

VicRoads Association

Newsletter No 186



Major road works – Warragul Rd

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,

It is great to have a bit of warm sunlight on my bones. I went with other family members to the semi-final between Richmond and North Melbourne in a confused state. My son barracks for the Tigers and my daughter for the Kangaroos. So whatever happened I was going to be sad/happy. My other son was there too. He and I are Bomber supporters and we both agreed that it was the worst year of football we had endured.

Still I can't complain. I also follow Melbourne Storm in the National Rugby League and Melbourne Victory in the A League. Victory won the premiership last year – in convincing fashion – and Storm progressed to the Preliminary Final only to be soundly beaten by the Cowboys (and a brilliant Jonathon Thurston). Many of you might consider me to be a traitor to Australian Rules but I have come to appreciate the special skills that are needed in all of the codes. Our National Rugby League code is the strongest in the world, and I believe that Billy Slater is one of the most athletic sportsman in Australia, which is really amazing seeing he started his career as a horseman. He grew too big to be a jockey!

On an entirely different tack, I have been invited down to Orbost to give a talk on building the bridges across the Snowy River flood plain. I really enjoyed my time down there and I have had great fun preparing the talk and remembering the details of the project and the people who were involved. I wrote a paper about it and concluded that the successful completion of the project was made possible by the close cooperation of the many individuals involved in the design, construction and supervision teams. This is how it was for all our projects. CRB people involved in the design included Keith Opie, Bruce Addis, Jim Winnett, and Max Schultz. Neil Jephcott was the Divisional Engineer at Bairnsdale and Stan Jarvis supervised the road works. Engineers Ron Glasser, Adrian Bond, Peter Ryan and David McInnes, and Clerks of Works Bernie King, Bill Grant, Gerry Wyckelsma, John D'Concy and Ron Smith supervised bridge works. As the Resident Engineer, I reported to Bruce Watson at head office. Adam Hudson was the project manager from Pearson Bridge and although we had some differences of opinion during the project, we still talk today.

The project has one claim to the Trivia Hall of Fame. It was the last bridge project built by the CRB using imperial units. The design had been completed prior to metric conversion but it was decided that we would proceed with feet and inches. I do remember however that we used metric measures in assessing concrete strength. We established a testing laboratory on site supervised by Noel Kiel who was not only the nicest man you would ever meet but also the most conscientious. Throughout the entire project we did not have one batch of concrete that failed the specification. Neil was one of the Rats of Tobruk. He was such a gentle man I felt privileged to work with him.

David Jellie - Editor

Dates For Your Diary

DATE	TIME	EVENT	
October	Monday 12 Thursday 29	12 noon	Occasional lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel Visit to the M80 project
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 Friday 26, 2016	12 noon	Occasional lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel Annual Golf Day

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

What's Coming Up

Occasional Lunches – Shoppingtown Hotel – Monday 12 October and Thursday 9 November

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 M80 Project – Thursday 29 October at 10.30 am

We propose to meet at the Project Office at 3 Bristol Street, Essendon Airport where – like all good visits – we will start off with a cup of tea. Then Project Director Trevor Boyd and his team will brief us on the innovations and initiatives that have been applied to this project.

What might you ask are these innovations and initiatives? Without spoiling Trevor Boyd's thunder, I can say they include: colour VMS pictograms; real time traffic monitoring systems; yellow line marking; EzyLane system; ramp metering and streams improvements; SMS services; integration management system; wind powered variable speed limit signs; swivel street lighting; and spider mowers – to mention a few. Trevor tells me that some of these applications are world first (as far as we know). I am sure this presentation will be fascinating.

After the presentation of about two hour's duration, we will repair to a nearby café for lunch at individuals' expense. For catering purposes would members intending to come to this function please inform Jim Webber or myself using the contact details provided at the foot of page 1.

Visit to the Desalination Plant, Wonthaggi – Thursday 12 November

The visit to the Desalination Plant at Wonthaggi is programmed for Thursday 12 November with a start time of 11.00 am at the site. The road to the Desalination Plant is on the right immediately after entering the derestriction signs on the entry to Wonthaggi. Wonthaggi is a 2 hour drive from central Melbourne, less from the eastern suburbs and vehicle sharing is encouraged.

The 1½ hour program involves a presentation and inspection of the desalination equipment from a viewing area and then a bus tour of the site which has been subject to extensive revegetation and includes a large planted roof. A contribution of \$20 towards bus hire is required.

Lunch at the Kilcunda Hotel at 1.00pm will conclude the visit.

Please let Jim Webber know of your intention to attend by Friday 6 November on Mob 0412 064 527 or e-mail jimwebber@optusnet.com.au Anyone looking for a lift or car-share should also contact Jim.

Annual Golf Day – Friday 26 February 2016

Our third annual golf afternoon will be at Green Acres Golf Club in Kew. Please contact Jim Webber on 0412 064 527 or jimwebber@optusnet.com.au if you are interested.



News About Our Members

Kerras Burke

Kerras was moved to write to me, including the article below, suggesting it should go in the trivia section. I think it is more worthy than that. I was also rather pleased when he said that he passed my earlier writings on the French explorers in the Pacific - to his daughter who is a teacher of French history. Imagine me being a source of reference! I better go back and check it all out to make sure it was all accurate.

Kerras called his story Animation Antics – St Kilda Road Roadworks and this is what he wrote:

“Although Surveyor Robert Hoddle argued the case for three chain (60 m) wide streets for early Melbourne (which would allow a horse or bullock drawn wagon to make a U turn), it was not long before land speculators reverted to one chain roads. It took a long time before some of this lack of foresight was reversed, and I was glad to be part of design team reconstructing St.Kilda Junction.

I was reminded of this when I came across an old 16mm film recently. I won't go into the hassle about resuming properties after a hundred years and just write about the traffic and engineering side. This film was made in 1966 nearly fifty years ago by MMBW engineers, well before this motley crew set sail for the port of Kew and the CRB.

Well, it was a continuation of politics too, but this time it was between other Boards - MMBW & MMTB.
- from opposite sides of Little Collins Street
- a confrontation that had to be resolved before roadworks could be finalised.

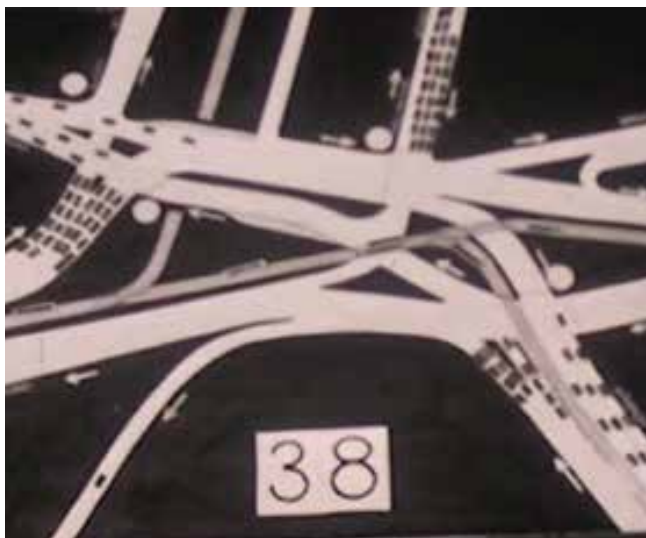
Yes, there were signals at the Junction, but running at a fixed time cycle with set time for trams whether they were present or not. Such waste of traffic time! And when there were trams, their turning movements were controlled by a signalman perched high in a cabin overlooking the scene, operating interlocked point switches and tram turn signals. Somehow we had to convince the Tramways Board to allow the change to an automatic system and release that man from up in the box.

Our planner Dick Bartholomew had done a time and motion study for this, so we felt that it would be best to lay out a time/motion study ourselves and make a movie of his work for all to see. A big sheet of cardboard was painted to show a new layout, and “platoons of cars” were cut out of sheet lead, and joined in line by cotton thread. And there were even bigger pieces of lead for the trams.

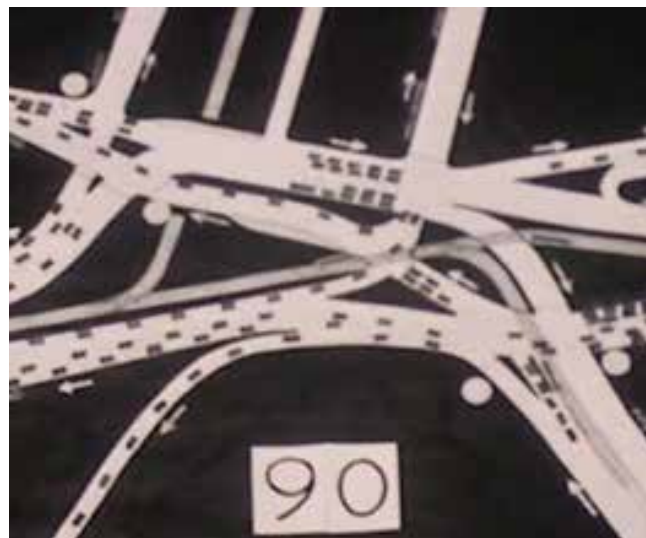
Our photographer Reg Seiber set up his 16 mm camera on a tripod overlooking the scene, and car and tram movements were made for every 2 seconds and photographed so as to create a time-lapse film, three minutes long.

I must say that the resulting animation was rather jerky and took a while for the brain to comprehend what was happening, nor was it helped that Reg had accidentally kicked a leg of the tripod halfway through the job.

Eventually the time for official viewing arrived, and we were unnerved to see the full splendour of the tramways board and entourage led by the formidable tram crusader Major General Sir Robert Risson arrive from their art deco H.Q. across Little Collins Street.



Punt Road/ St.Kilda Road (Wellington Rd entry from east)
Major tram movements at this time shown in centre/
right (at 38 seconds)



Reconstruction of St Kilda Junction Project
- Traffic Signals Simulation 1966.
Morning Peak Hour - 90 Seconds Signal Cycle



Reconstructed St Kilda Junction (1973)
Photo by E.J. Robinson



Caption

We ran the film several times for them and although doubtless confused, they were good sports and accepted that things should change. So we were on our way ... ! But it took another ten years for the by-pass construction work and until we had our traffic signal cabin, the signals, controllers with 125 road loop detectors in place.

Our local Eagle Signal Co built us a microprocessor digital master to co-ordinate the two kilometres of new road and tramway as well as the junction itself. We were proud too of our CCTV camera mounted high enough on a pole to see right down as far as Carlisle Street. And it took a while to load all the data into that Master, but our reward was to see traffic flowing as efficiently as our 16mm animated cartoon had predicted,

And now further memories come back to me!

When it was planned to take Queens Road under St. Kilda Road and Punt Road to join up to Dandenong Road, we knew that we would be descending below the water table and below the drains thereabouts that emptied into Albert Park Lake – so this was a hydraulic challenge.

The lake itself is a storm-water retarding basin, connecting in turn with an outlet to Port Phillip Bay.

We did not want the reinforced concrete structures to float like the good ship "St. Kilda"! So unlike preparing the usual economical designs, we made sure that there was plenty of concrete mass to counter possible buoyancy.

Where the roadway was below the local drainage line, we allowed storm-water run-off to flow to a sump and a pumping station. This is located behind the southern wall and consists of three electrically driven pumps which operate in turn. Thunderstorms are often accompanied by power outages, so there is also a standby Diesel driven alternator for such occasions. This alternator also supplies the junction's traffic signals and 40 years on, these provide a patch of colour for motorists travelling through a blacked out night! The pump-house is in the centre of the photograph below.

The southern wall when you drive by also conceals another secret. It hides a curved ramp turning outwards, should anyone in the future be bold enough to want to build an off-ramp spiralling up around the Junction Oval!

We discovered a hidden surprise ourselves. At the junction of Chapel Street, Wellington and Dandenong Roads we found an old pulley pit. This had been built for the cable trams that operated up until 1925.

There were long discussions and arguments about its historical importance but it was a major obstruction to the grading and crossfall necessary for a relatively high speed road. The pulley pit lost the argument, but had the last laugh. Because it had been built for a 12 ft. (3.65 m) size pulley to take the load of a couple of kilometres of cable drawn trams, it was such a great mass of concrete that it was a very difficult and expensive job to remove it. If this job were carried out today there may have been a heritage order invoked to prevent its removal!



VALE

Mary Swift

I mentioned Mary's passing in the last newsletter and promised that I would provide a few more details about her life in this one. Bob (her brother) gave a eulogy at her funeral and these recollections were gathered from there.

Mary was born in 1925. She trained as a pre-school teacher and later in her career she lectured trainee teachers at the Mt Eliza Institute of Preschool Education – so she became a teacher of children and a teacher of teachers. She was awarded an overseas scholarship to the USA where she gained a Master's Degree in Education through studies at universities in Detroit and Washington. During this period (between 1953 and 1959) she travelled extensively abroad studying her profession and in 1963 she was appointed to lead the Lady Gowrie Institute in Queensland.

She was also awarded a Myer Foundation scholarship where she travelled extensively - mainly in South East Asia – to observe practices there and to assist in developing improvements.



In 1972 she joined the City of Prahran to manage pre-school education in the area. In 13 years there she managed the building and establishment of seven new kindergartens. Bob said she used to walk around the city looking for spare parcels of land suitable for a kindergarten and then she had to persuade the council to make the investment.

In the photograph below – taken in 1963 - Mary is shown on the right looking at one of her charges. Oh – the woman on the left is Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Bob tells the story that at the time this picture was taken he was working at the Depot in Stawell. Apparently there was a television on and he happened to look up only to see his sister hob-nobbing with the Queen in Perth.

After her parents died in 1972, Mary came back to the family home in Brighton where she and Bob lived together up until fairly recently when ill health forced them into care institutions.

Peter Ryall

Peter died in August at the age of 67. There were many CRB, RCA and VicRoads colleagues at his funeral and Tom Glazebrook – who was the Divisional Engineer when Peter started his career with the CRB - gave a eulogy relating to Peter's work as an engineer. I am indebted to Tom for much of the information provided below.

Peter was through and through a Bendigo man. He was born in Strathfieldsaye (just out of Bendigo) and lived on the family farm in Ryall's Lane. He attended the local primary and secondary school and then studied civil engineering at the Bendigo School of Mines. He joined the CRB in 1970 at much the same time that Tom moved in as the Divisional Engineer. After an initial period of training in the Board's engineering responsibilities, Peter was appointed as the Bituminous Surfacing (BS) Engineer in the Division and it was in this position that he made his mark not only in the region but throughout the state.

Peter developed a thorough knowledge of the 'black stuff'. He took great care of the welfare of the men in the field under his supervision and was scrupulously fair with his contractors to the extent that there were never any arguments. He was innovative in trying new materials, equipment and techniques and meticulous in the planning and execution of the work. He was one of the first to use pulverized rubber in bitumen to improve performance – in 1975-76 in Kerang.

He was encouraged to seek promotion in Melbourne but refused because he considered Bendigo was his home. He was however coerced (or press ganged) in to going to Melbourne for 12 months.

John Bethune (who was the Asphalt Engineer) insisted that Peter and Wally Holtrop should review the contents of the 'Blue Book' to bring it up-to-date with current technology and practices. The 'Blue Book' was the Bible of all those people involved in bituminous surfacing and I think there would be many retired engineers who still have their 'Blue Book' on their bookshelves today. The 'Blue Book' sold more copies abroad than it did in Australia. During this time in Melbourne a 30 minute long film was also made about BS.

Peter's duties required the management of the quality of materials used especially the aggregate. Roydon Webb, the owner of one of the quarries remembered Peter as follows.

"My association with Peter began in the early 80s when the RCA did all aggregate testing at the stack sites. I look back and smile. Peter was often the bearer of bad news but managed it with great dignity and humour, so it was impossible to be offended. He also settled many disputes with honesty and integrity, and was always striving to maintain good relations between the RCA and the Quarry Industry. There would not be a quarry manager around Northern Victoria who was not helped in some way by Peter. Those relationships helped greatly during the transition to Quality Assurance and Peter's positive attitude helped us through those turbulent times."

Peter retired in 2004 but worked on for a further few years in a consulting capacity. He was heavily involved in Rotary and as a volunteer with the Tourist Information Office in Bendigo. Peter will be remembered as a thorough gentleman who genuinely cared for others, fair in all his dealings, and willing to assist in any way. As an engineer, he had a full command of his craft and was meticulous in his approach to project management.

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

Visit to Ballarat (Western Region) – 17 and 18 th September

Ten of us attended this visit. We were given a presentation by Chris Dunlop on the issues and initiatives being undertaken in the region and then joined Steve Pattinson at the Western Highway duplication project office where we had lunch and a bus trip out on site to observe the progress of the works. The following day we visited the Mechanics Institute and after lunch some of us visited the gallery.

These are some of my observations from the trip. The region – shown in the map next page - is about the same area as Tasmania and comprises three sub-regions summarized below.

Central Highlands

Population 2011 : 169,300 people

Estimated population 2041: 247,000 people
(Increase 78,200)

The Changing of the guard

I wish to inform members that Jim Webber has now taken on the role of Secretary of the Association – the position previously held by Peter Lowe. This move had been planned since the AGM but Jim sought to delay the move because he and Kay were in the middle of shifting into a new home. The shift is now complete and so Jim has taken over the role. Jim's contact details are included in the footer on the front page.

Peter has done a wonderful job for the Association and I have greatly appreciated the support he has given to our committee – and especially to me. I should also include Ros in my thanks. I know that she reviews my draft newsletters with a hawk-like eye and she has assisted us in mail outs more than I can count. So thank you Peter and Ros from all of us and I know that you will continue to be loyal supporters of the Association.

And talking of hawk-like eyes, I know that Jim is a pretty one-eyed Hawk fan. Jim and I started at the CRB around about the same time and I am sure you will all be relieved to know that the younger guard is taking over!

Eastern area - Melbourne's peri-urban hinterland including Bacchus Marsh which has strong links to Melbourne.

Ballarat - Commercial and services centre

Western area – predominantly rural areas and comprises towns of Beaufort and Ararat

Wimmera Southern Mallee

Population 2011 : 50,700 people

Estimated population 2031 : 51,300 people

Horsham - Regional centre and comprises large settled areas of agricultural hinterland.

Mildura

Population 2011 : 52,000 people

Estimated population 2031 : 61,000 people
(Increase 9,000)

Mildura

Key industries: Dryland farming, irrigated horticulture, tourism, food and beverage manufacturing, transport and logistics, retail, health and community services

Emerging industries: Renewable energy generation, aquaculture, mineral sands mining and recycling

The Region has developed a prioritised hierarchy of project proposals. They used the existing transport strategies and local knowledge and intelligence to capture current and future deficiencies across the regional transport network. From this a list of 50 problems was identified and each problem was scored using the project prioritisation framework and presented to the Regional Project Review Committee (RPRC).

It was agreed that the top 10 problems were to be carried forward to develop a prioritised list of key projects for the Region. In close liaison with Strategy and Planning and Policy and Programs a consistent approach enabled the ranking of projects and these linked well with work carried out by the Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure and a Whole of Government approach. Thus Western Region has developed a current pipeline of identified projects at various stages of development, which will influence future investment in the Region.

Those in the current pipeline include:

- Western Highway Duplication - Buangor to Stawell
- Bacchus Marsh North South Routes
- Mildura Heavy Vehicle Bypass Route
- Targeted Freight Upgrade Projects (Supply Chains)
- Town Bypasses (Ararat, Beaufort, Horsham)
- Upgrade Western Freeway to carry High Productivity Freight Vehicles
- Upgrade Gisborne / Western Freeway Interchange
- Sturt / Mair Street Improvements
- Improve Bacchus Marsh Central Business Area
- Regional Town Growth Corridors

In addition to these projects there are a number of current planning studies - Horsham Bypass, Ararat Bypass, Beaufort Bypass, and the Henty Highway.

There are also a number of programs in train - Transport Solutions Program, Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program (HVSPP), Bridge Renewal Program, Election Commitment Program, Congestion Program, Bicycle Program, Pedestrian Program, Road Safety Program, and Federal Blackspot Program.

In addition to these projects, programs and studies, Western Region is also participating with AustRoads and other industry partners in an Australia wide trial on foam bitumen stabilization. Two trial sections each 130 m long have been installed on the Western Freeway at Ballan.

They are based on a stabilisation depth of 200 mm but have slightly different bitumen contents. They have been designed deliberately to fail so that the failure mode can be determined. The expected benefits of foam bitumen stabilisation are:

- It provides a product that has characteristics of asphalt
- Foaming provides better dispersion and coating of materials compared to using bitumen emulsion mixed with pavement material
- About 2/3 of the price of full depth asphalt
- Ideal treatment for aging crushed rock pavements to extend life

We also inspected the new Avenue of Honour Bridge – designed in-house by VicRoads. The red colouring symbolizes the red poppies of Flanders and along the abutment walls are carved the names of all the battles of the Great War in which Australian soldiers fought.

The new interchange features a landscaped field on either side of the overpass which has been modelled from the battlefields of World War I that became known as the Flanders Fields. Native wildflowers have been planted in an arc shape which will be visible to drivers travelling under the overpass.

Every component of the overpass was designed with commemoration and the Anzacs in mind.





The two red coloured retaining walls on each side of the structure have been carefully imprinted to replicate the surface of oak leaves, like those from the trees in the avenue, and panels in the walls contain recessed text displaying where battles were fought and the names of units Ballarat men and women served in.

The side elevation of the bridge superstructure has been designed to replicate the red poppies placed in the Roll of Honour at the War Memorial – as shown in the picture below.

Steve Pattinson also took us further west where we were able to view the progress of the Western Highway duplication. The highway between Ballarat and Stawell is being progressively duplicated and upgraded to provide a safer and more efficient four-lane divided route. In addition to separating the traffic lanes, highway safety will be improved with sealed road shoulders, safety barriers, protected turning lanes, intersection improvements, and service lanes for local access at some locations.

In the five years to December 2014, there were 79 crashes on the Western Highway between Ballarat and Stawell, including 11 fatalities and 49 serious injuries. Infrastructure upgrades, such as those on the Western Highway, are important part of road safety improvements in Western Victoria.

Upgrades between Stawell and the South Australian Border include rest area improvements, bridge strengthening, new overtaking lanes and planning for a Horsham bypass.

Overhead messaging signs (Intelligent Transport System signs) have been installed at Ballarat, Ararat, Burnt Creek and Kaniva. These signs will provide information to motorists on road conditions, incidents and other information.



The depiction of red poppies at the War Memorial – on the side of the bridge

We had a very enjoyable dinner at the Boathouse Restaurant on Lake Wendouree.

On Friday morning we met at the Ballarat Mechanics Institute for a conducted tour by a local historian. It turned out to be a gem and I strongly recommend it to you.

Mechanics' Institutes are educational establishments, originally formed to provide adult education, particularly in technical subjects, to working men. They were often funded by local industrialists on the grounds that they would ultimately benefit from having more knowledgeable and skilled employees (such philanthropy was shown by, among others, Robert Stephenson and Joseph Whitworth). The Mechanics' Institutes were used as 'libraries' for the adult working class, and provided them with an alternative pastime to gambling and drinking in pubs.

The term "mechanic" seems to have been adopted in the 19th century as a general word for men who worked with their hands. Mechanics' Institutes developed in Scotland with the aim of providing the ordinary working man with a means whereby he could improve both his work skills and his general education. At this point I should mention that in the reading I have done about Mechanics' Institutes I saw no reference to women.

George Birbeck, a Professor of Natural History in Glasgow is credited with starting the movement in the early 1800s. The concept spread quickly through the English-speaking world and the first Mechanic's Institute in Australia was established in Hobart in 1827. This was followed by the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts in 1833, Newcastle School of Arts in 1835, then the Melbourne Mechanics' Institute established in 1839 (renamed The Melbourne Athenaeum in 1873). From the 1850s, Mechanics' Institutes quickly spread throughout Victoria wherever a hall, library or school was needed. Over 1200 Mechanics' Institutes were built in Victoria.



The Avenue of Honour Bridge



Lynn and Jeff Briggs at the dinner

Although the buildings which originally housed them can still be recognized in many Australian towns and cities, very few continue to operate as libraries and cultural centres. Just over 500 remain today, and only six still operate their lending library services.

The Ballarat Mechanic's Institute is one of the few which still operates along the original lines. The Institute's own records document the development of the collection and offer an insight into the activities of a Mechanics Institute from its beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century. Its collection is also of historical significance for its strong association with the Mechanics Institute movement and the important role it played in the intellectual, cultural and social development of Victorians throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century.

Comprising books, journals and newspapers acquired by the Institute since its inception in 1859, as well as the Institute's own archive of records and objects, the collection includes 16,677 books and journals, 1592 volumes of newspapers (approximately 80,000 issues) and institute records dating from c. 1857 including minutes, correspondence, annual reports, lithographs, artifacts and objects.

The main part of the book and newspaper collection was acquired by the Institute during the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century and is shelved and housed within the Mechanics Institute building.

The Mechanics' Institute first met unofficially in 1854 and was inaugurated in 1859. Space was provided for a reading room in the Ballarat Fire Brigade building and in July 1859 a circulation library started with a collection of 400 volumes including 89 volumes donated by John Pascoe Fawkner. By 1860 another 500 books had been added to the collection, possibly after it moved to its home on the ground floor of the new Institute building.

The first stage of the Institute's permanent home opened in December 1860 with the remaining spaces completed later. The Institute acquired the old Mining Exchange Hall in 1935 and the library and reading room moved there the following year. The collection includes newspapers, journals and periodicals from Ballarat, Victoria and overseas from 1845 onwards.

The book collection, predominantly non-fiction, is largely nineteenth century in nature, although it does include a book published in 1586 and other early publications. It includes early Ballarat and Australian colonial publications, and books of a range of subjects including mining, engineering, natural science exploration and history.

NEWS FROM VICROADS



From the CEO, John Merritt

Each week, John issues a news bulletin to all VicRoads staff. This one was issued on 14 August.

"This week has been dominated by an enormous amount of media coverage of VicRoads issues. Road issues are big news, with VicRoads getting over 2000 media mentions every month, and around 200 social media mentions per day. Over the last 6 months we've been revising our approach to media opportunities to better reflect our Strategic Commitment, and promote the relationship we want to have with the community. Whilst the media is keen to report on issues, it has become very clear that we need them more than they need us. We need to communicate with the community, and newspapers and talkback radio are effective ways to deliver our message and serve our customers. Our strategy is to be more available to the media and be frank in our responses.

We need to apologise for our mistakes, be less defensive about problems and empathetic to the challenges Victorians face each day. We also need to use our message, to give people insight into the skills and depth of the contribution that VicRoads is making to the road system every day.

This week started with the Road Safety Camera Commissioner's report into the four most contentious 40km zone speed cameras – Warrigal Road, Holmesglen; Flinders and Exhibition Streets in the city; and Fitzroy Street, St Kilda. The Commissioner confirmed that accident statistics warranted these speed reductions and that the signage in place was more than adequate. However, he also made several positive recommendations, including a call for greater signage. When pedestrians are injured at a busy intersection, reducing the speed is only one of the options at our disposal and we need to ensure we consider all of the potential interventions we can use at these locations.



There was also media coverage as a result of an error we made in applying an incorrect TAC levy to a number of light prime movers. We have identified 194 vehicles that were overcharged a total of \$860,000 over many years. We decided to proactively use talkback radio to draw attention to this issue and apologise to the owners. We also asked any previous owners who had disposed of their trucks and felt they may have been over charged to contact us. The error lies in system complexity, training weaknesses and our audit regimes all of which we are now correcting.

The crane collapse last Friday near the Kings Way exit ramp has made life very difficult for a lot of our customers who use the West Gate freeway. As part of the regular media coverage we included updates for our customers on the best possible run on the detour routes, and our Road Operations team has been working to give motorists the best run they can. Still, it has been frustrating week for anyone coming in on the Westgate.

On Thursday, the Herald Sun ran a story around congestion on Hoddle Street and Punt Road. This is a regular theme in the Herald Sun and we expect it to continue. At its busiest section, Hoddle Street carries about 90,000 vehicles per day. Volumes on the route have been pretty stable for the last 5 years. We know that around 25% of Hoddle Street customers are making a through-trip and have little choice in that. Our target is the customers travelling to the city, particularly from the east. For them, we need to make the Doncaster bus route as attractive as possible and on Sunday we officially open the new bus lanes in Victoria Parade to further support this.

We've had publicity on the second stage of consultation on our traffic noise reduction policy. Staff may be aware that one of the deficiencies of our current policy is there is no night-time standards. This is because the policy was crafted at a time when roads were relatively quiet at night. Now we are encouraging heavy vehicles to travel at night to make best use of the road network, so our traffic noise reduction policy needs to reflect those changes and we're engaging with the community about how that can best be done.

Next week, we have the prospect of a train strike. This is going to be an opportunity for VicRoads to bring to bear all of our knowledge, data and experience to give our customers the clearest possible transport choices before the strike. We'll be working hard on that and with PTV and the bus companies, and I'm looking forward to exceeding the community's expectations next week."

Princes Highway – Winchelsea to Colac

Many of you know that I am an old Colac boy. I remember my first trip to Melbourne when I was about seven – driving down with Dad in a truck. The road all the way to Melbourne was a two lane single carriageway. It was a slow trip and there were danger spots – especially near Waurin Ponds. My aunt was involved in an awful crash in Footscray in which two of her friends died and she carried scars for the rest of her life.

As a student in Geelong I travelled back and forth to Colac every weekend. Now the Princes Highway is the major inter-regional transport corridor that connects the communities of south-western Victoria to ports, airports, rail connections and capital cities. The Highway directly services over 350,000 people and a number of important industries including logging, agriculture, grain, dairy and smelter products.

The duplication involves widening and upgrading the highway to a four-lane divided road that will improve safety, travel times and reliability.

The works have been split into two separate projects: Geelong to Winchelsea and Winchelsea to Colac. These projects are jointly funded by the Victorian and Australian governments.

Construction for the \$171 million 23 kilometre duplication from Geelong to Winchelsea is largely complete. Work is continuing on a new bridge crossing of the Barwon River in Winchelsea and these works will be complete in 2016.

The Princes Highway duplication, Winchelsea to Colac, will be delivered in four sections:

- Deans Marsh Road in Winchelsea to Armytage Road, approximately 11.5 kms
- Armytage Road to Warncoort - Birregurra Road, including new bridges over the Geelong to Warrnambool railway line at two locations over 14.5 kms.
- Warncoort-Birregurra Road to Baillie Street, East Colac, approximately 9kms
- Approximately 2kms from Baillie Street to Corangamite Street.

Improvement works along Colac's main thoroughfare – Murray Street - as part of the first stage of the Princes Highway duplication project from Winchelsea and Colac are now complete. The two kilometre section of the Princes Highway (Murray Street) between Bruce Street and Corangamite Street included road surfacing repairs and an upgrade to five pedestrian crossings.

TRIVIA AND DIDACTIC WHIMSIES

So this is how it all started

Once upon a time there was a King who wanted to go fishing:

He called the royal weather forecaster and enquired as to the weather forecast for the next few hours.

The weatherman assured him that there was no chance of rain in the coming days. So the King went fishing with his wife, the Queen. On the way he met a farmer on his donkey. Upon seeing the King the farmer said, "Your Majesty, you should return to the palace at once because in just a short time I expect a huge amount of rain to fall in this area".

The King was polite and considerate, he replied: "I hold the palace meteorologist in high regard. He is an extensively educated and experienced professional. And besides, I pay him very high wages. He gave me a very different forecast. I trust him and I will continue on my way." So he continued on his way.

However, a short time later a torrential rain fell from the sky. The King and Queen were totally soaked and their entourage chuckled upon seeing them in such a shameful condition. Furious, the King returned to the palace and gave the order to fire the weatherman at once!

Then he summoned the farmer and offered him the prestigious and high paying role of royal forecaster.

The farmer said, "Your Majesty, I do not know anything about forecasting. I obtain my information from my donkey. If I see my donkey's ears drooping, it means with certainty that it will rain."

So the King hired the donkey. And so began the practice of hiring asses to work in the government and occupy its highest and most influential positions.

The magic of reading

Quite some time ago I included a story about how we read. Our minds don't really read the letters in a word but rather look at the shape of the word. As long as the first letter and last letter of the word are correct you can jumble the ones in between in any order and you can still read.

I cdnuolt blveiee that I cluod aulactly uesdnatnrd what I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid, aoccdrnig to rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it dseno't mtaetr in what oerdr the ltteres in a word are, the olny iproamtnt tihng is that the frsit and last ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can still raed it whotuit a pboerlm. This is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the word as a wlohe. Azanmig? It geos to sohwh that slpeling inst all taht ipmorantt!

This was fairly difficult to type up because my computer spell check kept correcting the spelling.

So you can read with the letters out of order, but what if we start to introduce a few numbers? If you can read this out loud you are doing pretty well.

53RV35	7O PR0V3
H0W	0UR M1ND5 C4N
D0	4M4Z1NG 7H1NG5!
1MPR3551V3	7H1NG5!
1N	7H3 B3G1NN1NG
17	WA5 H4RD BU7
N0W,	0N 7H15 LIN3
YOUR	M1ND 1S
R34D1NG 17	
4U70M471C4LLY	
W17H	0U7 3V3N
7H1NK1NG	4B0U7 17,
	B3 PROUD! 0NLY
C3R741N	P30PL3 C4N
R3AD	7H15.

When Insults Had Class....

These glorious insults are from an era before the English language got boiled down to 4-letter words.

A member of Parliament to Disraeli: "Sir, you will either die on the gallows or of some unspeakable disease". "That depends, Sir," said Disraeli, "whether I embrace your policies or your mistress."

"He had delusions of adequacy. Walter Kerr.

"He has all the virtues I dislike and none of the vices I admire." - Winston Churchill.

"I have never killed a man, but I have read many obituaries with great pleasure." - Clarence Darrow.

"He has never been known to use a word that might send a reader to the dictionary." - William Faulkner (about Ernest Hemingway).

"Thank you for sending me a copy of your book; I'll waste no time reading it." - Moses Hadas.

"I didn't attend the funeral, but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it." - Mark Twain.

"He has no enemies, but is intensely disliked by his friends." - Oscar Wilde.

"I am enclosing two tickets to the first night of my new play; bring a friend, if you have one."

- George Bernard Shaw to Winston Churchill. "Cannot possibly attend first night, will attend second if there is one." - Winston Churchill, in response.

Manners Maketh the Man

A golfer was getting ready to tee off on the first hole when a second man approached and asked if he could join him. The first said that he usually played alone, but agreed to the twosome.

They were even after the first few holes. The second golfer said, "We're about evenly matched, how about playing for five dollars a hole?" The first golfer said that he wasn't much for betting, but agreed to the terms.

The second golfer won the remaining sixteen holes with ease.

As they were walking off number eighteen, the second man was busy counting his \$80.00. He then confessed that he was the pro at a neighboring course and liked to pick on suckers.

The first fellow revealed that he was the Parish Priest. The pro was flustered and apologetic, offering to return the money.

The Priest said, "You won fair and square and I was foolish to bet with you. You keep your winnings."

The pro said, "Is there anything I can do to make it up to you?"

The Priest said, "Well, you could come to Mass on Sunday and make a donation. And, if you want to bring your mother and father along, I'll marry them."

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Roller Coaster Bridge

This is the Eshima Ohashi bridge in Japan. It's the third largest rigid-frame bridge in the world at 44 metres tall. The mile-long bridge was built on the banks of Lake Nakaumi, connecting the cities of Matsue and Sakaiminato. If you're wondering why it looks more like a roller coaster than a bridge, it's because it was designed to be high enough to let ships pass underneath. It has a gradient of 5.1 percent on the Tottori Prefecture side and 6.1 percent on the Shimane Prefecture side. No doubt the angle of the photograph makes it look scarier than it is.

