

VicRoads Association

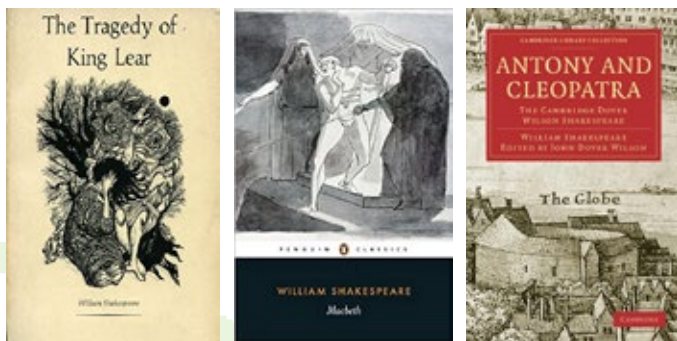
Newsletter No.217



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Dear Members,

I have read that when Shakespeare was quarantined during the plague he wrote King Lear. That was around 1606 and at about the same time, he wrote Antony and Cleopatra and Macbeth. Yes, they practised isolation even in those days although it was self-imposed. They knew they had to isolate themselves from people who had contracted the plague. The possibility of infection had shut down Shakespeare's Globe theatre, so I suppose he had nothing else to do except write a few more masterpieces.



But this was not really extraordinary because quarantine was much more common in those times – especially for the plague – and people had to live with isolation as a part of life far more than our era has experienced. John Milton wrote Paradise Lost during quarantine, even though he was blind, and Chekhov and Pushkin wrote during isolation from cholera epidemics in Russia. In fact Chekhov succumbed to tuberculosis which itself was a cause of quarantine.

Samuel Pepys wrote his diary from 1660 to 1669 through good times and bad and his recording of the bubonic plague in 1665 in London gave historians and scientists a good understanding how the epidemic moved so quickly due to the huge rat population in the filthy city. Dashiell Hammet, the

creator of Sam Spade, was a bit of a knockabout private eye in his youth but he contracted tuberculosis which afflicted him severely, and during his isolation he turned to writing, drawing extensively on his own experiences.

Indeed there are many chronicled instances of astonishing artistic and scientific achievements that have been made under the most trying of circumstances. Rather than dulling the mind, isolation may allow space and time for contemplation and clarity of mind. It eradicates the little things we might have to do every day which are both time-consuming and mind-numbing. Many members of my art studio have had an explosion of creativity during the shut-down and they find companionship and satisfaction in sharing their work amongst the others – albeit at a distance.

I can't put myself in that category mainly because I have spent the last couple of months finalising the publication of my books. Writing them is the easy part. Type-setting (or checking thereof), attributing photographs, seeking approval to publish some of those photographs, finalising cover designs and all the other little things that need attention has consumed much of my time – but by the time you receive this newsletter they will have been published. This will please you because it will stop me from banging on about it.

I expect I will be back to painting. As I write this (in mid-July) I have started another one. It is a still life. If it is any good, I will share it with you. If not, you will never see it!

Isaac Newton is one of the world's most celebrated mathematicians and nutcases. Despite his revolutionary work formulating calculus, optics and the laws of gravitation, he believed in alchemy and he pursued its futile secrets all his life. But the start of his productive work in science commenced not long after his graduation from Cambridge University. He was forced into isolation due to plague in 1665 for two years, thus enabling him to formulate his theories in solitude without distraction. It was during this time that he was supposed to



Sir Isaac Newton in later life. I could find no portraits of him as a young man.

have queried why the apple fell towards the core of the earth (no pun intended) rather than sideways or any other direction. I have thought that this was some sort of quaint myth but from what I have read, it seems that Newton used the falling of an apple to illustrate his conundrum.

There are a few other examples of great works emanating from quarantine and isolation that I want to mention. The Flemish master painter, Anthony van Dyck, was caught in Sicily due to plague in 1624 during which time he painted some of his most illustrious work.

A more contemporary example; Olivier Messiaen's chamber music Quartet for the End of Time was written in a German prisoner of war camp in 1941, and was first performed by fellow prisoners on clarinet, violin, and cello, with Messiaen himself on piano. You can watch a contemporary performance on https://youtube/zYpBHc8px_U

Messiaen was a French soldier captured at Verdun. Fortunately for him and music history one of his German guards was a music lover who protected him. Among the other prisoners was a clarinettist who was allowed to keep his clarinet and Messiaen started to write his piece for him.

I'm not saying we have all got it in us to produce works of world renown, but I do recommend writing as a creative way to spend your time. It makes you think, and the research opens doors to memories. Your writing does not necessarily have to be to a standard fit for publication. I found, when researching my family history, that the notes and letters written by my ancestors revealed their souls and personalities. My local council runs a life-writing group which encourages participants to write stories from the past. Some only comprise a few paragraphs and others a few pages, but they all reveal a truth and give great pleasure to those who write them.

Writing life stories is also a precious legacy for your children and you grandchildren. They might not know it but later in life, they will be grateful for the memories. It was the main motivation for me in my writing and once I started, I realised how different my life was to theirs – and it was worth telling.

So, if during your isolation you find that you have any spare time, I recommend that you write some of your stories. Your family will love them.

There are ways other than artistic or scientific output that can bring us comfort and satisfaction during isolation. I have introduced new dishes into my cuisine, I've watched some marvellous series on BBC First such as Sanditon, Belgravia, Les Miserables and World on Fire and I still love Dad's Army, Fawlty Towers, Yes Minister and Would I Lie To You. Surprisingly, I have lost a bit of interest in the football. All the changes have made it a bit Mickey Mouse for me. I have enjoyed talking to people by phone more than I have done previously and, likewise, I have enjoyed them ringing me up.

The main thing is to keep positive and obey all the rules of isolation – distancing, hand washing/sanitisation, covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, wearing face masks and seeking advice if you feel unwell.

David Jellie *Editor*



Saint Rosalia Crowned by Angels – one of five surviving van Dyck paintings on a theme while quarantined in Palermo in 1624-25.

Cancellation of 2020 Program of Activities

The only good thing about 2020 is that it will be pretty simple to write the Annual Report. I think I could almost get away with, 'We did nothing'.

The committee has not met since the pandemic started but we have communicated via email and formally approved the membership of **Steve Brown, Alan Collins, Max Palmer** and **Trevor Boyd**.

Please note that all remaining 2020 activities have been cancelled including the Golf Day.

However, to fill the void, I have decided to write an extra newsletter this year so that we can keep in touch. Please drop me a line to tell me any of your news and how you are managing with the lockdown. I am writing this at the end of July so there is quite a lag between writing and receiving. In fact, I delivered Newsletter 217 to the Mail room this morning only to find it has closed. Apparently, someone working in the building has tested positive to the virus and they have all but closed the building down. They told me that the newsletters will be posted the following week. By that time, I will have sent this newsletter off for design and printing.

VALE

Bev Thompson

Bev died last February. She served in various positions in VicRoads but will be most remembered for her role in Building Services as the manager of the cafeteria and catering services. We extend our sympathy to her family and partner, Geoff Coath.

Bruce Mainka

Some of you will remember Bruce Mainka who died in June, aged 79. Bruce worked in the Ministry of Transport before shifting across to the RTA in the late 1980s where he worked in Program Development and Traffic Planning. His career covered many disciplines including railways, forestry, soil conservation, roads and road safety. He also had many outside interests. These included classical music, opera and ballet and he was a passionate reader of history, art, natural history and Antarctica. He owned many copies of original logs and journals of voyages of exploration.

He was a part time lecturer at the Creswick School of Forestry and he also worked for a time at the Monash University Accident Research Centre. Bruce was also a member of the Hakluyt Society and the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. The Hakluyt Society was founded in 1846 in England. It publishes scholarly editions of primary records of historic voyages, travels and other geographical material.

Robert (Bob) Mann

Sandor Mokos rang me in early July to inform me that Bob had died at the age of 75. Bob worked as a bridge design engineer with the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and transferred to the Country Roads Board when the two organisations were merged in 1974. He spent his entire career in bridge design with the CRB, RCA and VicRoads and later shifted to Maunsell and Partners and, with them, he spent some time working in Hong Kong.

News from our members

Tom Glazebrook

Tom has the distinction of being the first person to have written to us at our PO Box address. Tom is as energetic and alert as ever and he sent me a few jokes for publication.

John Rebbechi

John wrote: 'The Association Newsletter arrived in the mail today which reminded me that I intended to congratulate you on another fine editing effort when I read the online version a week or so back. I had seen that photo of the 1926 Survey party before and had a vague recollection of a photo of some of the members. Clem Perrin was Asphalt

Engineer when I joined the Asphalt Division of the CRB in 1964 after two years with the SEC. He was a fine gentleman and excellent boss. I also have fond memories of the CRB balls in the 1960s and maybe early 70s.'

Jim Winnett

Early in May Jim had a confrontation with some kerb and channelling and broke four ribs. He said he was on his bike approaching an intersection when the kerb jumped out at him and he fell off the bike and collided with the pole of a stop sign. He said his helmet was split in two but it saved him. He spent some time in the hospital but he has fully recovered.

Edgar Bartrop

Edgar rang me to say how much he enjoys reading the newsletter. He compared something I wrote about my bucolic youth growing up in Colac to his experiences growing up in Ballarat. He has been living in his new house now for a year and said that he should have done it 10 years ago. I think we are all guilty of that at some stage in our lives.

He told me that he spent last Christmas with his sister and her family. She was an academic and she married an academic and all their children were academics married to academics. He said there were 13 adults at the party and he was the only one who wasn't a professor!

Lance Midgely

Carolyn Byrnes has provided a further update on Lance for us. 'Lance is still in the Royal Talbot in Kew and visitors are now allowed, with limitations – please see below.

Anyone wishing to pay a visit, can contact Tony (Lance's son-in-law) on 0409 161 056 to arrange an appropriate time in order to avoid double ups.

Lance has agreed to move into care and is hoping to be accepted by a facility in Whittlesea. Therefore, Lance and Judy's home in Ballarat was put on the market recently and it sold in just a few days – hopefully a lovely family will enjoy the home as much as Lance and Judy did over the last 20 years. He is starting to achieve more of his personal goals – signing his name and eating independently – which is great.'

The conditions for visiting are: two visitors per patient, hours between 12 noon and 2 pm and 5 pm to 7 pm, safe distancing, and no visiting if you are feeling unwell.

Max Palmer's Remarkable Career

Although Max has only just joined our ranks, he has made up for lost time by providing the following details about his work in international settings. He worked at the CRB for seventeen years as an Assistant Experimental Officer, a Engineering Assistant and a Draftsman, while completing his engineering studies.

In fact he was the first CRB employee to be awarded a scholarship to complete his studies full time.

In December 1975 while working on the Wallan – Broadford section of the Hume Freeway at Wandong, he received a call from his wife, Margaret, to say that he had to go home and get changed because he had an interview at the Southern Cross Hotel in the city.

When he asked what for, Margaret explained that while Max was on a course at the School of Military Engineering in Sydney, she had applied for a job in Hong Kong for him. So he attended the interview not knowing what Margaret had said in the application. However he succeeded and they departed for Hong Kong in April 1976. He had been appointed as a Resident Engineer with the Mass Transit Railway Corporation (MTRC). His only involvement with railways to that time was as a passenger.

Starting in Hong Kong

The Mass Transit Railway was the first stage of the railway system from Kwun Tong on the mainland to Hong Kong Central on Hong Kong Island. It was 17.5km long with most of it underground with a small section of overhead rail. The MTRC had been established to construct the railway and was independent of the existing Kowloon Canton Railway.

The tunnelling only involved one hard rock tunnel – with all the other tunnels constructed using compressed air technology – one cut/cover tunnel and a precast concrete tunnel under Victoria Harbour between the mainland and Hong Kong Island.

The project was divided into a number of sections including the stations in each section. Construction contracts were awarded to International contractors except for two sections that were awarded to local Hong Kong contractors.

The section Max managed as Resident Engineer was the tunnel between Choi Hung to Wong Tai Sin and the contractor was one of the local contractors. This section was mainly a squatter area where the locals lived and conducted their various businesses. It was constructed by cut/cover so required part of the squatter area to be cleared and residents relocated.

The local residents were very tolerant of the construction works and its effect on their day-to-day lives.

One day he had to investigate a complaint about damage to a property. It was an old village house, different to the squatter huts in that it was constructed with concrete – but of questionable quality. The contractor had been driving sheet-piles using a vibrating hammer. The complainant explained that when the vibrating hammer was working the bedroom ceiling of the house fell down on the occupants. When he Inspected the house he saw a plastic sheet suspended below the ceiling catching the material as it fell. The ceiling was reinforced concrete in such poor condition it was surprising it had not collapsed well beforehand. The steel reinforcing bars had mostly corroded away to the



point that their location was only recognisable by brown stains in the concrete where the bars once were.

Choi Hung Station

The construction of these tunnels had many challenges mainly caused by the extent and quantity of ground water and the stability of the surrounding areas. The ground conditions consisted of decomposed granite (clay) inter-dispersed with granite boulders – some being quite large and hard – thus causing problems driving the sheet-piling for the temporary works.

Working with the local contractor was also a challenge due to its limited resources and inexperienced personnel particularly in regard to safety and approval procedures. So Max had to mentor and assist the contractor's employees, while maintaining the appropriate contractor/client relationship.

When this stage was completed he transferred to the next stage. He was involved with squatter clearance and site investigation works for the Tsuen Wan Depot. The site investigation involved ground load testing which required excavating caissons down to rock, then filling them with concrete in order to proof load the founding rock. Some of these were later used in the construction of stations. They were up to two metres diameter and excavated by hand. This involved one person down the caisson digging and loading a bucket, while the second person operated a winch at the surface to remove the excavated material. Quite often this work was done by married couples – with the husband doing the excavation down in the caisson and the wife operating the winch at the surface to remove the excavated material. The normal progress was usually one metre depth per shift and at the end of each shift a concrete ring would be cast. This was repeated daily until the required depth was achieved – sometimes in excess of twenty metres.

While working within the caisson, the miner used a light, water pump, air blower, rock breaker (when required) and winch with bucket, all electrically powered. Conditions were very wet due to ground water entering the caisson. This was hazardous work because of the condition of the electrical tools and equipment and the lack of care of the workers. Often they used only two wires for the electricity supply ignoring the third wire for earthing. They required constant vigilance.

Following his stint with the MTRC he went to work for a Chinese contractor involved in road construction and land reclamation works, as well as a quarry development over the border in the Peoples Republic of China.

Cricket Exploits

While Max worked in Hong Kong, he played cricket during their winter. There were a number of memorable games, but the outstanding one was in 1981 when he was selected to play against a team of old Australian test players. Cathay Pacific had brought them back to Hong Kong following an earlier trip in 1975 when they played at the closing down of the original Hong Kong Cricket Club ground in central Hong Kong. Land in central Hong Kong is a very valuable asset, selling at millions of dollars per square foot. The cricket ground was only used by twenty two expatriates on Saturday and Sunday afternoons from September to March.

The Government closed the ground down to build the Central station for the Mass Transit Railway station. The cricket ground was relocated to the top of the Wong Ngai Chung on Hong Kong Island.

Some of the old test players on that tour included Alan Davidson, Les Favell, Neil Harvey, Lindsay Hassett, Ray Lindwall, Ian Meckiff, Keith Miller and Arthur Morris.

Hong Kong is about the same latitude north as Cairns is south, but Max remembers playing cricket one day when the temperature was 2°C as the result of strong winds from northern China.

There was also a game he played at the Hong Kong Cricket Club at Wong Ngai Chung, which is one of the higher points on Hong Kong Island. During the tea adjournment, he was batting at the time, the mist came down over the ground. After the tea adjournment the opposing team captain requested him to appeal against the light, as some of the fielding side had trouble seeing what was happening in the centre. Max explained that he could see the bowler so it was to his side's advantage to continue batting.

Burma

Max also worked in Burma on a World Bank project for the rehabilitation of the road to Mandalay, which differs from Kipling's 'On the Road to Mandalay' song which refers to the Irrawaddy River, not the road itself.



The original Hong Kong Cricket Club at Central with the Supreme Court in 1974.

It was a new experience both working in a Third World country as well as working with the protection of the army required because of local ethnic conflicts. The Burmese Government at the time was a socialist government with all its associated restrictions which spawned an active black market. The official currency exchange rate was 1 US dollar = 7 Burmese Kyats but, on the black market you could get anywhere between 30 to 40 Kyats depending on the market at the time.

In an effort to try and stem the black market, one Sunday night, the President demonetised the 100 kyat bank note. This caused a lot of consternation in both the local and expatriate communities because a lot of cash was being held within the community because nobody trusted the Government-run bank.

The project was problematic. There was a shortage of materials and fuel supplies were limited and rationed, leading to pilfering of fuel which was traded on the black market at highly inflated prices. The fuel pilfering had a direct effect on the civil works requiring bitumen. The bitumen heaters supplied for the project were diesel operated. They were never used as there was no diesel available. Instead trees were cut down as a fuel to heat the bitumen. All the plant and bitumen supplies had to be imported which the Burmese Government had to buy. In order to try and utilise what plant was available,


the Government required supply specifications to be written to facilitate in-country suppliers. Also automatic transmissions were not permitted on dozers and graders, and project vehicles had to be painted green with no synchromesh on gears.

Papua New Guinea

In Papua New Guinea (PNG) Max worked for a consultant on high rise building construction in Port Moresby. He then joined the Public Works Department before being seconded to the Prime Minister's Department as the Works representative for the Bougainville restoration program, followed later by the construction of the Poreporena Freeway in Port Moresby.

Bougainville Island was in a state of perpetual unrest with active armed rebels in a number of areas. Travel around the island was by helicopter, and some were shot at by the rebels using old World War 2 weapons. To operate in or near these areas required the protection by the PNG Defence Force.

The main challenge in the construction of the Poreporena Freeway was with land resumption along the route to the airport. It involved removing squatters, illegal buildings and businesses established on State-owned land where the Port Moresby water supply mains were located. One business



was selling water to Port Moresby residents, who had limited or no water reticulation supply. The water was being obtained from an illegal tapping into the water main.

To facilitate the clearance of the area a local contractor was engaged. It was Max's responsibility to sign off the clearance works. During the inspection he was forced to make a hasty retreat to the local police station, as his vehicle was stoned by some of the local inhabitants. The owner of the illegal water supply business followed his vehicle to the police station, threatening to shoot Max with a pistol he was brandishing because of the loss of his illegal water supply business.

Cambodia

In Cambodia, Max was based in Phnom Penh. The project involved the construction of five bridges on the main road from Phnom Penh to Kampong Thum. Components for these bridges were provided under an Australian Government aid project using prefabricated steel bridges manufactured by Transfield in Australia.

This project followed on from a United Nations initiative immediately following the removal of the Pol Pot regime. As a result of this horrible war, there were restrictions on moving within areas of the country due to land mines and unexploded ordinance.

During their period in Cambodia there was a coup where the Government was removed with the assistance of the armed forces. Max lived in an area where many of the Senior Military personnel resided, and his driver explained this would ensure that he would always have a reliable water and power supply. Because some of these Senior Military personnel were on opposing sides in the coup, the area where he lived did come under fire during the height of the coup which meant he had to evacuate to central Phnom Penh. On a lighter note, after fighting broke out at the airport and the airport finally reopened they couldn't find the mobile stairs used to load and offload passengers. They were eventually found several kilometres away being used by local residents to pick mangoes.

India and Bangladesh

His work in India involved road rehabilitation in the Indian State of Tamil Nadu based in Madras. This was to be a five-year assignment but they lived there for only nine months as the consortium doing the feasibility study phase was not awarded the construction phase.

In Madras there was a limitation on liquor supplies. Tamil Nadu was a dry state. However, they were able to purchase liquor from the neighbouring India Union State of Pondicherry. Pondicherry was a French colonial settlement until 1954, but it still maintains many aspects of its past, with the police uniforms resembling those of the French Gendarmes.

In Bangladesh, the project Max worked on involved the rehabilitation and upgrade of the Dhaka to Sylhet Road. During the wet season, up to 70% of the country is inundated by water. It is on the delta of many rivers. So construction works are very limited during the wet season and materials difficult to obtain. There were also problems with many of the embankments. Local residents buried their dead in the road embankments during the wet season as there was nowhere else available to bury them.

When East Pakistan was formed in 1947 after the border with India was established, most of the country was located on the floodplains of three great river systems – the Ganges, the Brahmaputra and the Meghna (and their tributaries). East Pakistan became Bangladesh in 1972 after a civil war in Pakistan caused by a dispute over the official language.

There is a dire shortage of suitable rock for construction in Bangladesh and most is harvested as gravels from the rivers after flooding. However the gravel comprises rounded pebbles which is unsuitable for construction so it has to be shattered by hammers and this is usually reserved for use in asphalt. There was one railway project undertaken by a Korean consortium where they mined rock for track ballast. Because of the water table and the local geology the ground had to be frozen to excavate the shaft.

For the road pavement construction crushed bricks are used. These bricks are made in local villages where residents use clay excavated from the surrounding area and they fired them in local kilns.

Max also worked on a feasibility study for a coal mine in northern Bangladesh in the Phulbari region. His involvement was restricted to the infrastructure aspects involving transporting the coal from the mine site to the markets. The feasibility study was accepted – in part – by the Government, but 15 years on the mine is still to eventuate. The coal sampling determined there were significant quantities of high quality coal that could be extracted with an open cut mining operation. However the area of the actual mine pit and the support area required, along with the need to displace a large number of local people, has deterred the government from proceeding.

So this description covers the work Max undertook overseas. He also did a short term assignment in Bahrain. When he came back to Australia, he worked on a golf course in Cairns and the Brisbane Airport before retiring.

Ted Barton

Ted wrote to me as follows:

'How are you coping with this COVID-19 lockdown? I guess you are keeping busy writing your family history. I have also done some writing and assembling early information on our family, mostly written by one of my uncles, going back to the 17th century. There is also a newspaper article about the arrival of the sailing ship Utopia in Rockhampton, Queensland, in 1862 with my Grandfather and his first wife amongst the passengers coming to settle in the new colony. They did not stay long in Queensland (about two months) then caught another boat down to Melbourne, and thence by bullock cart to Tawonga at the foot of Mt Bogong. Any way I am still piecing it all together.

I am hardly noticing the lockdown as there is much to do in the garden, cutting the grass, pruning the fruit trees, cleaning the roof gutters, raking up the autumn leaves for my compost heap etc, but also in my workshop/shed where I have been busy. I have completed a small mobile cabinet for the storage of video discs and have finished the wooden geared clock that I started on earlier in the year.

Also the house next door was sold and demolished and now two, 2-storey dwellings are being built. It is interesting to watch the progress. You know they formed up for the concrete slabs and they set the formwork in two days, then poured the concrete for both in one day and by the time they finished pouring the slab for the second house they were removing the formwork from the first and just before sunset they removed the formwork on to the second house finishing it just on darkness. Not bad in one day!!

I had a small operation back in April and that went OK and apart from an occasional visit to the Doc. I haven't been out from home. My second oldest sister passed away up in Wodonga and we could not go to the funeral but I was able to view the service on-line.

I haven't been able to see much of our grand-children, but they seem to be little troubled by the situation, the Melbourne ones found the home schooling a bit boring and are now glad to be back at school. The girls in Perth seem to be going on much as before, one at high school, one at Curtin University and one working (at her first job) – taking a 'gap year'.

I guess it will be still some time before the VRA can get back to some sort of program. I look forward to that when it happens.

By the way I was interested in the discussion on the radio this morning about Victorian Auditor's report on the 'wire rope barrier' program. You may recall my views on the subject. It has been poorly researched and lacks real evidence of effectiveness, it is driven by TAC doctrine and it is time Regional Roads Victoria did a serious review of its cost and effectiveness.'

Ted sent me some photographs of the wooden geared clock he made.



These pictures show the gears for the clock (top), and the finished clock (bottom left). The finished gears in Baltic Birch plywood (bottom right).

The various gears and frame were cut from high quality plywood (Baltic Birch) of various thicknesses. They are assembled on bright-steel rod axles and brass axle tubes. The driving weight is about 1.5 kg and the 1 metre pendulum swings at 1 beat per second. The clock should run for about 30 hours before having to re-lift the weight and I expect to get time to an accuracy of about plus or minus 1 minute per day.

Ted then sent me a letter with further details of his family history as follows.

'My Grandfather Richard Barton was born in February 1841 at Great Chart just outside Ashford in Kent, England. He was the second of three sons of John and Mary Barton of Gable Hook farm at Bethesden near Ashford. He married his first wife Susanna (nee Briggs) in 1861 and shortly thereafter migrated to Australia, sailing on the ship Utopia (949 tons) leaving Plymouth on 23 July 1862 and arriving in Keppel Bay, Rockhampton, QLD, on 6th November 1862. The ship carried 324 migrants, mostly English and Scots.

Richard and Susanna worked for about 18 months on a station in the area then came down to Melbourne by ship and then by bullock dray to Tawonga via Beechworth. Richard worked for one of the early settler families living on what was known as 'The Island' on the Kiewa River at



Ted's home in the Kiewa Valley – built by his father.

Tawonga, growing mostly potatoes which were taken to the gold diggings at Yackandandah and thereabouts. They sold for one pound a bag. He was allowed to grow some for himself which he also sold to the miners and thus saved enough to select a small block of land at Gundowring about 20 miles further down the Kiewa River valley where he built a small hut for himself, Susanna and an infant daughter. He later built a larger hut with slab walls, bark roof and

earth floor. The family increased to five and they moved to another of his selections about three miles to the south, a property he named "Kent Meadows".

Richard and Susanna had nine children and when they were mostly grown up, Susanna died and not long after that Richard re-married to a much younger lady who already had a young daughter and had migrated to Australia from New Zealand. They went on to have another three children, two boys and a girl and my father was the youngest of this second family.

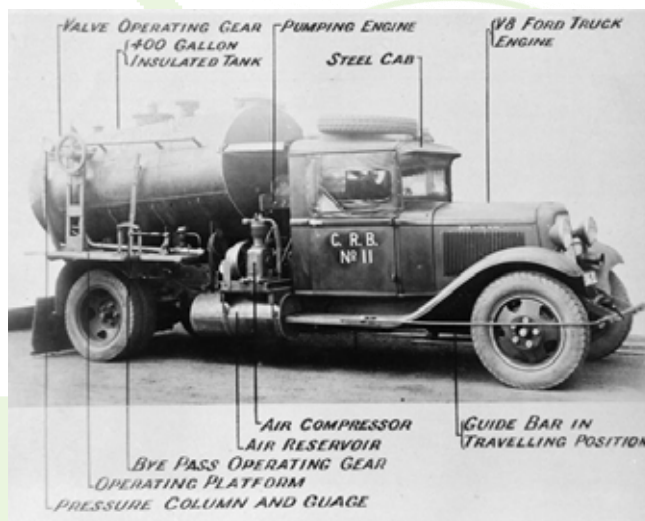
All of the boys of the first and second families settled on various blocks of land selected or purchased by Richard. My father, the youngest of the second family, trained as a carpenter and builder through an apprenticeship with a well-established builder in Albury, NSW. After Richard's house at 'Kent Meadows' was washed away by flooding of the adjacent creek, he built his father a new home on higher ground and ultimately the farm passed to him. This was the home I grew up in along with my eleven siblings.

Bitumen Sprayers

For those members who remember the black stuff.



The first 900 gallon tar sprayer on the Main Healesville Road – 1914



A Country Roads Board tar sprayer, 400 gallons capacity, 1940.



And here's one operating in 1974.



A modern Volvo 12,000 L Bitumen Sprayer

News from Regional Roads Victoria

The ski season is a busy time for snow clearing on the Great Alpine Road and other alpine roads especially those leading to the ski resorts. Snow clearing operations can be difficult work and it is usually carried out under difficult conditions. Clearing snow is dependent on snowstorm intensity and duration, the water content of snow, the temperature, traffic conditions and the time of day



News from Major Road Projects Victoria

The 6.4 km Drysdale Bypass, between Jetty Road and Whitcombes Road, opened to traffic on 30 June.

Building this important \$117 million bypass gives heavy vehicles, commuters and businesses an alternative route out of the centre of Drysdale, improving safety and easing congestion on the Bellarine Highway.



From the Archives

CRB Balls (Again)

The recent article about the CRB balls roused a lot of interest and Nick Szwed has posted several photos on the website but we are struggling to identify some of the people .



For example I am sure that this is Marje Robinson (Addis) pinning a flower to Chairman 'Paddy' O'Donnell's lapel with Lillian Moon looking on. On the left it looks like Noel Anderson and Jack Ross but who is the tall, handsome fellow on the right. Can anyone help?

And in this one, I only recognise Ted Goddard in the centre. More help please.



The article also brought back memories for Graham Gilpin. He was at the ball when Kay Webber won the Belle of the Ball. He pointed out that the article didn't mention that the ball outgrew Kew Town Hall and we had to shift the event to Camberwell Town Hall which was bigger. He went on to say that balls became unfashionable and the last CRB ball was a much smaller occasion and was held at 9 Darling St., South Yarra but he couldn't remember the year. But in the 1930s they were very popular as the photo below shows.

Nick Szwed has posted more photos of the CRB balls on the website and these can be found on <http://vicroadsassociation.org/crb-balls/> If you can identify anyone please contact Nick on the website.



How to write English

As you will probably know by now, I am a pedant when it comes to proper English usage. I think our dependence now on blogs and texts and Tweets has eroded the written language and perhaps it is time for an English language lesson.

So here are some rules to keep in mind when using the Queen's English:

- Verbs has to agree with their subjects.
- Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
- And don't start a sentence with a conjunction.
- It is wrong to ever split an infinitive.
- Avoid cliches like the plague.
- Always avoid annoying alliteration.
- Be more or less specific.
- Parenthetical remarks (however relevant) are (usually) unnecessary.
- Also, too, never, ever use repetitive redundancies.

Don't blame me for these...

I was driving to work this morning when I saw a parked RACV van. The driver was sobbing uncontrollably and looked very miserable. I thought to myself, that fellow's heading for a breakdown.

The Grim Reaper came for me last night, but I beat him off with a vacuum cleaner. Talk about Dyson with death.

I saw my neighbour talking into an envelope. He told me he was sending a voicemail.

- No sentence fragments. No comma splices, run-ons are bad too.
- Contractions aren't helpful and shouldn't be used.
- Foreign words and phrases are not apropos.
- Do not be redundant; do not use more words than necessary; it's highly superfluous.
- One should never generalize.
- Don't use no double negatives.
- One-word sentences? Eliminate.
- Analogies in writing are like feathers on a snake.
- Eliminate commas, that are, not necessary. Parenthetical words however should be enclosed in commas.
- Never use a big word when a diminutive one would suffice.
- Kill all exclamation points!!!!

Crime never pays

Four students at Monash University were taking engineering and all of them had an 'A' so far. They were so confident that the weekend before the finals, they decided to go to Sydney and visit some friends and have a big party. They had a great time but, after all the partying, they slept all day Sunday and didn't make it back to Melbourne until late Monday morning.

Rather than taking the final then, they decided to skip it and explain to their Professor why they missed it. They said that they visited friends but on the way back they had a flat tire and found there was no spare in the car. As a result, they missed the final. The Professor agreed they could make up the next day. The students were very relieved and they all studied that night for the exam.

The next day the Professor placed them in separate rooms and gave them a test booklet. They quickly answered the first problem worth five points. Cool, they thought! Each one in separate rooms thought this was going to be easy ... then they turned the page. On the second page was written... For 95 points: Which tyre went flat?

The London Underground Today

In the last newsletter I described my experiences using the London Underground back in the 1960s and I promised to bring you up to date. The network covers the northern part of the London region and extends out into the nearby counties of Buckinghamshire, Essex and Hertfordshire. It only covers a small part of South London – there are only 29 station south of the River Thames. The area south of London is covered by a surface line system.

Although its familiar name is the Underground only 45% of its length is underground. In its outer reaches it becomes a surface rail system. In 1965 there were six lines but the network has now expanded to 11 lines and in 2017/18 carried 1.357 billion passengers making it the 11th busiest metro system in the world behind Tokyo, Moscow, Seoul, Shanghai, Beijing, New York, Paris, Mexico City, Hong Kong and Guangzhou. It typically caters for about 3 million passenger trips daily. There are 270 stations and 400 km of track (250 miles).

There are two maps below which show the extent of the system geographically and the famous Underground map. If you compare the latter with the map shown in the last newsletter you can see how the network has grown since the 1960s.

The Docklands Light Rail network shown by the double green line in the bottom right hand corner is an independent system which connects to the Underground. The map does not show the Croydon tram which provides public transport south of the Thames connecting with the Underground. This is now considered to be part of the Underground system and is shown on latest London Underground maps.

Thanks to Ian Thiele, our Association's resident rail expert, for checking out these facts and figures for me.



This map shows the geographical location of the various lines.

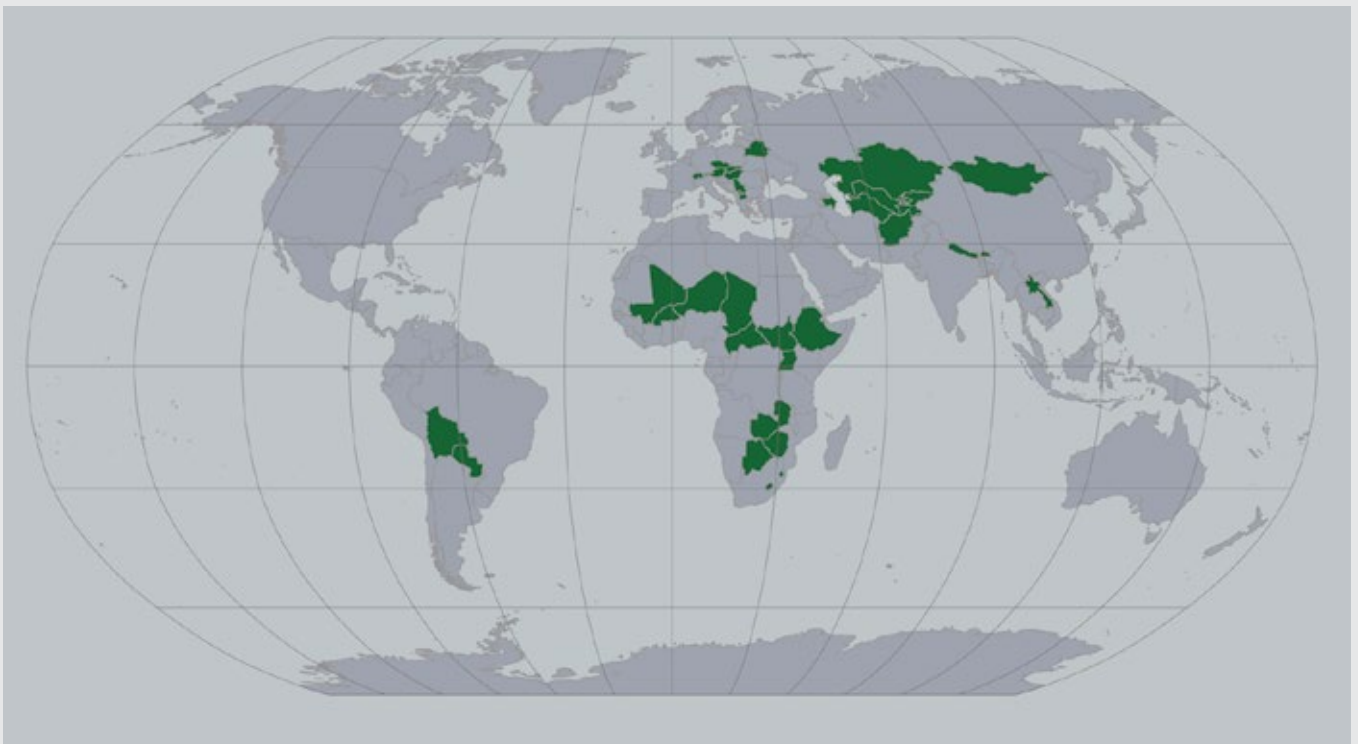


This is a current London Underground map.

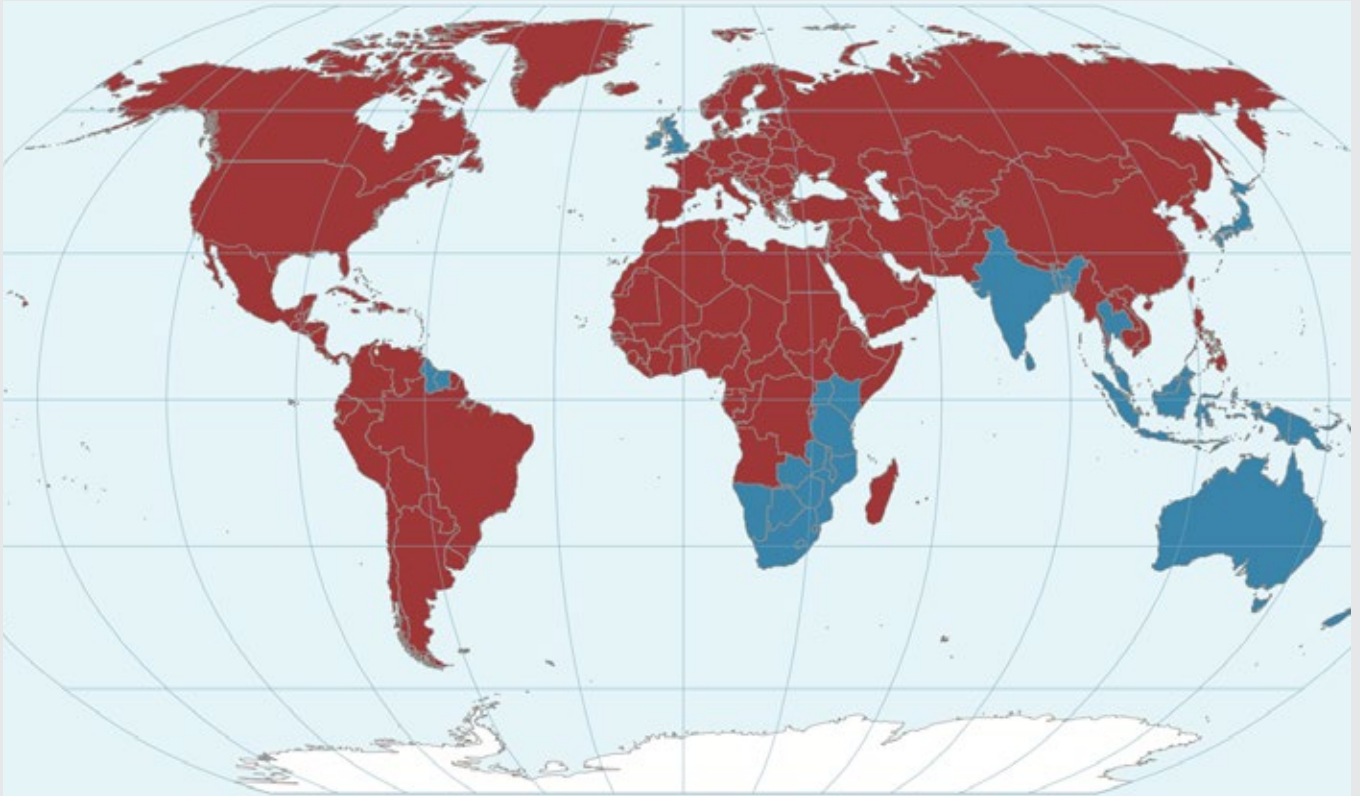
Some more interesting maps



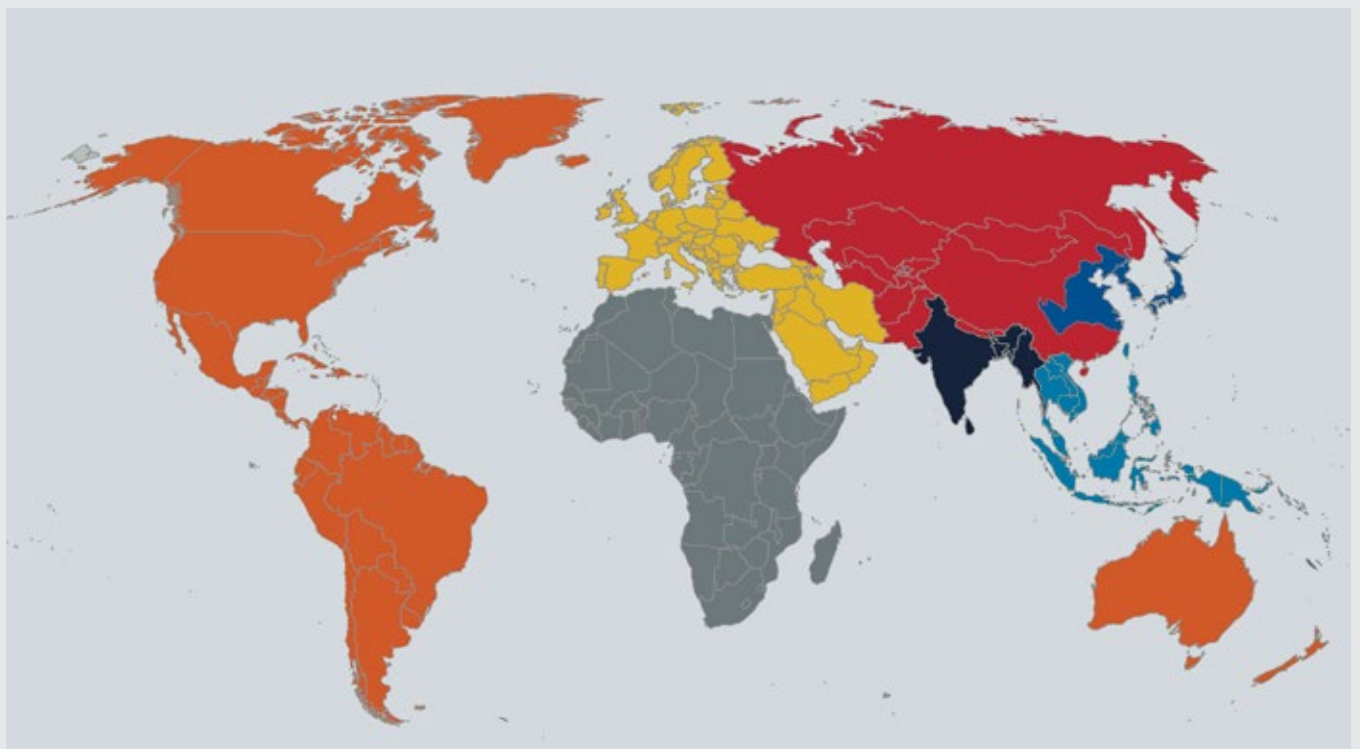
This map shows countries (in white) that England has never invaded. There are only 22.



This map shows (in green) all the landlocked countries of the world.



This map shows the countries (in blue) where people drive on the left side of the road.



This map shows the world divided into 7 sections (each with distinct colour) each section containing 1 billion people.

TRIVIA AND DIDACTIC WHIMSIES

Phobias

I have always been sympathetic to people with phobias.

As a boy, spanning primary school and secondary school, for a period of four or five years, I developed a morbid fear of the dark. I imagined that all sorts of evil and harm would come to me disguised by the cover of darkness. The condition is called scotophobia (an irrational fear of the dark) or nyctophobia (morbid fear of the dark).

My poor parents were at their wit's end because I could not rationalise my fear and of course, I felt a great shame about it, fearing my friends would find out about it. In fact I have kept it a secret for most of my life and have only revealed it publicly in the writing of my memoir.

I would awake screaming each night (without exception) with an overwhelming feeling of panic and an intense need to get away. I was old enough to know that what was happening to me was serious and Mum and Dad were extremely worried. They sought medical advice but there were no psychiatric or psychological services then and our family doctor could not help. Mum and Dad were very understanding and never lost patience with me. I described it in my memoir as my 'barbed wire necklace'.

I came to realise it was irrational and yet the fear would not go away. Eventually we bought a reading lamp which we put in the corner of my bedroom and we left it on all night. Initially when I awoke, I could feel fear grip me but I fought my demons and eventually fell back to sleep. I could see that there was nothing in the room to harm me.

And then, after years of struggling with it, it suddenly went away. I look back on it now and wonder what it was all about but I will forever remember the terror I felt and the pain I gave my parents.

So I am very sympathetic to people with phobias. They are irrational, sap self-confidence and take years to overcome – if at all. And many phobias are almost laughable. Take these for example.

Hans Christian Andersen suffered from taphephobia – a fear of being buried alive. He had a very dark side to his character and his stories had to be modified to provide happy endings. In his original story the Little Mermaid dies rather than marries the handsome prince. In his final days he asked his friends to stab him after he stopped breathing for fear of being buried alive. He also placed a note by his bedside saying: "I only appear to be dead".

Thomas Jefferson had glossophobia which is a fear of public speaking. Many of us have experienced this at some time.

Jefferson was a founding father of the United States and a co-writer of the Declaration of Independence. He only made two speeches in his eight-year term as president. He often feigned illness to avoid speaking. Psychiatrist have posthumously diagnosed his condition as an acute form of social phobia.

Salvador Dali, one of the most eccentric personalities of the 20th Century, had many phobias which were expressed in his surrealistic art. He had a fear of fathering a child, a fear of being castrated and a fear of women's bodies – all of which seem interconnected. But his greatest fear was entomophobia or a fear of insects. Insects featured often in his art as symbols of death and decay. He once cut his back with a razor thinking he was warding off an insect, only to find it was a pimple.

Franklin D. Roosevelt's phobia is a real mouthful – triskaidekaphobia – a fear of the number 13. This could almost be seen as a superstition. He is famous for his entreaty: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." He would never dine with 13 people and he avoided travel on a Friday. His greatest fear was Friday the 13th. Ironically, he died on a Thursday the 12th.

Alfred Hitchcock had a fear of eggs or ovophobia. He never tasted one in his life. This is rather ironic in that he was the director of the film called 'The Birds'. He hated the texture of eggs and there is a telling scene in 'To Catch a Thief' when the heroine rejects a tray of breakfast with disgust and stubs out her cigarette in the yolk of an egg.

Natalie Wood the American actress who starred in West Side Story suffered from hydrophobia – a fear of deep water. She drowned one night after falling from a yacht.

Woody Allen always plays the role of a tortured soul but it is not really acting. That's the way he is. He suffers from panophobia which is a fear of practically everything. He is afraid of heights, enclosed places, and insects, terrified of bright colours, lifts and sunshine. He has a non-specific fear of everything being a source of evil. He also has neurotic needs: his shower drain must be in a corner, and his breakfast banana must be cut into seven pieces. He has spent over 40 years, undergoing psychoanalysis.

Finally, Julius Caesar detested cats. This phobia is called ailurophobia. But he wasn't alone with this phobia. Ghengis Khan, Napoleon Bonaparte and Mussolini, despite their murderous records, also suffered this phobia. Apparently cats are symbols of liberty and freedom. And Caesar never really escaped them. Caesar was assassinated by his political rivals at Rome's Theatre of Pompey. The site is wired off from the public now but it is home to hundreds of feral cats.