

## Preface

My intent in producing this book has been to provide a coherent, comprehensive and correct history of Melbourne's inheritance of roads, streets and bridges. I believe that it is a story that deserves telling and preserving and am aware that others, perhaps a little silently, share this view. I certainly have received good feedback from the first edition. I also share the view of George Broadbent who observed in 1912 that "*There is no more common interest than the common road.*"<sup>1</sup> Broadbent was a pioneer Victorian cyclist and map-maker and one of the founders of the RACV. More broadly, the great Australian author and poet Mary Gilmore wrote<sup>2</sup> in 1922 that "*Give a man a road and he has a library which neither comes to an end nor comes cheap and common. History lies written in them for those that can read.*" I certainly share this view. In a paper<sup>3</sup> on the historical relevance of roads, I noted that they tell us stories about past times, not only through the way in which they were constructed, but also through an understanding of why and where they were built, of who used them and maintained them, and of who benefitted or suffered from them.

In writing this text I have assumed that you, good reader, will have ready independent access to a good road map of Melbourne. In the first edition I relied heavily on the excellent Melway directory and used the then-current edition as my gazetteer, final arbitrator, precedent-setter and master controller. Today Melway is still in print and is also on line at <http://online.melway.com.au/melway>. There are also a number of other excellent maps available on-line, including Google maps. Compared with paper-based road maps, the best of the on-line maps are usually more current and more realistic (rather than artistic) in their portrayal of local geography. Where specific historic maps are referred to within the text, wherever possible these are given as an [http](#) entry as this gives the reader access to more detail and enables the size of the book to be kept within practical proportions.

Although street and road names are based on Melway, there are also Metropolitan, State (SR) and National Route (NR) numbering systems used to aid motorists. They were introduced by the Country Roads Board (CRB) in 1964, in cooperation with the Traffic Commission and 43 municipal councils. A brief history of these Government Agencies is given in Sub-chapter 3.5 and Anderson 1994.

In 1996 VicRoads introduced a major modification by placing the M, A, B and C prefixes in front of the road numbers (which were sometimes also changed) to indicate the importance of the designated road. An M road is a motorway and A, B & C indicate roads of diminishing importance. These State Route systems have gained greater prominence with the wide use of satellite-based navigation systems. VicRoads used a far less public SN sequence of numbers to designate its major bridges.

However, the key alpha-numeric labelling concept used in this book to describe historic routes avoids confusing the labels with any of the many systems used over time for coding Melbourne's roads and streets. It has no significance outside of this text. The system is based on the structure of Chapters 4 to 6 that contains twelve generic groups of radial routes out of Melbourne, two sets of cardinal routes and one circumferential route. Each of the radials is examined in turn, working clockwise around city beginning at the right bank of the Yarra River and penultimately ending along its left bank, before finishing with the roads down the Yarra (see the list in the Table of Contents). Thus, routes to Williamston (WT) comprise the first of the 12 generic groups. Within that group, route WT1 is the first of a sequence of nine routes to the Williamstown area discussed in the text. Altogether, some 122 separate routes are covered in the full text. The routes are described fully in the text in Chapters 4 to 6 and are shown on the maps mentioned in those Chapters.

Notation in [square brackets], such as [9e], refers to survey *section lines*, which will be defined in Sub-chapter 2.1. Number pairs in { } brackets are map co-ordinates for the associated location.

As is normal practice with place names, I avoid using possessives with feature names, e. g. Queens Wharf, not Queen's Wharf. Particular routes are usually described from the perspective of a traveller leaving central Melbourne. The banks of rivers are described as left or right by assuming that the observer is looking downstream.

The bibliography uses standard Harvard style (e. g. Lay 2022 for this work) and maps are listed in the same way. The letters after the date (e. g. Hoddle 1840b) are used when more than one work by that person occurred in the year. The bibliography is in Sub-chapter 8.1 and the map list in Sub-chapter 8.2. Maps, plans and surveys are all called "maps" and are listed in Sub-chapter 8.2 by their compiler's name and compilation date.

This second edition primarily takes advantage of the enhanced presentation and distribution facilities and on-line map databases now available to authors and their readers.

## Acknowledgements

Andrew Brown-May set me on the path to this book when he asked me to write a few thousand words on the history of Melbourne's roads for "his" Encyclopaedia of Melbourne.<sup>4</sup> When I had finished that task, I realised that there was a much larger story to record - a story that was as yet largely untold and threatening to pass into oblivion. I guess I had had some preparation for the accidental duty as I had previously written a history of Australia's roads<sup>5</sup> as a Bicentennial task and then a history of the world's roads<sup>6</sup> that had begun as a chapter in a technical text<sup>7</sup> and ended as this book. For those happy quirks that led me to the current enjoyable challenge, I am deeply grateful.

I gained most help along the way from my wonderful wife Margaret who recognises and accepts my various manuscripts as my erstwhile mistresses. My various dogs have also assisted by reminding me that Melbourne roads were not primarily essay topics, but instead were made for walking and sniffing. Of course, I thank all those librarians and map custodians who so courteously assisted me. I pay tribute to the many authors of local histories - without their work this book would not have been possible. Finally, I acknowledge those many people who read and commented on parts of the text during its various incarnations. I am sure that their tolerance and tact will be rewarded in heaven.

Most of the maps and illustrations are from the collections of the wonderful State Library of Victoria and, because of their number, are succinctly but gratefully acknowledged where they occur by the term "SLV".

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<sup>1</sup> Broadbent, G. 1912

<sup>2</sup> Gilmore, M. 1922

<sup>3</sup> Lay, M. G. 2006

<sup>4</sup> Brown-May, A. & Swain, S. 2005

<sup>5</sup> Lay, M. G. 1984

<sup>6</sup> ---. 1992

<sup>7</sup> ---. 2009