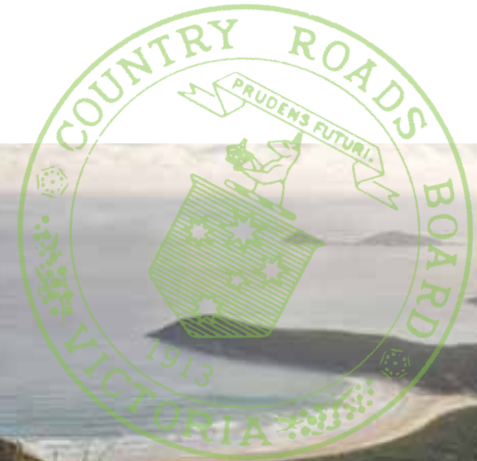


February 2021



VicRoads Association

Newsletter No.221



Tidal River, Wilson's Promontory.

Membership of the Association is available to all who have been members of VicRoads or forerunner organisations or the spouse of deceased members, and bestows on them all the rights of the Rules of Association. Cost of membership is a once only fee of \$50. Enquiries about membership or receipt of the Newsletter by e-mail should be directed to the Secretary, VicRoads Association, PO Box 80, Kew 3101 or by phone or e-mail as shown in the footer below. Visit our website at vicroadsassociation.org

Dear Members,

Am I becoming neurotic? The lockdown has given me plenty of time to think and I want to share some of my concerns about the world in general with you.

I am writing this in October 2020 and as I do so, I am trying to predict the future. After six months of fairly restrictive lockdown, will it be possible for my family to congregate for Christmas? I will know the answer to this before you receive this newsletter. Will I be able to hold and kiss my grandchildren without them squirming because I do it a bit too hard? Am I able to look into their innocent faces and think I am leaving a better world for them – a world that I am bound to leave relatively soon? I'll never know the answer to this.

Will I ever be able to hold my two books in my hands? They were printed about five months ago and are here in Melbourne – but because of COVID they are locked up somewhere and won't come available until Dan Andrews says so. By the time you receive this newsletter, I will have my answer.

Although I have survived the lockdown relatively easily, it has given me time to ponder about the world I live in, and how helpless I feel at this stage of my life, in changing it for the better. I have always taken an interest in politics and current affairs, but as I grow older, I lament the hubris and hypocrisy of many of our leaders – in Australia and abroad. Will Joe Biden become the President of the United States or will Donald Trump prevail? I will know the answer to these questions before you receive this newsletter.

When will I be able to go to the pictures, the football, the NGV or the theatre without feeling I'm taking a risk? I suspect it will be a long time off. Will I ever travel overseas again? There are places I've yet to see and there are friends I want to see again. I love travelling to places where they don't speak English, where they eat different food, and worship different gods. I also love travelling to other places where those things don't apply although America has lost its attraction. I will know the answers to these in a couple of years.

Will our world change because of COVID? Of course it will. We may have to adjust to live with it – if not COVID, some other pandemic. I hope that we may learn from it and seize the opportunity to build our lives more constructively. The budget has just been brought down but it is no use if the economy does not improve, and the economy won't improve unless there is a meaningful uplift in jobs. And such an uplift has to be across the board – young women and men, women and men re-entering the workforce perhaps in different types of work, older people who may have feared they could not re-engage because of their age, people working in informal sectors such as the arts, and students and temporary visa holders who don't enjoy a safety net but who are, nevertheless, important to our social and economic wellbeing.

Do we have a Roosevelt in our ranks who can inspire a sort of 21st Century New Deal? I fear not. His vision and leadership during the Great Depression and World War 2 brought about immediate economic relief as well as reforms in industry, agriculture, finance, water, power, labour, and housing. He increased the scope of the federal government's activities to embrace new concepts that weren't in the traditional American philosophy and aimed his programs at, what he termed, the 'forgotten man'. Americans today still enjoy the benefits of the hitherto unforeseen infrastructure that Roosevelt created in the New Deal. He saw the importance of raising the income of the working classes on the basis that they would spend their money (and therefore stimulate the economy) and pay their taxes, whereas the rich would rather save any relief given to them and not redistribute their wealth. In America, this would now be regarded as socialism, but it saved their economy.

The New Deal was only partially successful, however. The Supreme Court ruled against several New Deal initiatives in 1935, leading a frustrated Roosevelt to suggest expanding the Supreme Court to as many as fifteen Justices. Stacking the Supreme Court is again a contentious issue today. The United States only fully recovered from the Great Depression due to

its massive military spending brought on by the Second World War.



Franklin Delano Roosevelt – the architect of the New Deal.

Will our leaders on both sides of politics continue to ignore the warning signs of climatic deterioration – by the repudiation of science for simpler concepts aimed at keeping the cost of electricity down, ignoring that it has risen steadily every year since privatisation – mainly because privatisation thrives on company profits? Why would these companies want to drive down costs while their profit margins are linked to them? I will never know the answer to this. Is it an opportune time now to rebuild our country for a society free of fossil fuels? I feel anger that I pass on to my grandchildren the mistakes of my generation by treating our country as an economy and not a community.

Will the people of Australia's original nations see any improvements in their status or will we migrant Australians still think that they get enough and it's their fault at any rate? Would it harm our nation as a whole if they were given a voice (and that's all they ask – a voice) and that we could start a journey of understanding, apology and healing? I will never see this. What is the harm in developing a treaty between the original nations of Australia and the invaders?

The United Nations passed the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People in 2007. Four countries voted against it – USA, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. In 2009, Australia made a statement endorsing the declaration. Among other articles, it includes:

- Indigenous peoples are free and equal to all others and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, including discrimination based on their Indigenous origin or identity.
- Indigenous people have the right to live in freedom, peace and security.
- They must be free from genocide and other acts of violence including the removal of their children by force.
- Indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalise their cultural traditions and customs.

- Indigenous peoples shall not be removed from their land by force. Where they agree, they should be provided compensation, and, where possible, have the possibility to return.
- Indigenous peoples must not be discriminated against in matters connected with employment.
- Governments shall consult properly with Indigenous peoples before adopting laws and policies that may affect them. They must use the principles of free, prior and informed consent – which means giving Indigenous peoples all the facts needed to make decisions.
- Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use and control their lands, waters and other resources. Governments shall recognise and protect these lands, waters and resources.

Any reasonable person would agree with these and yet we have recently seen one of the world's largest mining companies demolish one of the world's oldest heritage sites at Juukan (Yuukan) Gorge. When I visited the mine at Mount Tom Price owned by Rio Tinto I was told that their largest single share-holder was Her Majesty the Queen. A bit of irony there.

Will I ever see a fair and balanced media again in Australia? I don't think so. Seventy five per cent of the media in Australia is owned by one man – I emphasise one man! He has his own agenda and politicians all round the world bend to his will. He is the ruthless puppet master who, through manipulation, influences many people how to think. But perhaps even more scary, is the manipulation of social media in our lives. These companies penetrate our private lives without us knowing and, through their clever use of algorithms, they enable individuals to be targeted for all sorts of thought manipulation. Talk about Brave New World!

Or am I just a silly old codger?

VALE

It is my sad duty to report the deaths of the following members and colleagues.
We extend our sincere condolences to their families and friends.

Arthur Ford

Gary Edwards rang me to say that Arthur died on 5 November 2020 in Wangaratta Hospital following a stroke. He was 89 years old. Arthur had been residing at Benalla's Cooina Retirement Village.

Arthur was born in Shepparton and commenced his career with the CRB in Benalla Division. As a young engineer he developed expertise in bituminous sealing operations. He transferred to Ballarat Division but in 1970 he returned to Benalla as Assistant Divisional Engineer as a replacement for Tom Glazebrook, who had transferred to Bendigo as Divisional Engineer (DE).

He worked initially under DE Alan Pryor and later Reg Patterson, and finally, Brian Chandler. He and Brian retired on the same day – 4 July 1986. Arthur and Rita were very involved in the Methodist, then the Uniting Church in Benalla. In recent years Arthur enjoyed attending the annual reunion of CRB personnel - both field and office - at Wodonga on the last Saturday in November.

Arthur is survived by two of his children; Catherine who lives in London with her family and David who lives in country NSW with his family. Arthur's wife, Rita, predeceased him as did his son Christopher.

Bob Barron



Bob Barron

Bob's daughter, Joan, and son-in-law, Steve Copland, wrote to us to say how much they enjoyed Roy Gilmour's accounts of Bob back in the days of Materials Research. They conveyed their best regards to Roy. Joan knew Roy over many years of family friendship and Steve met him on a few occasions. Steve's observation was that Roy was a great foil to Bob's somewhat more taciturn style. Steve wrote:

'I'm writing on behalf of Joan to let you know that Bob passed away on the 25th of last month (September). He was 89 years old. I know that Bob had many good friends

and colleagues at the CRB [VicRoads], who would wish to be informed but unfortunately we are not across who all these people are. Joan placed a notice in the paper but we are not sure how any people would have seen it. I know you maintain contact with a select group of people who knew Bob, so we were wondering, would you mind sending around a group e-mail to let them know?

Bob was showing distinct signs of dementia in the last couple of years and it became worse over the last 12 months. He was good at hiding it and was successful hiding it from us for a while but he was becoming increasingly isolated and less able to care for himself. Joan was in the process of getting him the support he clearly needed, so he could stay in his home and a nursing service had started to visit him daily to supervise his medication. Joan was visiting a couple of times a week to take him to his many medical appointments and to check on him generally. Unfortunately, Bob had a fall on the evening of the 23rd (September), we think, and the nurse found him on his visit early the following morning and he was taken to the Austin. He had two cracked ribs but blood tests showed he'd also had a minor heart attack. We thought he'd pull through based on early advice but it was enough to tip him over the edge and he died after less than 24 hours in hospital.

Yes, it was a bit of a sad end but you probably appreciate that Bob was very independently minded and was not about to be shunted off to a nursing home or made a fuss over and, although he did mellow considerably, he was still a bit prickly at times. I am very indebted to Bob and his wife Pat for all the help they gave Joan and I. Bob and I toiled away over many weeks and months doing all the interior work on our first home in Yarrambat and he and Pat helped us out financially as well and I'm very appreciative of all he did. I was also very attracted to his intellect and his left of centre views, contrasting very much with my father's right of centre views. He was a man of many talents and had a wide variety of interests and will be missed.

Vic Moll

I reported Vic's death in the last newsletter but there was an incident in Vic's career which was published in The Age on October 6, 1960 which is rather interesting, if chilling. It reads:

Rescued Man Clung by Boot

A semi-conscious man hung by his boot from the lip of a bucket as he was hauled to the top of a 65-foot pylon shaft near Punt Road Bridge, Richmond, yesterday afternoon. The man, Victor Moll, 34, Metropolitan Board engineer, of

Harry Court, Brighton, had been gassed with another man at the base of the shaft.

Workmates lifted him clear of the shaft, and two of them went down in the bucket to rescue the other man, Gordon Smith, 47, of Letchworth Avenue, Brighton, who was lying unconscious in a foot of murky water.

Mr Smith is a supervisor for John Holland & Co. Pty. Ltd. contractors for the new Morshead overpass.

The two rescuers, Cecil Boccuccio and John Conboy, put Mr Smith into the bucket and he was brought to the surface, where an ambulance crew was waiting. Both victims were taken to St Vincent's Hospital, where they were detained for observation.

At the hospital, Mr Moll said the experience was a nightmare. He and Mr Smith had been inspecting the base of the shaft when swamp gas, which had been in the shaft for weeks, suddenly became overpowering.

Mr Smith had decided to go to the top because he felt ill.

"When Mr Smith was about eight feet up he fell down on top of me," he added. "I tried to get him back into the bucket and tried to call for help, but then I found I couldn't call, and must have blacked out." Mr Moll said he believed he had fallen across the bucket and was brought to the surface by anxious mates.

During the journey up the shaft he must have rolled off the bucket and caught his foot on the edge.

Ivan Jones



Ivan died last October in Dimboola. He was 76. He worked in Horsham Division for over 30 years and, at the time of his retirement, he was the Regional Administration Manager. Ivan was a well-known and respected member of staff and for five years he served as the staff-elected member on the Advisory Board of the Road Construction Authority. In this capacity he travelled around Victoria extensively meeting managers, road-construction managers, shire personnel and politicians. Ivan was a Regimental Sergeant Major in the 22nd Construction Regiment.

After his retirement from VicRoads Ivan joined a Horsham-based labour hire firm. Ivan was also the President of the Dimboola RSL.

Ian Stringer



Ian passed away in Bairnsdale last September. He was 91. Ian's family owned a farm on the Banksia Peninsula in the Gippsland Lakes and he loved his life there but it was not enough to sustain him and he joined the Country Roads Board and eventually became a Roadmaster.

He was a kind and gentle man and was highly respected by his colleagues. Bill Atkinson wrote, "Condolences to the Stringer family on the passing of Ian. Ian was my boss and mentor on the CRB/VicRoads. He was a great bloke and a pleasure to work with, a big smile and warm heart. Nothing was a problem and was always available to give advice if needed. You will be sadly missed. Your friend and workmate Bill Atkinson."

Les Malseed

Les died in December. Les worked as a mechanical engineer in Plant Branch until he left the CRB to take up a position with the then Gas and Fuel Authority. But Les was probably better known in the CRB as a member of the CRB's 22nd Construction Regiment where he achieved the rank of Major.



Elaine and Les Malseed

He joined the then CMF (aged 21) as a sapper recruit member of the newly formed 16th Construction Squadron in 1948 and around 1956 he transferred to 22nd Construction Regiment RAE (SR) and continued to serve in the Supplementary Reserve until his retirement (at age 49) having completed 28 years continuous service. He was commissioned as a Lieutenant around 1957 and proceeded through to the rank of Major.

In 1969 he was appointed as OC of 91st Forestry Squadron (which was not part of 22nd Construction Regiment) until his retirement in 1976. Although he always apologised for not being a forester, in fact his mechanical engineering skills were incredibly valuable to the squadron when it set up its first portable sawmills.

He was an enthusiastic and highly effective sapper throughout his 28 years of service. He particularly enjoyed his service with 91st Forestry Squadron where his informal and friendly character fitted in so well with his soldiers.

During the late 1960s Les went to Vietnam as part of the CMF Officer's training scheme. Les also held positions as PMC of the Officers Mess and served on the Corps Committee. He was a foundation member of the RAE (Vic) Historical and Heritage Committee/Association when it was formed in April 1992. This was the forerunner to the current RAE Association (Vic) Inc.

Throughout his time with the RAE (H&H) Association Les was strongly supported by his wife, Elaine, who often provided refreshment for the attendees at these gatherings. In addition they both helped with the Old Sappers Association and its functions. Les was always a great source of information and contributed to the preparation of the RAE Vol. 4 History bibliography.

In later years both Les and Elaine suffered with health problems which restricted their ability to continue their support to activities - but they remained RAE through and through. Les was also a splendid singer. Elaine supported him exceptionally and she predeceased him by a couple of months. They had been married for 69 years and there was no doubt that Les never really recovered from her loss. They retired to Somerville – and in later years Les was immobilised by illness.

Bryan James

Bryan died early in January after a couple of years of deteriorating health. Bryan was, for many years, the DE's Clerk in Bairnsdale Division. This was a very important position in the divisions as the clerks were required to be knowledgeable about everything that was going on including such things as industrial relations, award conditions, management of correspondence, filing and records. Bryan carried out these tasks conscientiously with a wry sense of humour, and was respected by all he worked with. He was also a Regimental Sergeant Major in the 22nd Construction Regiment. He was a very early recruit when the Regiment was established and was part of 104 Squadron under the Supplementary Reserve (SR) scheme. He rose from the rank of recruit to be RSM of the Regiment in 9 years and occupied the appointment of RSM for 6 years from 1968 – 1974.

Bryan was always interested in the VicRoads Association and he contributed a number of articles for the newsletter. I had occasion to speak to him in recent times and for a 94-year-old he was bright and very co-operative in assisting me with my enquiries. He had a great knowledge of the history of Bairnsdale region.

Bryan lived at Paynesville and was a much-loved elder of the local community. He was born in 1926, at 'Eaglecourt' near the Bluff in Eagle Point, the home of his maternal Grandmother. It was said that he was delivered by the midwife as the doctor was practicing his golf putts on the front lawn! The family spent some time living in the old Eagle Point schoolhouse on the Mitchell River silt jetties - Bryan's bedroom was a modified Melbourne tramcar - before the family moved back to Paynesville.

Bryan signed up for the RAAF in 1942 and served on the RAAF crash boats based in Paynesville. After the war, he married Faye Robinson - his first girlfriend, who passed away in 2019 after more than 60 years of marriage.

He had a varied career in banking, building, chicken hatching, and finally as Divisional Engineer's Clerk with the Country Roads Board. He served for a period in the Army Reserve with the Royal Engineers building roads in remote areas of Papua New Guinea.

Bryan was a founding member of the Victorian Field and Game Association, a keen sporting shooter and fisherman and an active member and Committee man and life member of the Gippsland Lakes Yacht Club.

He had a kind and gracious nature, a huge intellect, a deep affection for the local area, its history and, of course, a lifelong devotion to his wife, Faye.



Bryan with a good day's catch

News from our members

Alastair Robinson

Alastair wrote to me about his memories of the day that West Gate Bridge collapsed. This is his story:



'The West Gate Freeway was initially called the Lower Yarra Freeway and the CRB was tasked with construction the freeway approaches on both sides of the bridge.

CRB's Metropolitan Division supervised the various contract works and I was based at a site office (in a house) in Beevers Street, Altona North, supervising works on the western approach. Stan Hodgson, the Assistant Divisional Engineer, had the overall responsibility for the work and Bob Morison was the Project Engineer. Other engineers were Maurie Johnston, Fred Davenport, Garnet Gibbs and Gary Veith. Kelvin York and Anthony Rees were in our on-site materials laboratory, Mal Sanders was our surveyor, Harold Eicke was keeping an eye on our finances, Brian Kemp and David Jellie looked after bridge construction on the approach roads and Fred Smith was responsible for the various clerks of works.

On the day of the collapse I was on site at the freeway's western interchange, on a sunny day just before lunchtime, when a contractor told me that he had just heard that the bridge had fallen down. At first I thought this wasn't true but, when others were saying the same thing, I raced back to our site office and Bob Morison asked me and some others to immediately go to the site and see if the CRB could offer assistance with the recovery effort.

When we arrived at the site on the Spotswood side, we were overwhelmed by what we saw. We saw the buckled steel bridge span lying on the mudflat, with adjacent parked cars and buildings spattered in mud from the impact of the fallen bridge hitting the ground. The emergency services people were all on site and were recovering the injured and dead from the point of impact. It was a terrible sight. The emergency services people were well equipped and didn't need our assistance so we returned to the site office.

We had a casual employee at our site office named Des Gibson (he was mentioned in the recent newspaper articles about the collapse of the bridge) who decided to leave us and get a job working on the bridge. He was on the bridge when it collapsed, survived the fall but died within 12 months from the mental trauma he had experienced from the collapse.

Later when the bridge was reopened, I remember the trepidation that I felt when first driving over the bridge. In later years I was the Operations Manager in VicRoads Central Region and was responsible for the management of the maintenance of the West Gate Bridge. This involved inspecting works from the moveable maintenance gantry on the underside of the bridge.

In time I adjusted and it just became part of the job.'

Garry Orme

I rang Eddie Schubert to ask him to search for a photo I wanted and he directed my enquiry to the Department of Transport. Molly Ap-Thomas (from the Department) contacted me and said she would look into it and she also said that her father had worked at the CRB back in the 1970s. I suggested she should drop me a line about him and this is what she sent.

'After graduating in civil engineering from Swinburne University, Garry Orme travelled abroad to Canada and the UK with his young daughter, Lisa. After returning home, he commenced work in the Country Roads Board in 1971 where he worked until 1975.

He was based in an office near the Kew tram depot initially, and later moved to Denmark Street (South building) close to where I sometimes work now. He was involved in a number of projects - the Wallan to Broadford bypass was one of them. He mentioned to us roundabouts and traffic lay-bys where people could pull

over. Mum mentioned that one of the men he worked with was Terry Gathercole(?).

After he left the CRB he opened a market stall and later ran a number of shops throughout Melbourne – a major career change from civil engineering.

Garry passed away peacefully at home, with Parkinson's disease on 3rd of June 2020, after a life well lived. He is survived by his wife Mish, his three children and six grandchildren.



Garry in his CRB days

This photo was taken about the time he worked at the CRB'

Nick Szwed

Nick wrote to me as follows:

David: I read your article about music and soon after I listened/watched Beethoven 9 - Ode to Joy and had felt similar emotions, so thought would share it with you: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0EjVVjJraA>

Nick has chosen a gem. If you can, listen to it and after 17 minutes of awe – imagine all this joy coming out of one man – you will be uplifted. I once saw it performed at Tanglewood, the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, in Massachusetts, USA.

He also sent me the photograph, shown here, of the CRB 1967 inductees which was sent to him by Lance Midgely. Lance has provided some of the names. Can anyone help filling in the gap. There are more on our website as well as a lot of other information. Please visit: <https://vicroadsassociation.org/>

Dom Meadley

Dom has written a history of materials research in the CRB, RCA and VicRoads. It was a monumental task and will be of interest to many members as well as outsiders interested in the development of road making technology. It is 53 pages long and contains photographs of many beautiful people.

There is a copy of it on our website: <https://vicroadsassociation.org>

If you would like to read it, please use the link below: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DyLxpo-P59pexZ2TWXIULeTjbrjaVRN/view?usp=sharing>

You can also contact Dom on mdmeadley@gmail.com



Reg Marslen

In the last newsletter Reg and I had discussed the possibility of him writing about his early days with the CRB. He tried to use his age (92) as a bit of an excuse to get out of it, but the story below arrived within a week of our correspondence. I was pretty confident he'd take up the challenge!



Reg undergoing dialysis in Sale Hospital about five years ago.

'It is now 36 years since I took early retirement. I well remember the day I started, the 25th June, 1951. It was on the condition of my playing football with Yambuk that they provided the job. The Board was reconstructing the Princes Highway West between Port Fairy and Yambuk. The camp where I stayed with one of my uncles was about two kilometres from the Yambuk township.

My initial registration showed Pick and Shovel work. The first morning I spent assisting the overseer, Mort Cummings, setting out the next section of road to be reconstructed. I then spent two hours spreading gravel on the shoulders of the highway west of Yambuk. Apparently the cost clerk, Harry Shields, was having difficulty keeping up with the job so in the afternoon of that first day, I spent helping Harry in the office. Unfortunately for the overseer and fortunately for me, the Assistant Divisional Engineer, Mr Howard Hobbs, happened to choose that day for a visit. He wanted to know what this new man was doing in the office. Mort was very red faced and spluttered out some obscure reason not wishing to embarrass his cost clerk. Mr Hobbs then asked me would I like to be a cost clerk. I could see that it had more merit than wielding a shovel and promptly said yes.

The costing officer, Mr Howard Pollard, visited a couple of days later and I officially became a trainee cost clerk. I was then engaged through Head Office rather than the Division, as the terms of appointment of personnel at that time was still regulated by ex-servicemen being given preference to any appointments in the field. The Divisional Engineer was

Mr. J.W.C. Pascoe and the supervising engineer, Mr. Laurie Jones.

Harry Shields was a good teacher and after a short period I moved to Dartmoor where minor works were taking place on the Princes Highway West. Following this job I joined Len Yeoman on the Warrnambool sprayer. At the end of the spray season I was home-sick and asked if could I be transferred to nearer my home at Hill End in Gippsland. When the spraying plant was returned to the South Melbourne depot, I reported to Howard Pollard in Head Office. The result was I spent two wonderful weeks updating leave records in the Exhibition Buildings. I worked with two girls, one of whom was Joan Tucker.

The next move was out to Campbellfield where the Board was fencing the recently acquired land for the Hume Freeway. This was only a short stay as I then transferred to Traralgon. There was no work for me as a cost clerk so I spent my time doing an assortment of tasks. The office at that time was in one of the Board's prefabricated houses in Dunbar Road, Traralgon. I spent the winter helping Jack Ryan in the office as well as relieving the storeman and the workshop clerk. I also helped out doing testing of aggregate etc. and acting as chainman on a number of minor surveys. The most notable survey was the repegging of curves on the road to the top of Mt. Oberon on the Wilsons Promontory. I enjoyed this variety of work especially working with the Divisional Engineer, Mr. Frank Docking, and the Assistant Divisional Engineer, Mr. Tom Russell and engineers Alan Barr, Fred Andrews, Jay Shimmin and Graeme Marshallsea. Mavis Wurm, the senior typist, was also a great help.

The store-yard was being built at that time and Mr. Docking was more often working beside the men on the concrete mixer than in the office. If he had an unexpected visitor I had to climb over the stile on the back fence to get his attention. He then had to hurriedly change back into his suit to meet the visitor.

The summer of 1952/53 I spent with Overseer George Hoffman on the Bairnsdale sprayer. We spent more time in Dandenong and Traralgon Divisions than in Bairnsdale. The next winter was spent firstly at Nelson in Western Victoria constructing a road between Nelson and Portland along the coast. I had very little to do and often drove the grader on the job. Portland was the next job - constructing the access road to the quarry for the stone to construct the breakwater in Portland harbour. It was here that it was decided that I had the makings of being an overseer. The overseer, Mr. Bert Beasley, taught me to read plans and coached me on other management skills - especially how to approach a job without the men seeing you coming so they could stop bludging. The trick was to come from the opposite end of the job to what was expected. As we did this, he asked me did I notice anything, to which I responded I hadn't. He said their heads were all looking away from us in the opposite direction.

The Board had the first two Caterpillar D8 bulldozers working on this project. At the time of our approach both machines were pushing overburden over a very steep cliff a hundred or so feet above the sea. Bert suddenly yelled at the ganger to get the driver off one of the dozers. I asked what this was all about. He said the man was drunk. I enquired how he knew. The driver still had the pilot motor operating so that he would not stall the machine on the edge of the cliff. He was drunk and he was sacked forthwith and I wondered why the ganger did not go also as he should have noticed what was happening.

The Stanley huts were freezing in winter and boiling hot in the summertime. It was heaven when we moved into the new air conditioned building.

I decided I did not want to be an overseer and subsequently returned to Traralgon on the sprayer with Mr. Fred Wallace. Fred was noted for having only the best men in his gang. Anyone slacking was promptly dismissed on the spot, something you cannot do in the workplace now. It was with Fred that I paid off men at many different hours, the oddest being 2.00am. Four men had been drinking and were making a lot of

noise during the night and he had warned them to cut the noise as it was keeping everybody from getting any sleep. I got too much so he finally sacked them and roused me to pay them off. This I did in my pyjamas. In my second season with Fred Wallace on the Traralgon sprayer, Fred took ill and had to be replaced. I was asked to take over as overseer but I declined. He was replaced by Mr. Tom Williams, a former cost clerk.

It was back to construction for the winter, this time at Snob's Creek on the construction of the roads connected with the enlargement of the Eildon Reservoir. I also spent time working at East Sale on the works being done by the Board for the Department of Works. It was a very big job with over 100 trucks on contract cartage. It was while I was at Snob's Creek that I came close to quitting. I returned home each weekend to play football with Hill End. This particular weekend I had the flu and was very sick and debated whether I would return to work or spend some time in bed. It was wages day on the Monday. We were in Dandenong Division where the wages sheets were always submitted on the Monday - so I returned to do the wages. Mr. Howard Pollard decided that day to pay a visit to the job to see how things were going and, I believe, to see if I was on time. I was late due to me being unwell. Howard was looking over the roadworks when I got to work. When he arrived back at the camp I was huddled over the heater having completed the wages returns. He proceeded to take me to task for being late. I still had red hair then and told him in no uncertain manner of why I was late and he could

stick his job. He promptly left without argument. Several days later I received a letter telling me I had been upgraded to class 1. So I stayed.

I often wonder how we survived without coming to harm while out in the field. Many of the workers came from Melbourne and were often straight out of prison. One time at Morwell, Fred Wallace had fired a particular person and he turned up one afternoon several weeks later and proceeded to abuse me for getting him fired. I was working at my desk and luckily caught a movement in my peripheral vision and ducked. The intended blow glanced off my head. I promptly threw him out of the cabin. He came roaring back at me so I held onto both sides of the doorway and would have kicked in a most vital spot if had kept coming. A little while later I wondered why the passing cars on the highway were blowing their horns. The said gentleman was walking along the highway stark naked. We got the police out from Morwell to remove him. When we were camped at Trafalgar one man kept asking if he had received any mail. He asked two or three times a day. One afternoon a telegram was delivered to the camp for him. As soon as he read it he disappeared, not even waiting for his pay. About an hour later two policemen arrived looking for him. He was wanted for armed robbery with violence.

In 1957 I got married and purchased a small bungalow in Traralgon and settled down to build a house on the front of the block. I had given up work on the sprayer and was engaged with central costing from the Divisional Office as well as helping out doing clerical work and typing for Mr. Docking. Early in 1959 Mr. Docking asked me if I would be interested in joining the staff. It involved a substantial decrease in salary, which I couldn't really afford while building my house. However, I could see the benefits regarding superannuation, so I agreed and a position was made for me. There were some concessions agreed to with the Staff Officer, Mr. Bell, which did not get honoured. I was on the point of leaving the Board and was applying for clerical jobs within the Latrobe Valley.

The position of Divisional Engineer's Clerk at Benalla was advertised which I applied for by submitting an application a week or so after it closed. One day Mr. Docking asked what I would do if I got Benalla. I said I had no hope of getting the job. He must have known something as he said he wasn't too sure about that. I did not get an interview but received a telephone call from Mr. Bell telling me I had the job and was to receive a Board house to live in at a low rental. I readily accepted.

Mr. Hubert Gibbs was the Divisional Engineer. I found him a wonderful man to work for, but you had to be at your best. If Mr. Gibbs wanted something it had to be addressed immediately - everything else had to be put aside. Conditions in the Benalla office were not good. They were in the old Lands Department building in Mair Street with a series of Stanley huts for the engineers and clerks. They were freezing in winter and boiling hot in the summertime.

It was heaven when we moved into the new air conditioned building at the western end of Benalla in 1962.

After Hubert Gibbs, we had Mr. Bob Handley. He was a colonel in the army reserve and an ADC to the Victorian Governor and at that time often seemed to manage the show on army lines. Mr. Alan Pryor was the next Divisional Engineer. He was totally different from the two previous engineers and was not beyond throwing any piece of paper that he didn't like into the waste paper basket. One of his habits was to have a drink or two with the engineers and then be early into the office next morning to admonish any late comers with a hangover. He had a range of jokes he would tell at Shire dinners, one for each occasion. I wondered how he remembered them until one day I was with him in his office when he got a telephone call. He didn't say much, gave a few chuckles and pulled out a notebook from a drawer and jotted down a few things. He explained that he wrote down the punch line and amended them to suit each occasion.

Mr. Reg Patterson succeeded Mr. Pryor. I got Mr. Patterson's attention at our first meeting. He called me in as soon as he arrived and gave me a list of things he wanted to know about the Division. I leant over, took a piece of paper out of his in tray with all the information he required. He was astounded that I had anticipated what he would need. You had to know all that was going on. For instance, if I saw a politician come in to see the Divisional Engineer, I would anticipate what he might be there to talk about and have the relevant file ready if I got the call, which was almost every time. It used to amaze all the Divisional Engineers that I worked for that I had the file they wanted without asking.

Other engineers with whom I worked in Benalla and mostly went on to higher positions with the Board were Bill Thomas, David Currie, Ted Barton, Howard Ellis, Tom Glazebrook, Noel Osborne, Norm Butler, Brian Chandler, Gary Edwards, Ted Oppy, Bill Stubbington, Alan Thompson, Doug Smith and Wally Dyall - among others I can't recall.

The decision to move to Bendigo was difficult especially as Reg Patterson had me reclassified as an engineering assistant.

I was promoted to Engineering Assistant in about 1973/74 taking with me all the Municipal administration work as well as many menial tasks which the "overworked" engineers found difficult to find time to do. I really enjoyed getting out of the office and was very happy. However, times change and a major problem rose within the family. At the time, 1975, the D/E's Clerk job became vacant in Bendigo I did not want to leave Benalla and had to do a lot of soul searching whether or not to put family before my own ambitions.

Reg was rightly put out and told me so. I did not tell him the real reason and I always meant to tell him but never got the chance. The reason I gave was that I could see better opportunities for my six children in Bendigo both in education and job opportunities. I did not tell Reg that we were having trouble with one of our children which had the prospect of a very bad outcome. We had taken him to many specialists but our GP put us on the right path. He recommended a change of scenery. The Bendigo job arrived at the right time and I hated to leave Benalla and drop back in salary.

The move was the best I ever made. All the children got as far as they could in education, and the change of scenery worked wonders. Two went to university in Bendigo but didn't finish their courses. All either got into trades or obtained good jobs and met their life partners. Looking at Benalla today I am sure it was the right decision. The Divisional Engineer in Bendigo was Tom Glazebrook and we knew each other well from our time together in Benalla. I was becoming disenchanted with all the changes being made towards the mid 1980s, especially the reduction in delegation of authority in the Divisions. For example minor deviations of municipal roads which we could approve immediately, had to be referred to Head Office and often took six months or more to approve. I finished on the 31st, March 1984, just five days short of my 55th birthday. I have not regretted retiring for one moment. I became heavily involved with bowls both with club and association administration. It was like a full time job and allowed me plenty of time to participate in the top bowls tournaments around Australia.'

Ian Goldie

This is the second half of Ian's story.

Yanakie and the National Park

Most country roads in Gippsland were gravel. They had to be fairly important to be sealed. Another example was the road from Foster to Tidal River. It was sealed for a mile out of Foster and then gravel all the way to Tidal River, except for one mile of sealed road through Yanakie, past the general store.

Yanakie of course was surrounded by Soldiers Settlement Farms. When I first went to Yanakie they were starting to clear a few thousand extra acres for new farms using two TD 24 International bulldozers. The Soldiers Settlement Department seemed to like International earth moving equipment whereas the CRB tended to buy mainly Caterpillar equipment, along with Allis Chalmers. These dozers were joined together with an immense chain at the centre of which was a steel ball 1.2 metre in diameter. The two dozers pulled the ball along and it just removed everything in its path – trees, bush, everything. After they had gone through for a set distance, they would unhook the chain and come back and windrow everything into lines to be burnt at a later time.

At Yanakie the Government Department that was clearing the land, had immense sheds that were like aeroplane hangars. The CRB at the time didn't have a camp at Yanakie, so my step-father and I pitched our tent inside one of these sheds, along with the car and the truck. We only took up a very small part of one of these sheds, that's how big they were. By this time, my step-father had left the SEC and was working with his truck with the CRB.

At one time four of our family were working for the CRB – myself, my step-father, my brother, and my brother-in-law. We were located in different areas though; my brother Ken in Dandenong, my brother-in-law, Doug Watts, in Kew, and my step-father, Bill Shacklock, and I in different areas in Gippsland.

When we were constructing and sealing the Prom Road, as it was known, it was too expensive to bring good gravel from the quarries at Foster, so we used lime from a quarry down towards Darby River. It made quite a good road and because the road was made on the top of sand, we had to use all wheel drive graders, as the conventional tandem rear wheel drive graders would get bogged. The all-wheel drive graders were Austin/Avalons and Aveling/Barfords. They did a very good job in the sand.

One of the mysteries at Yanakie for me was the Yanakie Homestead. It had disappeared through age well before I arrived, but its cemetery was still there in the bush. Most large spreads with homesteads had their own cemeteries in the 1800s. This particular one was very hard to find unless you could remember a land mark. I have taken my wife



Tidal River

to see it, but many years later of course, well after I used to be camped at the Yanakie CRB Camp. The camp was about 100 metres inside what today is the Park's Gateway Entrance and cattle grid to the National Park.

Yanakie Homestead was the home of the first person that selected the land at Yanakie for farming. The Yanakie Run or Station as it was known, had many owners in the early years; some for three years and some for six years. The Bennison family were the owners when it became more stabilised. It had many thousands of acres and the other runs around it also were of a similar size. I believe its name 'Yanakie' was the aboriginal name for shifting sand hills. I can verify that they shifted because once, over five years, the sand hills shifted along the beach quite a considerable distance.

The National Park at Tidal River was very good for a lot of people. We were allowed to have holidays there for a very small fee, and as the CRB had an established camp there for many years, it was a great place for the children's holidays. Early in the time when I camped and worked at Tidal River, my brother was also down there with the PMG. He and his workmates erected the big telecom towers on Mount Oberon which transmitted to Tasmania.

John Landy the Olympic runner camped down there as well. I was told that he worked for the National Parks and he used to train in the sand hills near the lighthouse. I am not sure what his position was with the National Parks but he was a very nice man and very easy to talk to. I met him again many years later at a Shire Council function in Bairnsdale when I was President of Lakes Entrance RSL and he was the Governor.

Many years as a Field Serviceman saw me travel all over Gippsland, as well as relief work in the Bairnsdale Division. At the time we had 135 large items of earth moving plant to service in the Traralgon Division, with countless small items

such as water pumps, generators, vibrating plates, pulsators, vibrators, compressors, concrete dumpers, large concrete mixers and small mixers – the list goes on. They had to be serviced every two weeks; but only if they were working of course. There were two of us in separate vehicles to do this job. We averaged about 50,000 km per year travelling to the work sites to service the machines. The area we covered was from Aberfeldie/Woods Point in the north, down to Tidal River in the south, and Korumburra in the west to Rosedale in the East. This was the Traralgon Division then. Later on the Division was extended in the western and eastern directions.

I worked for twenty eight years or more in the field. During this time when working under the Workshop Foreman, Haydon Brayshaw, and later the Workshop Manager, you could be summoned up to do various types of jobs if there was no one else available to do them. This included crane driver, bitumen tanker driver, depot truck driver and various other positions that all gave you overtime and provided you with a variety of work that kept you interested if you were that way inclined, and I was.

Over the edge

One weekend while replacing a water tanker driver, I had to travel over to a construction job that was at a place called Agnes in South Gippsland. This was a very hot summer and we had to put a lot of water on the road to keep the fines of the material from blowing away. While I was there, there was a bushfire in the Gormandale/Carrajung hills that I didn't know anything about until I travelled back to go home. The Carrajung hills were narrow, rough and very winding. When I was half way between Carrajung and Gormandale, just a little closer to the Gormandale end, I struck heavy smoke. The fire had been through the area and a lot of cinders were everywhere. On a tight corrugated bend the old Ford tanker's front wheels got stuck in a corrugation on the road and steered me over the edge. The tanker rolled once and came to a stop against a gum tree. Sparks were flying everywhere and I was lucky the truck didn't catch fire. I got out of the truck which had the cabin flat down to the steering wheel and climbed to the top of the embankment, where I hitched a ride into Traralgon. I only had scratches and bruises and they had to use 300 metres of steel cable to get the truck out of the gully so I ended up around 150 metres down the gully.

After leaving field work, I went to work for some time in the Divisional store, where I carried out local purchasing and overseas ordering of machinery parts. This was a very interesting position. It also included selling items to the Shire Councils that were in our Division. This included roadside furniture, Armco rail, posts, road signs and all other items that were used in road maintenance. Selling to the Shires was a bit like being a commercial traveller. I drove all over Gippsland to the offices and stores of all the shires in our Division. Most of the people I came across



The truck down in the gully.

I already knew from earlier encounters when carrying out the earthmoving maintenance. This was because as you attended your machines in their area, you had to get petrol from their storeman; we preferred to use shire petrol bowsers rather than private enterprise fuel, mainly to reduce paperwork and it was cheaper.

Flynn

In 1974 we shifted out to a place called Flynn, a little farming area between Traralgon and Rosedale. This was better for our children and better for the training of our greyhounds. We had started breeding, training and racing greyhounds. I was on the Committee of the Latrobe Valley Greyhound Racing Club for some time and then Vice President. I was a greyhound racing judge for 12 years and carried out many maintenance and other types of volunteer jobs while with the club. Overlapping this, I was also a trotting judge and Vice President of the Latrobe Valley Trotting Club, carrying out the same type of voluntary work. Both these clubs changed their names to Traralgon instead of Latrobe Valley due to local political reasons. I have been a Life Member of both clubs for many years, with the trotting club's Life Membership being taken over by the Warragul Trotting Club when the Traralgon Club's licence was cancelled. This was due to rearrangements of the meetings of Victorian Trotting Clubs which happened in the 1980s. I wrote a plea to the Trotting Control Board to see if I could get the decision reversed, but they had made up their minds to carry out the change for TAB reasons and the location of trainers. They appeased me with a 12 months extension of time for the Traralgon Club.

In 1981 while still living on the farm at Flynn, I remarried and this made our family eight children. Two girls were away working, two boys were working in Melbourne and four teenagers were still at home. We lived on the farm for another three years and then my wife and I built a new home in the Flynn area, near the Princes Highway on Flynn`s Creek Road. This was about four miles from the old farm at Flynn`s Creek. We had a very happy time living there for about twelve years and we saw most of the children married while we were there.

When living at Flynn we looked after my two parents in their old age. My step-father lived until eighty nine years of age and my mother lived until she was ninety four. During this time both myself and my wife had bouts of sickness that we eventually overcame. I then received an early retirement package and we retired to Lakes Entrance, where we had already had a holiday home that became our permanent home in 1995.

Lakes Entrance was a lovely place for us to retire to because we had a 9.2 m boat moored at Sale at the time. We gained a mooring at Lake Entrance and shifted our boat there in the main street moorings.

Lakes Entrance and Trafalgar

Over a period of 50 years, I had either built or rebuilt 14 boats, while at Lakes Entrance I refurbished three -two large boats and one 4.9 m. The largest was 12.2 m. It was a Pilot House Boden Cruiser and we had many great trips in this vessel over many years, with the children and grandchildren. This boat became very handy when we built a new house at Kalimna which is on the hill when coming into Lakes Entrance. We lived on the boat for over three months while the house was being built. It was no inconvenience to us, as we had all that was needed on board. It was like a small flat, a large galley, (kitchen) shower room/toilet, a large lounge area that was also the helm, (driving position) and towards the rear a bedroom with two three quarter beds and further aft a viewing/fishing area. There were a total of seven bunks. There was a dinette that made up

into two and further forward was another single bunk, along with the four at the rear. This completed the seven, a very roomy and comfortable boat, with electric power supplied on the jetty.

While living at Lakes Entrance we became involved with various organisations namely the Red Cross, the Cancer Council and the RSL. My wife became involved with the Catholic Women`s League as well. We both held executive positions on most of the groups that we joined; we were very busy while living retired at Lakes Entrance. We had three properties while living at Lakes, not all at the same time though. I became a Justice of the Peace in 2008.

We had an enjoyable time the 21 years that we were there; very busy but enjoyable, except of course we both had a couple of periods in hospital. Of course that is not due to

where you live, it just happens. As we were getting older we had to consider the consequences of what was required in older age, so we sold the house and shifted to Trafalgar. This didn`t happen immediately. We went to Warragul first and lived in the caravan park there while the new house was being built in Trafalgar. It took about seven months altogether until we shifted in. We have been in Trafalgar a little over three years now and we find it very convenient and comfortable.

Because we are both still involved with the RSL, it was closer for us to travel to Anzac House in Collins Street, Melbourne. My wife is still State Secretary of the RSL Women`s Council. Last year I retired from the Victorian State Executive, but I still keep in contact with the organisation and help out when necessary. I am Vice President of Moe RSL at this particular time.

Trafalgar places us in the middle of half of our family that lives in Victoria, as the other half live in two other states. It is closer to them than when we were in Lakes Entrance. It is much easier now to arrange and attend Christmas functions and all the other excursions that a family needs to be involved in. We would like to think that we have a few more enjoyable years here at Trafalgar.'

This photo is Tom Russell`s send off from Traralgon Division to the Bridge Branch in Head Office at Kew. Ian provided the names of the people who are sitting in the middle row. Reading left to right they are Leslie Roberts, Peter Allbers, Mavis Worm, Frank Docking (Divisional Engineer), Alan Barr, Pat Russell, Tom and Mrs Docking. Ian Goldie is the young man standing behind Tom on the right. Doug Watts (Ian`s brother-in-law) is down the front holding a large ear. The ear was presented to Tom because they said no matter where you were or how quiet you spoke Tom could still hear you.



And now for something beautiful

I would love to receive your suggestions or submissions on what you think is truly beautiful.

For this newsletter I am staying with last month's theme of poetry. I loved Bill Rush's contribution in the last newsletter and it stirred many memories for me especially about my own father. Like Bill's father, my Dad could launch into a poetic stream of consciousness when he heard a phrase or a word that piqued his memory. He loved poetry and could quote Banjo Patterson and C.J. Dennis. He read 'Ginger Mick' and the 'Glugs of Gosh' and 'Enoch Arden' by Alfred Lord Tennyson to us as children.

But what we loved most was A.A. Milne. It didn't strike me at all that many of these poems about an English boy living an entirely different life to me were incongruous. Why on earth would you want a Nanny when you had a Mum like mine? But Christopher Robin was saying his prayers and so too was I. And I also understood that when I was one, I had just begun, and when I was three, I was hardly me, because Dad told me. And I fully understood how John and James could be two raindrops on the windowpane and how they progressed under gravity at different rates. I used to watch drops on the window like that. Changing guard at Buckingham Palace might have been my introduction to British history, and I was certainly sympathetic to the king who did like a little bit of butter on his bread.

Most of all I loved A.A. Milne's eccentric characters and their human foibles. Good King Hilary imploring his pompous proud Lord Willoughby to run to the wicket-gate, 'quickly, quickly to see who is knocking'. After all it was only a beggarman with one red stocking but he was strong enough to throw a Lord High Chancellor out. This could have been my first appreciation of social justice. And I could easily picture Berryman and Baxter, Prettiboy and Penn, with Farmer Middleton chasing the little black hen. I used to chase hens. I was also heart-broken when Nanny let Alexander beetle out of the matchbox and overjoyed when he emerged from his beetle house only to be imprisoned again.

But there were some poems I always asked Dad to read. I loved the dithering old sailor who didn't know what to do because when he thought it was time to begin, he couldn't because of the state he was in. After being shipwrecked he thought of so many things to do – but he never could think which to do first, and so, in the end, he did nothing at all, nothing whatsoever until he was saved! Likewise, I also understood that if you teazle a sneeze or wheeze, a measles may easily grow but humour or pleazle the wheeze or sneeze, the measles will certainly go. And I did feel sorry for King John. He was not a good man – he had his little ways – and you could understand why no one spoke to him for days and days and days. He lived his life aloof and yet at Christmas he hung a hopeful stocking out and was eventually rewarded with a great big, red India-rubber ball. I thought this was the true spirit of Christmas.

As I grew older, Dad read more sophisticated poetry to us. When he was a boy, poetry was taught at school, as it was for me when I was a student, though poetry was only taught incidentally as part of English with spelling, grammar, dictation and stories. Dad read Banjo Patterson and C.J. Dennis to us as if we were riding along with the man from Snowy River or Clancy of the Overflow. We loved the sparks set flying by the hooves of the horses as they hurtled through the bush and I still get a tingle when I hear them. Then, later at school, there was poetry in the school papers delivered every month and in the school readers. Many poems referred back to the pioneering days such as 'The Fire at Ross's Farm' by Henry Lawson. I certainly understood the difference of class in this poem and the "two grimy hands shook in friendship" still catches my throat.

Henry Lawson was another favourite and I found this one to be a good fit for this modest journal. It is called Australian Engineers.

*Ah, well! But the case seems hopeless,
and the pen might write in vain;*

*The people gabble of old things,
over and over again.*

*For the sake of the sleek importer,
we slave with the pick and shears*

*While hundreds of boys in Australia
long to be engineers.*

*A new generation has risen,
under Australian skies,*

*Boys with the light of genius deep
in their dreamy eyes –*

*Not as of artists or poets,
with their vain imaginings*

*But born to be thinkers and doers,
and makers of wonderful things.*

The Victorian Readers from primary school days were also a great source of poetry. Many of us were first introduced to literature through these modest books. They had a mixture of Australian, English and foreign poems – and wonderful

illustrations to accompany them. Take this one –
An Australian Symphony by George Essex Evans.

*The grey gums by the lonely creek,
The star-crowned height,
The wind-swept plain, the dim blue peak,
The cold white light,
The solitude spread near and far
Around the camp-fire's tiny star,
The horse bell's melody remote,
The curlew's melancholy note
Across the night –*



Drawing by Harold Herbert – The Grey Gums by the Lonely Creek from the Eighth Book of Victorian Readers.

I am sure I have written in a previous newsletter about the CRB's own bard, John Shaw Nielson. I am too lazy to search previous issues to check if I am right.

Neilson was a tragic figure. His family made the long trek by wagon from South Australia to take up a selection near Nhill in Victoria, but the farm failed and the family became impoverished. Neilson and his father worked as farm-hands, timber cutters and as navvies on the roads. Both men, with scant education, loved poetry and some of their works were published. But Neilson always lived in poverty, spending most of his life working on the roads and in quarries. Dame Mary Gilmore was an admirer and when she first met him she said: '... and when I saw his work-swollen hands, with the finger nails worn to the quick by the abrading stone, I felt a stone on my heart'.

Despite his harsh life, he wrote delicately about nature and the human condition and some critics assessed him as one of the most foremost poets of his generation. I think it is sad that a man of such sensitivity is no longer remembered although there is a statue of him outside the library in Footscray. There is an entry in the Australian Dictionary of Biography that reads:

'Shaw Neilson spent much of his life in tents, in navy camps and in cheap boarding houses while working at casual jobs all over Victoria (and in parts of New South Wales) to an estimated total of 200 jobs in thirty years. By the time he was in his mid-fifties the strain of hard physical labour had taken its toll on a man who had never been robust. A group of Melbourne literary people worked to obtain Neilson a tiny Commonwealth Literary Fund pension, and eventually in 1928 he was employed as a messenger and attendant in the office of the Country Roads Board, which was set in the gardens surrounding the Exhibition Building. Neilson stuck at this permanent work for thirteen years although he hated the 'dreadful noise of the city', living all that time with relations at Footscray, but not writing many poems. Early in 1941 he took extended sick leave and went to Queensland to visit James Devaney, who left a picture of this ailing, frail, but cheerful man stepping from the train in Brisbane wearing a dressing gown.



'He returned to Melbourne in ill health in spite of patient care and he died, unmarried, of heart disease on 12 May 1942. Neilson was buried in the Footscray cemetery where Sir John Latham, a fervent admirer, addressed the mourners, and fellow poet Bernard O'Dowd made an oration. Vance Palmer recorded that Shaw Neilson 'in his coffin ... looked like a small wax image of some saint of the Middle Ages', but the poet's death passed with little notice, partly because poetic fashions had changed, but mainly because of the intensity of the war.

'After his death several collections of his poetry were made, including *Unpublished Poems of Shaw Neilson* (1947), *Witnesses of Spring* (1970), and *The Poems of Shaw Neilson* (1965, revised and enlarged 1973). His partial autobiography was published in 1978, and his earliest printed verse, *Green Days and Cherries* in 1981. A number of Neilson's poems have been set to music by composers. 'Shaw Neilson', Devaney so accurately said, was 'the poor working-man who has left us a legacy of endless wealth'.

Neilson made many friends at the CRB, most of whom had no idea of his literary celebrity – a truly sad story.

A BUTTERCUP IN JUNE

*All the blue of the skies,
The light of white flowers,
Is in my sweetheart's eyes.*

*All the blaze of the sun,
The lightnings of the storm,
Is with my little one.*

*The moving joys of day,
The bird's intrepid songs,
Are with my love always.*

BABY'S ASLEEP 1893

*Baby's asleep. His little life is o'er
And grievous pain will trouble him no more.
Short was his stay in this strange world of ours,
Now we shall deck his little grave with flowers.
Baby's asleep.*

*We loved him fondly. Who can measure love,
The purest thing that comes from God above?
We loved him fondly. Ah, we miss him now.
Cold are his little hands, cold is his brow.
Baby's asleep.*

*One thought alone can lessen the sharp pain:
Though parted now, we soon shall meet again.
This treasured thought within our hearts we keep:
He is not dead — he only is asleep.
Yes, baby's asleep.*

I can't leave this segment on poetry without a sample of A. A. Milne. Over the last few years I have taken his books camping with me and I am happy to say some of the smaller children still love listening to the rhythm and word pictures he creates.

THE THREE FOXES

*Once upon a time there were three little foxes
Who didn't wear stockings, and they didn't wear socks,
But they all had handkerchiefs to blow their noses,
And they kept their handkerchiefs in cardboard boxes.*

*And they lived in forest in three little houses,
And they didn't wear coats, and they didn't wear trousers.
They ran through the woods on their little bare tootsies,
And they played "Touch Last" with a family of mice.*

*They didn't go shopping in the High Street shops,
But caught what they wanted in the woods and copses.
They all went fishing, and they caught three worms,
They went out hunting, and they caught three wops.*

*They went to a Fair, and they all won prizes —
Three plum-puddings and three mince-pies.
They rode on elephants and swang on swings,
And hit three coco-nuts at coco-nut shies.*

*That's all I know of three little foxes
Who kept their handkerchiefs in three little boxes.
They lived in the forest in three little houses,
But they didn't wear coats and they didn't wear trousers,
And they didn't wear stockings and they didn't wear socks.*

Next newsletter, I think I will talk about beauty in architecture.

Trivia and didactic whimsies

Only one warning

A man was sitting in a bar and noticed a group of people using sign language. He also noticed that the bartender was using sign language to speak to them.

When the bartender returned to him, the man asked how he had learned to use sign language. The bartender explained that these were regular customers and they had taught him to speak in sign language. The man thought that was great.

A few minutes later the man noticed that the people in the group were waving their hands around very wildly. The bartender looked over and signed: "Now cut that out! I warned you!" and threw the group out of the bar.

The man asked why he had done that and the bartender said: "If I told them once I told them 100 times — NO SINGING IN THE BAR!"