

# VicRoads Association

## Newsletter No.220



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Dear Members,

Although I am writing these words on 20 September, this newsletter will be the last you receive this year. You probably haven't noticed but I have squeezed in an additional newsletter this year to compensate for the loss of our program for 2020. In addition, I have distributed some earlier and new writing on the exploration of Australia and the Pacific – although these have only been conveyed to those members connected to the internet. As I write this, I have no idea what next year will bring, but be assured we will do everything we can to resume operations as soon as possible.

However there is one thing that I can do and that is to wish you and your families a happy and safe Christmas. If the pandemic continues to follow today's trend I am confident that families and friends will be able to congregate in the true spirit of Christmas. So ....

# Merry CHRISTMAS

Christmas has always been a happy time in my various lives. When I was a child we weren't big on giving extravagant gifts –and we still aren't. It was the gathering of the family together which we loved—from aunts and uncles down to children of all ages. After we shifted in to our house on the outskirts of Colac when I was seven, we always had Christmas day at our house because we had a vestibule at the back door which could accommodate about 30 people. Dad erected trestle tables borrowed from the school and sheets were spread on them as table cloths.

We always had a hot dinner. Dad raised ducks so they were always on the menu but occasionally Uncle Ted would bring a turkey – and once we had a goose but I can't remember what it was like. Mum and my aunts prepared everything. Most of the vegetables were hand-picked from our veggie garden and I was often given the task of podding the peas. The laughter and talk in the kitchen was palpable. We children loved listening to the stories and we were often sucked into the laughter without really getting the joke. All the cooking was done in a wood oven and on some days it must have been awfully hot but we didn't seem to notice.

Some things were pre-prepared such as the plum pudding and the sherry trifles – and dare I say it, the jellies. Mum made a couple of trifles, one of which was without the 'doings' as she said, because cousin Eddy was a teetotaler. The threepences, sixpences, shillings and florins were stuffed into the puddings on the day but Uncle Buck always had a pocketful full of silver coins to refresh supplies.

It was always conducted in the same order. At about 11.30 to midday, there were drinks and sweetmeats like rum balls or hedgehog. These were accompanied by sherry, beer, or a beer and lemonade shandy but no one was a heavy drinker. We had cordial or if we were lucky, some sort of fizzy drink. This was usually done in the 'good' room which was usually off limits to us when we played hide and seek. It was where Mum displayed her wedding gifts, mementos of visitors, photographs of the family and strangers, an empty bottle of John Rankin whiskey – because that was her father's name – and Longstaff's painting of Menin Gate at Midnight, the significance of which we didn't understand. All this happened after the War and we children would not have understood that there was an even bloodier war before that.

However, if it was especially hot we went into the front garden where we used the cypress bush at the front gate as a Christmas tree. Cousin Eddy borrowed the Apex Club's Santa Claus suit (complete with a bushy white beard) which

he passed on to my brother, who in turn, passed it to me when I was in my late teens. I think I was the least effective Santa of the three of us because of my height, not to mention the glasses. When I finished the doling out of presents, I had to bid farewell to the children because, of course, I had many more visits to make on that day. I used to change behind a cypress row in the paddock and I had to run like mad so that the little kids didn't catch me. I remember cousin Eddy's Santa driving off in a ute.

Almost every year, at great urging from her audience, Auntie Jean did her rendition of the one-armed fiddler. She would dress up in one of our raincoats with all the buttons done up with one coat sleeve empty because she explained that the fiddler only had one arm. She then took two wire coat hangers, one of which was the fiddle and the other, the bow. She staggered about pretending to be shickered and we all laughed our heads off as she tried to hold one coat hanger under her chin so she could manipulate the bow with the other one. This went on for about five minutes and then someone offered her a drink but she didn't have a free hand to take the drink. Then the laughter really took off when she thought of the solution. Out of the bottom of the coat a finger slowly emerged, on which she hung the coat hanger bow and then she accepted the drink.

Immediately after lunch (at about 3 p.m.) all the men and some of the cousins got up and went home to do the milking but they arrived back at about 7 p.m. to finish off the leftovers and some freshly prepared salads.

Christmas at home lasted until well into my married life and it was but one drop of glue that welded my family together. Today, our families have dispersed but despite that, we still seem to be able to get back together for that one day of the year.



This photograph was taken on a Christmas Day before we shifted into the new house – circa 1945.

Dad is the man on the left, Auntie Jean is holding my sister, Mary, at the back and I am the small boy in the centre next to my brother John. It was taken at Mum's family home. It is about half the people who would have been there,

May you have a happy Christmas to treasure with your loved ones and we look forward to catching up with you next year.

## VALE

I extend sympathies on behalf of the Association to the families of the following ex-colleagues:

### Garry Titheridge

Garry died early in September at the age of 79. He was born in Ballarat, graduated as an engineer from the Ballarat School of Mines, and worked all his life with the CRB in Ballarat. He was Ballarat through and through. The Titheridge name in Ballarat is inexorably connected to golf. Garry's mother and father were both club Captains and Presidents of Ballarat Golf Club and Garry was Captain in 1971 and 1972. Garry also served as President of the club and represented it in Pennant and Country Week competitions. He played off a handicap of 2-3 for many years and his lowest stroke score at Ballarat was 65. Garry's brother, Neil, had an even more illustrious golfing career.

He was club champion 26 times and Victorian Amateur Champion in 1961 and 1962.

Garry and family moved to Point Lonsdale after his retirement. But he continued his golf there in executive positions and in exercising his engineering skills in up-grading the course. The photograph (right) was taken fairly recently after he scored a hole in one.



I had dealings with Garry regarding some of the bridges on the Western Freeway. He had a reserved demeanour but he was very co-operative and I enjoyed my fleeting relationship with him. He was a thorough gentleman.

## David Veitch of the Estates Division

David died in September at the age of 90. I did not know David so I asked Tim Holden to provide a few recollections about David. This is what he wrote:

'I was saddened to hear of the recent passing of David Veitch. David was appointed to the position of Estates Officer in the mid 60s on the death of the previous incumbent. I recall as a youthful member of the Estates staff at the time that he was not the expected appointment but as a younger man and a qualified land valuer he was judged the person best suited to manage the section. Over the following years he oversaw the restructuring of the section in response to the CRB's programme—entailing a burgeoning increase in land acquisition and property management.

David is remembered as a personable man who did things his way, overseeing the re-organisation of the section during this challenging period. It saw a large increase in its size and the engagement with a wide range of external, independent consultants. His work laid the foundations for an Estates Section/Property Department capable of meeting its future challenges.'

## Vic Moll

Vic died in early October from lung cancer. He was 94. He was the most senior engineer of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Highways and Traffic Branch to transfer to the Country Roads Board in 1974.

Within the MMBW, Vic managed road design and construction activities while Bruce Day managed bridge design. Vic managed the inner sections of the Tullamarine and South East Freeway projects as well as the St Kilda Road Junction/Underpass and the Brighton Road widening projects. The transfer of the MMBW's highways functions to the CRB was problematic for many of the people affected – and none was more affected than Vic.

He was opposed to the transfer and felt that the position he was offered as head of Metropolitan Major Projects in the CRB did not reflect the level of seniority that was warranted.

I cannot speak with any authority on the arrangements of the transfer but many of the MMBW staff members felt disgruntled about the new arrangements – and perhaps not without foundation. It must have been hard for them as the CRB was a much larger organisation and some felt that it was more of a takeover rather than a merger. For the more junior officers of the MMBW, the amalgamation provided broader opportunities and their careers were relatively unaffected.

However Vic 'stuck to his guns' and argued doggedly to the extent that he found himself largely at odds with the CRB organisation and turned his position into a 'dead-end' with diminishing authority. This resulted in him being bypassed which was a shame because, in my dealings with him on the West Gate Freeway, I found him sound and reasonable in his deliberations.

## News from our members

### Lance Midgley

I was delighted to get a call from Lance recently. He read of the death of Bob Barron in the last newsletter and mentioned that he and Bob had worked pretty closely together on the pavement design for the Badaginnie to Bowser Section of the Hume Highway. He offered to write a story about it which I gratefully accepted. I also asked if he could write about his current situation and this is what he wrote:

'Hi Everyone,

Just a brief update on my situation. I am now residing in the Whittlesea Lodge Aged Care Facility. About 70 residents are cared for here, most of which have varying degrees of cognitive skills. I am receiving electrical stimulation and physio treatment to my fingers hopefully aimed at improving their movement although not much gain at present. I am also on an exercise program that is keeping my upper body and arms in a fit state. Depending on how much improvement I achieve over the next few months

will determine if the proposed nerve and tendon surgery goes ahead. If this occurs and is successful, I am advised that my pinch will be stronger, I will be able to make a fist and maybe be able to hold a pen. In the meantime, I have several aides that I attach to my wrist and fingers that allows me to feed myself and reasonably operate my Laptop computer. COVID restrictions currently in force do not allow any family and friends to visit nor am I allowed out of the facility. I am certainly looking forward to that day where I can re-join the outside community.

*Cheers Lance.'*



I have received two stories from Gippslanders. Reg Marslen lives in Sale and Ian Goldie in Trafalgar. Both have contributed before but I am very grateful for these new contributions. In fact Ian's story is a bit long for one newsletter so I shall spread it over two or three of them. Here they are:

## Reg Marslen

Reg has been in touch with me several times and he wrote to me recently with this interesting story.

*'Dear David,*

I always enjoy the newsletters but the last couple have contained several items which I found particularly interesting. I have often wondered how a family of eight siblings got through unscathed during the 1930s. I attribute this mainly to my mother who had a basic knowledge of medicine through her mother being a district nurse. Those times were very unhygienic and the means of infection were plentiful – lice, fleas, flies by the million, rats and mice as well as myriads of other nasties. At the first sign of illness out came the dreaded blue bottle, castor oil. It was guaranteed to remove all bad bugs, as well as the good. We were also treated to a dose of Epsom or Kruschen salts on a Friday night, especially during epidemics, to keep the bowels in motion, no pun intended. The polio epidemic of the late 30s closed all the schools and we did our schoolwork via correspondence for quite some time. In addition we gargled our throats with salt and water every night – and we survived.

I have also completed my memoirs, but have not done anything in this regard since Rose passed away. I am currently looking at reviewing them as something to do while in lockdown.

The other aspect I want to mention is my genealogy. I have done a little research but baulked at the enormity of looking into my history on my father's side. My mother's side is well documented in the "The Uebergang Families in Australia 1848-1985". At my 90th birthday party, the wife of one of my nephews presented me with a memory stick contain 110 pages of my father's history going back to 1560. It proved most enlightening.

The name itself has been spelled many different ways. Both my father's and grandfather's birth certificates showed the spelling as 'Maslen', and yet their death certificates showed both 'Marslen'. My great grandfather, Robert Maslen, emigrated from All Cannings in Wiltshire, England, with his wife, Jane Caudry, and one child in 1839. They came out in the Hoogly and settled in South Australia. The lure of gold brought them across to the Forest Creek (Castlemaine) gold diggings in 1852. Jane died of typhoid fever in the squalid conditions shortly afterward and Robert was left with five young children. They had seven altogether – the eldest stayed in Adelaide and one had died in infancy.

Robert then married Jane Frances Mullins. She was 20 years younger. They had a further twelve children. It is this line of ancestry that was most interesting. Jane's grandmother arrived in Tasmania in 1818 at the age of 18 as a convict, with free board and travel. She had been convicted of the grand larceny of a watch and umbrella and was sentenced to seven years. Her name was Sarah Smith. She married Joseph Hopkins (a convict) in 1819. He drowned in the Tamar River shortly after the birth of their first child. Sarah was then assigned to George Trowbridge, an ex-convict, with whom she had a son. There is no marriage certificate. While assigned to George she had an affair with another ex-convict, Thomas Webb, and with him she had eight children. As a convict, she applied twice to marry Webb, who by then had his free certificate. She was refused the first time, but with her second application they were allowed to marry. By this time they had six of their eight children. She was free of servitude at that time.

Jane never mended her ways and was subsequently arraigned for further thefts, the last being in 1834 for stealing five pounds of mutton fat worth one shilling and six pence. She got another seven years for that. Her eldest daughter married Richard Mullins when she was 12 years of age. Mullins, another ex-convict was 39 years old. Imagine the furore that would cause today! She gave birth to her first child when thirteen – a girl who became my great grandmother and who, in turn, gave birth to my grand-father. She separated from Richard Mullins after three children, and "married" Daniel Irving with whom she had a further 18 children. There is no record of Irving having been a convict. He was Irish and living in Tasmania at the time which to me indicates he may have been a convict at some stage. There is no record of a marriage certificate.

My father never related any of this story to us although he must have known my great grandfather and mother as he lived in Echuca with them until my great grandfather died in 1904. My father was then 13 years old. Dad often told us stories of his days living on the Murray River and living on fish and wild ducks and sleeper cutting in the red gum forests. He only ever told us that we had a relative who had twenty one children. I suspect he knew that convicts were involved but at that time you did not admit to this as it could affect your chances of employment. How times have changed.

Since I wrote to you seven years ago nothing much has changed. I am still on dialysis three times a week for four and a half hours. It has its moments. You generally feel OK but have some pretty ordinary days. It is like walking a fine line. You have to keep all the chemicals in your body at the right level as well as your weight, fluid level and blood pressure. I am having some trouble with blood pressure at the present time, so I cannot afford an infection of any type. I am restricted in the amount I can travel as I have to organise dialysis in advance and that involves blood tests etc. I have had two trips to Fremantle, one to a brother's 90th birthday party and 18 months later to his

funeral. I also had a trip to Queensland to another brother's funeral. It was one heck of a task to organise dialysis as every facility was fully utilised. Eventually I got into a private hospital in Nambour and a facility in Fremantle fitted me into their unit under the special circumstances.

I forgot to mention earlier that another means of keeping us healthy as children were the Laxettes dispensed on Friday nights in place of Epsom salts. They certainly kept us regular. I have often wondered what the reaction would have been today of the marriage of my great, great grandmother to a 39 year man at the age of twelve. Of course it would be illegal. However, you can't change history even though a lot of people would like to expunge it. I am reminded of Mark Antony's speech in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, "The evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones".

You may use this story as you wish in the Newsletter, if you think it appropriate. I always like to hear of my workmates of many years ago. They are starting to get a little thin in numbers now. It is almost 70 years since I started with the CRB as a pick and shovel labourer before moving into job costing, then divisional staff as a clerk and finally Divisional Engineer's clerk in Benalla and Bendigo with a short period as an Engineering Assistant in Benalla.

*Kind regards,  
Reg Marslen*

Reg's story resonates a lot with me. Not only do I fully understand the home remedies he suffered but I think

I have a very remote connection with his mother's family. My cousin married a Doris Eubergang.

I wrote to Reg to thank him for his story and suggested he might like to reminisce a bit about his early days working for the CRB. He responded as follows:

'Dear David

I have thought about your request for my days in the field as a labourer. It is true that my sign-on form said Pick and Shovel, but I only spent half a day as a labourer. The first two hours was setting out the next section of reconstruction of the Princes Highway West between Port Fairy and Yambuk. The next two hours was spreading gravel by hand on the Portland side of Yambuk. The rest is history. I can relate the story of my time with the organisation from then until I retired but at this stage of my life, into the second half of my 92nd year, and feeling increasingly unwell, any story of my life could become an obituary. I am happy to do it, but let me know what you think. I spent seven years in the field and 26 in Divisional Offices on the staff.

*Reg*

I wrote back: 'I don't want to burden you Reg but stories like yours are always appreciated by our members. I will leave it entirely to you but please don't worry about it.

Take care and warmest regards, *David*

## Shifting to Traralgon

### Ian Goldie

Ian submitted the following mini-memoir to me. He sent some photos too but, unfortunately, they were not of sufficient quality to publish. I have split his story into two instalments and will provide the second half in the next newsletter. This is his story:

In February 1951, my family moved to Gippsland, mainly to gain work for my step-father's truck. My step-father was Bill Shacklock. At that time he was working for A. V. Jennings – a large construction company - who were running out of work for his truck. The allocation of a large contract to build the West Heidelberg Housing Commission homes became a saviour for the company, but it came too late for us as we had already decided to shift to Traralgon to obtain a job at the Morwell SEC open cut coal mine. I was born in Benteigh and had lived there all of my life until this shift.

Our arrival at Traralgon coincided with a wild and fiery summer. Early in the summer, we had strong winds followed

by bush fires, topped off with what was to be some of the worst flooding on record. We had a car, a truck and a caravan, all in the Traralgon Caravan Park at the end of Franklin Street which was the main street of Traralgon. Franklin Street ended down by the Traralgon Creek in the area now occupied by the tennis court complex and skate park. The caravan park was later moved to the east end of town.

The floods came down the creek in a four metre wall and shifted the bridge leading to the caravan park sideways and washed it about 50 metres downstream. The wall of water was caused by a build-up of bush timber upstream near Koornalla, which formed an artificial dam holding back the water. Once the water pressure became too great, the dam collapsed and the flow rushed down Traralgon Creek to the Latrobe River, taking everything before it and depositing a huge amount of debris as it went.



Flooding in Traralgon in 1993

We were lucky as we were forewarned by the police to get out as quickly as possible. Didn't we move fast? Another truckie who was camped near us had decided to stay; he chained his caravan to a tree and parked his car downstream behind his truck. He survived the flood but they had to take provisions to his family and two other families that also stayed behind. These provisions were delivered by an Army Duck, for about a week, till the floodwater subsided low enough to get in and out of the caravan park.

This was a record flood to that time and the following year there was another one which was almost as big. After leaving the caravan park, we parked our vehicles and all our possessions in Kay Street, near the Osler's Inn, which was about 50 metres from the main street. This sufficed until we could sort ourselves out. We were helped to do this by a lady who offered to have us stay at her place until we could purchase a home of our own. This was a great act of kindness and our family will be forever grateful for her generosity.

While staying at this lady's home – for about a year – we used to go deer hunting in the Longford area. They were small, hog deer but if we wanted to hunt larger deer, we had to travel further to Labertouche which is out the back of Drouin. In those days, bushland extended between all the towns in Gippsland. We used fox hounds to drive the deer out of the bush, where hunters were waiting to shoot the deer. Not very fair for the deer was it? We then laid the deer over the front mudguard of the old Willy's Overland car to bring home, travelling down the main street of Traralgon of course and around into our house. How would you be doing this today? In those days we could carry our rifles on our back, while we rode out on our push bikes to shoot some rabbits. People were more responsible in those days and there were no drug addicts and maniacs watching mind-bending shows on the computer or television. During those 12 months, I did a lot of fishing in the Traralgon

Creek, right in the town where the bridge was washed away – and right up to Koornalla. It was a great creek for fishing, spotted trout, sand trout and 'slimies' (a type of black fish).

We finally bought a home built by Australian Paper Manufacturers (APM). There were very few homes available at that time. Traralgon's population was only a little over 6000 people in 1951.

### Primary School in Traralgon

I started school at the Grey Street Primary School as soon as it was possible to do so. I had transferred from Bentleigh West Primary to Chelsea for a short while and now to Traralgon Primary. Traralgon Primary was a good school with some very good teachers. The following year there was an extremely cold winter and we experienced quite a heavy fall of snow in the township, with about 100 mm of snow up against the school brick wall. I only ever witnessed snow falling in Traralgon twice while I was living in the area.

The same year during the school sports, I was lucky enough to win all the events and received a silver cup with Boys Championship engraved on it. A girl in my class won every event for the girls at the sports and she received a similar cup with Girls Championship engraved on it. We were both very excited about this achievement. Another great memory of the primary school was the milk delivered in bottles to the school. A lot of schools complained about hot milk but not our school. We always kept it in the shade. If anyone didn't like their milk I would always drink it for them – without being seen of course.

The Inter Gippsland school sports were always held in Yallourn, because of their great facilities. I started red hot favourite for the 70m sprint in my age group. They always did the line marking for the lanes the day before the sports. Guess what? It poured with rain the night before and my lane, lane one, was full of water about 25mm deep. I slipped and slid my way to third place so at least I got a place.

### Yallourn

On leaving Grey Street Primary, I then attended Yallourn Technical College in the old township of Yallourn – a State Electricity Commission (SEC) town which has since been demolished to expand the open cut mine. Yallourn was a lovely little township with homes that had been shipped from England in a pre-fabricated form. A lot of them had very steep gabled roofs. It took us some time to work out why we had homes like these in Australia, until the penny dropped and we realised that they were designed to shed the snow when built for use in England.

### Typical Yallourn houses

The Yallourn Technical College was a well-built red brick multi story building as the photos (right) indicate. It was built



Typical Yallourn houses



Yallourn fire station, 1920s



Yallourn Technical College - circa 1940s



Yallourn Technical College - circa 1940s



Yallourn Technical College - circa 1950s



Hostel Staff hostel on the corner of Northway and Railway Avenue, c. 1925.



Early photograph of Yallourn – including a free-standing privy in the bottom left-hand corner – Date unknown

in 1928 in the Art Moderne style. It was placed in the centre of three roads, with the canteen south west of the main building up a slight hill. East of the school building was SEC land and we made use of some of their igloo type huts for our class rooms – carpentry, science, clay modelling, etc.

The SEC went to great trouble to provide good facilities for its workers In Yallourn and the public buildings were of a very high quality in the Art Moderne style. Yallourn was a beautiful garden city, unique in Australia’s planning history where the SEC was the landlord, boss, and local council. But now it is a memory. It was demolished in the 1970s to expand the open cut mine.

One thing you had to be very careful of in Yallourn was where you sat as there was coal dust everywhere. It made a nice mess of your clothes. The canteen had a good variety of food to be purchased. We used to put our orders in early in the morning, so that no one would miss out on lunch.

Some novel things happened in Yallourn. One of these was when the large vacuum trucks went around all the homes every year, to vacuum the coal dust out of the roofs of the houses. These trucks were the size of a ready mix concrete truck with the vacuum unit on the back as big as the barrel on the mixer. This was done to eliminate fire risk in the houses as brown coal dust is very combustible when suspended in the air.

Yallourn had beautifully maintained football ovals and gardens with six ovals in a row on the one property. It just goes to show you the value to the public that the SEC was at the time. This was only one of the many assets provided by the SEC. Number one oval was where we used to have the Latrobe Valley Football League Grand Final – always

a sell-out. One year 10,000 people attended. We also used the ovals for school sports. We had to walk from the school to the ovals; it was a few miles. They wouldn’t do that today; the children have to be driven everywhere. Yallourn had a great picture theatre and swimming pool – even though it was a dam with reeds growing around the perimeter, it was still good. It had duck boards to dive off.

Getting to the Tech School was an adventure. The Yallourn Passenger Service was made up of a lot of old 1946 Fords and other vehicles. You could hear them coming up the road coughing and sputtering and if the driver was silly enough to turn the motor off, we were really in trouble. The driver would say “OK everybody out and push the bus”. We sometimes had to push it for a hundred metres or more and this often happened at every stop. Sometimes we would have to wait until a replacement bus came to get us, but we usually made it by morning recess. This didn’t happen every day but it was quite frequent.

Yallourn was also the home of the Army’s RAE 38th Field Squadron. It was on SEC property too. This is where I ended up after National Service at Puckapunyal, but that’s later in this story.

### Leaving school

After leaving the Tech School, I became an apprenticed Electrical Mechanic on six month probation with a local electrical contractor. The probation was so that they didn’t get stuck with a lad that wasn’t suitable. Most of my work was in homes, hotels, butter factories and the APM. The APM job was a large contract for my boss. It was to wire the new chlorine plant. All wiring had to be in galvanised pipe and a bank of large electric motors had to be wired in to



Yallourn Swimming Pool – circa 1940





Malcolm Paterson

The power station at Yallourn, 1981

place. It was very labour intensive in those days, everything had to be done by hand. Cutting and threading the pipes was a big job on its own and I did most of this. We put the pipes in place up 12 metres into the roof walking on planks. There was no scaffold and harness in those days and I was only 15 years old. The concrete troughs inside the chlorine plant were one third filled with mercury. I never really found out the purpose of the mercury.

While working in the Grand Junction Hotel in Traralgon, I had to remove the lino of the upstairs bedrooms. I found a lot of old newspapers from the 1920s. This was good reading for me as I liked history. I think I still have some planted away somewhere. We wired the bar and various other rooms throughout the hotel.

When my probation time was up with the contractor, I changed over to the CRB (Country Roads Board). I did this for the following reason. I received one pound nineteen shillings and sixpence per week as a Probationary Apprentice, working seven days per week and, most days, 10 hours per day. You didn't have to work seven days unless you wanted to, but I always worked as much overtime as possible if it was available. For the weeks work at these rates, I collected seven pounds five shillings and sixpence.

### Joining the Country Roads Board and National Service

When I shifted to the Country Roads Board, I received the same amount of money for a straight weeks work. My brother in law instigated this move and I was very grateful. I remained with the CRB for 38 years and have never regretted one moment. I had many positions while at the CRB – Depot Serviceman, Field Serviceman, Stores Purchasing officer, Road Safety Officer and finished up as Administrator of the Community Road Safety Councils of Gippsland and South Gippsland, encompassing 16 Shires. Later, after I left, the Shires were merged and became eight.

When I turned 18, I was called up for National Service. This was 1957. It was the second last year of the 1951 Korean National Service Act. In 1959 they ceased National Service altogether and never brought it back until it was needed for Vietnam in the mid-sixties. During the period I was in the Army the Malayan Emergency was on and the Indonesian Confrontation, but I didn't have to go to either, as there were plenty of servicemen available during this period.

While at Puckapunyal and after we had finished our basic training, we held a display for local and overseas dignitaries. This was called "Operation Firepower". I believe it was partly to get rid of about \$2 million worth of old Second World

War ammunition. We had Centurion tanks, fighter planes strafing the area, mortar guns, Bren guns and rifle fire. At night, the rifle fire and Bren guns had tracers every fourth bullet if my memory is correct. The climax was an artificial atomic bomb. We built a large platform about 1.5 metres above the ground. It was loaded with 44 gallon drums (200 Litres) full of Nitro pill, plastic explosive and diesel fuel; this had to be arranged in a special order and was done by the experts, to get the effect of an atomic bomb. It worked perfectly with a giant mushroom. While we were building the platforms and seating for the big brass which took us a week, we were driven nuts with the Sound of Music – lovely music for a little while, but a week of it is too much.

After leaving Pucka I was deployed to the 38th Field Squadron RAE for 2 years. This was at Yallourn as I mentioned previously. It was called the Citizen Military Forces (CMF) and today it is known as the Australian Army Reserves. When your two-year CMF term finished, you are still under obligation to the Australian Army for another three years. While I was with the 38th Field Squadron, we spent time at SME Liverpool the NSW School of Military Engineering and at Canungra, Queensland, building roads for the camp. Later we constructed the foundations of the Boolarra RSL Hall in Gippsland, then we followed up with blowing up an unwanted bridge that had to be replaced with a concrete one. There was always something going on with the 38th Field Squadron.

My time with the Country Roads Board, as I mentioned earlier, was a great experience. When I started, the Divisional Engineer, Frank Docking, had a house cow which he grazed in the Divisional Depot, along with a hen house full of laying hens. Sometimes he milked the cow, and sometimes the gardener had his turn to milk. We were a big happy family in those days, which made a great environment for our CRB work.

After the boss's children left home, he relegated the hen house to the depot foreman and got rid of the cow. The foreman thought it was great. The only thing was, I had to look after the chooks. One of the other workers in the workshop, Graham Harkins, used to write on the eggs, things like: please don't eat me I'm too young. The toilet for the workshop was a timber single drop pan facility. Once, when the foreman attended the toilet, we lifted it up with a grader blade and give him a good shake. He came out swearing all sorts of lovely things, but no one was around to see or hear.

After getting married in the late 1950s we lived for a short time at the in-laws place, then at my parents place for another short stint, until a Country Roads Board home became available. All of the CRB homes were taken at the time, but then the CRB purchased a group of homes along Argyle Street, which eventually would be the new alignment for Princes Street approaching what was known as the long bridge. The streets of Traralgon in those days were very confusing for visitors and this is the reason why. The road



leading up to the town's restricted speed limit, was the Princes Highway. Once you entered the built up area, it became Princes Street. This carried on until you reached the corner at Maryvale Motors and Franklin Street where you had to turn left, and it then became Franklin Street. When you travelled down Franklin Street and arrived at the Post Office, you turned right and you were in Argyle Street. Argyle Street carried on until you arrived at the Long Bridge and once over the Long Bridge, you were back in Princes Street again. After you got to the top of the hill going out of Traralgon towards Rosedale and you approached the Glengarry turn off, you were back on the Princes Highway. All of this took place over a distance of about 3 or 4 miles, very confusing unless you were a local.

We lived in the CRB home on the highway for about 12 months, until we put a deposit on a home in Traralgon East. We lived there for 15 years. We had four girls and one boy. They all went to school from this house which was about 200 metres from the Primary School and the High School – and there were shops just around the corner.

The roads in those days could not be imagined by today's travellers. There was very little traffic. The road to Yarram from Traralgon had a very narrow seal and it was only sealed for one mile on the Carrajung side of Gormandale, and then gravel all the way to within one mile of Yarram. It was a very winding, hilly, narrow bit of gravel road. It went through Carrajung past the Carrajung Hotel in those days, but later on we shifted the alignment to bypass the hotel.

*To be continued ...*

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## Frank Kwong

Frank's wife, Ezintra, rang me to cancel the newsletter. She told me that Frank is now in care suffering Alzheimer's disease. She said he is in a lovely home but she misses him terribly. They have been married for 37 years. I told her to give Frank a hug from all of us.

# News from Major Road Projects Victoria (MRPV)

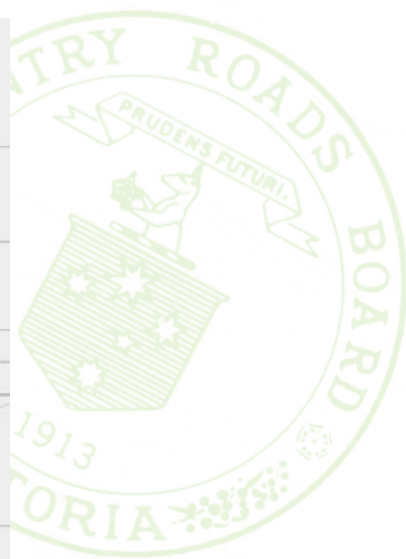
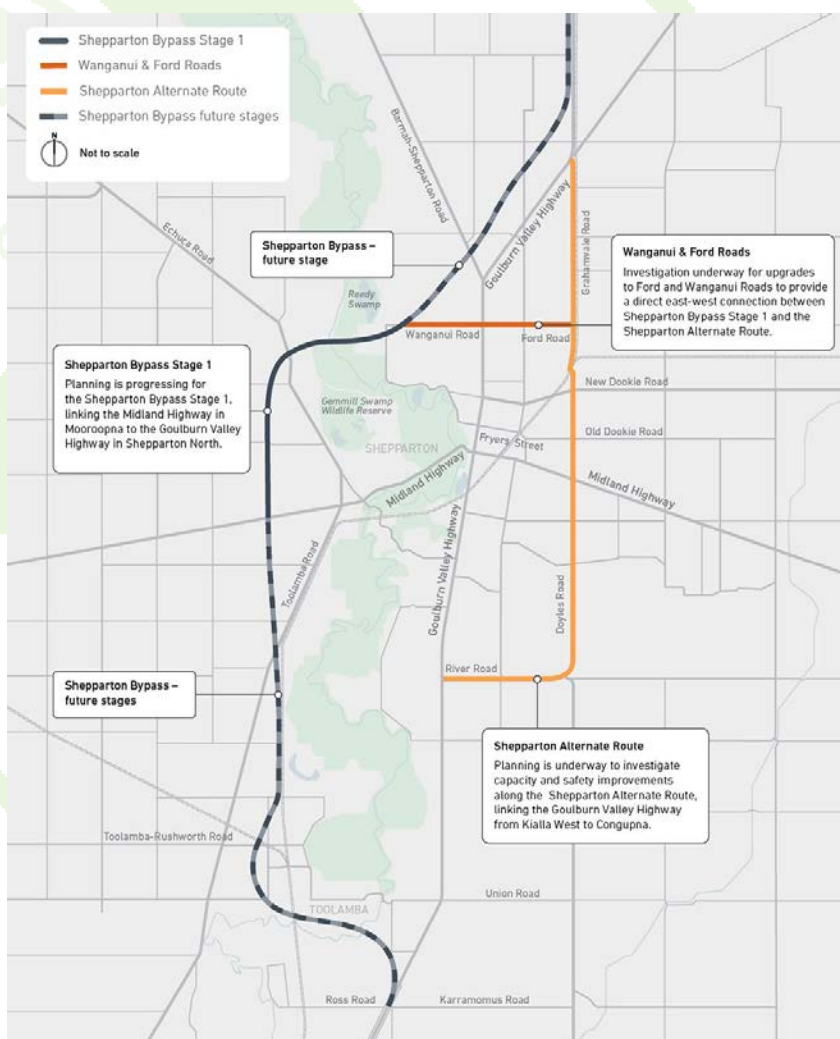
## Bypassing Shepparton

MRPV will liaise with a Project Liaison Group (PLG) for the planning for the Bypassing Shepparton projects. The PLG includes representatives from Council, relevant Victorian Government agencies, key environment and community groups and local landowners. The PLG will be a forum to share information and provide advice on the project and its environmental management.

There are three projects in the scheme - Shepparton Bypass Stage 1, Shepparton Alternate Route and upgrades to Ford and Wanganui roads. The location of each project is shown in the map below. MRPV is responsible for the planning of all three projects.

These studies will inform both the concept designs and the business case. Various technical studies are in train to determine the impacts and benefits of all three projects. MRPV will also work with Regional Roads Victoria and the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation to carry out cultural heritage surveys for the Shepparton Bypass Stage 1 and for Ford and Wanganui roads.

Regional Roads Victoria has previously carried out consultation with the community for Shepparton Bypass Stage 1 in 2018. MRPV will use this feedback in the planning for this project and carry out further consultation for all three projects as the study progresses.



## And now for something beautiful

In this segment, I want to write about beauty in our lives—the creations that move our emotions whether they be natural or man-made. The concept of beauty being in the eye of the beholder first appeared in the 3rd Century BC in Greek and it later appeared in 19th Century English literature. Shakespeare expressed a similar sentiment in *Love's Labours Lost*, 1588:

*Good Lord Boyet, my beauty, though but mean,  
Needs not the painted flourish of your praise:  
Beauty is bought by judgement of the eye,  
Not utter'd by base sale of chapmen's tongue.*

In the last two newsletters, I wrote about art and music and I promised that I would write about poetry in this one. This is a difficult task for an amateur such as myself, so I have turned to a friend who has published a number of books of poetry. His name is Bill Rush. You may recall he also wrote about Tunisia in the last newsletter. I have known and admired Bill for many years. We have fought battles against each other and won momentous victories with each other on tennis courts in Malvern and Lorne - without spilling blood. I asked him to write about poetry, what inspires him to write poetry and some of his favourite works. This is what he wrote:

'When I was a boy I had only to mention the sea and my father would begin to recite Byron's poem which begins *Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain etc.* Well, that sort of poetry, bits of which people carried in their heads, has long gone out of fashion. And with it much rhyme, form, and remembering.

When as an adult, I started writing my own poems, I was influenced by W.H. Auden who was a master of his craft. The poem which has had the most impact on our generation is surely his *Funeral Blues*, which was made famous by the movie, *Four Weddings and a Funeral* — a poem with separate stanzas, rhyming couplets, and unambiguous meaning:

*The stars are not wanted now; put out every one.  
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun.  
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood.  
For nothing now can come to any good.*

This poem, in all its verses, demonstrates the extent to which original images add to a great poem. They are important as because they 'show rather than tell'. The poet here conveys emotion through concrete images rather than by abstraction.

The obvious difference between poetry and other forms of writing is its brevity. Narrative poems such as *The Ancient Mariner* and *Clancy of the Overflow*, employ fewer words than a short story. The shortest poem I know (by that famous writer Anon) has eight words: *Dr Hu speaks twenty-three languages. What loneliness.* A novel could arise from this word picture.

Here is an unusually short poem by the Australian poet, Les Murray. He also packs a great emotional punch while using only a few words:

### Working men

*Seeing the telegram go limp  
and their foremans face go grey and stark,  
the fettlers, in their singlets, led him  
out, and were gentle in the dark.*

(Murray may have won us a Nobel Prize for literature if he had lived a little longer).

Here is another short poem – one of mine.

### Requiem for Concorde

*your gesture of silver  
across an uncrowded sky  
it was love at first sight  
an aluminium flash  
ripping the hearts curtain  
with a thunder roll  
o unrisen phoenix  
your incomparable body  
was too good for this world.*

While most poems published in the past fifty years or so have been in free verse, I am interested in the large number of forms available to the poet. The sonnet is an obvious one with origins in England and Italy. Shakespeare wrote 154 of these. The most famous one is probably number 18: *Shall I compare thee to a summer's day ... etc.*

Japan has many poetic forms: the haiku, senryu, tanka; the French the villanelle, the Malays the pantoum, the Israelis the kimo; and so on. I personally enjoy trying my hand at making a poem from their restrictions. To take the simplest of these, a haiku in its anglicised form has three lines of five, seven, then five syllables and its subject must come from the natural world. Poetry has been central to Japanese life for centuries and their most famous writer of haiku was the poet Basho, who lived in Osaka in the 17th century:

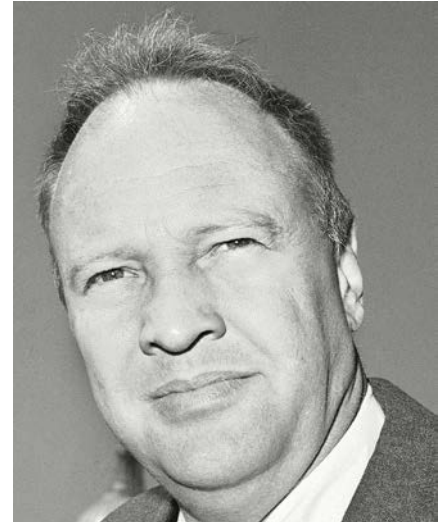
*First winter rain –  
even the monkey  
seems to want a raincoat*



W.H. Auden



Les Murray



James Dickey

Not all poetic forms are old. In 2006, an American, Gregory K. Pincus, posted a new form on his blog called the Fib – and to his surprise he had 32,000 visitors on the first day. It could be said that the Fib forms a bridge between art and science as it is based on a mathematical sequence, the Fibonacci. Adapted to poetry, the classic Fib has up to the following number of syllables per line: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13. In practice it can't go further without running off the page. There are thousands of Fibs being added to the internet every month. Here is one I wrote:

*the  
song  
he sings  
so sweetly  
at operas end  
continues for seven minutes  
although a dagger has been plunged deep into his heart.*

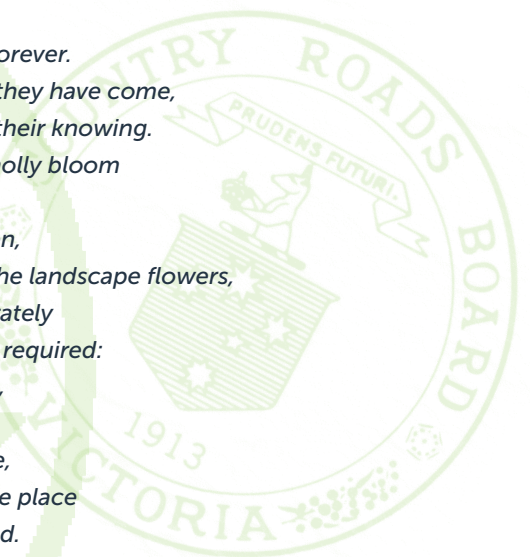
I suppose I write poetry because I love the sound of words. Also, a poem doesn't take as long to write as a novel. The financial rewards from poetry are miniscule, probably negative, when one deducts the cost of paper. And as someone once remarked 'a publisher would rather find a burglar in his office than a poet'.

I finish with an example of a longer poem I have loved for decades. It is by the American poet, James Dickey:

#### **The heaven of animals**

*Here they are. The soft eyes open.  
If they have lived in a wood  
It is a wood.  
If they have lived on plains*

*It is grass rolling  
Under their feet forever.  
Having no souls, they have come,  
Anyway, beyond their knowing.  
Their instincts wholly bloom  
And they rise.  
The soft eyes open,  
To match them, the landscape flowers,  
Outdoing, desperately  
Outdoing what is required:  
The richest wood,  
the deepest field.  
For some of these,  
It could not be the place  
It is, without blood.  
These hunt, as they have done,  
But with claws and teeth grown perfect,  
More deadly than they can believe.  
They stalk more silently,  
And crouch on the limbs of trees,  
And their descent  
Upon the bright backs of their prey  
May take years  
In a sovereign floating of joy.  
And those who are hunted  
Know this as their life,  
Their reward to walk  
Under such trees in full knowledge*



*Of what is in glory above them,  
And to feel no fear,  
But acceptance, compliance.  
Fulfilling themselves without pain  
At the cycles centre,  
They tremble, they walk  
Under the tree,  
They fall, they are torn,  
They rise, they walk again.*

### **What is poetry? What is a good poem?**

I once heard the late Judith Wright, the Australian poet, say that she knew she was reading a good poem if she felt a funny feeling up the back of her neck. Another poet, C.S. Lewis, produced this definition which is as good as any I have come across:

*Poetry is a little incarnation, giving body to what before had been invisible and inaudible.*

What are your favourite poems? I would like to write further about poetry in our next newsletter.

## **Beautiful Picture**

I was attracted to this beautiful picture recently. The iridescent green and silver against the vermillion backdrop has a haunting beauty but the picture hides a sinister story. It shows the wild fires in California.

The view from the hills above Berkeley, California, at 9 a.m. on September 9, 2020. Photo: Clara Mokri



## Trivia and didactic whimsies

Back in the mid-seventies, I lived in Euroa while I was working on the Hume Freeway. I shifted there from Orbost – a similar sized community. As we got to know our new surroundings, I was rather surprised to learn from the locals that the small town of Euroa and its local district, was the home of three Victoria Cross recipients. They were Leslie Maygar, Frederick Tubb and Alexander Burton. All three were killed in action – Burton at Gallipoli, Maygar in Palestine and Tubb in France.

Maygar was born in Kilmore but was farming at 'Strathearn' at Ruffy in the Strathbogies near Euroa when he joined up. Tubb was born at Longwood, south of Euroa. Longwood had an earlier place in history because Ned Kelly robbed the bank there. Burton was born in Kyneton but the family moved to Euroa where his father, a grocer, worked in a department store. If ever you want a stop-over along the Hume, call in to Euroa and visit the VC Memorial Park which is located on the Seven Creeks west of the main road. It is well sign-posted. There are statues of each man and interpretive panels providing details of their actions.

I was reminded of this recently when David Miles rang me seeking Lance Midgley's new address. We chatted about various matters and I can't remember how the subject of Leslie Maygar arose, but it turns out that he was the great uncle of David's wife, Jill. So I thought it would be appropriate to write a story about one of our member's great uncle.

Maygar served in the Boer War and was awarded his VC in 1902 for rescuing a fellow soldier under heavy fire. He was the first Victorian to be awarded a VC. He also volunteered



Lieutenant Leslie Maygar c. 1903

and served in the Great War at Gallipoli and he died of wounds received after a German aircraft strafed his position in the Battle of Beersheba during the Palestine Campaign.

Maygar was in command of the last party to withdraw from the trenches at ANZAC Cove. He was also awarded a Distinguished Service Order (DSO) and was Mentioned in Despatches three times during the Palestine campaign. His VC is in the Australian War Museum.

His citation for the VC read:

*On 23 November 1901 at Geelhoutboom, Natal, Maygar galloped out and ordered men of a detached post, which was being outflanked, to retire. The horse of one of the men was shot under him when the enemy were within 200 yards and he dismounted and lifted the man on to his own horse which bolted into boggy ground, making them both dismount. As the horse could not carry two, Maygar again put the man on its back and told him to gallop for cover at once, while he himself went on foot. All this took place under very heavy fire.*

He is buried at the Beersheba War Cemetery in Israel.

There is an intersection of coincidence in this story in that one of my uncles was in the last party to depart Gallipoli, so perhaps they knew each other. I would like to think so.

### Biblical lessons

Children at the Sunday School class were asked to draw pictures of their favourite Bible stories. The teacher was puzzled by one little girl's picture, which showed four people on an airplane, so she asked the child what story it was meant to represent.

"The flight to Egypt," said the small child. "I see ... And that must be Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus," the teacher said. "But who's the fourth person?" "Oh, that's Pontius - the pilot."

\* \* \* \* \*

A kindergarten teacher was observing her classroom of children while they were drawing. She would occasionally walk around to see each child's work. As she got to one little girl who was working diligently, she asked what the drawing was. The girl replied, 'I'm drawing God.' The teacher paused and said, 'But no one knows what God looks like.'

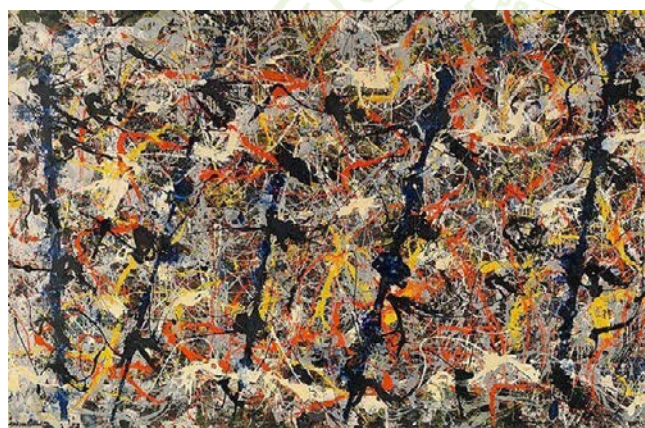
Without missing a beat, or looking up from her drawing, the girl replied, 'They will in a minute.'

\* \* \* \* \*

A little girl was talking to her teacher about whales. The teacher said it was physically impossible for a whale to swallow a human because even though it was a very large mammal its throat was very small. The little girl stated that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. Irritated, the teacher reiterated that a whale could not swallow a human; it was physically impossible. The little girl said, 'When I get to heaven I will ask Jonah'. The teacher asked, 'What if Jonah went to Hell?' The little girl replied, 'Then you ask him'.

## Eat your heart out Jackson Pollock

Its funny how art mirrors reality. One of these, Blue Poles, is valued at up to \$100 million and the other is in the Lego basket under the table.



## An Article from the Boort Community Newsletter (15 November 2020)

Mammatus clouds are some of the most unusual and distinctive cloud formations with a series of bulges or pouches emerging from the base of a cloud.

Mammatus comes from the Latin mamma which translates as “udder” or “breast”. Their striking appearance is most visible when the sun is low in the sky and their pouches are framed by the sunlight. This supplementary feature is a firm favourite with many meteorologists as well as cloud and photography enthusiasts.

Mammatus often forms in association with Cumulonimbus clouds, which in turn bring thunderstorms due to their huge mass of unstable air. Mammatus cloud generally form in the most unstable cumulonimbus, meaning that there is also a chance of hail, heavy rain and lightning in the vicinity, and if the air is cold enough during winter they can produce snow. Sometimes mammatus may form on other cloud types which produce no rain, though this is far less common.

