed due to a lack of physical protection. About one in ten cyclists struck by a vehicle at 30 km/h will die. At speeds above 30 km/h the risk of death rises significantly – at speeds of 50 km/h about eight in ten cyclists will die when struck by a vehicle.

Cycling is growing in popularity, and is a healthy and sustainable mode of transport that reduces traffic congestion and the need for on-road parking space.

By 2050, Melbourne's transport network will need to cater for 10.4 million more trips a day, with a cycleway able to accommodate 1,960 more people an hour than trams.

If Melbourne had a better-connected network and more inclusive cycling culture, four in 10 Victorians say they would be encouraged to cycle, or cycle more often, to destinations close to where they live.

To improve road safety for cyclists, VicRoads is building cycling corridors that include:

- well designed and maintained off-road bike paths and shared paths for pedestrians and cyclists
- dedicated on-road bike lanes to provide separation between cyclists and drivers on busy routes
- protected bike lanes that include a separation island to protect cyclists from traffic
- early-start traffic lights to give cyclists a head start
- improved line markings

- bike lanterns at traffic signals to prevent cyclist from having to dismount at pedestrian crossings
- improved line markings and coloured bike lanes to help make cyclists more visible to drivers
- alternative routes
- new cycling routes in regional Victoria.

Cycling corridors aim to provide safer, lower-stress and more direct journeys into and across Melbourne and Victoria for people who already cycle, and encourage more people to cycle as a viable mode of transport for both recreational and commuter cyclists.

To implement this strategy, VicRoads is building three strategic cycling corridors in the South and South East of Victoria including:

- Melbourne CBD to Scoresby, between Warrigal Road and Waverley Road
- Box Hill to Ashburton
- Clayton to Syndal (formerly Chirnside Park to Mordialloc) including Syndal Station to Monash University and Monash University to Clayton Station

All three cycling corridors are expected to be complete by late 2019.

VicRoads conducted investigations with its partner agencies into an off-road shared path through the existing pipe track reserve, connecting Syndal and Nunawading Stations. Unfortunately, due to anticipated pipe replacement works to be conducted by Melbourne Water, this was found to be unviable.



Trivia and didactic whimsies

Amazing Sea Story

Doug McLaine sent this amazing story.

The passenger steamer SS Warrimoo was quietly knifing its way through the waters of the mid-Pacific on its way from Vancouver to Australia. The navigator had just finished working out a star fix and brought Captain John D.S. Phillips the result. The Warrimoo's position was Lat 0° 31' N and Long 179 30' W. The date was 31 December 1899.

"Know what this means?" First Mate Payton broke in, "We're only a few miles from the intersection of the Equator and the International Date Line". Captain Phillips was prankish enough to take full advantage of the opportunity for achieving the navigational freak of a lifetime.

He called his navigator to the bridge to check and double check the ship's position. He changed course slightly so as to bear directly on his mark. Then he adjusted the engine speed.

The calm weather and clear night worked in his favour. At mid-night the SS Warrimoo lay on the Equator at exactly the point where it crossed the International Date Line! The consequences of this bizarre position were many:

The forward part (bow) of the ship was in the Southern Hemisphere and in the middle of summer. The rear (stern) was in the Northern Hemisphere and in the middle of winter. The date in the aft part of the ship was 31 December 1899.

In the bow (forward) part it was 1 January 1900.

This ship was therefore not only in two different days, two different months, two different years, and two different seasons, but in two different centuries – all at the same time!



The new brexit 50p coin!





And the latest in the road rules

1 I am about to **SLOW DOWN** suddenly

2 I am about to **STOP**

3 I am about to **TURN RIGHT**

4 I am about to **TURN AROUND**

5 You may **PASS ON**

6 I am about to **DIVERGE RIGHT**

These are the LAW!
SIX hand signals you should always use...

Road users! It is your responsibility — to use these hand signals! Failure to do so in an appropriate case is an offence punishable by fine. Your neglect may also affect your liability in the event of an accident.
Make your intentions clear, early . . . give the **CORRECT HAND SIGNALS** . . . **BEFORE** you act!

Issued by the
QUEENSLAND ROAD SAFETY COUNCIL

*Observe
Road Safety Laws*
**FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY
AND FOR OTHERS**

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