

VicRoads Association

Newsletter No. 230



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Dear Members,

Merry Christmas everyone. May the spirit of Christmas be alive in all our hearts!

Brittanica defines Christmas as a Christian festival celebrating the birth of Jesus. The English term Christmas (mass on Christ's day) is of fairly recent origin. The earlier term 'Yule' may have derived from the Germanic 'jöl' or the Anglo-Saxon 'geōl', which referred to the feast of the winter solstice. The corresponding terms in other languages – 'Navidad' in Spanish, 'Natale' in Italian, 'Noël' in French – all denote nativity. Since the early 20th century, Christmas has also been a secular family holiday, observed by Christians and non-Christians alike, devoid of Christian elements, and marked by an increasingly elaborate exchange of gifts. In this secular Christmas celebration, a mythical figure named Santa Claus plays the pivotal role.

For me, as a child, Christmas Day was always the most celebrated festival of the year – not only for the gifts, which in those days were pretty modest – but also for the fun and love of an extended family. There were cousins galore, coins in the plum pudding and Auntie Jean would always have us in stitches with her one-armed fiddler routine.

Mum and my aunts produced the most delicious Christmas fare none of which was bought at a grocery. There were no supermarkets then. Dad raised the ducks, Uncle Ted the turkey, the cream came from Uncle Buck and all the vegetables were in the ground that morning barely 30 metres from where we sat at the trestle tables to eat. Mum made one trifle without sherry, because one of my cousins was a teetotaler. She made a few others with what she called 'the doings'. The Christmas tradition in my family descended from my Anglo/Celtic ancestors – piping hot Christmas lunches with place cards depicting snow scenes, conifer Christmas trees and cottonwool decorations evoking the snow of European winters. The fact that the temperature outside could have been nearing the 100 deg F mark was of no concern. Our kitchen at home had a wood fired stove and for a long time, we only had an ice-chest to keep things cool – and of course

air-conditioning had not been invented. Mum and my aunts had sweat dripping off their noses and down their backs but it could not drown out their talk and laughter.

We sat on our front lawn to open the gifts and one of us acted as Santa Claus in Colac Apex Club's Santa Claus outfit. Later in my teens I was conscripted into being Santa (with a cushion around my belly) but the kids weren't fooled and they chased me down the paddock to try and pull my beard off. It is rather a sad reflection, that in my current octogenarian stage of life, I could dispense with the cushion!

One of my cousins had bought a 35 mm movie camera and many of these Christmases are recorded. I found it quite eerie to see myself as a five or six year old running around without a care in the world.

But it wasn't the food or the presents or the coins from the plum pudding that bathed us in happiness – it was the love, laughter, generosity, understanding and good cheer that made these days memorable. Later in life when Christmas was celebrated in my home, I liked to invite a few people – who were not strangers but who had no-one to celebrate with – to join us. I might add that they were not necessarily of the Christian faith, but I think the true spirit of Christmas transcends religious differences.

I searched for a distinctively Australian photograph that had a link to Christmas and I've come up with this one. Aren't I clever?



This is the annual migration of millions of land crabs heading to the sea to spawn on Christmas Island. A truly amazing sight.

I hope that your Christmas is a happy and loving time for you, your family and your community.

David Jellie,
Chairman and Editor

What's coming up

Christmas lunch at Waverley RSL at 12 noon on Monday 13 December

I am pleased to announce that our Christmas lunch is definitely on. It will be held on the above date at the Waverley RSL Club which is located at the eastern end of Coleman Parade near the Glen Waverley Shopping Centre. For those wishing to travel by public transport, the RSL is opposite Glen Waverley Station which is the end of the line. There is ample off-street parking adjacent to the centre.

We are planning to start at 12 noon and we will sit down to lunch at around 12.30 pm. We have booked a separate room on the first floor with access via the lift. The cost of the lunch will be \$40 per head payable in advance. This cost covers a two course (main and dessert) with two options for each course with alternating serves. Drinks are available at the bar located in the room at bar prices. The venue is COVID conscious and everyone must have proof of their double vaccination as a condition of entry. You will also require photo ID for entry to the club. Your driver licence will do.

If you wish to attend, please contact Ken Vickery on 0409 561 618 or kenvickery@tpg.com.au

Payment should be made via electronic transfer to the VicRoads Association account as follows:
BSB: 083323
Account number: 170934017

Please make sure when paying that you include your name as the transaction reference so that the payment can be attributed to you.

This is an excellent venue and it will be wonderful to catch up with you to celebrate Christmas and our relief from COVID restrictions.



Occasional Lunches at Shoppingtown Hotel, 12 noon.

**Our next lunch will be held on
Monday, 7 February 2022.**

There is no longer a requirement to contact Kelvin York – just turn up.

Dinner at Glen Waverley RSL, Thursday 17 March 2022 at 6pm.

Details will be provided in our February newsletter.

Annual Golf Day

We plan to have our annual Golf Day at Green Acres Golf Club in Kew on Friday 1 April 2022. More details will be provided next year.

Warrnambool Trip

We had to cancel this trip in 2021 because of COVID. We are now proposing that we will go on the **10, 11 and 12 May 2022** i.e. two nights of accommodation. Details will be provided early next year.

Vale

I have just been informed of the death of George Giummarra. Some of you would be aware of an earlier email I sent around regarding his battle with a brain tumour for which he underwent surgery in February 2021.

Despite ongoing treatment and wonderful care provided by his family and health practitioners, regrettably, George succumbed on 3 November with his loving family by his side. I propose to write an obituary for George in the next newsletter.

News from Major Road Projects Victoria

Mordialloc Freeway

Work is progressing on this project and it will be open to traffic soon. The freeway is a northward extension of the Mornington Peninsula Freeway to connect to the Dingley Bypass – a distance of nine kilometres.

It includes bridges over Springvale, Governor, Lower Dandenong and Centre Dandenong Roads, along with new freeway entry and exit ramps; bridges over Old Dandenong Road and the Waterways wetlands; upgrade the existing interchange at Thames Promenade to include new entry and exit ramps for the Freeway; and a new shared walking and cycling path along the entire Freeway.

Project images opposite

News from members

David Miles

David wrote to me with further reminiscences about the CRB Car Club. I have included his letter below and invite others to send in their memories so that we can develop a history. This is what he wrote:

'David, Alan Hamley was introduced to Peter Brock by Tim Ferguson in 1963. Tim worked part time at the CRB and was a member of the car club. Alan became one of Peter's closest friends. Alan and Peter joined the Car Club.

Alan bought an old Austin and hotted it up which impressed Peter no end and they tested it together along the winding roads around Hurstbridge. Ken Mitchell who also worked part time at the CRB and was a member of the car club was also a close friend of Peter's. They all competed in the CRB Car Club's motor-khanas, rallies and hill climbs.

At one particular event, at Winton Race circuit near Benalla, after practice the CRB group set up camp near the pits. Peter borrowed Alan's Holden and went driving

on the circuit. After going faster and faster Peter, much to Alan's disgust, rolled his precious car. Peter took the car back to Melbourne and rebuilt it. Fortunately it didn't end the friendship. I was with the group and witnessed the whole unfortunate episode.

Peter Brock was called up for National Service in 1965 and was unable to compete in motor racing until the end of his two year service. In 1967 Peter started racing his A30 and we were all involved in the start of his racing career.

I was a member of the CRB Car Club until 1974 but with the constraints of marriage, babies and building a house I no longer had the time to compete in events. I would really like to find out more about the car club and to know how long it existed for.

I wonder if any of our retirees have any more knowledge of the club. I have many photos of Car Club events. The club was a large part of many of our lives and provided much enjoyment to many over several years.

Regards, David'

Map of the Mordialloc Freeway.



Asphalting works at the Centre Dandenong Road entry ramp – June 2021.



Works on the twin 400 m long bridges works across the Waterways wetlands.

LEST WE FORGET



I have found two men who worked for the CRB who served in the **Korean War** as follows:

Private Michael (Mick) Thomas Doyle, 34915

Michael was born in Kensington in 1933 and served in the 3rd Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment (3 RAR) in Korea for just under a year. The 3 RAR was Australia's main land force contribution to the United Nations forces in the Korean War.

After a period of intensive training and reinforcement in Japan, the battalion arrived in South Korea in late September 1950. The battalion took part in the United Nations offensive into North Korea and the subsequent retreat into South Korea following the Chinese offensive in the winter of 1950–51. In October 1950, the battalion distinguished itself at Chongju during the UN northward advance to the Yalu River. It was one of three units to receive the US Presentational Unit Citation after the Battle of Kapyong in 1951.

In 1951, 3 RAR fought the Battle of Maryang San, which is widely regarded as one of the Australian Army's greatest accomplishments of the Korean War. 3 RAR remained in Korea until the war ended in 1953, sustaining total casualties of 231 men killed.

Mick became a chairman at the CRB and worked with Don Durant on the Mulgrave Freeway Project. He told Don about the Australian Air Force pilots who, on taking off, were particularly adept at raising the wheels of the fighters at the very instant that the planes became airborne. Mick said you should have seen the piled up wrecks at the end of runways when the Americans tried to do likewise.

In December 1969, Mick married an American woman, Sarah Dick. They lived in Crawfordsville, Indiana. Mick died there in April 2013.



Mick's grave in Indiana, USA.

Corporal Kenneth Campbell Goudie, 3400473

Ken was one of the 17,000 Australian servicemen who served in the Korean War. He was born in Drouin in 1929 and served as a Corporal with the 1st Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment between 1952 and 1953.

The battalion suffered 42 killed and 107 wounded during the nine months that they served on combat operations in Korea.



Ken's father served during the First World

Kenneth Goudie – images on the Australians at War Archive of UNSW.

War and was seriously injured in the Battle of Fromelles rendering his right arm useless.

Ken left Drouin High School after completing his leaving Certificate and became a cadet engineer for Warragul Shire Council. He studied engineering through distance education and after about a year, he transferred to Ballan Shire Council where the Shire Engineer was a Licensed Surveyor. It was here that he learnt about surveying but he was not certificated. He was later to qualify in both civil engineering and surveying.



Sergeant E. J. 'Slim' O'Sullivan of Woollahra, NSW, and Corporal Ken Goudie of Drouin, Vic, hold up a Communist propaganda sign Goudie recovered from the barbed wire in front of a forward company of the battalion while out mapping mine fields. The sign reads: "You risk your life, big business rakes in the dough". In 2004 the banner was donated to the Australian War Memorial at a ceremony attended by both men.

He was only 17 when he applied for a surveying job on Ocean Island and Nauru – both located on the equator and both rich in phosphate. In fact he bumped his age up to 18 in order to get this job. Later he took up a job in Papua New Guinea before returning to Australia in 1951 to work for the CRB.

He only worked for about a year in the Plans and Survey Branch of the CRB, before he decided to join the army which was advertising for soldiers to serve in Korea. He signed up for 12 months and, in Korea, he applied his surveying skills in mapping minefields and site layouts.

Ken died in 2010 aged 80 years. After his death, his family donated a large and important database that Ken had collected for over 20 years, of information and images relating to more than 3,000 Victorian honour rolls and 97,000 service personnel to the Australian War Museum.

And now for more of our colleagues who served in the **Second World War**.



Corporal Russell Grantham Cooper, VX83436

Russell was born in Colac in 1922 and lived in the small town of Gellibrand in the Otway Forest. He began work at the CRB in 1939 as a Junior Clerk. He had tried to enlist in the Royal Australian Navy initially, but his application was rejected – possibly because of colour-blindness. He then enlisted the Citizens Military Force (CMF) in September 1941 and he joined the 2nd Australian Survey Regiment as a Gunner under the command of another CRB officer, Sid Atkinson. His regimental number was V275110.



Russell Cooper in uniform and in civilian life.

In August 1942, he transferred to the 2nd Australian Imperial Force and his regimental number became VX83436. In September he made another shift to the General Details Depot at Caulfield for Concentration Independent Commando Companies AIF, and later that month, he transferred to the Independent Company training centre at Wilson's Promontory. He became part of the 2nd/7th Independent Company which was redesignated as the 2nd/7th Commando Squadron after their first tour of service in New Guinea in 1943.

Russell's early career in the army was spent training at Balcombe and Watsonia in the 2nd Survey Regiment but his later training at Foster (Wilson's Promontory in Southern

Victoria) and Canungra (Queensland) was with the men forming the Independent Company.

Training at Wilson's Prom was not for the faint-hearted. Officers and NCOs had six weeks of intensive training, and then they trained other ranks for a further six weeks. An Independent Company was formed from those who were left standing. In November 1942, the Training Centre at the Prom was closed down and training was transferred to Canungra, Queensland, where the tropical conditions were more appropriate for Australia's jungle fighting needs.

An excellent source of information about Australia's Independent Companies is a PhD thesis by Gregory Lewis Blake entitled *The Australian Army's Independent Companies and Commandos 1940-1945*. It described the process used to select recruits:

"Volunteers were expected to exhibit self-reliance, intelligence and independence and expected to be able to operate without direct supervision if necessary. Jack Boxall of the 2/5th Independent Company said: "We had been ordered to select strong, tough types who looked as though they would have a go at anything." The broad concept of those concerned with training the companies was that the main role would be guerrilla warfare.

Throughout their period of instruction, the assessment of Independent Company trainees was unrelenting. The Officer instructors watched the trainees continually, to determine if they came up to the standards required. They particularly paid attention to personality traits, looking for men who remained cheerful in adversity, were easy to get along with, and were able to stay the course when things got rough. The task of identifying those who could not cope with physical strain and duress involved tests such as the trek to 'Sealer's Cove'. This involved a full-day trek across rough country with no food, no water, no smoking and no talking. At the end of the day the party would be met by trucks. The men were told that the trucks were there to give a ride to any man with sore feet that thought he could not make it back to camp. Anyone who took the offer and boarded the trucks was immediately sent back to his unit."

The 2nd/7th Commando Company arrived in Port Moresby in February 1943. The Japanese Army had launched an amphibious attack on New Guinea from their garrison in Rabaul. They successfully took Lae which is located on the north coast, directly above Port Moresby. Japanese troops then advanced easterly overland towards Wau where Australia had established a base which potentially threatened the Japanese positions at Salamaua and Lae. The 2nd/7th was flown to Wau to join other Australian companies in the Salamaua-Lae campaign. The Australian forces became known as Kanga Force. After bitter fighting,



LEST WE FORGET



they were successful in defending Wau and succeeded in pushing the Japanese back to Mubo, all the while conducting harassment raids. Alexander Bruford VX 60359, who also worked for the CRB, was killed in this campaign.

The Company served in the Wau area for seven months before being shifted to strengthen the garrison at Ben Bena against the Japanese advance. The garrison then had roughly 400 men. Bena Bena is east of Goroka and borders on the Upper Ramu in Madang province to the north. It had a small airstrip which was strategically important. They sent patrols through the Ramu Valley to observe Japanese movements and the main approaches to Bena Bena. Welcome reinforcements arrived and, after serving nearly a year in New Guinea, the company was withdrawn to the Atherton Tablelands in Queensland. It was here that they were amalgamated with two other commando squadrons to become part of the 2nd/6th Cavalry (Commando) Regiment later to become Commando Squadron.

When the squadron returned to Australia late in 1943, Russell was hospitalized with malaria in January 1944 - in 115 Australian General Hospital (115 AGH) which was located on the campus of the Austin Hospital at Heidelberg in north eastern Melbourne. Through until August 1944, Russell spent time in 115 AGH and in 2nd/6th AGH on the Atherton Tablelands with malaria.

Malaria has been a military problem throughout history capable of causing epidemics that stop military operations. There was a lethal epidemic of malaria in New Guinea in September 1943 to March 1944 that killed 92 Australian soldiers and Russell's illness falls into this timeframe.

However he recovered and he returned to New Guinea in October 1944. During this period the squadron took part in the Aitape-Wewak campaign. But illness continued to dog him. He was put on the 'X' list which means he was away from his unit because of infectious hepatitis on three separate occasions. He remained in New Guinea until war's end.



Wewak area, New Guinea. May 1945. 2nd/7th Squadron troops coming out of action in the Prince Alexander Ranges.

The Aitape-Wewak campaign was one of the final campaigns of the war in the Pacific. Between November 1944 and the end of the war in August 1945, the Australian Army, with air and naval support, cleared the Japanese Army from the coastal areas and drove them inland, amidst difficult jungle conditions. Japanese casualties from combat and disease were high, but at last the war had finished.

Russell received a letter from the CRB when he was in New Guinea requesting him to pay a superannuation contribution. During his absence he had been placed on permanent staff and he had to pay his contribution. He was quite amused by this but it did strike him as being a rather odd request. He was away from Australia fighting for his country and his employer was seeking some minor payment from him.

Russell said it was the Board who got him out of the army at the end of the war. He was a bit upset by this because he had an opportunity to go to Japan as part of the occupation forces. He never knew the grounds on which the CRB was able to arrange the discharge of a very junior clerk - but it happened. He was discharged just before Christmas 1945. He wanted to have a few days at the beach before resuming work but he was advised that if he started the following day he would be eligible for Christmas pay and half-staff leave. He started the next day.

Later, he went to university, taking leave from the CRB to obtain a Commerce Degree in 1949. He returned to the CRB that year, and went on to enjoy a long and distinguished career, rising to become Chief Accountant. He married in 1952 and had three children. He retired in 1982.

One final word about Russell. He was an excellent public speaker with a great sense of humour and his farewell speeches to members of staff were always memorable.

Russell served the CRB for 42 years and retired in 1982. He died in October 2006 at the age of 84.

Lieutenant Eric John Moncrieff MBE, VX47482

Eric's file has not been digitized. From information in the DVA Nominal Roll, it can be seen that Eric was born in Numurkah in 1916 and enlisted in July 1940. He retired in February 1948 as a Lieutenant in the 3 MD Provost Company. I take this to mean the 3rd Military District military police. The 3rd Military District covers Victoria and southern NSW.



Eric Moncrieff, 1977

The role of the Australian Army Military Police is to maintain law and provide specialist security across army activities including high-threat situations. This includes security and protection of personnel, crime prevention and deterrence, traffic control,

maintenance of general law and order, and protection of buildings and critical army infrastructure. Military policing also has a combat support role in the field and, Eric served in the New Guinea campaign in this capacity.

After the war Eric applied his policing skills as a Traffic Officer in the CRB. He started at Stawell and Ballarat immediately after discharge from the army, and in 1951 he was appointed Assistant Senior Traffic Officer. He worked closely with the Police forces in Victoria and NSW in investigating infringements – such as overloading, speeding, non-registration and licensing, and illegal movement of goods without permits – and the payment of fines.

In 1952, Eric re-enlisted in the Citizens Military Force (CMF) as an officer. He was involved in air portability and land transport and gained experience that assisted him in his work with the CRB. He retired from the CMF in 1960.

He was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire in February 1946. This was for meritorious service in the South-West Pacific area of combat, in particular his organizing capability in Lae.

Eric was also the foundation Honorary Secretary of the VicRoads Association. After 28 years of service with the CRB, Eric retired in 1977 and died in August 1992.

Corporal James Primose, VX27765



Corporal James Primose.

James was born in Glasgow in Scotland in 1901, so he was 39 when he enlisted in June 1940. His name was on the CRB's list as J Primrose, and while there were 26 others of that same surname, he was the only one with the initial 'J'. He was listed on the CRB Employees list – but his enlistment form says that he was "in charge of oil fireheaters". It leads me to wonder if he was a member of a bituminous sealing gang.

Between 1917 and 1919 he served in the Royal Navy as a seaman, so he had already experienced war service. Like any self-respecting ex-sailor, it was noted that he had a tattoo on his left forearm. His next of kin (mother) was in Scotland and John gave his address as the Commercial Club Hotel, Nicholson Street, Fitzroy. There is an anomaly about his marital status. On the enlistment form it said that he was single but at discharge, it states that he was married to Emma. He must have married during the war.

After enlistment he was shuffled around various units in Colac, Seymour and finally, Wangaratta. He had been posted to the 2nd/24th Battalion. This battalion was a unit of the all-volunteer 2nd AIF. It was formed in July 1940 from primarily Victorian volunteers and was known as "Wangaratta's Own" because of the time the battalion spent in the town during its formative period prior to deployment overseas. It served

in North Africa in 1941–1942 and in early 1943, the battalion returned to Australia and later took part in campaigns against the Japanese in New Guinea in 1943–1944 and Borneo in 1945. The 2nd/24th suffered the highest number of battle casualties of any 2nd AIF infantry battalion.

James disembarked upon the H.M.T. *Strathmore* in November 1940. After arriving in the Middle East, the battalion undertook further training in Cyrenaica, and subsequently saw action for the first time around the besieged town of Tobruk in April 1941. Tobruk was a strategically important port. The battalion remained there for eight months, occupying various positions around the perimeter before they were withdrawn by sea in late October 1941. A period of garrison duties followed in Palestine and Syria before it was hastily moved to El Alamein in response to a German advance through the desert towards Egypt. The 2nd/24th was heavily involved in both the First and Second Battles of El Alamein between July and November 1942. During the first battle, the battalion fought to secure Tel el Eisa where they captured a German intelligence unit. During the second battle, the 2nd/24th advanced from Tel el Eisa towards the sea, amidst fierce fighting around a position dubbed the "Saucer".

James had a number of periods in hospital at Dimra (near Gaza) in Palestine during the garrison duty in October, November and December 1941. The reasons for hospitalisation are not stated. In January 1943, the battalion embarked for Australia arriving in Sydney six weeks later. It remained in Australia for the rest of the year but James had one spell in hospital in Queensland with dyspepsia.

In April 1944, the battalion was on the move again to New Guinea. Leaving Townsville on the *Katoomba*, they disembarked in Lae on the north coast. Five months later, James left Madang for Townsville. It seems that this was the end of James' war. He was sent back to Victoria. This was when he met Emma and got married. There is an entry in his archive dated January 1945 which stated "Next of kin. Change of address – wife."

He was discharged in October 1945. The Army had a system for determining demobilization priority and James' assessment of normal priority was calculated as follows:

1. Length of service in months	
63 x 2 (males) or x 1 (females)	126
2. Age of enlistment in years	
39 x 2 (males) or x 3 (females)	78
3. Dependency status (males only) – one point for each month of service	63
Total	267

This was enough to enable James to be demobilised ahead of many of his mates and start living his new life with Emma. It was a good one. James died in June 2002 a few months short of his 102nd birthday.



LEST WE FORGET



Able Seaman Noel Lawrence Allanson, PM7211



Noel Allanson – Secretary of the CRB, 1970.

Noel was born in Carlton in 1925 but at the time of his enlistment in 1943 he was living in Essendon. Noel joined the CRB after returning from the war. He was an accountant and served as Secretary to the Board from 1962 to 1979 and was a Board Member from 1979 to 1983.

At the time of his enlistment he was a clerk at the Melbourne City Abattoirs in Newmarket. They closed in 1987. Noel served as an able seaman in the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) during the later

stages of the war and was present in Tokyo Bay in 1945 when the Japanese surrender was signed aboard the United States Navy battleship USS *Missouri*.

Noel was an excellent sportsman excelling in Australian Rules Football and cricket. Despite serving three years in the prime of his youth with the RAN, he played 57 games between 1947 and 1951 for the Essendon Football Club, playing in a losing VFL grand final team (in 1947) and a winning one (in 1950). He was a defender and he only kicked one goal in his career – at Glenferrie Oval against Hawthorn. In the 1947 grand final Essendon lost by a point in the last minute, to Carlton. Noel was listed among Essendon's best players. He continued his connection with the club as vice-president in 1976 and 1977 and treasurer from 1978 to early 1991. He was inducted into the club's Hall of Fame in 2015.

Noel also played pennant Cricket for Essendon and also played one cricket match representing Victoria in 1957. It was against Tasmania and he scored 24 runs.



Essendon Football Team - VFL Premiers 1950. Noel Allanson is seated at the extreme left in the centre row.

Noel was a teetotaler and non-smoker all his life and contrary to what you might think, this was a great advantage in the Navy. On shore leave, his crew mates rationed their spending money before going ashore and gave Noel – ever the accountant – the balance, so that they were not tempted to spend the lot.

Brigadier Frank Hosking ED, VX108279 (V38038)



Frank Hosking on his retirement in 1969.

Frank was the Advance Planning Engineer at the Country Roads Board. He was born in Middle Park in 1904. He enlisted in July 1942 and retired in December 1945.

As Brigadier General, he was the Commanding Officer of the 10th Australian Infantry Brigade in 1942 and the 15th Brigade in 1942 and 1943 fighting in the New Guinea Campaign. He retired in 1945 with the rank of Brigadier. In 1956 he was awarded the

Efficiency Decoration. He was President of the Public Service Sub-branch of the RSL for 14 years. The Efficiency Decoration was instituted in 1930 for award to part-time officers after twenty years of service as an efficient and thoroughly capable officer.

Frank completed his Engineering Degree with Honours at the University of Melbourne in 1925. One of his lecturers was A.E. Callaway who was the Chief Engineer of the CRB. His first job with the Board was that of a Plant Inspector on bituminous surfacing plant on the Princes Highway East under the supervision of Overseer Costello. The engineer in the charge of the project was Louis Loder – the Highways Engineer – later to become Sir Louis.

Frank was the CRB's first Advance Planning Engineer. The position was created after Caleb Robert's return from a trip to the United States where he foresaw the need for the Board to undertake long-term planning.

Frank's son, Peter, also had a long career with the CRB rising to the position of Group Manager – Technical and General Services. Peter was also a Colonel in the 22nd Construction Regiment in the Citizen Military Force – now the Australian Army Reserve.

Frank retired in 1969 after 43 years' service with the Board. He died in May 1984 at the age of 79.

And now for something beautiful

In this newsletter we are going to explore some of the world's most beautiful gardens. We are fortunate in Victoria with the quality of our public gardens. The Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne ranks very highly in world rankings but, for the purposes of this newsletter, I am going to concentrate on gardens in international settings. It is presumptive of me to be telling you which ones are the best. Who am I to say? One thing about gardens, whether they are among the greatest or not, they can always provide pleasure by their planting, their landscape, their space, their colours, their aromas and even their history.

In this latter category is Monet's Garden at Giverny in France. His paintings have made them famous and they have become a Mecca for art lovers. Claude Monet lived there for 43 years and visitors come from around the world to admire it and dream in this intimate garden with its iconic water lilies and its Japanese influences.

Monet produced over 250 oil paintings of the water lilies at Giverny as well as many other garden scenes. In 2007, one of Monet's *Water Lily* paintings sold for £18.5 million at a Sotheby's auction in London. In 2008 another of his *Water Lily* paintings, *Le Bassin Aux Nymphéas*, sold for almost £41 million at Christie's in London. In May 2010, it was announced that the 1906 *Nymphéas* work would be auctioned in London in June 2010. The painting had an estimated sale price of between £30 and £40 million. Claude Monet's water-lily paintings are amongst the most recognised and celebrated works of the 20th Century and were hugely influential to many of the following generations of artists.

On a far different scale to Giverny are the gardens of the Chateau of Vaux-Le-Vicomte 55 kilometres south-east of Paris. Andre Le Nôtre's garden is the dominant feature of the Chateau's man-made landscape. Its longest axis



Water Lilies Agapanthus, 1914-1917 by Claude Monet.

extends for three kilometres with a balanced composition of water basins and canals contained in stone curbs, fountains, gravel walks, and patterned parterres. The site is naturally well-watered, with two small rivers that meet in the park. One of these forms the Grand Canal, which leads to a square basin.

Le Nôtre created a magnificent scene to be viewed from the house, using the natural terrain to advantage. He placed the canal at the lowest part of the complex and beyond the canal, the garden ascends as an open lawn at the end of which is the huge column of Hercules. I found it hard to find a photograph which adequately conveyed the enormity of this garden.

This garden greatly influenced the gardens at Versailles and all the other Chateau gardens in France including Chateau Villandry. Villandry has five gardens surrounding its chateau – the ornamental kitchen garden, the medicinal garden, the ornamental garden, the water garden and the maze. The gardens are relatively recent. They were created in 1906.



Monet's Garden at Giverny.



Vaux-le-Vicomte showing the main axis with the Hercules column in the far distance.

And now for something beautiful continued

England has some of the world's greatest gardens – large and small. It is hard to think of the grounds of Stowe as a garden. It is more like a park. Its creator, the politician Lord Cobham, wanted the garden to reflect the morality of the day so there are three paths to follow – the Path of Virtue, the Path of Liberty and the Path of Vice. You can see that he must have been very idealistic!

Stowe is a country house in Buckinghamshire and is the home of Stowe School – a posh English private school that none of us could afford. But the grounds of classical English park style garden is open to the public

Stowe is cared for by the National Trust. It has 250 acres of gardens and contains paths, bridges, temples, lakes, pavilions, arches, shrubberies and flower beds. This is more than a garden. It is a landscape of valleys and vistas created by man to give the appearance of nature.

In contrast to Stowe is Hidcote Manor Garden near Chipping Campden in Gloucestershire. It is one of the best-known and most influential Arts and Crafts gardens in Britain, with its linked "rooms" of hedges, rare trees, shrubs and herbaceous borders.

Hidcote Manor Gardens cover 10.5 acres of gently sloping ground. Hedges mainly composed of holly, beech, and yew are used to define a series of garden rooms planted with uniquely different species. At the edges of the garden are carefully planned vistas looking out over the Vale of Evesham.

Another unusual garden that stunned me was that at the house of Yves St Laurent in Marrakech in Morocco. It is called the Majorelle Garden – named after its original owner, Jacques Majorelle. Majorelle was born in Nancy, France. As a young aspiring painter, Majorelle was sent to Morocco around 1917 to convalesce from a serious medical condition. After spending a short time in

Casablanca, he travelled to Marrakech and like many of his contemporaries, fell in love with the vibrant colours and street life he found there. After travelling around North Africa and the Mediterranean, he eventually decided to settle permanently in Marrakech.

During his lifetime, Majorelle earned a reputation as a celebrated Orientalist painter. The special shade of bold cobalt blue, inspired by the coloured tiles he had seen around Marrakech and in Berber burn-houses, was used extensively in the garden and its buildings and is named after him, Majorelle Blue. Prior to his death, Majorelle patented the colour which carries his name.

Another small garden that left a life-long impression on me is the Mauritius Botanical Garden at Pamplemousses. I had been working in South Africa and the cost of travelling on the major airlines was exorbitantly high. Air Mauritius offered much cheaper flights with a weekend stopover and I took advantage of this deal a couple of times – and fell in love with Mauritius and its people, its landscape and its botanical garden. The 300 year old garden boasts that it is the oldest in the Southern Hemisphere and has a brilliant array of exotic plants I had never seen before – and 85 types of palm trees. The highlight is the giant water lilies.

Another favourite garden is at the 16th Century Villa D'Este at Tivoli, near Rome. It is famous for its terraced hillside Renaissance garden and especially for its profusion of fountains. It is now an Italian state museum, and is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The gardens are filled with fountains, statues, grottoes, water organs and other features designed to delight their owners and amuse and impress visitors. The style was imitated throughout Europe, influencing the gardens of the French Renaissance and the English gardens.

More to follow in the next edition.



Stowe, Buckinghamshire



The ornamental kitchen garden at Villandry. Everything except the roses are edible.



The ornamental Garden at Villandry.



Hidcote Manor Garden



Hidcote Manor Garden



The Majorelle Garden – Marrakech.



The giant water lilies of Mauritius Botanical Garden.



The Mauritius Botanical Garden.



Villa D'Este



Villa D'Este and the Oval Fountain.

BOARD

Trivia and didactic whimsies

I apologise for these!

Someone broke into my house last night. They took all my soap, shampoo, deodorant and toothpaste. They made a clean getaway.

I saw an advertisement for burial plots, and I thought: "That's the last thing I need!"

I have a few jokes about unemployed people, but none of them work.

Will glass coffins be a success?
Remains to be seen.

A bit of a hiccup.

A man walked into the Chemist and asked if they could give him something for hiccups. The assistant promptly wound up and slapped him in the face.

He was quite shocked and said, "What did you do that for?" whereupon the assistant said, "Well you don't have the hiccups any more do you?"

The man replied, "No, but my wife does and she's out in the car."

Horse's birthdays.

I am writing this on Melbourne Cup Day and so it is appropriate to give you a bit of horse trivia.

In Australia, every horse has its birthday on 1st August each year. All thoroughbreds have the same birthday so that their ages can be standardised for comparison because of the historical lack of records of actual birth dates.

All thoroughbreds celebrate their birthdays on the same date, January 1, in the Northern hemisphere and August 1 in the Southern hemisphere.

After the first time a horse is alive on August 1 it is considered a yearling. At its next birthday on the following August 1, it is considered two years old, even though it could be one year and one day old.

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