

## VicRoads Association

### Newsletter No 185



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. An application for membership of the Association can be found at the end of the Newsletter.

Dear Members,

I have received many calls recently about the latest saga with my eyesight – but don't panic – I am alright. You may recall I had four detached retinas (two in each eye) back in 2001 and 2002. I had a stroke of bad luck in that I lost most of the sight in my right eye, but with excellent skills on the part of the surgeons I was able to retrieve good sight in the left eye enabling me to lead a pretty normal life. The only down side was that I could no longer play tennis or golf.

Because of the trauma of the operations on my eyes I developed cataracts requiring routine surgery. The one in the right eye was not replaced because I could not see due to the damage to the retina so an implant was only required for my left eye. This proceeded normally at first but during the operation, the sac in which the implant lens was to be fitted, detached and so the new lens was stitched on to the surface of my eye. Eventually scar tissue assisted in keeping it in place.

Then about six weeks ago, I joined a friend at a sports bar in Carlton on a Monday night to watch the game between Melbourne Storm and the Sydney Roosters. The Storm was being thrashed and so my mate and I decided to go home early. I dropped him off at his apartment in Carlton and drove home to Kew. About two minutes after arriving home, my sight disappeared. I could see lights and movement but the acuity of my vision completely disappeared. Everything was just a blur. My wife was at her book group but I rang her and she returned home and we then drove into the Eye and Ear Hospital in East Melbourne. There they determined that the implant lens had detached and had slipped down under and behind my eye.

In fact when I looked up I could clearly see the image of the lens with two semi-circular arms which expand to keep it in place. I felt no pain or discomfort. In a funny way, the Registrar at the hospital was quite pleased to see me because it was an opportunity to show some of the younger doctors this particular condition – but most of all they were interested in the other eye i.e. the hopeless one. They looked into it and went "Ohhhh", one even saying to another "I see what you mean" which I thought was somewhat ironic.

I was referred to a surgeon who specialized in removing detached lenses and underwent numerous examinations and measurements before an operation about a week later. The lens was removed and a new one attached and I have been told that this one won't fall off. The operation was carried out under a local anaesthetic and I was conscious throughout. Again I felt no pain. Since then my sight has been improving in small steps and I expect to retrieve the same level of sight as before in a month's time or so. The worst thing about it is that it occurred only a few days before we were due to fly to France for a holiday. But better that it occurred here and not there.

But there is a silver lining to this story. My surgeon is seventy per cent confident that he can improve the sight in my right eye. He thinks he can remove some crystallized particles remaining there from previous operations, remove some of the scar tissue covering the remaining retina and insert an artificial lens to get back some of the sight. Isn't that just marvellous! We are going to try it in a few months after the left eye has fully recovered. If successful, I will be quite dangerous.

David Jellie - Editor

## Dates For Your Diary

DATE		TIME	EVENT
August	Monday 10	12 noon	Occasional lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel
September	17 – 18		Delegation to visit Western Region (Ballarat)
October	Monday 12 Thursday 29	12 noon	Occasional lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel Visit – yet to be decided
November	Monday 9 Thursday 12	12 noon	Occasional lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel Visit to Desalination Plant, Wonthaggi
December	Monday 7	12 noon	Christmas lunch at Head Office
February	Monday 8, 2016	12 noon	Occasional lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel

Please remember too that family and friends are always welcome to attend our functions.



## News About Our Members

I have received very welcome correspondence from three of our members. These are provided below.

### Robin Underwood

After reading the story about Ted Barton in the last newsletter, Robin was inspired to submit this story about other traffic engineering pioneers in Victoria. He wrote:

“As indicated in the tribute to him in the June 2015 Newsletter, Ted Barton has had a remarkable career in traffic engineering and this has been rightly recognised both nationally and internationally. In the formative years of traffic engineering in Victoria, Ted and others made significant contributions to the profession. Other CRB engineers who did pioneering work in this area during the late 1940s, through the 1950s and into the 1960s and beyond, include those mentioned below.

Shortly after the Second World War H P George was appointed Location Engineer, and in addition to his normal road location duties he was given the task of investigating suitable limits on wheel loads for the State taking into account road transport costs and road construction and maintenance costs. As part of this investigation he carried out large-scale surveys of traffic using Victorian roads. The results of his investigations were accepted by the Victorian Government and adopted as the basis for legal load limits in the State. It is understood that this was the first study of its type in the world. His results were reported in a paper published in the Journal of the Institution of Engineers, Australia in 1946 and later to a Permanent International Association of Road Congresses World Meeting in Rio de Janeiro. This work aroused his interest in traffic and traffic engineering and in 1947 he was appointed to the newly created position of Traffic and Location Engineer. This was the first engineering position in Australia with the word “traffic” in it. He enthusiastically pursued traffic engineering principles and practices, and encouraged their widespread adoption. He quickly saw the relationship between land use and traffic generation, and became involved in examining the traffic implications of new housing developments.


Because of this interest, he relinquished the position of Traffic and Location Engineer in 1949 when he moved to the Town and Country Planning Board (the then State Planning Authority). On his departure the position reverted to the earlier position of Location Engineer. He returned to the CRB and to the position of Traffic and Location Engineer in 1953, set about establishing the Traffic and Location Division, and worked tirelessly towards establishing traffic engineering as a recognised separate branch of engineering and to having it accepted within the CRB, within the State of Victoria and indeed within Australia. It should be noted that, in this regard, he received strong support from D V Darwin (Chairman) and C G Roberts (Chief Engineer).

In 1955-56 Harry George was sponsored by the CRB to attend the Bureau of Highway Traffic at Yale University (USA). In late 1958, he moved to become Divisional Engineer, Dandenong Division. In 1963 he became Deputy Chief Engineer –Works and in 1965 Deputy Chief Engineer. He retired in 1970.

During the late 1940s – early 1950s another CRB engineer who took a strong interest in traffic engineering was J D Thorpe (Assistant Highways Engineer) who, as part of his duties, supervised the State’s line marking program and works associated with road signing and delineation. These activities were transferred to the Traffic and Location Division in late 1953. Jack Thorpe was appointed the first Chairman of the newly created Traffic Commission in 1956. At the Traffic Commission he played a major role in drafting the Victorian Road Traffic Regulations, setting up the State Accident Record System, the Metropolitan Route Marking System, the Clear Way System and the preparation of standards for the design and use of traffic signals and road signs in Victoria. He returned to the CRB as a Board Member in 1968 and became Deputy Chairman in 1971.

In 1956-57, D J Delaney, who had been working in the then Bridge Division, was awarded a Sidney Myer Highway Traffic Scholarship to attend the Yale Bureau of Highway Traffic. On his return to the CRB he worked in the Traffic and Location Division for a short period before being appointed Chief Engineer of the Traffic Commission. Later appointments included Traffic Engineer at the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, Study Director for the Metropolitan Transportation Study, and appointment to a senior transport planning position in the Commonwealth Bureau of Roads.

In 1957-58, Neil Guerin, who then was Shire Engineer to the Shire of Kerang and earlier an engineer in the CRB’s Benalla Division, was awarded a Sidney Myer Highway Traffic Scholarship to attend the Yale Bureau of Highway Traffic. Neil achieved recognition at Yale by being named the top student in his year. On his return to Victoria he was appointed to the position of Traffic and Location Engineer with the CRB. This was a time of increasing growth and importance of traffic engineering functions in the CRB, and indeed throughout Australia. Neil oversaw a rapid increase in the activities of the Traffic and Location Division and in its staff numbers. One of his significant legacies was staff training in traffic engineering. He introduced a major internal staff training program and many young engineers benefited from it.



Some of these staff later assumed senior positions in the CRB, in other agencies, in Consultancies and in Local Government. In 1968 Neil was promoted to Plans and Surveys Engineer, and later to Chief Planning Engineer and then to Deputy Engineer-in-Chief.

Another traffic engineer who played an important role in traffic engineering for over 50 years was K D (David) Freeman. David, a graduate of the Royal Military College, Duntroon, joined the Traffic and Location Division in about 1960. He was engaged in signing and line marking activities and soon established a reputation for his expertise in these areas. He played a significant role in the then Australian Committee on Road Devices (ACORD) drafting much of the material for consideration by ACORD. When ACORD was finally disbanded in 1977, David continued a close association as a Project Manager with the Standards Association of Australia (SAA) and was involved in the progressive updating of various Australian Standards. He retired from SAA in 2011 and then was contracted by Austroads to continue working on Standards and industry guidelines until close to his death in 2014.

One other Victorian traffic engineer who did not work for the CRB, but who made a major contribution to the acceptance and development of traffic engineering in Australia, was J M Bayley. In 1954 the Melbourne City Council created a Traffic Engineering Branch within the City Engineer's Department with responsibility for traffic planning, traffic surveys and studies, traffic design, traffic signals, traffic signs and line marking. John was appointed its first Traffic Engineer. In the same year he was awarded an International Road Federation Fellowship to undertake post-graduate study at the Yale Bureau of Highway Traffic during the 1954-55 academic year.

On his return he made major contribution to the acceptance and development of traffic engineering in Australia by the widespread application of traffic engineering principles and practices in the Melbourne City Council area, and by giving lectures and presenting papers to various groups around Australia."

*Editor's note. I might add that you could include Robin Underwood himself in this list.*





## Tom Smallman

Tom Smallman answered my plea for stories in the newsletter before last and has sent me this nostalgic memoir of his early life at the Country Roads Board.

### *Lucky in Life*

Approaching Christmas 1946 I was the engineering cadet at the Shire of Korumburra under the direction of Fred Stansfield, the newly appointed engineer. A young lady named Frances Joyce turned up for work there as a temporary assistant to help in both the rates and engineering offices. It turned out she had very recently resigned her position with the Country Roads Board in Carlton (at the Exhibition Buildings) as assistant to Miss Jean Hudspeth, the Board's title search clerk, so as to marry her fiancé – a local farmer. Aged around twenty, Frances soon showed that for her few years of experience she was quite knowledgeable at both aspects of what was required of her, even showing me a few things about getting good sun-exposed plan prints. In subsequent years I would often amuse people with the claim that one of my first 'chainmen' was in fact female. And her skills were very much appreciated in the rates office too.

How Frances comes to be important in this story is because not long afterwards, when she learned from me that I much preferred surveying work to the engineering work of the shire, and was somewhat disillusioned at the prospect of a future as a 'Shire Engineer', she said she thought that the Title Survey and Records Section of the Board she had so recently been a staff member of was expecting to soon appoint a pupil for articles in surveying. She said she would enquire for me.

Pressing on me also was the fact that I rather felt like a slave there, working 5½ days a week for a pittance (30/-) when my basic-rate board was costing me more - 35/- in fact - my parents making up the difference with a few bob extra for pocket-money. I was accustomed to a better existence, having left a reasonably well-paying clerical position, my first professional job, with the Dept. of Civil Aviation in Melbourne, to take it up to please my parents, who saw the other as a 'dead-end job'. Also, I deemed the engineer's supposedly esteemed position in the place also rather difficult in doing his best to please many masters, the exalted councillors, the always-picky public, and the canny contractors. So it quite jarred with me and put me off the prospect.



Fred (always Mr. of course, to a lad like me then) soon learned of my inquiries and talked it over with me, and to his credit in my estimation, wrote me a great reference that I feel almost guaranteed me that surveying cadet position at the C.R.B. I felt lucky indeed about it and did get the position.

So, to get straight to the point, the appointed Monday morning arrived and I duly presented at the offices in the Exhibition Buildings. I was led to the office of Mr. Bell (irreverently 'Ding Dong' behind his back of course) the staff officer, and was greeted most warmly; he left me in no doubt I was joining an elite and proud organization with a homely and friendly staff. I thought that if he was an example of it my luck in being there was still serving me well. And it turned out he wasn't overdoing it. He took me off down the corridor and around a corner into a huge, magnificently day-lit room (the Big-Room) mostly occupied with large drafting desks and a few office glass-walled cubicles, into one of which I was led to be introduced to Wesley Williams, the officer in charge of my new 'home', the Title Survey and Records Section. After some acquainting there I was then introduced to my new boss, my master-surveyor, Robert Sidney Atkinson (Sid), to whom I would eventually be apprenticed. It was all very professional and legal, with indentures signed, witnessed, and registered with the Surveyor's Board.

The position occupied by the Section in the big-room straddled the thoroughfare to the back door through the Materials Testing section after exiting the Big Room – see the sketch included here. It was a quite interesting area of the building with all manner of staff and strangers passing through, because it was also the way through to the 'kiosk' for much of the staff as well, the mini-store jointly shared with the Motor Registration Branch of the Police Department, as it was constituted in those times. And as it springs to memory, one such alien character was an old Chinese vendor who strolled slowly through (seemingly with official approval) singing out – "peanuts, ginger". The yard at the back was parking space between the building and a sports ground; the staff vehicles were parked facing the back wall and a petrol bowser stood close by to refuel them as necessary.

This then was my work environment for the majority of five working days (not long since reduced from a 5½ day week), the other days being spent "in the field".

The assistant to Chief Draftsman of the Section was Evan Davies, in the adjoining 'glasshouse', a veteran of the Boer War, with many an interesting tale to tell of his service there, most of which we enjoyed as chit-chat on the evening journey home on the occasional times it happened. Sid was one of the lucky officers of the staff to have permanent use of a Board vehicle for his work and the people enjoying free travel in his 'spare' seats added greatly to the interest of the job for me.



You'll see that next to Mr. Davies was seated Harold Godkin, Records Clerk, seated amongst his files, folders and maps, behind a small counter that the occasional contractor would come to and lean on to peruse and deal with the 'plans & specifications' for Board's construction contracts throughout the State. Never 'Harry', he was around 35, not shy but quietly spoken and reserved, a nice chap all round, who had been in the forces, I think, but I now realize how little I knew of him except for having a promising, gifted daughter in ballet.

Across the aisle from Harold also in the open area of the big room were rows of long drafting desks designed for two. There sat Jean Hudspeth, whose occupation was mainly searching out land titles and dealing with them in the work of the section, with much desk space for a young female assistant and document sorting. Mostly she had an assistant, Frances Joyce having recently been in that position. But memory for around that time fails me considerably though because I cannot remember her assistant at that time. Sid had two long desks next along the aisle, one of which I was to share with his senior 'pupil' Morrie Hocking, just at that time finishing obtaining accreditation and licensing with the Surveyor's Board. He left a few months later to begin a position with the Commonwealth. Next, and last before the aisle through to the Kiosk, sat Percy Westcott, a general survey draftsman. I remember him also for his signature on the Board's official map of the state for many years.

#### 'Lady Luck' again

When I learnt where Sid lived I could hardly believe it, because it was just two streets further down Hawthorn Rd. from the street I boarded in, in Cheeseman Ave. on the corner with Mackie Grove. Then to completely round it all off so very nicely, he garaged the Board vehicle at an available private garage in Hawthorn Rd. between those two streets, for which the Board paid the small rent. This was Sid's 'survey vehicle', as much a surprise to me as any of the foregoing revelation, because it turned out to be a very tired-looking 1937 dull-gray V8 coupe, still complete with its wartime requirement 'blackout' headlight shields. Replacement of the original headlights must have been such a problem because of their inbuilt position in sloping mudguards that the store yard engineers apparently left them be and simply bolted new fog-lamp-type headlights onto the bumper-bar!

I have always regretted not getting a photo of that remarkable car, as much because our family car since 1937 was a full-size sedan of the same make and model, than for its other "remarkable" features. It stank of petrol; a small part of the rear bench seat had been cut away to accommodate a 15 gallon spare-tank fitted with a drain and valve into the main tank. This allowed staying on any job till late without the worry of not reaching home for lack of fuel, in those times of "early-closing". I'll never forget my first day out in it on a trip to Allambee in Gippsland. Our family sedan had the usual bench-seat accommodating three with the driver, but this coupe with its only two doors required 'bucket-seats' to allow access to the rear now-limited seating. So imagine my discomfort as the third passenger, confined to this poorly ventilated space, and that was just getting there.

I'll say a bit more about this day because I was learning a lot, and fast! Sid had me go a short way along the job to find a certain mark and plumb a ranging pole over it, but not far on I came upon a black snake and in the excitement of dispatching it I fractured the pole. Oh, I'd really "blotted my copy-book", and so soon. Anyway, back on the job some time later, I saw a movement in the grass not far from where Sid was standing entering measurements in his field-book and told him. He just kept on entering his readings and said, "We've disturbed him, he'll go away."

It was getting close on dark as we finished the day's task to Sid's satisfaction, and he was pleased to make Warragul on the return trip to get dinner at a known hotel there before continuing our way home. It was here that I made acquaintance with 'expenses'. If we needed accommodation in any of its forms, like this meal 'away from home', we paid for what we got, and on return at the office 'claimed expenses'. That way we were only receiving compensation for what we had spent. It was "reimbursement of expenses" – not to be seen as 'income'. However, in those days it was a bit tainted with class-distinction. Sid was entitled to claim at the rate of 12/6 per day, and Morrie and self, 10/-.

But I had no complaints, having so recently been rather much treated as a slave by prosperous country gentlemen. Anyway claims were made on an "L2a" form and needed to be authorised by a senior officer, in our case Wesley Williams, but failing that if he was absent we would take it to senior engineer George Dempster, who was in charge of Plans and Survey Section, which shared occupation of the Big Room with our Survey and Records. George sat in the 'glasshouse' next to Wesley (see the diagram) and in the next one again sat Harry Townley, his deputy. George was rather hampered by a 'club-foot' and early memories of Harry with me still are that he also was a Licensed Surveyor and his father had reached the incredible age for the time of 100 years. Nicer people than both of these senior engineers would be very hard to find.



### Our work

Much of the legal survey to facilitate the acquisition of land for the Board's improvements to the roads of the state was done by the various Shire Engineers, those who, like Fred Stansfield, were also Licensed Surveyors, because that work was mostly on 'Board's Main Roads', and a normal part of their responsibilities. So Sid was there mainly to do the work associated with larger projects like the one he was currently involved with, the widening and deviation of Well's Road to provide alternative Mornington Peninsula access and to relieve the very busy Nepean Highway. Sid's previous large project had been the legal survey for the new road to the Cumberland Junction from East Warburton commonly spoken of at the time as "The Reefton Spur Road". It was required to create new access to Woods Point, needed when the existing road would be flooded by the new Upper Yarra Dam. So for an occupation this kind of work suited me just fine. Very interesting indoor and outdoor work suitably describes it.

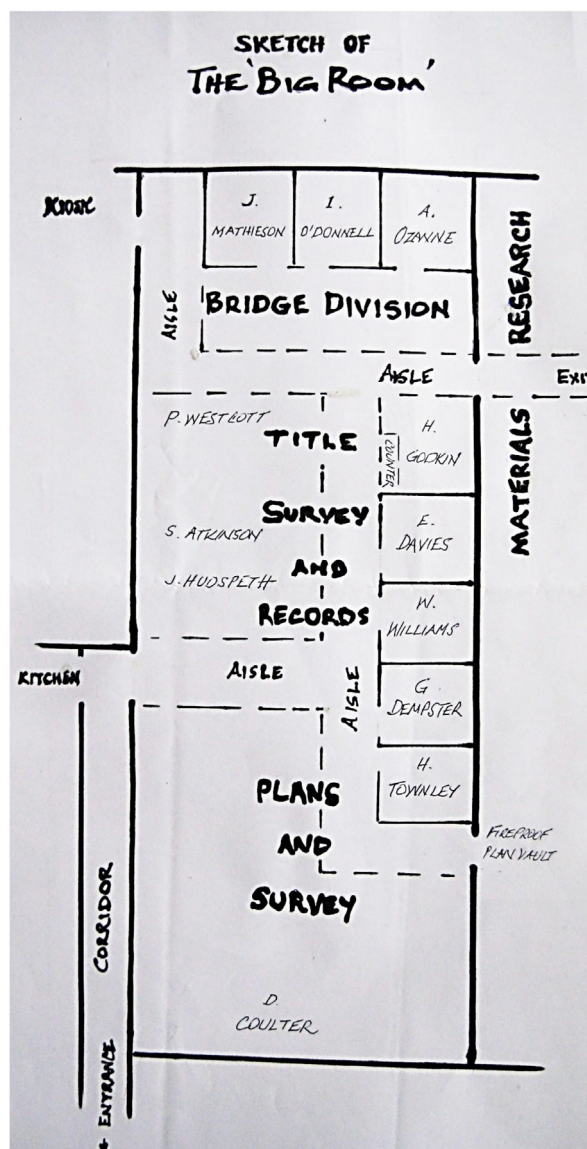
It was indeed a chummy place to work in and I had only just commenced in the position when Dick Coulter (his desk indicated on the sketch) came up and introduced himself as 'family', his sister had married my cousin Tyson Smallman of Mardan. I was very soon acquainted with the fact that Sid was related by marriage to Wesley Williams. Harry George, in the Retirees' "Reminiscences" book, speaking of his time at the Titles Office, says "I sat alongside Sid Atkinson in those early days, and became very friendly with him. He married one of the girls who worked under Wes Williams; in fact she was Wes Williams' niece". So this chumminess atmosphere of the organisation appears to have been a prominent feature of it since inception, with a particular strengthening of it in those latter days at the Titles Office.

### Getting to Work

The most fortunate aspect of my lucky situation there at East Brighton was that I was seldom required to pay fares to go to and from work because it was natural that I went each day with Sid. However it soon became apparent I usually wasn't his only passenger; it turned out that on office days he was made use of by a few staff members, who made it their business to know his work movements and to arrange a lift in if possible. Chief participant of these hopefuls was of course Wes Williams, who was lucky enough himself to live directly on Sid's route into the office, in Gordon St. Toorak in fact. Next in frequency of occasion was Jean Hudspeth, who was also most conveniently on Sid's direct route in, living as she did with her sister and brother in Halstead St. Caulfield. All of them were of mature age and unmarried. She would be waiting each time in Hawthorn Road at the corner of her street. Next to be mentioned was Ted King who also lived in Caulfield and would be waiting at a convenient spot along the way each time. He had also been in the Army and so he and Sid got on very well and swapped many an interesting story on the way into the office. These were the people most frequently involved like this at that time and I soon got to know them very well.

### Sid and his background

Sid was about 46 at the time and had had a distinguished career in the Army extending far back before the war to militia days as a young fellow just out of school. His principal interest in this role was of course oriented to survey, but he was deeply involved on the artillery side of it too. When war came he was rather invaluable to the service because of this experience and expertise, the upshot of which was that he pretty-well never 'went to war' – a situation that was to have unfortunate consequences for him when the war ended. Much of this personal background appears in the previously mentioned "Reminiscences" book, reprinted from "Roadlines" at the time of his untimely death from heart trouble in 1965.



The story as it unfolded before me seemed very remarkable indeed because he finished the war a Lieutenant-Colonel, but as his service had not taken him sufficiently beyond Brisbane and a so-called 'Brisbane-Line' up there as determined by the powers-that-be as the southern extent of the war zone, he was considered to be not a 'Returned Serviceman'. I don't know the full extent of that situation for him but the thing that certainly rankled with him was that the R.S.A.I.L.L.A. (now known as The Returned Services League), refused him membership as being not qualified. Even to me, a junior, and fairly un-familiar with such things, it seemed grossly unfair, if not silly. So there he was with so many of his mates of old, like Ted King, most of whom had been in the services, not being able to join in with them in their own special organisation.

But I did get to learn much about the army, the war, the survey side of it, and Sid's wartime involvement, memories of technical jargon about "flash-spotting and sound-ranging" still with me. Thousands of young fellows at the outbreak of hostilities had suddenly to be sorted and the obviously appropriate of them selected for specialised service with training by a relatively few officers like Sid. His expertise in this work gets special mention. His expertise with artillery also had him at the forefront of the task of updating the technology because of its equally huge importance, and when this was eventually under control there was then the task of continually evaluating it as the war progressed and conditions changed greatly' with the 'fortunes of war'. This was especially so when the situation was suddenly and grossly affected by the entry of Japan into the conflict, and troops and equipment returned from long desert fighting to face a fresh enemy in the jungles of New Guinea, a totally different terrain, climate and style of warfare to contend with and solve its problems.

So I got a second-hand mini-education in artillery practice and technology from listening to Sid and Morry, who had been a Lieutenant in Survey, discussing the problems etc. It was all a wonderful experience for me and it didn't end there with just the usual, gradual learning about the fine art of title surveying, because I also soon became aware the profession, amusingly pointed out to be "The second-oldest profession", sported a 'Learned Society', in this case "The Institute of Surveyors, Victoria". They used the small "Kelvin Hall" in the southern part of Exhibition St. in the City, at that time strangely named Collins Place if memory doesn't fail me, for their meetings. Professional meetings like these were generally encouraged by the Board and so Sid was permitted to use the vehicle for that purpose on those evenings and I was immediately included if interested, which of course I was indeed. And they really were interesting, putting up much discussion of survey topics like aerial photography and photogrammetry at that time assuming great importance.

In fact, Sid used a great deal of this understanding of them later on in his position as Principal Title Survey Officer to produce innovative highly detailed aerial-survey based highway record plans to better facilitate the work of the Board. He was the right man for the job in this time of huge expansion of every aspect of land acquisition during the time of the widening of Melbourne's arterial roads, like Warrigal and Springvale Roads and Burwood and Princes Highways to name a few. I vividly recall these gatherings of old friends of Sid's, and others like George Dempster and Harry Townley, and watching them all sitting listening very attentively to the latest doings of the surveyors and mappers in these subjects, who were employed by the Commonwealth and the Army and were 'up with the latest'. These proceedings were then followed by a half-hour or so of chatting and reminiscing over a few beers.



CRB Ball at 'St Leonards' Cafe, St Kilda, 1948





### On the academic side

Understandably I had much to learn, and by the terms of my Articles was required to do so. Therefore I set about completing the first subject in surveying I had commenced at the Shire by correspondence, and then next year, 1948, attending classes at night-school at R.M.I.T., then known to us as "The Melbourne Tech." But of course a problem to be contended with was frequent interruption from being away from home on survey.

### On the social side

The highlight of the social side of the staff of the Board was the annual ball, and in 1948 this function was held at St. Leonard's Café, on the foreshore at St. Kilda. Memory of the event is not all that familiar now but is bolstered by a photograph taken there which I'll include here because it might lead to someone recognising the people with whom I and my girlfriend were seated that night.

In the picture I'm on the extreme right being supported by a helium balloon. I cannot remember the names of my table members that night, nor in fact why I was with them, but it is likely one of them at least was a draftsman from across the aisle in Engineering Survey in the 'big room'. Anyway Sid and Alma were there in style that evening, and with a creditable understanding of the small problems of impecunious 'pupils', kindly offered me and my pal a lift home to Brighton East. Now they were there in the Board's Ford coupe, another privilege allowed him by the Board, and also now with some knowledge of what travel was like in that rather amended automobile a good idea of what this 'freebee' entailed can be imagined. So, in we squeezed, my friend in her evening finery, distanced as far as was possible on the small rear seat, and myself hard up against the auxiliary petrol tank, and away we went 'in the small hours'. However I do think she was rather amused by it all and certainly had a better understanding of my employment.

### In conclusion

To complete this essay on what it was like to become a member of such a highly regarded organisation as the Country Roads Board in its post-war times, and because a lot of it involved experience of this most amazing 'survey-vehicle', I guess a look at how Sid fared in that department later when it was finally replaced in 1948, would be a good idea.

Ford V 8's were well regarded in those times. However they were rather thirsty by today's standards and petrol was not in any to be considered as cheap. But that didn't seem much of a problem then, so it ought not to surprise that the Board provided him with a nice new 1948 V8 utility. With this development we went from the 'ridiculous to the sublime' when this came about, and the envy of many others for a change. But of course it obviously didn't suit some who saw their 'freebie' rides vanish with the change to this vehicle that took a passenger less. Around this time though, circumstances took a sudden turn when Wes suffered a stroke, largely it was thought, brought on by worry over the many problems with the building of his new home in Warrigal Rd. close to the tram terminus in Toorak Rd. He was something of a perfectionist and surely not suited to this particular venture.

From then on, after getting a bit mobile and determined to struggle to work, the Board provided other means of getting him there and home on the days he could manage it. But it took the pressure off Sid. Anyway I did manage to get a picture of this lovely new 'survey-wagon' and of course also 'yours truly' of those lucky times. I drove this vehicle on and off until about 1955 as my survey vehicle after Sid took over from Wesley Williams when he soon afterwards succumbed to his massive stroke. As might be gathered from the picture, it was registered as GR-025, which reminds me: I think that all of the Board's registered vehicles of the time, and for many years afterwards, were registered in the range of GR-000 to GR-500.



Tom posing in front of the new ute



Sid Atkinson on the job - "in the field" - always nicely dressed in collar and tie.

## Peter Lowe

Peter submitted the following note about the concerted effort to drive the road toll down in the late 1980s. Peter was the Director of Road Safety in VicRoads from 1990 until his retirement in late 1991. He wrote:

“In 1989 the State Government was concerned that the road toll was once again on the rise. In an environment where road fatalities had been trending downward since 1970, from 1984 to 1989, the toll had risen from 658 to 776. It was concluded that the long standing road safety initiatives previously put in place required re-invigoration as the annual road toll was once again increasing in line with the annual growth in vehicle numbers.

Returning from a visit to the United Kingdom, the Minister for Transport, the Hon Jim Kennan injected a new urgency into road safety in Victoria through the mechanism of the Parliamentary Ministerial Road Safety Committee. Working with the Chair of the Committee, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Hon Steve Crabb, a series of bold initiatives were introduced influenced in part by what had been observed overseas. These included:

- Greatly increased testing of driver blood alcohol levels by Vic Police with 10 new ‘Booze Buses’;
- Speed enforcement at greatly increased rates employing 56 new speed cameras;

- Creation of the Traffic Camera Office to process the massive increase in speed infringement notices;
- Creation of targeted and graphic television and print media advertising material to support the Police enforcement programs;
- A significant injection of funds into VicRoads and Municipal on-road safety improvements including ‘Black Spot’ programs;
- Strong support for the Monash University Accident Research Centre programs which identified targets for road safety initiatives and evaluated the effectiveness of road safety programs;
- Ensuring the committee structure to coordinate the programs of agencies with road safety responsibilities was operating effectively;
- Publication in 1991 of a Road Safety Strategy agreed by the agencies to guide and provide agency program coordination.

Funds for the purchase of ‘Booze Buses’, speed cameras and a significant contribution to the on road safety improvements came from the Transport Accident Commission fund. The graphic road safety advertising programs were also developed and fully funded by the Transport Accident Commission.

Between 1989 and 1992 the road toll fell from 776 fatalities to 396 demonstrating the importance of this Government commitment and the effectiveness of these initiatives in road toll reduction. In the following years to 2015 these programs and additional new initiatives have seen the road toll continue to fall, reducing to 249 fatalities in 2014.”

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## Noel Allanson

Noel Allanson was the Secretary to the Country Roads Board for many years and most of you would know that he was a celebrated sportsman. I have to declare that I am an Essendon supporter and I was thrilled to learn that Noel was recently inducted into the Essendon Football Club’s Hall of Fame. He was acknowledged for his all-round sporting skills and dedication to the club on and off the field.

As a player, he was a solid defender and centreman whose career coincided with a golden era for the club. He made his debut for the Bombers in 1947 and played alongside some of football’s greatest players. At his induction he said, “My career was modest, but to play with Dick Reynolds, Bill Hutchison and John Coleman – I couldn’t believe it.” “And they turned out to be great blokes too.” He was a member of Essendon’s premiership team in 1950.

Noel was also a brilliant cricketer and represented Victoria during the summer of 1956/57.

Ken Fraser reflected on Noel’s playing career and also his service off the field. Noel was Vice President of the club in 1976 and 1977 and was Treasurer from 1978 to early 1991. “He was close-checking, disciplined and played a straight bat as a footballer, cricketer and treasurer,” Fraser said.

## What's Coming Up

### Occasional Lunches – Shoppingtown Hotel – Monday August 10 and 12 October

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 Ballarat (Western Region) – Thursday 17 and Friday 18 September

Participants will travel by private car and will arrange their own accommodation. The program will be as follows:

#### Thursday 17 September

11.00 am arrive at the Regional Office, meet staff and receive briefing on Regional activities

12.30 – 1.30 pm lunch at the Regional Office, 88 Learmonth Road, Ballarat

1.30 – 4.30 pm visit Project Office on the Ring Road, Ballarat and then the Project on Western Highway west of Ballarat

6.30 pm Dinner at a local venue with local staff and retirees (on an individual pays basis)

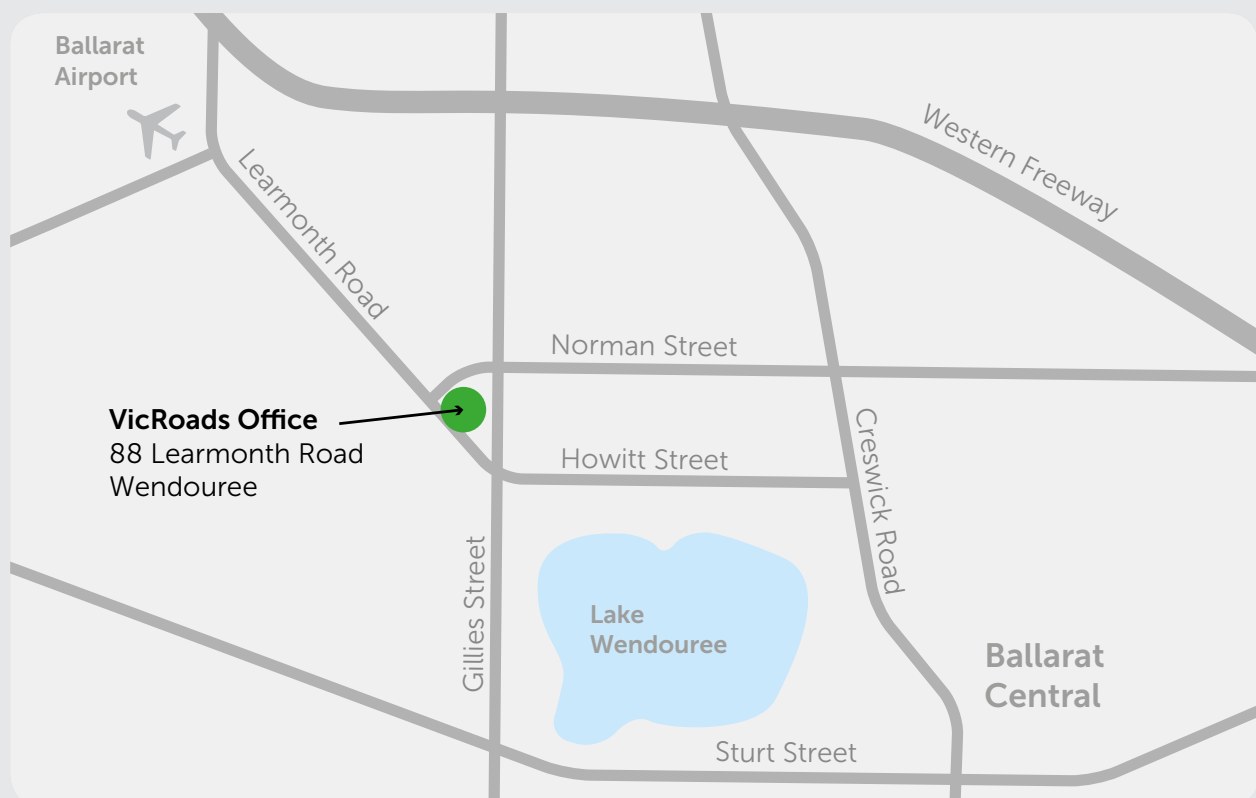
#### Friday 18 September

10.00 – 12.00 am visit the Art Gallery

12.30 -2.00 pm Lunch at a local venue with local retirees and any other interested employees (on an individual pays basis)

2.00 Depart

Those intending to participate should let David Jellie (Tel 9077 1136, Mob 0418 105 276) or Peter Lowe (Tel 9818 7009, Mob 0419 337 300) know by Monday 14 September. We will car pool where possible. The map below shows the location of the Regional Office.



## Vale

### Mary Swift

It is with great sadness that I inform you of the recent death of Bob Swift's beloved sister, Mary. Mary accompanied Bob to many of our excursions and although she wasn't an official member of our Association, she was certainly an honorary member. I will write a little bit more about Mary in our next newsletter.

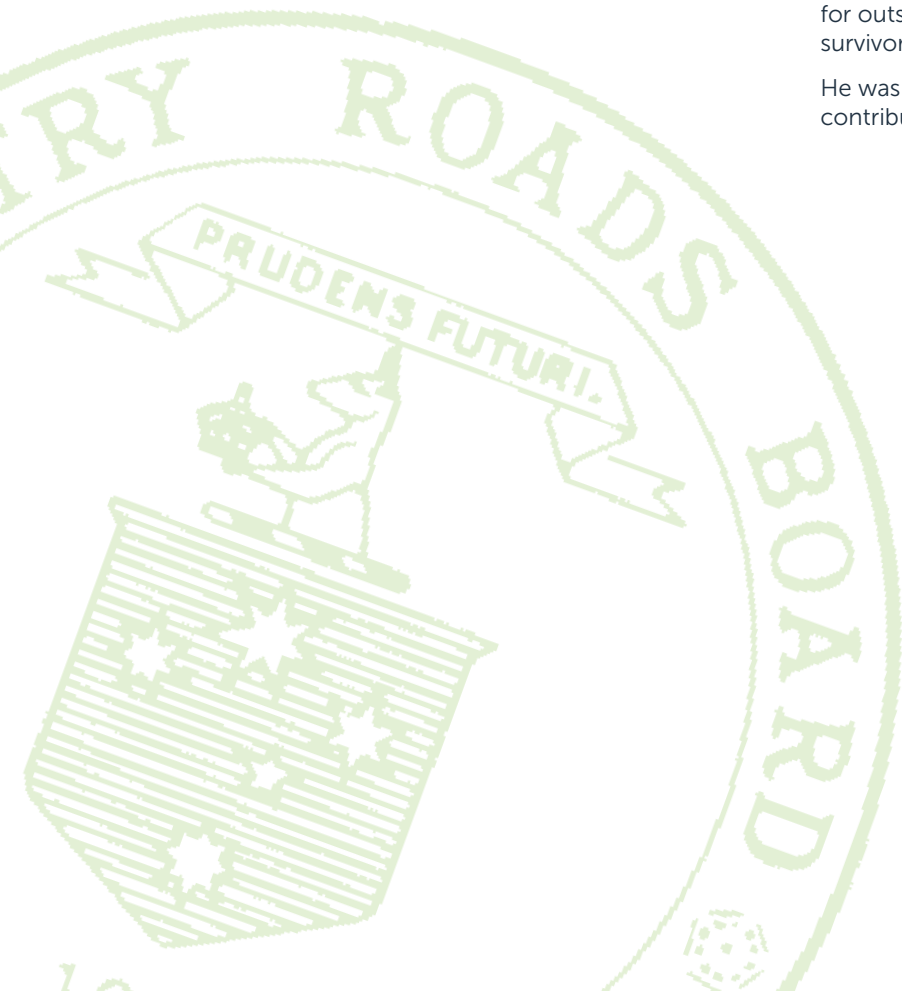
### Professor Peter Joubert

Peter Joubert who died in July, was Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Melbourne. He played a significant role in road safety programs across the world through his advocacy of mandatory seat belt legislation introduced in 1972. Victoria was the first jurisdiction in the world to introduce this law. Peter Joubert was a World War II fighter pilot and saw the role that seat belts could play in saving lives while on active duty in Papua New Guinea.

This led him to be widely sought out as a consultant on road safety issues, and he often acted as an expert witness in road accident cases. He was an advisor on road safety to the Commonwealth and State Governments. He chaired many specialist committees with surgeons and is credited with being the instigator of legislation leading to the compulsory use of seat belts in motor vehicles, now adopted in all major countries, and proven to have saved hundreds of thousands of lives.

Peter Joubert is also well known for his yacht designs and there have been more than a hundred yachts built to his designs. He was an annual competitor in the Sydney to Hobart race for many years and, mercifully, survived the storm of 1998. In 1993, he was awarded the Commodore Medal of the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia for outstanding seamanship after his crew rescued eight survivors from a sunken yacht at night in a strong gale.

He was awarded the Order of Australia in 1996 for his contributions to road and yacht safety.



# News From VicRoads

## Funding for Road Maintenance

The Government recently announced that it will spend \$135.6 million over the next year to repair unsafe and deteriorating roads across Victoria. \$80 million has been allocated for road resurfacing under the Road Surface Replacement Program.

Under the program, Victoria's eastern region will receive a \$10.4 million boost this year, which will see resealing repair works undertaken on more than 130 sites across key roads, including the South Gippsland Highway, Bass Highway and Great Alpine Road.

Hundreds of additional sites across regional Victoria will also be resealed, including \$11.6 million for 130 sites across northern Victoria, \$11.4 million for 300 sites across north eastern Victoria, \$12.6 million for 120 sites across western Victoria and \$14.2 million for 160 sites across south western Victoria. Metropolitan Melbourne will receive \$19.8 million in resealing projects.

In addition, \$55.6 million will be invested across Victoria to deliver more significant road rehabilitation projects on key arterial routes including the South Gippsland Highway at Ruby, the Great Ocean Road, and Hamilton Highway at Penshurst.

The program of works, which will be carried out during the summer period, includes a variety of road structure and surface repairs to allow the roads to continue to operate safely. The works will reduce the level of deterioration of road surfaces and will support local primary producers to get their products to the market or to the factory as well as support local residents as they travel to work and school.

These road improvements will not only create smoother and safer roads for all motorists but it will also help to preserve the longevity of the roads.

While interim measures such as asphalt patching works over the winter period will ensure roads can continue to operate safely in the short-term, the projects under the Road Surface Replacement Program and rehabilitation works will ensure their ongoing, safe operation into the future. Work on the projects is due to start later this year.

The Government also recently announced \$35.8 million to strengthen bridges in regional Victoria and \$50 million for the Safer Country Crossings Program.

## Western Distributor Proposal

You may remember that after the recent change of government and the scrapping of the East-West Link, Transurban (the operator of CityLink) submitted a plan to the government for a link road aimed at providing an alternative crossing of the Yarra in the west. At this stage nothing is locked in, but the government has agreed to work with Transurban in evaluating the concept which will take up to six months to complete. While that happens, Transurban will continue with community and stakeholder consultation to further explore the solutions this project offers.

This current stage will develop a detailed proposal, investment case and procurement plan to significantly improve travel times and reliability as well as providing a new, direct freight route to the Port of Melbourne.

The proposal minimises impacts on local communities, removes the need to acquire any homes and supports motorists and trucks looking for alternative connections to the city. The current proposal is estimated to deliver 3500 construction jobs and 4500 indirect jobs. It incorporates the delivery of three key sections:

- Western Distributor – a proposed tunnel and elevated motorway that connects the West Gate Freeway with the Port of Melbourne, CityLink and the CBD, providing an alternate river crossing and easing pressure on the West Gate Bridge. This is estimated to increase the river crossing capacity by 60 per cent.
- West Gate Freeway widening – two additional lanes from the M80 Ring Road to the West Gate Bridge, boosting capacity of the corridor by approximately 50 per cent.
- Webb Dock access improvements – upgrading Cook Street and the West Gate Freeway-to-Bolte Bridge ramp to complement works already underway and improve safety and access from Webb Dock.

The proposal includes the roll out of a state-of-the-art freeway management system to manage the flow and entry of vehicles on the motorway, such as overhead lane use signs, electronic on road message boards, ramp metering, CCTV and automatic incident detection systems. This would complement existing managed motorways along the M1 corridor in the south east and the M80 corridor in the west.



It is an opportunity to deliver real improvements to Melbourne’s transport network by relieving pressure on the West Gate Bridge, reducing trucks on local roads, improving travel times and boosting safety and liveability for our community. It will also provide an economic boost, with more reliable and shorter travel times and improved efficiencies for freight.

Transurban has claimed that the Western Distributor proposal will provide the following benefits:

- Nearly halve travel time heading into the city from the M80 interchange during morning peak
- Wipe around 15 minutes off city trips from Geelong and Ballarat
- Enable three times faster trips to the Port of Melbourne

- Provide a second river crossing, reducing reliance and pressure on the West Gate Bridge
- Bypass up to 14 sets of traffic lights
- Take up to 50 per cent of trucks off local roads in the inner west, improving liveability
- Enable safer and conflict-free cycling routes
- Improve safety with a fit-for-purpose motorway network
- Provide more consistent travel times
- Create construction jobs and enhance opportunities for job seekers in the west
- Boost freight productivity and the Victorian economy

A plan of the proposed route is shown below.



**01**  
Additional lanes from the M80 Ring Road will boost capacity by 50%

**02**  
Proposed tunnel takes significant traffic volumes off local roads with no expected acquisition of homes or parklands

**03**  
Proposed elevated freeway will provide direct connections to the Footscray Road and the Port precinct and adds 60% additional river crossing capacity

**04**  
Connections to CBD and CityLink providing choice

**05**  
Proposed improvements to further enhance access and safety to Webb Dock

**06**  
Providing more options for those travelling to and from the northern and south eastern suburbs

## What’s Been Happening

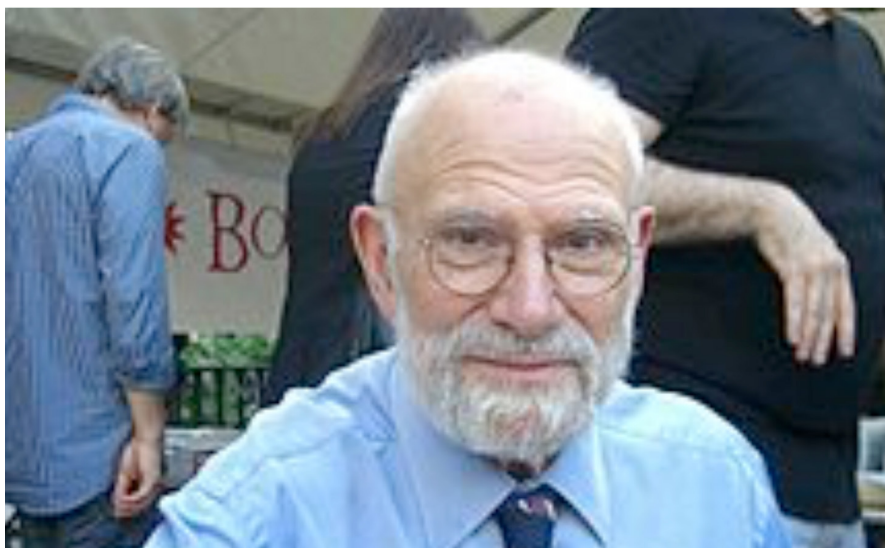
### Dinner at Waverley RSL, Thursday 9 July

We had an excellent roll up of 28 members (and partners) including two new members, Jim Morse and Phil Symons. Graham Gilpin was there on the eve of his ‘official’ retirement from work – although he intends to continue with some consulting work.

We suspect that Graham is the last person to retire of those commencing their careers in the Exhibition Building. Noel and Margaret Anderson were also there. Noel has just turned 90 and he is as spry and cheeky as ever. It was also wonderful to see John Ford and Jan Weinberg there for the first time as well as David and Jill Miles and Mike Hodgson.



## Trivia and Didactic Whimsies



### Oliver Sacks on turning 80 and Dying

Oliver Sacks is a neurologist and writer. His two most famous books were 'Awakenings' (turned into a film starring Dustin Hoffman) and 'The Man Who Mistook His Wife For A Hat' both of which were case studies about some of his patients. In February 2015, writing in The New York Times, Sacks announced that he had been diagnosed with terminal cancer—multiple metastases in the liver from the ocular melanoma to which he had previously lost his vision in one eye. Measuring his remaining time in "months," Sacks announced his intent to "live in the richest, deepest, most productive way I can," and wrote that "I want and hope in the time that remains to deepen my friendships, to say farewell to those I love, to write more, to travel if I have the strength, to achieve new levels of understanding and insight."

When he turned 80 he wrote:

"Last night I dreamed about mercury — huge, shining globules of quicksilver rising and falling. Mercury is element number 80, and my dream is a reminder that on Tuesday, I will be 80 myself.

Elements and birthdays have been intertwined for me since boyhood, when I learned about atomic numbers. At 11, I could say "I am sodium" (Element 11), and now at 79, I am gold.

A few years ago, when I gave a friend a bottle of mercury for his 80th birthday — a special bottle that could neither leak nor break — he gave me a peculiar look, but later sent me a charming letter in which he joked, "I take a little every morning for my health."

Eighty! I can hardly believe it. I often feel that life is about to begin, only to realize it is almost over. My mother was the 16th of 18 children; I was the youngest of her four sons, and almost the youngest of the vast cousinhood on her side of the family. I was always the youngest boy in my class at high school. I have retained this feeling of being the youngest, even though now I am almost the oldest person I know.

I thought I would die at 41, when I had a bad fall and broke a leg while mountaineering alone. I splinted the leg as best I could and started to lever myself down the mountain, clumsily, with my arms. In the long hours that followed, I was assailed by memories, both good and bad. Most were in a mode of gratitude — gratitude for what I had been given by others, gratitude, too, that I had been able to give something back. "Awakenings" had been published the previous year.

At nearly 80, with a scattering of medical and surgical problems, none disabling, I feel glad to be alive — "I'm glad I'm not dead!" sometimes bursts out of me when the weather is perfect. (This is in contrast to a story I heard from a friend who, walking with Samuel Beckett in Paris on a perfect spring morning, said to him, "Doesn't a day like this make you glad to be alive?" to which Beckett answered, "I wouldn't go as far as that.") I am grateful that I have experienced many things — some wonderful, some horrible — and that I have been able to write a dozen books, to receive innumerable letters from friends, colleagues and readers, and to enjoy what Nathaniel Hawthorne called "an intercourse with the world."

I am sorry I have wasted (and still waste) so much time; I am sorry to be as agonizingly shy at 80 as I was at 20; I am sorry that I speak no languages but my mother tongue and that I have not traveled or experienced other cultures as widely as I should have done. I feel I should be trying to complete my life, whatever "completing a life" means. Some of my patients in their 90s or 100s say *nunc dimittis* — "I have had a full life, and now I am ready to go." For some of them, this means going to heaven — it is always heaven rather than hell, though Samuel Johnson and James Boswell both quaked at the thought of going to hell and got furious with David Hume, who entertained no such beliefs.

I have no belief in (or desire for) any post-mortem existence, other than in the memories of friends and the hope that some of my books may still "speak" to people after my death. W. H. Auden often told me he thought he would live to 80 and then "bugger off" (he lived only to 67). Though it is 40 years since his death, I often dream of him, and of my parents and of former patients — all long gone but loved and important in my life.

At 80, the specter of dementia or stroke looms. A third of one's contemporaries are dead, and many more, with profound mental or physical damage, are trapped in a tragic and minimal existence.

At 80 the marks of decay are all too visible. One's reactions are a little slower, names more frequently elude one, and one's energies must be husbanded, but even so, one may often feel full of energy and life and not at all "old." Perhaps, with luck, I will make it, more or less intact, for another few years and be granted the liberty to continue to love and work, the two most important things, Freud insisted, in life.

When my time comes, I hope I can die in harness, as Francis Crick did. When he was told that his colon cancer had returned, at first he said nothing; he simply looked into the distance for a minute and then resumed his previous train of thought. When pressed about his diagnosis a few weeks later, he said, "Whatever has a beginning must have an ending." When he died, at 88, he was still fully engaged in his most creative work.

My father, who lived to 94, often said that the 80s had been one of the most enjoyable decades of his life.

## The Leica Camera

In the last newsletter I wrote about Ernest Leitz II and how he helped save many Jewish people in Germany during the Nazi regime. I was watching Antiques Roadshow the other night and a particular segment was dedicated to the most expensive gems that appeared on the show. One was a van Dyck painting. When presented on the show it was stained with blackening lacquer but when that was removed it revealed a vibrant portrait which, after expert opinion, was attributed to the master. They estimated that it would be worth between £300,000 and £400,000.

He felt, as I begin to feel, not a shrinking but an enlargement of mental life and perspective. One has had a long experience of life, not only one's own life, but others', too. One has seen triumphs and tragedies, booms and busts, revolutions and wars, great achievements and deep ambiguities, too. One has seen grand theories rise, only to be toppled by stubborn facts. One is more conscious of transience and, perhaps, of beauty. At 80, one can take a long view and have a vivid, lived sense of history not possible at an earlier age. I can imagine, feel in my bones, what a century is like, which I could not do when I was 40 or 60. I do not think of old age as an ever grimmer time that one must somehow endure and make the best of, but as a time of leisure and freedom, freed from the factitious urgencies of earlier days, free to explore whatever I wish, and to bind the thoughts and feelings of a lifetime together.

I am looking forward to being 80."

The other master was a Leica Luxus camera. It was made in the late 1920s and apparently only four of them were ever manufactured. After identifying it on the show, the owner sent it to an auction in Hong Kong and it sold for £320,000 (sterling). I took the photo with my telephone from the TV but it came up quite well.



## Excuse Me!

Bert feared his wife Peg wasn't hearing as well as she used to and he thought she might need a hearing aid. Not quite sure how to approach her, he called the family Doctor to discuss the problem. The Doctor told him there is a simple informal test the husband could perform to give the Doctor a better idea about her hearing loss.

'Here's what you do,' said the Doctor, 'stand about 40 feet away from her and in a normal conversational speaking tone see if she hears you. If not, go to 30 feet, then 20 feet, and so on until you get a response.'

That evening, the wife is in the kitchen cooking dinner, and he was in the den. He says to himself, 'I'm about 40 feet away - let's see what happens. Then in a normal tone he asks, 'Honey, what's for dinner?'

No response. So the husband moves closer to the kitchen, about 30 feet from his wife and repeats, 'Peg, what's for dinner?' Still no response.

Next he moves into the dining room where he is about 20 feet from his wife and asks, 'Honey, what's for dinner?' Again he gets no response.

So, he walks up to the kitchen door, about 10 feet away. 'Honey, what's for dinner?' Again there is no response.

So he walks right up behind her. 'Peg, what's for dinner?'

'For Pete's sake, Bert, for the FIFTH time, CHICKEN!'