

# VicRoads Association

## Newsletter No. 232



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](http://vicroadsassociation.org)

### Dear Members,

Continuing on from the last newsletter, I want to round off the history of immigration in Australia as learnt from my visit to the Immigration Museum in Flinders Street. The COVID pandemic all but eliminated immigration and this had a great effect on our workforce – at all skill levels. Our universities lost international students and the aged care sector also suffered from a depletion in the workforce. Because of COVID, Australia's population fell for the first time since the First World War.

I also came across the 1920 Enemy Aliens Act which prevented the entry of people from Australia's former wartime enemies for five years, including Germans, Austrians, Hungarians and Turks. The Immigration Act 1925 created a quota system limiting or prohibiting people from selected countries. For example, only 100 Greeks were allowed to immigrate each month between 1925 and 1929. It was believed that those who were allowed in would assimilate into the Australian identity. Many communities supported the policy of assimilation – even the Chinese Empire Reform Association in Melbourne – which aimed to Westernise and Christianise the Chinese as a way of restoring China as a world power.

If you remember, I visited the Immigration Museum with my granddaughter and this is what I learnt about Australia's more recent immigration policy. For the rest of this section, I am directly quoting from the museum's exhibition.

For over 200 years, immigration has been raising questions about national identity. What kind of society do we want? Is Australia to remain a southern outpost of British culture or is our identity bound to Asia and the Pacific? Is there a typical Australian – or does the very idea of 'typical' deny the diversity of our culture? How does Aboriginal identity fit into the idea of Australia as an important nation? Can different cultures maintain their identities while participating in 'national' identity?

The selection of immigrants has always been influenced by the sort of nation that governments and special interest



Group of migrants bound for Australia on MV Toscana at Trieste, 1954.

groups have wanted to create. Issues such as increasing the population, developing a workforce and responding to global humanitarian needs have been tempered by preferences for particular nationalities and culture.

Since the time of European settlement Australia has provided refuge for people fleeing persecution. In the past 50 years, over 600,000 refugees have been resettled in Australia. The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees states that:

*'A refugee is a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country ...'*

Asylum seekers are refugees seeking new countries in which to settle. Australia provides protection for asylum seekers under its Humanitarian Plan. It is not illegal to seek asylum in Australia. It is a basic human right, accepted by all signatories, including Australia, to the 1951 UN Convention and the 1967 UN Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. Illegal immigrants are people who have not met any legal requirements for visiting or migrating to Australia. This includes thousands of people who overstay their visa, many from Britain and the

United States. Overstayers outnumber asylum seekers by ten to one.

Australia is a culturally diverse nation. In 2016, more than one in four Australians was born overseas, the highest level since the 1850s. One in five speaks a language other than English at home. Since the early 1970s Australia's immigration levels and composition have fluctuated dramatically. The number of European migrants has declined, while those from Asian and Middle Eastern countries has increased. By 2011, China and India had surpassed the United Kingdom as Australia's primary source of permanent migrants.

Australia today accepts immigrants from any country, based on their ability to meet criteria determined by Australia's economic, social and political needs. Global refugee demands continue to apply pressure to Australia's refugee quotas. The largest number of refugees in 2015 came from Iraq, Syria, Myanmar and Afghanistan – all countries ravaged by war (my words).

Australia no longer conducts vigorous campaigns to attract permanent migrants, except for business migration. Assisted passage schemes ended in 1981 – except for refugees – and child migration schemes no longer operate. A typical example for 2015-2016 shows the immigration quota to be 190,000 including 13,750 under the Humanitarian Program.

During the last 20 years, the emphasis on temporary migration has intensified, as the economic benefits have become more apparent. The arguments put forward by opponents of migration - of migrants taking jobs from Australians - has been tempered by the notion of migrants

doing jobs that Australians either can't or don't want to do. A multi-billion dollar industry has grown to service the increasing number of international students.

Temporary Work (Skilled) Visas, also known as 457 Visas have been more contentious. While intended to fill gaps in the Australian workforce, they have also been a way for businesses to bring in cheaper overseas labour at the expense of local jobs. In 2017, the scheme was revised to narrow the occupations and selection criteria. The recent exposure of migrant labour exploitation in some fast food outlets, convenience stores and fruit-picking industries has demonstrated the complexities in regulating Australian labour practices which protect both the local and temporary workforce.

Asylum in Australia has been granted to many refugees since 1945, when half a million Europeans displaced by World War II were given asylum. Since then, there have been periodic waves of asylum seekers from South East Asia and the Middle East, with government policy and public opinion changing over the years.

Refugees are governed by statutes and Government policies which seek to implement Australia's obligations under the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, to which Australia is a party. Thousands of refugees have sought asylum in Australia over the past decade, with the main forces driving movement being war, civil unrest and persecution. From 1945 to the early 1990s, more than half a million refugees and other displaced persons were accepted into Australia.



Vietnamese refugees arriving in Darwin Harbour

Historically, most asylum seekers arrived by plane. However, there was an increasing number of asylum seekers arriving by boat in the late 2000s and early 2010s, which was met with some public disapproval. In 2011–2012, asylum seekers arriving by boat outnumbered those arriving by plane for the first time. Three waves of asylum seekers arriving by boat have been identified: Vietnamese between 1976 and 1981; Indochinese asylum seekers from 1989 to 1998; and people of Middle East origin from 1999.

The visa policy of the current government is to detain persons entering or being in Australia without a valid visa until those persons can be returned to their home country. Australia is the only country in the world with a policy of mandatory detention and offshore processing of asylum seekers who arrive without a valid visa.

So this is what I learnt at the Immigration Museum. I hope it is not too boring. I found it very interesting and recommend that you call in to the Museum next time you are in the city - and it is free!

It reinforces my view that Australia is a truly multi-cultural nation of which we should be proud.

David Jellie,  
*Chairman and Editor*

## What's coming up

### **Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Dinner at Glen Waverley RSL** Thursday 17 March 2022 at 6pm.

We will conduct a brief AGM at 6pm before our usual drinks and dinner function. The purpose of the AGM is to report to our members, to elect committee members, to elect an auditor, to set our membership fees and to consider any motions submitted by members – as well as to discuss any items of general business. We would greatly appreciate your attendance.

### **Annual Golf Day**

Please note that the date for this event has changed from previous notices owing to a Corporate Day. The annual Golf Day at Green Acres Golf Club in Kew will now be held on **Friday 8 April 2022**. Guests are welcome. Please contact our Secretary, Jim Webber if you are interested in coming. His contact details are provided in the footer of the cover page. We will also send out a reminder to those on our electronic mailing list.

### **Warrnambool Trip**

This trip will take place on the **Tuesday 10, Wednesday 11 and Thursday 12 May**. The itinerary is still being designed but if you are interested in coming please let me know. My contact details are: [pdjellie@hotmail.com](mailto:pdjellie@hotmail.com) or 0418 105 276.

### **Benalla/Shepparton Trip**

As mentioned in the last newsletter, we are planning a trip to Benalla and Shepparton in the spring. We will let you know the final arrangements later in the year.

### **Christmas Lunch**

This announcement is like buying hot cross buns on Boxing Day. We have set the date for our Christmas lunch on **Monday 12 December 2022** at Glen Waverley RSL.

## Vale

We offer our condolences to the families and friends of the following colleagues who have died.

### Noel Allanson

Noel was born on Christmas Day in 1925 and died on 7 February 2022 at the age of 96. He joined the Country Roads Board in 1950 – four years after his discharge from wartime service with the Royal Australian Navy. He was the Board's Secretary for 17 years and a Member of the Board for four years – serving with Tom Russell (Chairman) and Bill Brake. Tom always gave great praise to Noel and Bill for their efficiency and service.

Noel served as an Able Seaman with the RAN during the Second World War. He was an excellent sportsman playing football for Essendon and cricket for Victoria. I think he was probably one of those gifted sportsmen where his timing, balance and innate ball sense served him well. I recall that I rang him on Christmas Eve to wish him a happy 90th birthday. Betty answered the phone and told me that he could not come to the phone as he was having a shower after completing 18 holes of golf. I rang him back later and he said how much he enjoyed playing – although he thought he might cut back to nine holes soon.

Noel played in two grand finals for Essendon – losing one by a point and winning the other one. He was the club's last surviving World War II veteran. He served Essendon Football Club for 45 years as a player and administrator.

As a player, he was a solid defender whose career coincided with a golden era for the club. Making his debut in 1947, Noel played alongside legends such as Dick Reynolds and John Coleman over his 57 game career. Noel said at his induction into the club's Hall of Fame in 2015: "My career was modest, but I managed to squeeze in a couple of Grand Finals and one premiership."

"But to play with blokes that I used to watch as a kid in the early '30s and '40s, like Dick Reynolds, Bill Hutchison, Wally Buttsworth, Harold Lambert and Jack Jones, I couldn't believe it.

"They turned out to be terrific teammates, and they accepted me just as a kid in football terms."

He returned to Windy Hill in 1976 as Essendon's vice-president, before holding the position of club treasurer from 1978 to 1991.

Noel was a gentleman – always immaculately dressed and with impeccable manners. He was conservative and careful in his dealings always crossing the 'T's and dotting the 'I's. He demanded high standards from his staff. Peter McCullough recalled that every time a letter was taken in to Noel's office, Noel automatically picked up his red pen. One day, Peter presented a letter to Noel and he read it through, after which he wriggled his shoulders and read it through again. After finishing it a second time, he paused for a while and turned to Peter with a perplexed look and admitted he couldn't find anything wrong with it.

The Essendon Football and Cricket Club played a huge part of Noel's life. One day, in the Boardroom, Tom Russell observed that there seemed to be a lot of Essendon footballers on the Board's payroll. Peter said that Noel just turned and looked out the window.

Noel had a very strong friendship with Peter Hosking – through both work and cricket. Noel was captain of Essendon and Peter was captain of St Kilda. One day, Noel was facing up to Peter when Peter, accidentally bowled a bean ball which hit Noel in the head. Noel collapsed to the ground and Peter was horrified at what had happened, but Noel bounced up with a laugh and resumed his stance. They remained life-long friends.

Further information about Noel's service in the Navy can be found in the Lest We Forget section of this newsletter.

While researching Noel's history with the Essendon Football club I found these interesting figures. During the Boer War, one Essendon Player was killed – Charlie Moore (30 games); during the First World War, 13 were killed – Lewis Blackmore (1), Hughie Callan (71), Dick Clough (2), Chris Fogarty (28), Jimmy Gordon (8), Bill Harvey (9), Herb Hunter (3), Fred McIntosh (39), Charley Morely (3), Les Rogers (3), Gerald Ryan (18), Bruce Sloss (84) and Jack Wood (2). Those who perished in the Second World War were Godfrey Goldin (8), Len Johnson (69), Jack Keddie (1), Ted Regan (11), and Archie Roberts (48). Over both World Wars, there were 232 servicemen who played for Essendon. These figures would be similar for other clubs.

Noel's involvement in cricket, including as captain of the 1962 CRB team will be described in the next newsletter.



Noel Allanson (back row second from the left) listens to an address by the legendary Dick Reynolds.

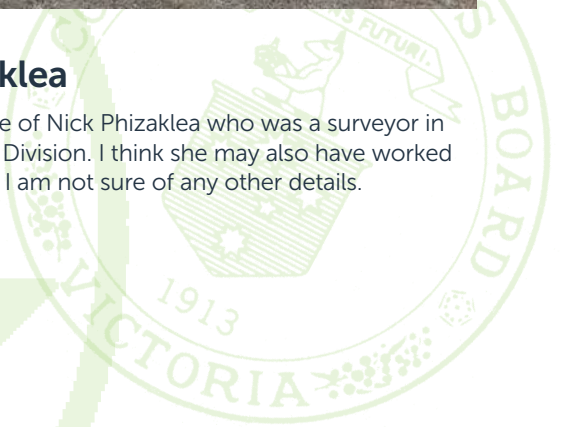
## Maureen Chapple

Maureen is the wife of the late Des Chapple who worked in the Pay Section and, for ten years, managed the Correspondence Registry. Maureen died in January 2022 at the age of 91. Des met Maureen when they were both working at the CRB's South Melbourne Depot. Maureen's father was a bookmaker and Des often worked for him on weekends.

Des was a close colleague of Peter McCullough. Peter told a story about Des putting in a lot of groundwork studying the car market. He thought they had enough money to buy a brand new car and he announced to Peter that he was going to inform Maureen that night of his decision. When he got home, Maureen was overjoyed because she had just bought a second-hand VW Beetle only hours before.

## Sue Phizaklea

Sue was the wife of Nick Phizaklea who was a surveyor in the Title Survey Division. I think she may also have worked for the CRB but I am not sure of any other details.



## News from members

John Liddell sent me this photograph which he found in his archives. I suspect it was taken in the 1970s at a Management Course at Jumbunna Lodge. You will see that the people in it could be considered the cream of the organisation but there are a few names missing. I recognise all the faces but can't remember the names.



Back row (left to right): David Jellie, Unknown, Howard Ellis, Lindsay Clay, John Clark, John Liddell, Jim Jarvis (ARRB), John Rebbechi, Graeme Nelson, Unknown at the back, Allan Lade and Stan Jervis. Front row (left to right): Murray Cullinan, Unknown, Neil Guerin, Bob Billinge, John Gunson, Unknown and Bill Peyton.

## Across the board

We are aware that there are many groups of people who worked with the CRB, RCA, RTA, VicRoads – and affiliated groups such as RoSTA, ARRB, MMBW, TRB and MRB – who arrange reunions from time to time. For example, Colin Pratt is arranging a reunion of Syndal Workshop colleagues in April, and he has sought our assistance in spreading the word and perhaps providing contact details. While many of these people are not members of the VicRoads Association we are still keen to promote these types of activities.

The details of the Syndal reunion are that it will be held at the Notting Hill Hotel on Sunday 3 April from 12.30 onwards. Partners are welcome. People attending are asked to give a \$30.00 donation to cover name badges, venue, food, and drinks. It is not a formal party. It covers a couple of finger food bits and a few drinks. If any of you would like to attend, please contact Colin on [colpratt@yahoo.com](mailto:colpratt@yahoo.com) or 0423 239 603. I have just noticed that daylight saving ceases at 2 am on that day – so if you are going remember that it will be Eastern Standard Time.

Because of privacy considerations we cannot provide contact details from our membership database without an individual's permission, but we are willing to assist by providing notice of any such reunions in our newsletter. So, if anyone is aware of a specific reunion, please contact me and provide me with the relevant details and I will include a note in the newsletter. We could also post notices, reports and photographs on our website.

I remember that Estates Division held a reunion a few years ago (which I wrote up) and I think ex-Geelong Depot and Field Staff have get-togethers every now and then. There are probably more in the regional areas. I would also be happy to include reports of them in our newsletter including any photographs. You don't have to be a member of the VicRoads Association to participate.

## Some Melbourne nostalgia – 1950s



The bread delivery man in Dandenong (1951) and the paper boy (1950).



Launching Made in Australia Week with Australian made planes (1954) and a washing machine demonstration.



Bourke Street (1954) and Dave Stephenson (the Flying Milkman – 1955)

# LEST WE FORGET



I have included three more stories from Roads to War. I hope you enjoy them.

## Able Seaman Noel Laurence Allanson, PM7211



18 year-old Able Seaman Noel Allanson; and after the war circa late 1940s.

Noel was born in Carlton on Christmas Day 1925 – accordingly, he was named Noel after that day. His father was Laurence Allanson. He was a so-called 'Depression Baby' and his family lived in a modest house down the hill from the Essendon Football Club ground known as Windy Hill. This was to become a very important location in his life. Noel joined the CRB in 1950. He rose through the Accountant's Branch and served as Secretary to the Board from 1962 to 1979 and then became a Board Member from 1979 to 1983.

He attended Essendon State School and Essendon High School and his school report said that he was 'Senior prefect – outstanding in cricket, football, tennis, athletics' – with cricket and football underlined in red.

In December 1941, Noel joined the City of Melbourne, Abattoirs and Cattle Markets Department as a Junior Clerk. He enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) ten days after his 18th birthday in January 1944, and served as an able seaman (AB). An AB is a seaman and member of the deck department of a ship. An AB may work as a watch-stander (or lookout), a day worker, or a combination of these roles.

He joined HMAS *Ipswich*, which was one of sixty Australian Escort/Minesweepers (commonly known as Corvettes) built during the Second World War in Australian shipyards as part of the Commonwealth Government's wartime shipbuilding programme. Twenty (including *Ipswich*) were built on British Admiralty order but manned and commissioned by the RAN.

*Ipswich* was only 60 m long and 10 m wide and had a range of 4,300 miles at 10 knots. It had a crew of 80. This was to be Noel's home until July 1946.

Noel recalled the story of his first trip to Fremantle across the Great Australian Bight in some of the roughest weather anyone had seen – shuddering up and then pile driving down the huge swells. He said he was as sick as a dog with

carbuncles on the back of his neck – but apparently this was the only time he was ever sea sick.

The *Ipswich* served in the eastern Indian and western Pacific Oceans. Noel was an able seaman and gunner, he visited Colombo in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Manus Island and other atoll bases. It was on the remote coral island of Enewetak Atoll in the Marshall Islands that Noel received his only war wound – playing a football match. He split his eye brow which was promptly stapled up by a US doctor at the base in five seconds flat. He always had a bit of a droopy eyelid from it.



HMAS *Ipswich*.

But his most memorable recollection of the war was being in Tokyo Bay at the time of the signing of the Japanese surrender, September 2nd 1945, with *Ipswich* anchored near the USS *Missouri* on which the truce was signed – a truly historic occasion.

In July 1946 – at 20 years of age – Noel was discharged from the Navy and he returned to the City of Melbourne, Abattoirs and Cattle Markets Department. At the urging of his mother, he studied accountancy at night school with the Federal Institute of Accountants. In 1949 he attended a 21st birthday party for Betty Wilson and Noel was so smitten he is alleged to have asked her, "Would I be standing on anyone's corns if I asked you out?" They were engaged in 1950 and married in March 1951.



Noel and Betty on their wedding day – 13th March 1951.

In 1950, Noel applied for a position as ledger keeper at the Country Roads Board. He was given a glowing reference by his boss at the City of Melbourne who stated that. "In all



*branches of his work, he displays a marked ability and a very keen interest in his work."* He also said that, *"Mr Allanson has an outstanding record as an athlete and is at present a playing member with the Essendon Club in both District Cricket and League Football"*.

So, it is indisputable that Noel was an excellent sportsman excelling in Australian Rules Football and cricket. Despite serving two 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, when 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.



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

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. He was captain of the Essendon Cricket Club.

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.



Noel Allanson – Secretary of the CRB, 1970.

Noel retired from the CRB in 1983. He always regretted not having done any further formal education – so one of the first things he did was to enrol in the Bachelor of Commerce at the University of Melbourne as a mature student. With a live-in secretary, Bet, to help type up notes and essays, he loved it. He revelled in mixing it with the

young students, and challenging the teachers. He would take interest and great pleasure in the careers of many of his fellow students and friends long after his graduation in 1987.

Of course this study did not get in the way of his post footy and cricket love – golf! He played many rounds at Northern over many years – well into his 90s. He got down to a single figure handicap, although only for a short while.

His children and grandchildren complained that whenever they went to the MCG for a footy or cricket match, it would take forever to get to their seats – because every ten metres or so it seemed someone would stop Noel for a chat. Noel was a modest gentleman, and never big-noted himself.

Noel died in February 2022 at the age of 96. The Essendon Football Club brought the 1950 Premiership Cup to his funeral. He was the last Essendon player to have served in the Second World War to die<sup>1</sup>.

## Flying Officer Hartley Trevor Sargeant, V44681, 419278

Hartley was born in Essendon in 1918 and enlisted in January 1940. His file in the Australian Archives has not been digitised so that details of his training and embarkation to the UK are unknown. However from other sources I can confirm that he was a navigator in RAF 214 Squadron (Federated Malay States). This squadron was so named because it had some affiliation with the Federated Malay States but I cannot find what that connection was.

No.214 Federated Malay States Squadron spent the entire Second World War operating with Bomber Command. Like many similar units it had a quiet start to the war, and offensive operations did not start until 14 June 1940, well after the start of the war in the west. I don't know when Hartley joined the squadron but his eventual fate is well-recorded.

On 14 March 1945, the mission of Flying Fortress Mark III HB802 BU-O to Lutzkendorf failed to return. It was brought down by light flak at 3,000 ft on its way home. All ten crew members were taken as Prisoners of War. Alternatively, it may have been shot down by the rear gunner of Hptm Martin Becker's Me 110 of Stab IV/NJG6. Becker claimed nine 'Lancasters' were shot down this night - this

<sup>1</sup> During the Boer War, one Essendon Player was killed – Charlie Moore (30 games); during the First World War, 13 were killed – Lewis Blackmore (1), Hughie Callan (71), Dick Clough (2), Chris Fogarty (28), Jimmy Gordon (8), Bill Harvey (9), Herb Hunter (3), Fred McIntosh (39), Charley Morely (3), Les Rogers (3), Gerald Ryan (18), Bruce Sloss (84) and Jack Wood (2). Those who perished in the Second World War were Godfrey Goldin (8), Len Johnson (69), Jack Keddie (1), Ted Regan (11), and Archie Roberts (48). Over both World Wars, there were 232 servicemen who played for Essendon. These figures would be similar for other clubs.



## LEST WE FORGET



being the last, at 23.37 hrs, approximately three miles south east of Baiersbronn (near Strasbourg and Stuttgart).

Flt/Lt John Wynne was the pilot of the other 214 Fortress which was shot down on March 14, 1945 and gives further insight into the loss of HB802. Quote: "The other Fortress accompanying mine was flown by Norman Rix DFC, who became a celebrated architect. His aircraft, some miles further south than mine, was shot down over Stuttgart and Rix was lucky to survive. His parachute opened a few seconds before he crashed into the top branches of a pine tree. As a POW, Rix saved the Bavarian village of Ettringen from destruction by the advancing U.S. 7th Army. Having been marched to Ettringen, he persuaded his guards to lay down their arms and then took control of the village. The next day, he went forward to meet an American tank patrol and informed the astonished commander that Ettringen was already in British hands. A formal handover was arranged for the following day. No shots were fired and no civilians injured. Sadly, Rix's achievement was never recognised by the authorities, but the villagers of Ettringen have not forgotten what he did."

The crew of Flying Fortress Mark III HB802 BU-O consisted of two RAAF (including Hartley), three RNZAF and five RAF airmen. I can't find information regarding his incarceration but Hartley was repatriated to the UK on 8 May 1945.



A Royal Air Force Boeing Fortress III photographed in August 1944. The Fortresses operated with No. 214 Squadron from January 1944 onwards.

Hartley started work with the CRB in 1937 after working for A. G. Healing – the bicycle makers. He had put a note in with Zercho's Business Collage that he was looking for a change, and out of the blue, he received an invitation from the CRB. He started work in the old Dunlop Building in South Melbourne doing clerical work for the Mechanical Branch. He remained with the Board (and the Branch) for 40 years.

Hartley retired in the mid-1970s and died in 2010 aged 92.

## Corporal Keith Thomas Pullin, VX23150

Keith was born in Footscray in 1912. He was a Corporal in the 2nd/8th Field Company and he was discharged in November 1945. Keith was a clerk in the Works Sub-branch although at the time of enlisting he was a storeman.

Immediately after enlisting in June 1940, Keith was sent to Puckapunyal in Central Victoria for training and in September he embarked for service overseas. He disembarked in Palestine in October where he remained until April 1941 when he embarked for Greece. The record shows he arrived in Egypt shortly afterwards. The next entry says: *6-6-41 Missing in Crete and trans. to X list date unknown*. I translate this cryptic note to be that, on 6th June 1941, he went missing in Crete and that he was placed on a list of soldiers whose whereabouts was unknown. Ten days later it stated that it was believed he was a POW. In November 1941, it was officially reported that he was a POW interned in Stalag VII-A.

Stalag VII-A was the largest POW camp in Germany. It was located just north of the town of Moosburg in southern Bavaria – just north of Munich. The camp covered an area of 35 hectares (86 acres). It served also as a transit camp through which prisoners, including officers, were processed on their way to other camps. At some time during the war, prisoners from every nation fighting against Germany passed through it. At the time of its liberation on 29 April 1945, there were 76,248 prisoners in the main camp and 40,000 or more working in factories, repairing railroads or on farms.

Edgar Bartrop, who was a colleague of Keith in Works Sub-branch of the CRB, said that after his capture he was imprisoned in Greece for some time, before being transferred to Germany. From my research, it appears that the POWs from Crete and Greece were incarcerated in transit camps in Corinth and Salonika, from where they were taken north to Germany by train. However, Keith told Edgar that he and his fellow prisoners were force-marched from Greece to Bavaria and that it took about over a month to travel the distance. By my reckoning, the distance would be over a thousand kilometres meaning they would have had to cover about 25 to 30 kilometres per day. There is nothing in Keith's archive that confirms this although there are many recorded instances of the Germans force-marching prisoners to camps. In fact, they were notorious for it. Another possibility may be that Keith was referring to forced-marches between prison camps in Germany because he was to change camps twice more.

The archive is clear in that he was also incarcerated in Stalag 8B (which was renamed Stalag 344) and finally, in Stalag 357. Stalag 8B was near Lamsdorf (now Lambinowice) in Silesia in south western Poland. Over 100,000 prisoners passed through this camp. They came from Australia, Belgium Canada, France, Greece, India, Italy,

the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, South Africa, the Soviet Union, the UK and the USA.

Stalag 8B was notoriously harsh and overcrowded. A Polish academic Dr Anna Wickiewicz wrote in her book *Captivity in British Uniforms: Stalag VIII B (344) Lamsdorf*, that fuel for heating was scarce and the wooden barracks often had no glass in the windows. Most of the POWs worked as labourers in paper, chemical and armament factories, on farms, in forestry and sawmills, and on road and bridge construction. A typical work shift was 12 hours per day. Wickiewicz's research showed that Australians and New Zealanders were mainly sent to work in nearby coal mines. She wrote: "All the hazards typical of miner's work were additionally augmented by guards' cruelty, as it was only by means of terror that they were able to force the soldiers

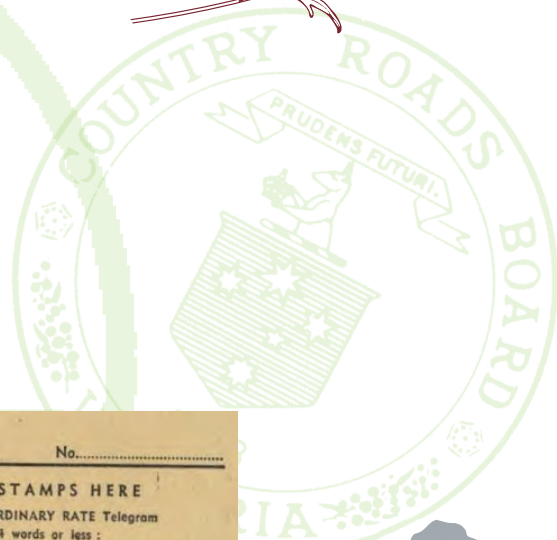
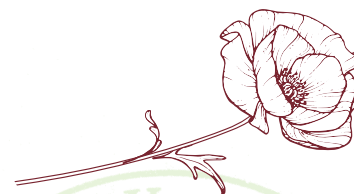
to stay obedient." The International Committee of the Red Cross inspectors who visited the camp concluded that, compared with other camps, Lamsdorf was to be classified as the worst. And yet the photograph of some of its Australian prisoners in the photograph below show them to be in relatively good spirits.

Keith was liberated in April 1945 and returned to England for debriefing and recuperation. He returned to Melbourne on the *Otranto* in September 1945. He may have suffered trouble with his eyesight, because the last entry records an eye test in November 1945 – but no result was recorded.

Keith married Audrey Rodgers in 1948. He died in January 1995 and is buried in Stanthorpe Cemetery in Queensland.



Group portrait of Australians captured on Crete and sent to a German POW camp. August 1941.



41. COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA—POSTMASTER-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT		No. ....
CASH REGISTER	<b>TELEGRAM</b>	<b>AFFIX STAMPS HERE</b>
	This message is presented for transmission subject to the Post and Telegraph Act and Regulations.	Charges for ORDINARY RATE Telegram For 14 words or less : Within a 15 mile radius 9d., Beyond a 15 mile radius 1/- Each additional word in both cases 1d.
S. C.2941—9/1940.	The address must contain all information necessary to ensure delivery.	
Words.....	To <b>MRS M. PULLIN</b>	For Office Use Only T C B
Charge.....	<b>22 KING ST ESSENDON</b>	
Time.....		
By.....		
Remarks.....		
DISTREC <b>6706</b>	<b>K.T. PULLIN</b>	<b>PRISONER OF WAR</b>
<b>VX23150</b>	<b>PULLIN K.T.</b>	<b>I HAVE TO INFORM YOU THAT</b>
	<b>PREVIOUSLY REPORTED MISSING BELIEVED PRISONER</b>	<b>ENTERED</b>
	<b>IS NOW REPORTED PRISONER OF WAR</b>	
A REPLY PAID TELEGRAM is a courteous means of ensuring A PROMPT ANSWER (PLEASE TURN OVER)	From <b>MINISTER FOR THE ARMY</b>	

The telegram sent to Keith's mother to inform her that Keith was a prisoner of War.



## And now for something beautiful

I am turning to the natural world for my inspiration – especially our local natural world.

These photographs were taken by Alan Mackinlay during our visit to the Royal Botanic Garden Cranbourne last November. I think you will agree with me that they are of exceptionally high quality and I am grateful to Alan for allowing us to publish them.

### Red Browed Finch



The Red Browed Finch is a tiny bird growing to about 12cm. It inhabits the east coast of Australia in grassy areas interspersed with dense understorey vegetation. Its nest is large and domed with a side tunnel entrance. The finch feeds on insects and seeds.

Both sexes are similar in appearance. They are often observed in small flocks feeding on grass. When disturbed, they fly into dense undergrowth. Red browed finches may also be called Red-browed Firetails.

Red Browed Finches often associate with other small insectivorous species, especially family groups of superb Fairy Wrens. The association with the Fairy Wrens is especially interesting, as the simple song of the Red Browed Finch sometimes sounds superficially similar to the contact call of the superb Fairy Wren.

### Superb Fairy Wren



The Superb Fairy Wren was one of the first Australian birds to be described. I think if you took a popularity poll, the male Superb Fairy wren would be up there in the top five, and yet he has been labelled as 'the least faithful birds in the world'. Females may be courted by up to 13 males in half an hour, and 76% of young are sired by males from outside the social group.

The breeding plumage of the male Superb Fairy Wren is unmistakable – a light blue cap, ear tufts, and cheeks; a black eye-stripe; dark blue-black throat; brown wings and white breast and belly. The beak of the adult male is black and legs are brown to dark brown. The adult female is mostly brown, with white throat, breast and belly. The beak is orange-red, with a similarly coloured eye-stripe; the tail is brown with a faint pale blue-grey tinge. The female has the same plumage year-round.

The Superb Fairy Wren is found in south-eastern Australia, from south-eastern Queensland, eastern NSW and throughout south-eastern Victoria, to southern Eyre Peninsula in South Australia. It is also found in Tasmania, King Island, Flinders Island, and Kangaroo Island.



### Shining Bronze Cuckoo

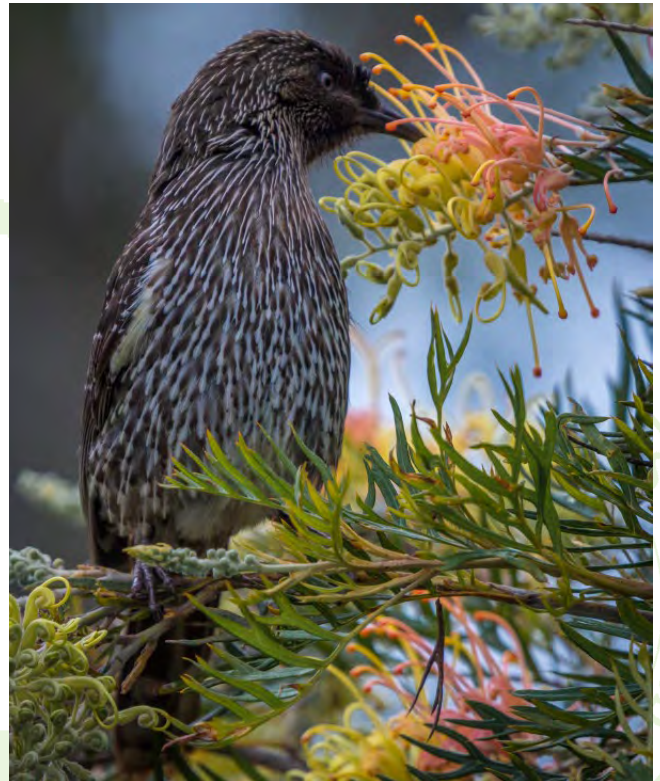


The Shining Bronze Cuckoo is a species of cuckoo found in Australia, Indonesia, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.

It is the world's smallest cuckoo, being only 15 to 17cms in length. The Shining Bronze Cuckoo is a summer visitor to Eastern Australia from the Cape York Peninsula in Queensland to South Australia's Eyre Peninsula and Kangaroo Island and Tasmania, as well as Western Australia from Carnarvon in the north to the southwest and east to Esperance.

It does have a dark side. A female Shining Bronze Cuckoo lays a single egg in a host nest and removes a host egg. After hatching, the baby cuckoo ejects the host nestlings from the nest.

### Little Wattlebird



The Little Wattlebird is a medium to large honeyeater, but is the smallest wattlebird. It is found in banksia/eucalypt woodlands, heathlands, tea-tree scrub, sandplain-heaths, lantana thickets, wild tobacco, parks and gardens. Cranbourne gardens are an ideal habitat.

Little Wattlebirds feed on nectar obtained with a long, brush-tipped tongue, adapted for probing deep into flowers. They also feed on insects, berries, and some seeds. Most feeding is done perched, but some insects are caught in mid-air. They may feed alone or in groups.



## And now for something beautiful continued

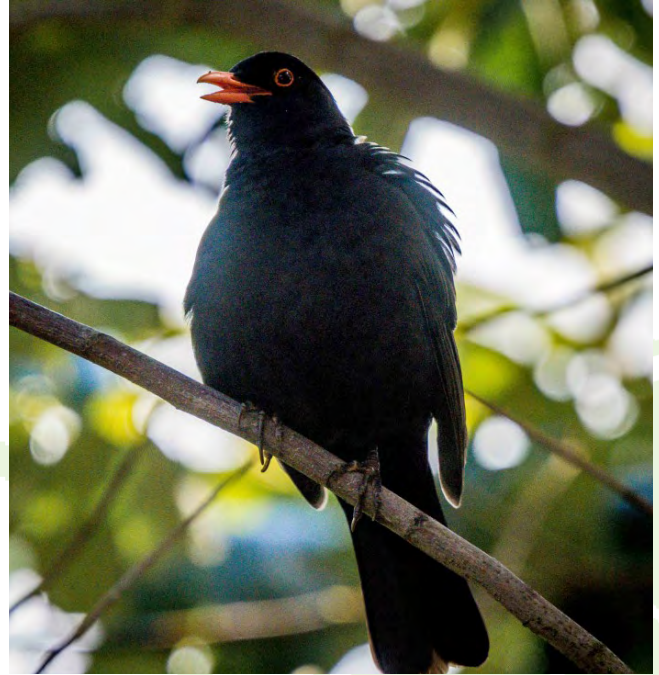
### New Holland Honeyeater



The New Holland Honeyeater is a species found throughout southern Australia. It was among the first birds to be scientifically described in Australia.

It is around 18 cm long and is mainly black, with a white iris, white facial tufts and yellow margins on its wing and tail feathers. It is a very active bird and rarely sits long enough to give an extended view. When danger approaches – such as a bird of prey - a group of honeyeaters will form together and give a warning call. Sexes are similar in looks with the exception that females are, on average, slightly smaller. They appear to be a socially monogamous bird with no sign of co-operative breeding.

### Common Blackbird



The Common Blackbird occurs naturally in Eurasia and North Africa. It was introduced to Victoria before 1862, and spread throughout Victoria, Tasmania, southern New South Wales and eastern South Australia, but its range has only increased marginally over the last 20 years.

It is omnivorous, eating a wide range of insects, earthworms, berries, and fruits.

Both sexes are territorial on the breeding grounds, with distinctive threat displays, but are more gregarious during migration and in wintering areas. Pairs stay in their territory throughout the year where the climate is sufficiently temperate. This common and conspicuous species has given rise to a number of literary and cultural references, frequently related to its song. Depending on latitude, the common blackbird may be resident, partially migratory, or fully migratory.

## Bandicoot



Bandicoots have v-shaped faces, ending with their prominent noses similar to proboscises. With their well attuned snouts, and sharp claws, the bandicoot is a fossorial digger – which is a fancy way of saying they are burrowers. They have small but fine teeth that allow them to easily chew their food.

The name bandicoot is an Anglicised version of a word from the Telugu language of South India which translates as 'pig-rat'. What we now call bandicoots are not found in India and bandicoot was originally applied to completely unrelated mammals and several species of large rats.



# Trivia and didactic whimsies

## Letting the cat out of the bag

A doctor holidaying in Europe met an old lawyer friend and asked him what he was doing there.

The lawyer replied, "Remember that lousy real estate I bought? Well, it caught fire, so here I am with the fire insurance proceeds. What are you doing here?"

The doctor replied, "Remember that lousy real estate I had? Well, the river overflowed, and here I am with the flood insurance proceeds." The lawyer looked puzzled.

"Gee," he asked, "how did you start the flood?"

## Little white lie

Bob, a 65-year-old, extremely wealthy widower, arrived at his Country Club with a breathtakingly beautiful 25 year-old woman. She knocked everyone's socks off with her youthful appeal and charm. She hung on to Bob's arm and listened intently to everything he said. His friends were flabbergasted.

At last they cornered him and asked, "Bob, how did you get your trophy girlfriend?"

Bob replied, "Girlfriend? She's my wife!" They were all bowled with this and asked, "How did you persuade her to marry you?" Bob said, "I lied about my age." His friends responded, "What, did you tell her you were only 50?"

Bob smiled and said, "No, I told her I was 90."

### Things Confucius did not say... but wishes he did

Man who wants pretty nurse must be patient.

*Man who leaps off cliff jumps to conclusion.*

Man who runs in front of car gets tired, but man who runs behind car gets exhausted.

*War does not determine who is right; it determines who is left.*

Man who drives like hell is bound to get there.

*Wise man does not keep sledge hammer and slow computer in same room.*

And, Confucius did not say. . .  
"A lion will not cheat on his wife, but Tiger Wood!"

## It all makes sense

A group of adults was taking a computer science course at a community centre. After a few weeks of classes, the teacher decided to have a bit of fun using a new approach to learning. He divided the class by sex and he put the men in one room, and the women in another. He then asked each group the same question – "I want you to spend the next 10 minutes to determine what gender computers ought to be.

They deliberated and reported back as follows. The men voted unanimously that computers should be referred to in the feminine gender for four reasons. The teacher asked them to share their four points.

They said the first reason why computers should be spoken of in the feminine gender is because no-one but their creator understands their internal logic. The second reason is because when computers communicate with each other, they speak in code language that only they and experts can understand. The third reason is because every mistake you make is stored on their hard drive for later retrieval. The fourth reason, the men said, is because as soon as you commit to one, you find yourself spending half your pay cheque on accessorising.

Now, don't scoff too hard because the women had the last word on this subject.

The women voted unanimously that computers must be in the masculine gender. Why?

First of all, in order to get their attention you have to turn them on. Secondly, they have a lot of data but still can't think for themselves. Thirdly, they're supposed to help you solve problems, but half the time they are the problem. And the final reason they gave was because as soon as you commit to one, you realise that if you'd waited a little longer, you could have got a better model.

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