

VicRoads Association

Newsletter No. 237



Artist's impression: Anzac Station

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,

This month, I propose to introduce Lithuania to you and later, tell you of the heart-breaking but heroic story of Biruta Don's family who migrated to Australia after the Second World War. I found the story she tells of her family's voyage to the other side of the world was most moving.

Her father, Antanas Leveris, was born on 14 June 1915 on a farm about five kilometres from Kudirkos Naumestis in Lithuania. It is marked in yellow on the map below. It was only one kilometre from the Šešupė River which is the border between Lithuania and Russia (Kaliningrad). Twenty-five kilometres to the south is Poland.

The Republic of Lithuania is one of three Baltic states – the others being Latvia and Estonia. They all lie on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea. Lithuania shares land borders with

Latvia to the north, Belarus to the east and south, Poland to the south, and the Russia province of Kaliningrad to the southwest. It has a maritime border with Sweden to the west on the Baltic Sea. Lithuania covers an area of 65,300 km² (25,200 sq mi), with a population of 2.8 million. Its capital and largest city is Vilnius (over 500,000 population). Lithuanians belong to the ethno-linguistic group of the Balts and speak Lithuanian, one of only a few living Baltic languages.

Kaliningrad was part of Germany until the Red Army seized control of it from the Nazis in 1945. It was ceded to the Soviet Union after the war in Europe ended. The city and seaport is now an exclave of the Russian Federation, detached by land from the rest of Russia. Kaliningrad is separated hundreds of kilometres west of the rest of Russia and currently, it is a flash point between Moscow and the rest of Europe as the fallout from Russian President Vladimir Putin's war reverberates beyond Ukraine.



Sandwiched between Lithuania and Poland – both of which are European Union and NATO members – Kaliningrad receives much of its supplies via routes through Lithuania and Belarus. Lithuania has recently announced that it would bar the transit through its territory of Kaliningrad-bound goods sanctioned by the E.U., including coal, metals and construction materials. Moscow has made serious threats that would have an impact on the Lithuanian people.

Aside from a brief period of independence from 1918 to 1940, Lithuania was occupied by Russia beginning in 1795. It was controlled by Germany for a brief period during the Second World War, and was again incorporated into the USSR in 1944. On March 11, 1990, Lithuania declared its

What's coming up

Occasional Lunches at Shoppingtown Hotel 12 noon

Our next lunch will be held on Monday 10 October 2022. There is no longer a requirement to contact Kelvin York – just turn up. Future lunches are on 7 November and 6 February 2023.

Dinner at Glen Waverley RSL Thursday 6 October at 6pm

Ken Vickery is our contact for this function. If you wish to come, please contact Ken on kenvickery@tpg.com.au or call him on 0409 561 168. Family and friends are most welcome.

Briefing on the North East Link Project Monday 17 October at 10.30am

A briefing on the project will be held at the Watsonia Information Hub, 17 Watsonia Rd, Watsonia. The briefing (including Q&A) is expected to last 90 minutes. There is no limitation on the size of the group but if you wish to attend, please contact Jim Webber on 0412 064 527 or jimwebber@optusnet.com.au. We currently have 19 attendees.

We will indicate a restaurant or hotel in the area for lunch.

Benalla/Shepparton Trip Thursday 17 – Friday 18 November

The plan is as follows:

Thursday 17 November: Drive to Benalla in the morning and meet for lunch (venue to be advised). At 2pm we commence a tour of the LS Precast facility which will last for 90 minutes. Free time afterwards although the local gallery is well worth a visit. In the evening we will have dinner with present and Ex-CRB/ VicRoads staff from region (venue to be advised). We stay overnight in Benalla.

Friday 18 November: Breakfast in Benalla, then drive to Shepparton and meet at the Shepparton Art Museum (open 10am - 4pm). At around 12noon we will take lunch at the Museum Café, then free afternoon – possible visits to Shepparton Motor Museum, Shepparton Heritage Centre, Gallery Kaiela, Bangerang Cultural Centre, and then return to Melbourne.

Please advise Jim Webber on 0412 064 527 or jimwebber@optusnet.com.au if you wish to attend. We currently have 23 attendees.

The tour of LS Precast will require all attendees to wear steel capped boots or shoes. For those without boots/ shoes, we will endeavour to borrow these from other members.

– We appeal to members who own steel capped safety boots, shoes or gumboots to lend them to us. If you can help, please advise Jim so that we can pick them up and return them to their owners after the trip.

Annual Golf Day Friday 2 December 2022

The 8th Annual VicRoads Golf Day will be held on Friday 2 December at 12 noon at the Green Acres Golf Club in East Kew. The 2021 winner was Roy Gilmour.

The course upgrade (greens and irrigation) is scheduled to be completed by the end of October. The above date will not change irrespective of the state of the upgrade works.

Please contact Jim Webber on jimwebber@optusnet.com.au or SMS on 0412064527 by Friday 18 November if you wish to play and if you wish to share a cart.

Christmas Lunch Monday 12 December 2022, 12 noon

This will be held at Glen Waverley RSL. Please advise Jim Webber via the contact information above if you wish to attend.

Introduction continued from page 1



Hot air balloons over Vilnius.

independence by a unanimous vote of its newly elected parliament.

Ethnic Lithuanians make up about five-sixths of the country's population and Lithuania has the most

homogeneous population in the Baltic States. In 2015, the population of Lithuania stood at over 2,900,000 - 84.2% of whom are ethnic Lithuanians who speak Lithuanian, which is the official language of the country. Several sizeable minorities exist, such as Poles (6.6%), Russians (5.8%), Belarusians (1.2%) and Ukrainians (0.5%).

Lithuania's economic freedom score is 75.8, making its economy the 17th freest in the 2022 Index. Lithuania is ranked 12th among 45 countries in the Europe region, and its overall score is above the regional and world averages.

The state is largely defined by a secular order. In general, religious dogmas do not influence politics or law (as in some other EU countries). However, about three quarters of Lithuanians belong to the Roman Catholic Church which plays a privileged role in certain public policies, such as education and culture.

Biruta's full story of her family's journey to Australia can be found under News from Members.

David Jellie,
Chairman and Editor

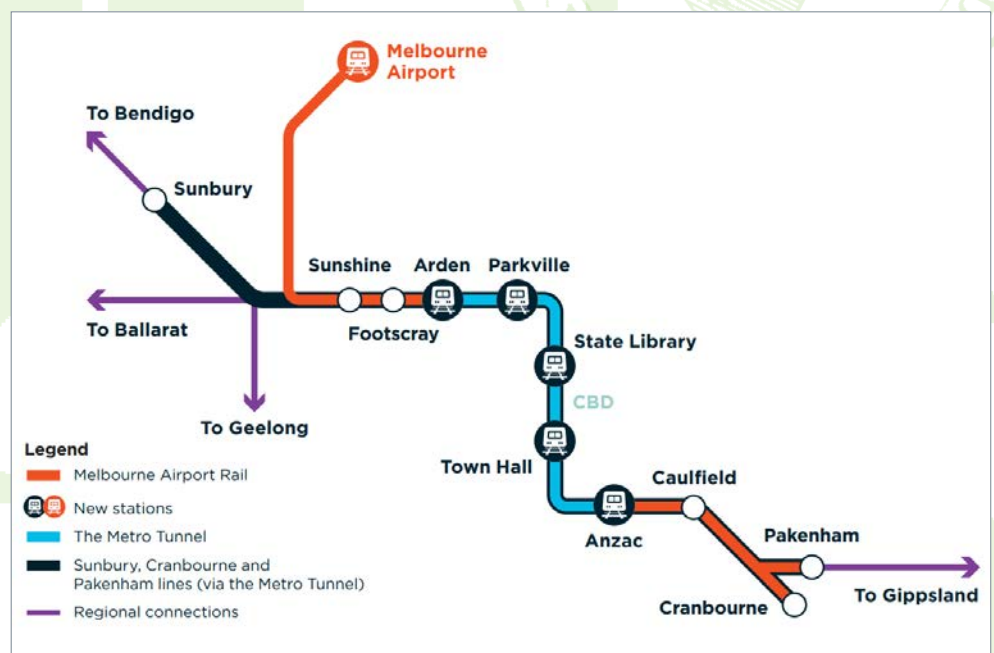
What's been happening

Metro Tunnel and Melbourne Airport Rail Link Projects

Because of constraints on space this visit was conducted in two similar sessions – on 30 August they described the Parkville Station and on 6 September they described the Anzac Station. Each session also described the Airport Rail Link. Twenty members and friends attended each presentation. It is beyond my capability to report comprehensively on these projects but I will attempt to provide an overview of them below.

The diagram shows how the two projects connect with each other. The airport trains connect directly into the new Metro Tunnel Project so that passengers from the airport can be delivered right into the city and be able to connect with other routes – including regional links. Trains are scheduled to run at 10 minute intervals and travel time to the centre of the city will be 30 minutes.

Megan Cusack, Strategic Communications Manager of Melbourne Airport Rail, provided an overview of the Airport Rail Project. The highlights of the Melbourne Airport Rail Project are show on the map on the next page. The exact location of the station at the airport is still





under discussion. From the airport, the rail will be elevated until it crosses Maribyrnong River where it will come down to grade before entering the tunnel being constructed under the Metro Tunnel Project.

The most likely form for the bridge construction over the river is a four metre deep steel box girder launched progressively from one end. Civil works of some aspects of the project have just commenced and the project is expected to be completed by 2029. The work will be delivered in a number of contract packages including incentivised contracts and alliances. Close attention will be given to the management of the interfaces between contracts.

At the 6 September session, Ashan Jayasuriya (Design Interface Manager) and Henry Hunyh (Senior Project Engineer) briefed us on the design and construction of the bridge across the Maribyrnong River – detailing environmental and construction constraints as well as Paula Williams, Senior Precinct Manager (who, incidentally, used to work at VicRoads), briefed us on works south of the Yarra River concentrating mainly on the stage construction of Anzac Station. She showed an animation on the staging of the construction of the tram tracks in St Kilda Road during the construction of the underground works.

At the 30 August session, Eli Firestone outlined the stage construction of the Parkville Station.

The complexity of the stations means that the estimates of overall project costs for the Metro Tunnel Project and the Suburban Rail Link can only be appropriate at best.

An artistic representation of the finished Anzac station is shown above. The roof is complete and work is proceeding on the concourse. It shows the connection between the tram station at surface and the underground rail.

I want to thank Greg O'Farrell, Megan Cusack, Ashan Jayasuriya, Henry Hunyh and Paula Williams for providing such an interesting session for us.

A few members dragged me down to Young and Jacksons afterwards for a very pleasant lunch.



Vale

It is with the deepest sadness that I inform you of the death of Leo William Russell (6 August 1927 to 6 July 2022).

Leo grew up on a dairy farm in Mt Moriac, about 20 km west of Geelong. This area must have had engineering in its water because Ron Angus and Robin Underwood also came from there.

He attended Mt Moriac Primary School, sharing the horseback journey with two other kids. He was Dux of St Joseph's Secondary College Geelong in his final year, although he had only three students to beat after which he attended the Gordon Institute of Technology Geelong for his Civil Engineering Diploma

Leo was keen on cricket and football. He played cricket for Barrabool in the Geelong Cricket Association and made one century, 107, at age 21 in the 1948/49 season. However he said he was a bit lucky because he was dropped 3 times.

He played football for Modewarre Football Club which is next door to Mt Moriac. At age 20 he played in the 1947 premiership and later the 1952 premiership. He was the last survivor of the 1947 premiership. He and his brother, John, were the last two left from the 1952 premiership. Unfortunately his football career was hampered by illness and injury. In 1949 Modewarre, went through the home and away season undefeated. However, according to the Geelong Advertiser – on the eve of the finals Modewarre lost three of their best players – Leo, his brother Tony and Ian Hovey to polio. They were all admitted to the Geelong Infectious Diseases Hospital. Modewarre lost the second Semi Final and the Grand Final. After eight months in a splint, Leo left hospital in March 1950 and resumed playing in 1951. The polio vaccine was introduced in 1955.

After winning the 1952 premiership Modewarre found themselves in the 1953 Grand Final against the undefeated Portarlington. Leo broke his leg in the second quarter, and at half time he was still lying on the rubdown table waiting for someone to find a shop with a phone to ring an ambulance. It took six months to heal. At age 26 Leo had played his last game of football. Modewarre generously wore black armbands on the Saturday after Leo's death, and had a good win.

The main social life for Leo was attending the local dances. One of these dances was a fancy dress put on for the sailors, and Athol (his future wife) was there dressed as a hayseed, with a bucket for a hat. At the end of the night, to avoid being pursued by a drunken sailor she asked Leo for the last dance. He offered her a lift home and asked her for a date to the pictures. She was quite a catch and after two years of courtship he finally wore her down and the marriage was arranged for October 1953. But the broken leg from the football Grand Final in September caused a postponement and they finally married in April 1954.

Leo had been working for the Harbour Trust in Geelong when later in 1954 he was offered a job as an Engineer with the Country Roads Board. He had a choice between Ballarat and Bairnsdale and chose Bairnsdale because a house was provided. 56 Rupert Street became their home till 1970 when they moved a few houses along to number 37.

Leo enjoyed a few drinks in the early Bairnsdale days but asthma and family cut that short and he became a teetotaler at age 32. His interest in sport meant the family was always involved in football, cricket and tennis. He was very supportive and was President of the Bairnsdale Junior Cricket Association.

Leo walked to Mass at St Mary's Catholic Church in Bairnsdale every morning and was active with the Catholic Church, St Vincent De Paul, and the National Civic Council. He loved horse racing and was a Life Member of the Hibernian Race Club in Bairnsdale. Every Saturday afternoon involved the races on the radio, TV and the form guide.

Bairnsdale Football Club was at the end of their street and Leo was a regular spectator. He was very proud when his son, Chris, played in Bairnsdale's 1981 premiership.

Leo retired in May 1986 after 31 years with the CRB. Retirement provided plenty of time for he and Athol to join family and friends during the winter months in Queensland – in places like Rockhampton, Toowoomba, Hervey Bay, Cairns, and Brisbane. They liked it so much that in 2006, after 52 years in Bairnsdale, Leo and Athol moved to the warmer climes of Hervey Bay where their daughter, Colleen, lived. They were a 10 minute walk to the beach and backing on to a gum tree lined walking track. The move was seamless and the new surrounds were just what the doctor ordered.

Leo knew all the TABs where he could quickly duck in depending on his whereabouts to put on his weekly Saturday bet and chat to the locals. The local pub TAB eventually won the race for his money. He would back one



Neil Jephcott, Athol and Leo Russell, Geoff Reddick, Peter Lowe and Merv Williams at Leo's retirement – 1986.

horse for a \$3 win and \$2 place and once, surprisingly, had a streak of four winners in a row, and he went out a winner. His last bet was on the Saturday before he died on a horse he had been backing for a long time – Sirius Suspect. It hadn't won for 12 starts. But Leo was loyal and this time it paid off.

The increasing dependence on assistance from carers meant that in December 2017, Leo and Athol moved to Ozcare Aged Care Facility. A week later Athol died at age 88. Leo realized how fortunate he had been for nearly 64 years of marriage and things would never be the same, but despite the devastating loss he got on with life the best he could.

He made the effort to know the names of Ozcare residents and staff and showed an interest in their lives.

He appreciated everyone's help and always said thanks. He was on the phone regularly to find out the latest news of his numerous family and friends. And the football progress of his grandson Tom Atkins at the Geelong Cats was top priority. Leo would have been very proud when the day after his death Tom wore the black armband and was in the best three players on the ground in the Cats great win over ladder leaders Melbourne.



Leo with his Tom Atkins hat.

Appeal for information about Long Jack Ryan

There were two men named Jack Ryan who worked for the CRB, both of whom served in the RAAF over the same period of time. To make matters more complicated, they both worked in Dandenong Division. To distinguish them, one was dubbed 'Long Jack' and the other 'Little Jack' - based on their height. I want to include an entry for each of them in *Roads to War*.

I think I have found enough information about Little Jack. He was the son of a legendary Overseer with the CRB, 'Bull' Ryan, and he started work with the Board in 1934. His name was John Claude Ryan. During the war he enlisted with the RAAF, and after his discharge he resumed work with the CRB. He was the Divisional Engineer's Clerk at Traralgon Division and Dandenong Division – working for Frank Docking in both positions. His Service Record archive has not been digitized but, next time I am in Canberra, I will be able to look at the original file and then I will be able to complete the entry for him.



Little Jack Ryan at work in Dandenong Division in the 1970s and being farewelled on his retirement by the Chairman, Mr R.E.V. Donaldson - date unknown

I know that Long Jack started at Dandenong Division in 1950. I don't know what he did there. He doesn't appear to be in the CRB phonebooks of 1973 and 1977 on our website but Peter McCullough has a photograph of him at the first meeting of the VicRoads Association – then called the CRB Retired Persons Association. That meeting was convened in 1978.

The phone directory of Dandenong Division at the time had his initials as T.J. and the Department of Veteran Affairs nominal roll for the RAAF lists seven men with the name T. J. Ryan, only two of whom were born in Victoria. None of them match what little I know of Long Jack. There are over 850 men and women named Ryan in the WW2 archives of the RAAF so it is a bit like the proverbial needle in the haystack trying to find him. It is quite common in the archives to have anomalies about initials and sometimes nick names like 'Jack' have nothing to do with someone's name.

But I do have a photo of him taken at his retirement – as shown below. It pictures the Dandenong Divisional Engineer, Frank Docking shaking hands with the big man.



When I was searching through the archives, I thought I had found him only to find the physical description of his height did not match. In fact of all of them, I only found one over 6 feet tall and he was a mechanic from Queensland.

I would like to find out as much as I can about him – what he did, where did he live, what were his qualifications, was he married, did he have family, are there any photographs of him, when he retired, where did he retire to, did he

mention his war service and the like? There is quite a lot about him in Reminiscences of Life in the Country Roads Board but I have found that there was some confusion with the story of Little Jack Ryan.

I believe he was a bit of a larger-than-life character so I am hopeful that those of you who worked in Dandenong Division can help me fit the clues together.

News from members

Biruta Don

This is the story Biruta sent to me about her family leaving Lithuania to come to Australia.



Antanas Leveris in the Lithuanian Army, 1937-1938

'My father, Antanas Leveris, was born in Lithuania and died in Australia in 1991. I will always be grateful to my parents for creating a better future for me and my three brothers in Australia.

Antanas was born on 14 June 1915 on a farm in Bubleliai about 5 kilometres from Kudirkos Naumestis in Lithuania. It was only one kilometre from the Šešupė River which is the border between Lithuania and the Russian province, Kaliningrad.

Antanas was born during the First World War and he was only two years old when Lithuania's Act of Independence was signed on 16 February 1918. In 1927, my grandfather, Jonas Leveris, died and Antanas had to leave school and help run the family farm. He was just 12 years of age. My father served in the Lithuanian Army in 1937-1938 as part of the Lithuania's National Service obligations.

After the outbreak of the Second World War, in 1940, Lithuania was occupied by invading Russian forces. The other Baltic States of Latvia and Estonia were likewise invaded. Soviet authorities compelled the independent Baltic governments to resign. The Presidents of Estonia and Latvia were imprisoned and later died in Siberia. Under Soviet supervision, new puppet communist governments were established through rigged elections and shortly thereafter, the newly elected People's Assemblies passed resolutions requesting admission into the Soviet Union. In June 1941 these new Soviet governments carried out mass deportations of "enemies of the people". The Russians deported about 12,600 Lithuanians to Siberia.

Only a few weeks later, the German army invaded the Baltic states, and drove the Russian forces back. At first, many Balts greeted the Germans as liberators when they occupied the area. In Lithuania, a revolt broke out and an independent provisional government was established. It

was hoped that the Germans would re-establish Baltic independence. Such political hopes soon evaporated and Baltic cooperation became less forthright or ceased altogether. The Germans aimed to annex the Baltic territories to the Third Reich where "suitable elements" were to be assimilated and "unsuitable elements" exterminated. The Baltic area was the only eastern region intended to become a full province of the Third Reich.

Fortunately, my father and my mother's family members survived these terrifying and uncertain times. In 1943, Antanas, at 28 years of age, married Ona Grigaityte, 20 years old, in the Naumestis Catholic Church.



Ona Grigaitite, seated on the left, with her brothers and sisters in the late 1930s, and Antanas and Ona on their wedding day, 1943.

Soon after their marriage – in 1944 – they fled Lithuania by horse and cart. They were being bombed by the Russians as the German troops were also retreating from Lithuania (and Poland) following a second invasion by Russia. My parents survived this journey despite being separated once when they were individually fossicking for food. They were reunited after crossing the bridge at Stettin (Szczecin in Poland). Soon after it was bombed thus stopping the exodus from Lithuania. They were lucky to have a friend in the cart who spoke German and Polish so he could help get food and provisions. The refugees had to keep killing their

horses for food and fleeing in the middle of winter with no shelter made life extremely hazardous.



1944: Antanas and Ona (rear seat) fled Lithuania by horse and cart through Poland to Germany

Their first son, Antanas, was born in Poland. However the winter of 1944 in Poland was cruelly cold and he died – due to exposure to the cold and the shortage of food and shelter. Another son, Gediminas, was born in 1945 and a third son, Pranas, was born in 1947 in Germany. They were both born in a Displaced Persons Camp operated in Blomberg, in the British Sector of occupied Germany, which housed refugees from Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia.



Gediminas (back) and Pranas in Naples – 1948.

In 1948, Antanas migrated by ship from Italy to Australia without his family, since Ona and the two boys were being cared for in a Naples hospital.

The baby, Pranas, died of measles in Naples in 1949 and soon after Ona and Gediminas left on the *Anna Salen* refugee ship from Naples to Sydney, Australia.

The *Anna Salen* which left Naples on 22 May 1949 and arrived in Sydney on 22 June 1949 with Ona and Gediminas on board.



Antanas and Ona's route from Lithuania to Australia on separate ships.

Antanas was reunited with Ona and Gediminas at the Bathurst Immigrant Reception and Training Centre. Soon after their arrival, Antanas drove them to Gulpa not far from the NSW and Victorian border to live in tents. I was born in 1951 in Deniliquin. We lived in a number of tents. My father was required to work for the Victorian Government from 1950 to 1952 cutting trees for railway sleepers. Gulpa is now a National Park between Deniliquin, NSW and Echuca, Victoria.



1950: My father on the left felling a tree in Gulpa with another refugee

1951- Tent life in Gulpa for the Leveris family (Antanas Leveris).



In 1952, Antanas, Ona and their two children moved to St Marys, NSW, on the outskirts of Sydney. The twins, Romauldas and Vytautas, were born there in December 1953.

Antanas and his family operated a firewood and fencing business in St Marys until Antanas died on 5 July 1991. He was aged 76 years and died suddenly in his sleep due to a blood clot. This was just before the dissolution of the USSR in December 1991 and independence being granted to Lithuania.

Ona celebrated her 98th birthday on 19th March 2022. Her children Gedas, Biruta, Romas and Vyautas all married and are retired – with a total of eight grandchildren.'



1954 Leveris family photo St Marys NSW
Antanas, Gediminas, Ona, Biruta (Don) plus twins Romauldas and Vytautas (left to right)



1991 – The Leveris family after Antanas' funeral.
Back row males (L to R): Vytautas, Gediminas, Romaldas
Centre row (L to R): Kay (daughter of Gediminas), Biruta, Olga, Yvonne (daughter of Gediminas), Shirley (wife of Gediminas) and Ona Leveris (bottom centre)

So that was Biruta's story. I think you will agree that it was heroic, tragic and heart-lifting and I am so glad that Biruta sent it to me.

But it has not quite finished because Ona has also told her story which was published in an on-line magazine called *Primer*. It was written by Naomi Chrisoulakis and photographed by Cybele Malinowski.



"I have been a widow twice. Forty-eight years I was married to Antony. He was from a nice family who lived close to my home in Lithuania; I was 20 and he was 28. We were happy, but it was wartime in our country, and we were invaded by the Communists and then the Nazis. As we tried to escape, my six-month-old baby froze to death. We ended up in a very bad refugee camp, where we hardly had any food. One piece of bread a day, and I had to give half to my two year old. Then, he got measles and he died. It was a terrible time.

When we finally made it to Australia, life was very hard. I only had two dresses; no one wanted to rent a house to the "reffos". I slept in a tent for a while. But eventually we built a business, we bought a house, we raised four children and we always felt very lucky to be in this country – Australia is beautiful and looks after all the people.

One morning, I was awake before Antony and I thought: "I'll let him sleep in a little while." But when I went to wake him, he was cold. I felt it very deep in my heart. I was very sad, but I had to accept it: what can you do? My kids took me everywhere, but I was lonely in the house by myself.

We always feel very lucky to be in this country – Australia is beautiful.

I kept going to the local sports club and being with my friends including Vyt, a nice Lithuanian man. He had known my husband, he was a nice man. We got together, he loved me and he became my second husband. His family became my family, and I was happy again. His wife had died too, so he understood. He was a very good man who would help everyone. We did everything together for 25 years.

But he passed away from cancer in 2016 at 93. Since then, it's just me. I became very lonely again. I love people. I don't like to stay in the house, I like to be with family and friends.

I never think of the past, I only dream of what's in front of me. The past – never mind. You have to think forward.

My kids help me a lot. My step-granddaughter lives with me and sometimes we have a whisky at night and watch *Married At First Sight*. My family keeps me happy. I still cook and clean, I never want to go into a nursing home. I have lots of friends who live in my street and close by – some widows, some not – and I have them over for tea. I like to go to the club and sometimes I just get on the community bus and the driver takes me around all day long – you never know who you'll meet."

Biruta has since told me that, despite stating at the end of the article that she never wants to go to a nursing home,



Ona has come to the realisation that she now needs high residential aged care. Last week Ona moved to a nursing home in Sydney. She is looking forward to making it to at least 100 years – which is only a little more than a year away. She is excited that the Leveris story will be printed in our Newsletter.

We extend our warmest wishes to Ona and our gratitude for sharing her story with us.

Francis Sin

Francis wrote:

Dear David,

Thank you for your hard work on the production of the Newsletter.

I found the latest one most interesting because two of my direct bosses at the CRB were mentioned. I joined the CRB in 1979 as a Class 2 Engineer. My immediate superiors were Sean Cribbin and Ted Barton for quite a few years.

During those years, I did some research with Ted on the impact of the then new A Class trams on the inductive loop detectors. Our conclusion from the research was that the speed control systems of the A Class trams produced a lot of high frequency and high power signals which caused the inductive loop electronics to lock up for minutes. During these lock ups, the detector would stop operating. The noise was worst at start up and braking – exactly at the stop lines at an intersection.

I am not sure if the inductive loop detector electronics have improved in the last 20 years (since my retirement) but would think that the principles of motor speed control

systems for electric vehicles would resemble that of the tram system (by pulse width modulation or by frequency control).

I support Ted's suggestion that the DoT should investigate this further since electric vehicles will become the predominant mode of car transport in the near future.

My best wishes

Keep up the good work, David.

Francis Sin

Joan Tucker

I was surprised and delighted to receive a call from Joan Tucker. Joan is 93 years young. She sounds as energetic as ever although she has arthritis and now uses a walking frame.

She is still living on her own in Pascoe Vale but she has good support around her. She can't understand why people complain so much – typical of Joan's positive attitude. She reckons there are a lot more people worse off than she is. She enjoys receiving our newsletter and she passes it on to one of her carers who is a bit of a fan. And she is still has time to be the Treasurer at her local church

Joan rang to say that she used to work with a lady in Accounts Branch who she thought was Latvian. Her name was Erika Stokans. I found this photograph of Joan's retirement in Newsletter190 (June 2016) which shows Erika.



Joan's retirement (1988)

Back row: Erika Stokans, Anne Green, Margaret Bennett, Lynne Anderson, Sheila Finnegan

Front row: Stella Airey, Barbara Salmena, Fay Paull, Marjorie Phillips, Joan Tucker, Martha Whan

We extend our warmest regards to Joan.

LEST WE FORGET



Roads to War

Nick Szwed has recently posted the latest draft on the VicRoads Association website so that those of you who are connected to the internet can read it on line. I have separated it into chapters. For those of you who aren't connected you might be able to get someone to print it off – but be warned, it is a pretty large document. I have posted the full version on line but it will require heavy editing for publication. In this way, the Association will have access to the maximum amount of information.

It is nearing completion – I would say about 97%. I spent a week in the National Archives in Canberra and was able to confirm some details and solve a few puzzles. However there are still some people who require further investigation. They are Guy Baxter, Cecil Haylock, Maxwell Stuart (surveyor), Gordon Wilson, Mac Wilkinson, Allen Archibald, and Michael Doyle (who served in the Korean War). There are also some Vietnam Nashos that I haven't been able to contact. They are: Bob Adams, Ken Arthur, David Bryan, Kevin O'Keefe, David Patterson, Brian Scantlebury, Rod Smith and Doug Walsh.

There are a couple of others whose archives evade me although I do have some anecdotal information. They are: Paddy O'Donnell (there is only one document in his archive – a Prisoner of War internment card), Bob Eastick (who transferred from the Army to the RAAF – or vice versa), and Bob Handley (who was a Colonel but he does not appear to have an archive).

If you have any details about these people, no matter how trivial, please contact me.

I would really appreciate it if you read it and provide me with feedback. If you can provide any further details and especially, any photos of them, please let me know. You might also know of some omissions.



Frank Jackson's enlistment photo.

Lance Corporal Frank Wolfe Jackson VX 29148

Frank was born in Bairnsdale. He was 21 when he enlisted at Sale in June 1940. His occupation was a draftsman. In *Reminiscences of Life in the Country Roads Board*, Frank described his early experience seeking work at the height of the Depression.

"I left school at the end of 1935 and jobs were hard to come by. Alec

Archibald was the Divisional Engineer in Bairnsdale and he was looking for a junior draftsman. He came round

to my home and asked if I would like a job and that was how I started. One of his earliest memories was being an escort on a pay round with Les Starling. We used to draw the money from the bank on the afternoon of the day before so we could get an early start. We always covered a lot of ground and we had to be back at the office for work the next day. Sometimes we didn't get home until 2.30 am.

This particular day we drew the money out. It would have been a couple of thousand pounds. I decided it was time for me to learn how to use the automatic pistols we took on the rounds. There were three of them locked in the office safe. We had ten rounds for the whole lot and they were very carefully counted up every 30 June for the sake of the Government Auditor. One gun was a Browning and the other two were Colts - so the mechanics of the two types were different. I didn't know anything about guns and Les decided to show me. He took the magazine out of both guns and said, "Now when you take the magazine out of this one, the safety lock comes on and nothing happens". He demonstrated. "The other one is different. When you take the magazine out the safety lock doesn't come on, just like that." And he thought there would be just a faint click. There was an unholy BANG as the thing went off and drilled a hole in the floor within an inch of my right toe. I jumped out the back window."

After his enlistment in June 1940, he trained in Albury and Seymour and was promoted to Lance Corporal. He disembarked for Singapore in February 1941 and moved directly to Malaya. He was reported missing in March 1942 and on 9 June 1942 his record was stamped PRISONER OF WAR. Below this, in barely visible type, it said 'Rec. from Jap at Changi P.W. Camp 5/9/43 Singapore' and below that, 'Disembarked Sydney 10/10/45'. We can only wonder what the intervening period was like for Frank.

There is nothing in the archives about the period of time spent as a POW but I suspect that Frank remained in Changi for the duration of the war. Because he was a draftsman, Frank was asked to draw a map of the camp. At war's end, Frank brought the plan home with him. Sometime in the 1960s he thought he would visit Singapore and Changi. He was curious to see what it was like and to see if his hut was still standing. However the prison governor would not allow Frank to enter the grounds but he did allow him to view the camp from an elevated position in a nearby tower. When Frank reached the viewing area he unrolled his plan. The governor was curious to see what it was and Frank explained the background to it. The governor demanded it from Frank, but Frank refused to hand it over saying that if he was not allowed to enter the camp, the governor could not have it. The governor



LEST WE FORGET

changed his mind and let Frank into the grounds. Frank had intended to donate it to them at any rate.

Frank had one shoulder lower than the other. This was a result of an unprovoked beating he received from a Japanese officer. In October 1946, Frank became engaged to Shirley Weaver of Brighton and they married in October 1947. This leads me to think that Frank did not return to Bairnsdale after the war but remained in Melbourne where he resumed his career with the CRB. In 1947, Frank married Shirley at Melbourne Grammar School Chapel.



Frank Jackson at his retirement in 1979.

The Electoral Roll of 1949 lists him as a draftsman but later he was appointed the Pipe Testing Officer in Bridge Branch. I recall Frank as a tall, handsome man with impeccable handwriting.

Frank retired in 1979 having given the Board 42 years of service. He died in Beaumaris in December 1995.

Trivia and didactic whimsies

Faint Praise

When Peters learned that he was being fired, he went to see the head of human resources. "Since I've been with the firm for so long," he said, "I think I deserve at least a letter of recommendation."

The human resources director agreed and said he'd have the letter that next day. The following morning, Peters found the letter on his desk. It read, "Jonathan Peters worked for our company for eleven years. When he left us, we were very satisfied."

Apologies – you'll see why!

A man went into a pet shop.

"Hi, I want to buy a parrot ... how much are those on the bottom shelf?"

"Twenty Dollars each," said the owner.

"Not bad," said the man, "How much are those on the middle shelf?"

"Forty dollars each," replied the owner.

"Hmmm," said the man, "Not bad at all, but the ones on the top shelf are the best of all, how much are they?"

"Sixty dollars," said the owner, "but you will have to pay for them at twenty dollars a week for the next three weeks if you want one."

"That's strange," said the man, "Why is that?"

"That's because they are on higher perches."

And now for something beautiful

I am afraid I have run out of space so I will have to hold this over until the next newsletter. To compensate, I suggest that those of you who are connected to the internet could no better than to go to

Max Bruch: Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor with María Dueñas | NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra to see and hear something beautiful.

David Jellie
Editor pdjellie@hotmail.com