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Dear Members,

I wrote this introduction a while ago but shelved it because I thought the heart on my sleeve was getting too big.

I am becoming a grumpy old man. I have been on the road quite a bit in the last few months, both in the city and the country. I don't know what you think, but I reckon our politeness and consideration on the roads has deteriorated into a sort of simmering road rage. I don't know the underlying cause(s) for this but there are many factors that contribute - age, driving experience, how you feel on the day, road conditions, congestion, fatigue and the like. However, I wonder if we are seeing changes because of our new life styles - mobile phones (read distraction), individualism (rather than community spirit), conceit (more access to expensive or high-powered cars), larger vehicles (giving drivers more confidence because of their commanding presence) and just plain bad manners and selfishness.

It seems to me that drivers are becoming more impatient and intolerant of other road users. Here are some of the things that bug me, in no particular order.

The first is drivers who approach an intersection at speed and stop about half a car length beyond the stop line. If they have half a chance, they will cut into traffic without stopping.

Tailgaters! The Princes Freeway to Geelong is a favourite haunt. I find it difficult to keep a space in front of me because these drivers cut in and sit on the bumper bar of the car in front of them - at high speed.

Drivers wanting to turn right at an intersection without indicating, annoy me as well. They sit at an intersection and when the light turns green, they then indicate that they propose to turn at the last minute. If they had indicated earlier, other motorists could weigh up their options of which lane to take. I am also annoyed by drivers speeding past in the left lane and then cutting back in when a parked vehicle blocks their passage. However, I have to be careful about this one. Traffic engineers want to see all lanes occupied to clear as much traffic from intersections in the shortest time as possible.

Likewise, I get annoyed with people who pull out of a parallel park without indicating as if they have right of way. I was involved in a crash like this (as a passenger) when a driver pulled out of a parking space without indicating.

I also get angry with drivers in slow traffic who don't give way to pedestrians crossing the road. Don't suggest to me that pedestrians should use pedestrian crossings. Take Glenferrie Road in Hawthorn. Pedestrian crossings are hundreds of metres apart. Surely you can't expect pedestrians to cover that sort of distance to cross two lanes of traffic. Stopping for a vulnerable pedestrian to cross the street in slow moving traffic does not usually delay the driver's journey one whit. By the way - I think we should abandon pedestrian activated lights at intersections with automated signals for road traffic. Make the pedestrian movements automatic too. I often see pedestrians who fail to push the button by half a second and then cross the road against a red light. In such cases, the light should automatically be green. Pedestrians are road users too.

I wish we could reduce traffic during school pick-up and delivery times. The problem is that traffic congestion in the vicinity of schools peaks for a period about an hour before classes commence and for a similar period at the end of the school day. The cause of the congestion is a sudden influx of parents dropping off or collecting their children, school buses unloading or loading students and students arriving at or leaving the school grounds. At the same time teachers will be arriving at or leaving the school and there will be parents (sometimes with pre-school children) accompanying their children to school on foot.

The problem appears to be becoming more acute as a result of a variety of factors such as:

- Increasing incidence of car ownership and more children travelling to and from school by private car.
- A perception that children are no longer safe travelling to and from school unaccompanied.
- At the end of the school day, parents' vehicles parked outside the school gates waiting for their children to emerge.
- Most schools are not designed to provide for one way traffic flow into and out of the school or off-street parking for parents' vehicles.
- Some cars double park or park illegally for short periods in the vicinity of the school thus adding to congestion and increasing risk.
- Lack of separation between pedestrians, cars and buses.
- More senior students own or have access to a vehicle and drive themselves to school.

My son, Dugald, once lived next door to a well-known private school. One morning he was backing his car out only to find a Toorak Tractor parked right across his driveway. There was no-one in it. When the driver came back, she would not apologise as she said she was only away for five minutes.



Another danger lurks at school crossings. A Victorian parliamentary inquiry into air pollution has been told Australia is decades behind other countries, where laws protect the air kids breathe. Our rising population and traffic congestion were creating a perfect storm for asthma and other health problems, the experts warned. Air pollution increases up to 300 per cent at school pick-up times.

As an immediate first step, the experts urged the government to stop parents from keeping their engines running as they wait to pick up their children. But they said long-term solutions were also needed, including restrictions on childcare centres on busy roads.

I really don't need to mention it but mobile phone usage while driving is still a problem. It is as if it is dangerous for other drivers to use phones but it is OK for me. I often see drivers stopped at intersections looking down on their laps - mostly checking their messages or their navigation system. I don't even like drivers eating while they are driving.

What do you think?

WHAT'S COMING UP

Please remember that partners and friends are always welcome to our events.

Occasional Lunches at Shoppingtown Hotel, 12 noon.

Our next lunch will be held on Monday 9 October and the last one for 2023 is scheduled for 6 November. There is no longer a requirement to contact Kelvin York - just turn up.

Dinner and drinks at Glen Waverley RSL - Thursday 5 October at 5.30 pm for 6.00 pm

Please note the earlier start for this function. Parking in the adjacent car park is becoming a problem and an earlier start at 5.30 pm should ensure that everyone gets a convenient park.

As usual, Ken Vickery is the contact for this function. If you wish to come, please text or call him on 0409 561 168 or send him an email on kenvickery@tpg.com.au

Annual Golf Day - 27 October 2023

The 8th Annual Golf Day will be at the Green Acres Golf Club, East Kew on Friday 27 October at 12 noon. Please note the change of date given in the last newsletter due to coring and sanding of the greens.

Please let Jim Webber know by 18 October if you wish to play and if you wish to share a cart. His contact details are jameswebber1717@gmail.com or SMS 0412 064 527.

Ballarat/Bendigo Trip - Wednesday 15 November to Friday 17 November 2023.

Although we have developed an itinerary, travellers are free to pursue their own interests and may drop out and re-join as the fancy may take them.

Our itinerary has been described in detail in the last two newsletters and I will provide just a brief summary below.

Wednesday 15 November

We will meet at the office of Regional Roads Victoria (RRV) in Ballarat at 11.00 am. The address of the office is 101 Armstrong Street, North Ballarat. We will have briefings from the DTP, RRV and MRPV on road issues in the region. We will have a sandwich lunch at the office and then visit the Ballarat Art Gallery.

In the evening we will have dinner at the Golden City Hotel with past VicRoads staff members.

Thursday 16 November

We propose to leave Ballarat at 9.00 am and meet at Stawell around 10.30 am for morning tea. We will then drive on to Horsham arriving at 11.45 am to look at the silo art. We will drive on to Murtoa to have a conducted tour of the Stick Shed after which we will have lunch at around 1.15 pm.



The Stick Shed at Murtoa.

Following lunch, we will drive to Bendigo via Rupanyup and St Arnaud to view more silo art, finally arriving at Bendigo about 5.15 pm.

Dinner that night will be held with ex-Bendigo colleagues, at the Foundry Hotel.

Friday 17 November

We are negotiating a briefing by RRV regarding road issues in the Bendigo region at 9.30 am. Following this presentation, we will visit the Bendigo Art Gallery in the morning and perhaps have an early lunch at the Gallery Café before returning home. I mentioned in the last newsletter, the special exhibitions being shown at the gallery. As I mentioned in the last newsletter the gallery will be highlighting its own collection as well as two special exhibitions entitled *Earth, Air, Water, Fire* and *The Kingdom of Power*.

Members and friends who are interested in participating in this trip should register with Jim Webber by email (jameswebber1717@gmail.com) or SMS (0412 064 527).

Christmas Luncheon at Waverley RSL - Tuesday 12 December at 12 noon.

Please put this date in your diary now. This is our most popular function and is a great way to wind up the year's activities. The cost will be \$50 per head. Partners are most welcome.

In next month's newsletter, we will provide you all the final details.

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

Visit to the Lindsay Fox Classic Car Exhibition - Thursday 14 September 2023

Jill Earnshaw organised this marvellous excursion. A group of thirty members and friends visited the old Customs House (built in the 1890s) at the top end of Collins Street, to view an amazing collection of cars. I will describe the visit in more detail in the next newsletter.

I confess, I am not a petrol head in any sense, but I was completely enthralled by what I saw and heard. The collection has been acquired over 50 years and is still growing. It mainly comprises Mercedes, Porsche, Ferrari, MG and the like cars - but all of them are special in some way. To whet your whistle, the car below is a 1955 Porsche 550/1500 RS Spider. It has a top speed of 220 kph and was raced by Stirling Moss. Our guide told us that it was valued at many millions of dollars.

It will always be remembered as the car that James Dean was driving at the time of his death. This particular vehicle chassis is numbered 56. James Dean's chassis was number 55.



A few members of our group listening intently to the guide.

VALE

Jeffrey Francis Coath

I reported Jeff's death in the last newsletter but Jill Earnshaw and Iris Whittaker have both provided additional information after attending his funeral.

Jeff died suddenly at his home in Anglesea on 29 August. He had been undergoing treatment for cancer.

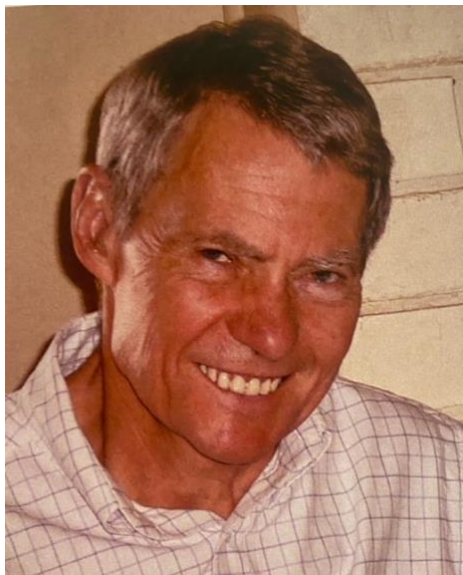
He was born in Preston and was the eldest of three children. Throughout his life he had a very strong work ethic. As a child, he worked in his father's greengrocery and delivered fruit and vegetables on his bike when he got his first trainer wheels. In his youth, he became an Air Cadet

He attended night school at Preston Technical College where he enjoyed the ranking system so that he could compare himself with others. He qualified as a draftsman and initially, worked at the State Electricity Commission of Victoria. He moved to the Highways Branch of the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works and later transferred to the Country Roads Board (CRB)/VicRoads when the responsibilities of the Highways Branch were transferred to the CRB in 1974. As I mentioned in the last newsletter, a major part of his work at the CRB was the detailing and design for the elevated section of the West Gate Freeway, which took several years and involved a very large team of draftsmen and women. His colleagues in the field were very grateful for the accuracy and thoroughness of this work which was led by Jeff.

All his colleagues attested to his desire to get things done and to achieve his goals. They described him as a perfectionist, hardworking and dedicated.

He married his wife Bev in 1965 and they had two children - Richard and Kate.

He built his house at Anglesea and became a windsurfer - but it took some time as he had to be rescued by fishermen a couple of times. He loved Country and Western music and reading (especially war history and politics). He became a member of the Masonic Lodge in 1979 and was a Master at the Preston Lodge.



In 1994 he completed a Master of Business Administration and shifted away from drafting at VicRoads to the Business Management area. When he retired, he operated his own drafting business for a

number of years. In 2016, he became a Board Member and then Chairman of the Victorian Institute of Management - which was owned by Inner Eastern Group Training.

He was a blood donor for over 50 years.

Reflecting Jeff's life philosophy, he stipulated that the following quotation be read aloud at his funeral service. It was made by President Calvin Coolidge.

"Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not. Nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not. Unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not. The world is full of uneducated derelicts. Persistence, determination and hard work make the difference."

NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Ted Barton

Ted wrote to me regarding the recent, fatal crash on the Hume Freeway in which four people perished. This is what he wrote:

'The recent fatal crash on the Hume Freeway at Wenkes Road near Chiltern is just another indication of the inadequate priority of road funding in Victoria. A huge amount of taxpayers' money is being spent on infrastructure projects - some of which are road projects - but are they the highest priority road projects? Far too much priority has been given projects such as the rail level crossing elimination program and the West Gate Tunnel which has put this State into great debt. In my opinion, there is a totally inadequate priority given to funding normal maintenance of our rural highways and funding major works on our rural freeways and highways. I am particularly concerned about the state of the Hume Freeway. The recent fatal crash near Chiltern should never have happened and there have been several other fatal crashes in the recent past at similar intersections on the Hume.

Back in the 1970s and 80s there was a large amount of duplication work on the main highways radiating from Melbourne and, we in the Traffic Engineering Division, were tasked with the problem of designing the safest geometric treatments to be used where important side roads - mostly being proposed as future interchange sites - were retained to provide points of temporary access until either the interchanges were built and/or local frontage roads were built to serve local access. The design we devised has been generally known as 'Wide Median Treatments'.

This is the treatment at the Wenkes Road intersection and at quite a few similar sites on the Hume and other rural freeway sections. In the main these treatments have worked very well but they were only ever meant to be temporary treatments, until the planned interchanges were built or the access point closed due to alternative access (say via service roads) were built. It is really disgraceful that after more than 30 years they still exist on the Hume Freeway, the major route between Australia's two largest cities.



An aerial view of the intersection of the Hume Highway and Wenkes Road showing the wide median treatment. The fatal crash occurred at the upper right yellow dot. Melbourne is to the right and Wodonga to the left.



A driver's eye view of the crash site.

We still have that horrible mess on the Hume Freeway at Kalkallo where commercial developments are allowed to have direct access to the main carriageways, and a similar situation just West of Wodonga. At both these locations the speed limit has had to be reduced to 80 km/h in what should be a 110 Km/h area. On my last trip up the Hume to Albury I noticed that they have installed flashing (amber) lights at a number of these at-grade intersections on the Hume Freeway with an associated speed limit reduction to 80 Km/h when the lights flash. The lights (I presume) are triggered by detectors in the side road approaches. This is in the 110 Km/h zone and I have seen some dangerous decelerations as drivers try to comply with close following vehicle drivers not expecting such behaviour.

The Wenkes road crash is interesting in that the reporting of in in the media said that the people involved (killed) were on their way to visit friends in Melbourne and had stopped off at Chiltern on

the way. I know the intersection quite well and it seems that the crash occurred on the Wodonga bound carriageway which means that they were in the process of doing a right turn. With the wide median treatment, the right turner waits at the stop/give-way line with their vehicle slightly angled towards Wodonga (in this case) then (when safe to do so) crosses that carriageway into the protection of the wide median, traverses the median and when safe to enter the other carriageway, turns right and gets immediately into the left (slower) lane to accelerate up to operating speed.

The wide median treatment has a number of features that are designed to make the right turn as safe as possible (I won't spell those out here) but generally the treatment has worked very well at many locations. I could argue that these treatments have been so successful that the Government sees no urgency to remove them even though it is inevitable that some drivers will make mistakes and the resulting crashes are always very serious. There are no significant sight distance problems at Wenkes Road intersection. It is a straight alignment, little or no trees close to the freeway on that side, but there is a difference in level between the two carriageways (probably about 1 metre) but this is taken up in the median so it is difficult to understand how the car driver did not see the approaching B-Double truck.



The scene of the crash.

These types of crashes will continue to occur on our major high speed rural freeways until the Government 'bites the bullet' and puts priority on making these so called rural 'freeways' truly freeways. I cannot imagine Germany's Autobahns or the UK's motorways allowing such at grade intersections to exist on these high-speed roads.

How do we get this message across?

Regards, Ted'

Editor's note:

The Hume is generally referred to as the Hume Freeway but strictly speaking it is not a Freeway. A Freeway is a high-speed road with no at-grade (or ground level) intersections where access and egress are controlled by high-speed entry and exit ramps.

I wish to make one other point. The Hume Highway/Freeway is a national road (because of its national importance) and the Commonwealth Government is responsible for funding its works. The

Victorian Government should be lobbying the Commonwealth Government for remedies on the Hume Highway so that it fits the criteria to become a Freeway.

I also forwarded to Ted, my comments about traffic management around schools as described in the introduction. He responded as follows:

'I agree with the points you raise about school pick-up traffic problems. I remember back in the 1970s attending an on-site meeting with someone from RoSTA dealing with the problem of parents stopping on the unsealed shoulder of the Nepean Highway at Mt Eliza Primary School at the intersection of Wooralla Drive and Mt Eliza Way. We had built a pedestrian bridge over the Nepean Highway to provide added safety to school children crossing the highway. However, at school pick up time in the afternoon it was absolutely chaotic as drivers parked, and in some cases, double parked especially on the Southbound direction of the Highway in an 80 km/h zone over a slight crest. Car doors opening and children trying to get aboard and even while we watched a crash occurred. It was frightening particularly as the Nepean Hwy was 2-lane - two-way at that time.

Nothing much has changed just a new set of poor behaviour problems.

It is also a concern of mine that there are many students (and even adults) walking on the footpath and crossing local and busy streets while totally engrossed in their mobile devices with ear/headphones on and not paying any attention to traffic. It is not surprising that the road toll is increasing year on year.

I will stop now before I get too carried away.'

Graeme Walter

Graeme wrote:

'Hi David

Very sad about this whole process and the loss of a reputable professional organisation (Country Roads Board, RCA and VicRoads) to a now political - and from my dealings with them - a technically incompetent organisation.

I am in South Australia now and still working as the lead proof engineer for the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation (SMEC) on the Melbourne Metro Tunnels and Stations Project in Melbourne. It has been a great project and we have a great diverse group of people involved in the Team. I have been on this since 2018.

I have also been involved with the SA Department of Transport and dealing with them is something to behold. They have real technical challenges.

My greatest disappointment however, as I stated above, is the loss of a reputable professional organisation (Country Roads Board and its evolving organisations to VicRoads) to a now political, and from my dealings with them, a technically incompetent organisation. You need to have technical expertise in house to appreciate what you are being fed, and in my opinion, they no longer have that.

I appreciate the effort you put into the newsletter and this year I may try and get to the Christmas lunch.'

Alastair Robinson

Alastair wrote:

‘Hello David,

I trust all is well with you and family.

Congratulations to you and others for your wonderful newsletters over the years. As soon as they pop into my inbox, all must be stopped until I have read them from front to back. They bring back great memories of people I have worked with or known.

Re the photo of 1987 Barwon Region Staff, I have added a couple of the missing names. Given that the region was such a great place to work and the challenging projects at that time, most of the staff in the photo were still there when I worked in the region in 1988/1989.’

AUSTRALIA’S MOST DANGEROUS ROAD

As I was writing this newsletter, I heard a report on the radio which named Australia’s most dangerous stretches of road crashes. Plenty Road in Bundoora has the dubious claim to being the most dangerous stretch of road in the nation. The information was recently released by AAMI and is based on the 350,000 motor vehicle insurance claims of five insurers received over the 2022/2023 financial year. This measure does not enlighten us on the severity of the crashes but it does indicate the likelihood of having a crash.

This is not just a blip. It is the sixth successive year that Plenty Road has been declared Australia’s worst crash location. Based on this measure, most of the crashes occur on major roads intersecting with local streets in heavily-trafficked industrial, commercial and educational zones. Most of the crashes were nose to tail. Analysts nominated tailgating, distraction and road rage as the major contributors to the crashes.



Plenty Road in Bundoora

In 2021, VicRoads reduced the speed limit along a section of Plenty Road as part of a six-month safety trial. The limit was dropped from 80 to 70 kph from Greenhills Road to McKimmies Road. According to VicRoads at the time, road movements were complicated on this section of Plenty Road, with multiple traffic lights and entry and exit points, as well as schools and universities and a tram line in the middle of the road. I have not been able to find out the effectiveness of this measure but Plenty Road’s continuing record as a black spot indicates that more needs to be done. Driving

behaviour is the major cause and programs should be designed to target tailgating and distraction - and, possibly, speeding.

Other conclusions from the analyses of these data are that crashes occur most frequently on Fridays (16 per cent) and the worst time of day is between 1.00 pm and 4.30 pm (28 per cent). The worst offenders are aged between 35 and 49 and more men are involved in crashes than women - 54 per cent c.f. 46 per cent).

In the year up to the end of July 2023, 1,234 people were killed on Australia's roads - up 8.4 per cent on the previous year's tally and it is trending upwards.

LEST WE FORGET

In this edition, I want to remember David (Dave) Hewson. Dave was respected by everyone and held in the highest regard by his colleagues.

Flight Lieutenant David (Dave) Thomas Hewson, 41999

David and John Pittard (about whom I have written in an earlier newsletter) had much in common. They were a bit like brothers. They were both born in 1924 - two months apart - David in Brighton and John in Hampton.

I met both of them when I started at the CRB in 1961. David was the Deputy Chief Road Design Engineer under Harry Townley and John succeeded another serviceman, Frank Hosking, as the Advance Planning Engineer, after serving a long time in Bridge Design Branch.

Dave and John first met when they trained together in the RAAF training school at Western Junction in Tasmania. After completing their training, Dave was posted to Point Cook to learn to fly twin-engine Airspeed Oxfords and John to Deniliquin to fly single-engine Wirraways.



December 1942 - RAAF Course 31 for trainee pilots at No 7 Elementary Flying Training School, Western Junction, Tasmania. David Hewson is on the left end of the seated row and John Pittard on the right of the second top row.

Dave enlisted in the RAAF in October 1942 and was discharged as an airman on 16 June 1943 on being granted a commission as a Pilot Officer. At the time of his enlistment, he had worked at the CRB as a Junior Draftsman.



David Hewson's paybook photograph - 1942

On 4 August 1943, Dave embarked from Adelaide to England where he arrived on 10 September. In England, Dave undertook further training in flying Blenheim, Beaufort, Beaufighter, and Mosquito aircraft which, when added to his training in Australia, clocked up more than 380 hours of flying time. In May 1944, his first posting was to No. 510 Squadron RAF at Hendon in Middlesex. The squadron flew light transport aircraft on communications and liaison flights within the United Kingdom. In September 1944, Dave was transferred to 456 Squadron.

No. 456 Squadron was the RAAF's only dedicated night fighter squadron. It was formed in June 1941 at Valley, on the Welsh island of Anglesea, and joined 9 Group of Fighter Command. The squadron was initially equipped with Boulton Paul Defiant aircraft but had barely begun operations before it was re-equipped with Bristol Beaufighters. The obsolete Defiants were ill-suited to the night fighter role, but the potent radar-equipped Beaufighters, were well-equipped for stalking German bombers in Britain's night skies.

The squadron operated Beaufighters for a little over a year before it was re-equipped with De Havilland Mosquitoes in December 1942. The De Havilland Mosquito was even more versatile and its introduction, combined with a lessening of the German air threat over Britain, led to a diversification of 456 Squadron's activities. From the start of 1943 it was also employed on offensive patrols over occupied Europe, striking at both German bombers near their home airfields and at targets on the ground. In March 1943 the squadron relocated to Middle Wallop, in Hampshire to the east of Salisbury.

At the time of its introduction in 1941, the Mosquito was one of the fastest operational aircraft in the world. Originally conceived as an unarmed, fast bomber, the Mosquito's use evolved during the war into many roles, including low to medium-altitude daytime tactical bomber, high-altitude night-bomber, fighter-bomber, photo-reconnaissance aircraft, pathfinder and day or night fighter. The crew of two, pilot and navigator, sat side by side.



A De Havilland Mosquito of No 456 Squadron, flying from Middle Wallop, in flight. The wartime Censor has scratched out the wing-tip antennae of the Airborne-Interceptor radar.

Although the night skies remained the 456 squadron's principal domain, it also mounted operations in daylight, attacking trains and other enemy transport in France, and flying patrols in defence of Coastal Command aircraft operating over the Bay of Biscay.

At the end of February 1944, a German 'mini-blitz' on London and other targets in southern England resulted in 456 Squadron being redeployed to strengthen the defences there. It joined 11 Group at Ford, south east of London, and operated in its primary role against German bombers. The German campaign petered out at the end of May, just in time for 456 Squadron's efforts to be diverted to protect the Allied landings in Normandy that began on 6 June. Later that month, the squadron returned to the air defence of Britain, mounting patrols to intercept V1 flying bombs.

456 Squadron launched its last operational sorties of the Second World War on the night of 3 May 1945 but these were aborted due to bad weather. After the Armistice on 8 May, the squadron was employed to enforce the surrender of the German garrisons on the Channel Islands and on reconnaissance missions over Germany. It disbanded on 15 June 1945 having shot down 42 enemy aircraft and 29 V-1 flying bombs during the war.

In April 1945, Dave and his navigator, Warrant Officer John Hutchinson of the RAF, were returning to RAF Station, Bradwell Bay in Essex, in a Mosquito Bomber after an unnamed sortie over Europe. They came in to land at 3.05 a.m. Both propellers of the plane had been damaged by flak, but Dave safely negotiated the landing and neither of them were injured.

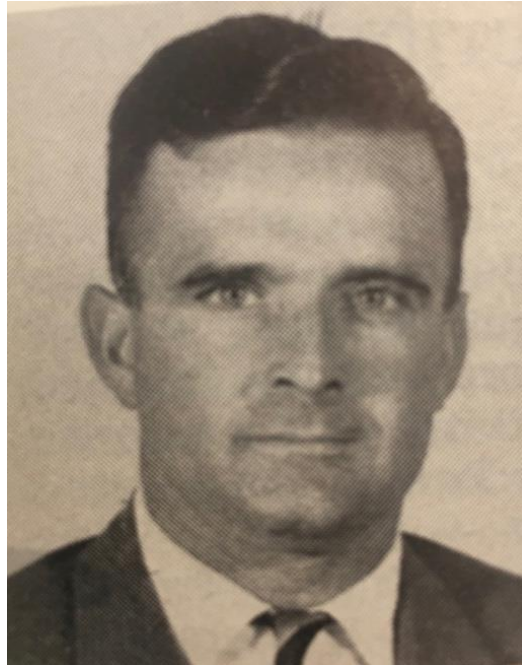
David flew as first and second pilot and racked up 160 hours of defensive and offensive night fighter operations over Europe. He flew 22 sorties between September 1944 and June 1945. His total accumulated flying hours in the UK - training, operational and non-operational - was a grand total of 660 hours.

He was promoted to Flying Officer in December 1943 and to Flight Lieutenant in June 1945.

David was highly respected. In reports on file, it said: "*F/O Hewson with experience should go a long way as a leader, has a most charming personality, sound common sense and is very loyal. Is*

well liked by his subordinates and treats them in a correct manner. A very good pilot and a definite asset to the Flight, No task any trouble to him. An above average officer."

On his return to Australia after the war he studied at the University of Melbourne under the Commonwealth Repatriation Training Scheme and obtained the degree of Bachelor of Civil Engineering. He returned to Plans and Survey at the CRB and then transferred to Bridge Division as a construction engineer. In 1956 he was appointed Assistant Divisional Engineer at Bendigo and in 1959 he returned to Head Office as Assistant Plans and Survey Engineer. In 1965, he became Engineer for Plans and Survey.



Dave Hewson - 1965.

Noel Anderson (ex-RAAF bomber crew) told me a story about Dave. Apparently, there was a Polish engineer/draftsman who worked for Dave in Plans and Survey who was a wizard at maths. However, his wartime experiences had left a mark on his emotional stability and he was prone to severe changes in mood. One night, Dave was contacted to say that this particular person was down at the police station as a result of some sort of altercation. Rather than leave it alone, Dave went down and sorted it out with the police and paid the bail to enable the man to be released. Noel said that Dave knew the man's wartime history and was very supportive and protective towards him.

David was also known for another act of heroism which was recorded in the CRB's 42nd Annual Report as follows:

It is with pride and pleasure that reference is made to an act of conspicuous gallantry by Mr. David Hewson, a member of the Board's Engineering staff during bridge building operations on the Calder Highway in Gisborne.

Early in the afternoon of the 19th July, 1954 two employees of the bridge contractors were demolishing the centre masonry pier of the old bridge when one of them, a non-swimmer, fell into the creek. The other man, who could barely swim went in to try and save his companion, but was unable to support him and was in difficulties himself. Mr. Hewson dived into the water fully clothed, brought the second man back to the pier and then dived unsuccessfully for about 10 minutes in an endeavour to recover the first man's body. His quick action undoubtedly saved the life of one man, and his sustained efforts to try and recover the body of the man drowned were most praiseworthy, especially as the temperature of the water was very low at the time.

The Royal Humane Society of Australia has awarded a Certificate of Merit to Mr. Hewson for his rescue work.

Dave married Dorothy Emslie Hauser in 1947 and they had four children.

Tragically, and somewhat ironically after such a distinguished war record in the face of high danger, Dave was killed in a car crash on the Calder Highway, early in the morning of 23 March 1968. He was only 43.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Mike Hoare and Alastair Robinson have come to my rescue by filling in a few more names for staff in Barwon Region in 1987 - as well as amending a few spelling mistakes. They are an exceptionally good-looking group of people, aren't they?



Back row (left to right): Liz Dimitrovski, Rod Bennett, Gary White, Heather Fitzgerald, Terry Milligan, Serge Mezzavia, Leo Stella, Vin Elliott, Leith Wohlers, (?), Roger Plumridge, Denis Lewis, Rod Westwood.

Middle row: Charles Low, Geoff Moran, Bernie Gebblie, Bob Smith, Tamara Simunek,(Reception), Margaret Keneally, David Senior, Allan Norton, Colin Batson, Ken Turley, (?).

Front row: Ann Maaser, Julie Del Rio, Bob Scott, Rick Hattam, Howard Ellis, Colin Roy, Mike Hoare, Tom Richmond, Mike Jones, Ian Templeton, Greg Salt.

Nick Szwed will post the photograph on the website. If any of you have similar photos, please forward them to me.

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL

My uncle in Colac, Allan Bilson, was a wealthy but humble man. Bilson's department store played a pivotal role in the economy of Colac - especially for my family. Dad was employed for a significant part of his working life in the store and in other local businesses owned by my uncle. I also worked in the store after school, on Saturday mornings and during school holidays. The country store was the main employer of people in the town and the largest mercantile business in any Victorian country town. Bilson's was an institution which survived two World Wars, two catastrophic fires and the Great Depression. The Murray Street frontage was about the same as that of the Myer Emporium in Melbourne's Bourke Street.



Bilson's Department Store - 1936.

My sister and I loved visiting my aunt and uncle because they subscribed to the American magazine, the *Saturday Evening Post*. The magazines were passed on to us after the Bilson family had read them. We loved the glamorous and sentimental take on the American way of life - typified by the Norman Rockwell paintings on the front cover. My school projects dripped in photos cut out of these magazines. Rockwell tapped into the hearts and optimism of conservative, small town America following the Second World War and I was a willing collaborator.

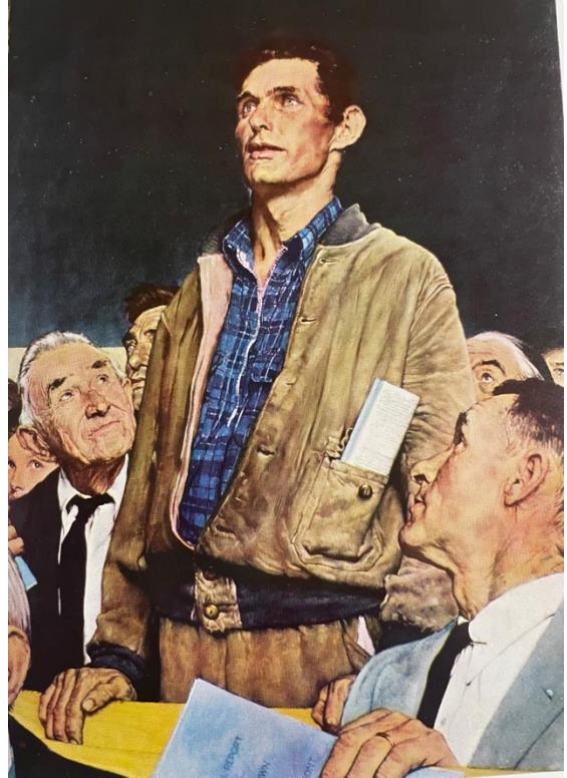
The following entry can be found in Wikipedia.

'Rockwell's work was dismissed by serious art critics in his lifetime. Many of his works appear overly sweet in the opinion of modern critics, especially the *Saturday Evening Post* covers, which tend toward idealistic or sentimentalized portrayals of American life. This has led to the deprecatory adjective, "Rockwellesque". Consequently, Rockwell is not considered a "serious painter" by some contemporary artists, who regard his work as bourgeois and kitsch. Writer Vladimir Nabokov stated that Rockwell's brilliant technique was put to "banal" use. He is called an "illustrator" instead of an artist by some critics, a designation he did not mind, as that was what he called himself.'

But I was too young at the time to pass judgement like this. For me, every painting or illustration told a story and the realism of the settings gave the stories integrity. They were uplifting - although there were some which told darker stories. His paintings present a window into a more idyllic world. I wonder how he would portray America now with its guns, violence and still - its racial divide?

An artistic storyteller, Rockwell planned his scenarios down to the smallest detail, yet he found it difficult to paint purely from his imagination. In his first decades as an illustrator, he could not paint without studio models in continual view as he worked. He often stopped painting and re-arranged his models. He found it impossible to deviate from the scene before him. Later, he used photography to liberate him. By freeing him from the drawbacks of live models, photography dramatically expanded his range of available postures and possible expressions and he took full advantage of the opportunity. Rockwell's trademark animated faces became possible because they could first be captured on film. The paintings *are* mawkish but they opened the eyes of this country kid and they

always remind me of the values they portrayed and the yearning I had to see a wider world. If only America was like that today. Here are some of them. My memories of them are beautiful.



The home-coming Marine keeping his audience in the general store spellbound by his stories, and Freedom of Speech - standing up to say a few sincere words at a community gathering.



Freedom from Fear - doting parents tucking their innocent children to bed, and the scout teaching the cub to tie his knots. Rockwell was a consistent illustrator of Scouting themes and illustrated their annual calendars from 1925 to 1976.



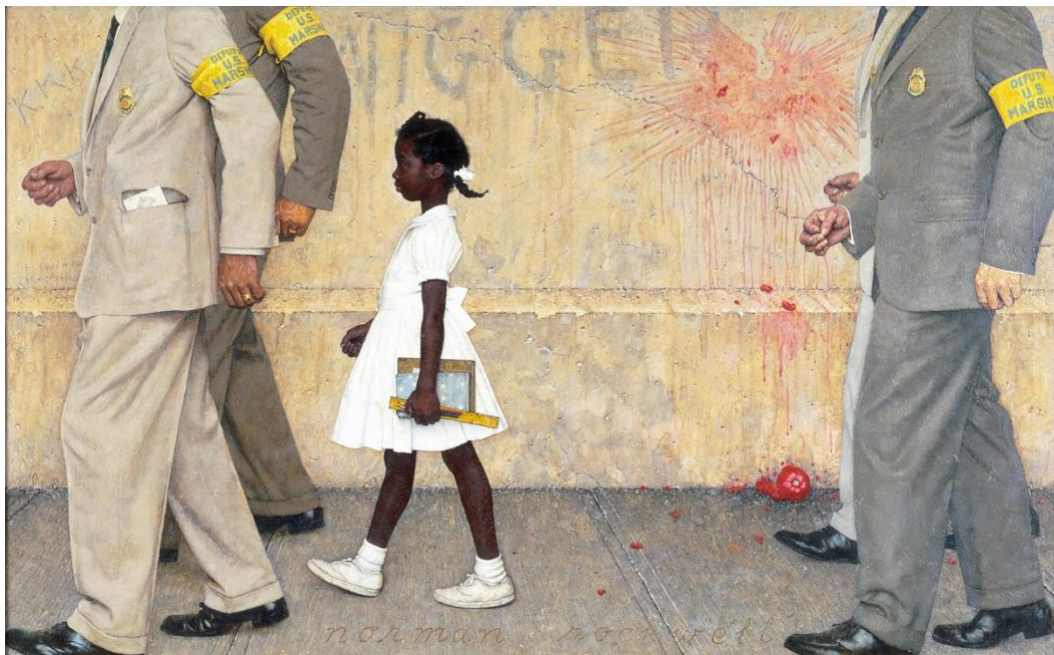
A moment of tension in the hospital waiting room, and Freedom from Want - serving a huge turkey at Thanksgiving.



The Runaway - the cop shouting the runaway a soda before delivering him back home, and Easter Morning - mother and children march off to church while the father reads the papers.



Saying Grace - this painting sold for \$46 million in 2013, and Breaking Home Ties - waiting for the bus to take the farmer's son to a new world. This painting was found hidden in a wall and sold for \$15.4 million in 2006.



The painting above is entitled 'The Problem We All Live With'. It was painted in 1963 and is a visual commentary on segregation and the problem of racism in America. The painting depicts Ruby Bridge's courageous walk to school. She dutifully follows faceless men—the yellow armbands reveal them to be federal marshals—past a wall smeared with racist graffiti and the juice of a thrown tomato. The canvas is arranged so that the viewer is at Ruby's height, seeing the scene from her perspective.

This is what actually happened to Ruby Bridges on her first day at William Franz Elementary School in New Orleans on November 14, 1960. Ruby was the first African American child to attend the school after a federal court ordered the New Orleans school system to integrate. The public outcry was so great that white parents withdrew their children from school so they would not have to sit with a black girl. Ruby spent an entire year in a classroom by herself.



The Oculist and the Girl with a Black Eye. Humour and wit were often portrayed by Rockwell to provide levity in times of great strife. His work covered the times from WW1 to the Vietnam War, the Depression and the civil rights struggles but a great deal of his oeuvre is just natural playfulness as illustrated in these two paintings.



Election Day. What voting at Cedar Rapids in Iowa, America, looked like in 1944.

But one of the paintings I loved best was the April Fool's Day cover of 1943. I was only two when it was published and I doubt that the Bilson family was getting the Saturday Evening Post then. I saw it only a decade or so ago - on the internet - and I loved trawling over it to see how many absurdities and visual mistakes were in it. It is shown on the next page so that you can have a go at it. Don't forget the tap out of the side of the fireplace or the bottle and glass hovering over the table! The clock face says it all. Rockwell claims there are 45 errors in all.

THE SATURDAY EVENING
POST

APRIL 3, 1943

10¢

The never-before-told story of
our marines' struggle for survival

**LAST MAN
OFF WAKE ISLAND**

By LT. COL. W. L. J. BAYLER, USMC



TRIVIA AND DIDACTIC WHIMSIES

Home Schooling...

My mother taught me RELIGION - "You better pray that mess will come out of the carpet."

My father taught me LOGIC - "Because I said so, that's why."

My mother taught me about the science of OSMOSIS - "Shut your mouth and eat your supper."

My father taught me about HYPOCRISY - "If I've told you once, I've told you a million times, don't exaggerate!"

My mother taught me GENETICS - "You're just like your father."

My father taught me the CIRCLE OF LIFE - "I brought you into this world, and I can take you out."

My mother taught me about ANTICIPATION - "Just wait until we get home."

My father taught me HUMOUR - "When that lawn mower cuts off your toes, don't come running to me."

My mother taught me HOW TO BECOME AN ADULT - "If you don't eat your vegetables, you'll never grow up."

My father taught me WISDOM - "When you get to be my age, you'll understand."

My mother taught me about my BACKGROUND - "Shut that door behind you. Do you think you were born in a barn?"

My father taught me IRONY - "Keep crying and I'll give you something to cry about."

A sobering message for us all

99% of those born between 1930 and 1946 (worldwide) are now dead. If you were born in this period, you are one of the rare surviving 'one percenters' of this exclusive group. Their age range is between 77 and 93 years old, a 16-year age span. Here are some interesting facts about the one percenters.

- You are the smallest group of children born since the early 1900s.
- You are the last generation, climbing out of the Depression, who can remember the winds of war and the impact of a world at war that rattled the structure of our daily lives for years.
- You are the last to remember ration books for everything from petrol to sugar to shoes to stoves.
- You saved tin foil and poured fried meat fat into tin cans.
- You can remember milk being delivered to your house early in the morning and placed in the 'milk box' on the veranda.
- Parents and teachers enforced discipline.
- You are the last generation who spent a childhood without television; instead, you used your imagination when you listened to the radio.
- With no television, you spent your childhood playing outside.
- The lack of television in your early years meant that you had little real understanding of what the world was like.
- We got a black-and-white TV in 1956 with three stations and no remote control.
- Telephones were one to a house, sometimes shared (party lines) and no one cared about privacy.
- Computers were called calculators; they were hand-cranked.
- Typewriters were driven by pounding fingers, throwing the carriage, and changing the ribbon.
- 'INTERNET' and 'GOOGLE' were words that did not exist.
- Newspapers and magazines were written for adults and the news was broadcast on your radio in the evening. Your Dad would give you the comic pages when he read the news.
- New highways would bring jobs and mobility. Most highways were two lanes and there were no Freeways.
- You went to town to shop. Mum got the groceries at a grocer's shop and topped up in need from a corner store.

- You walked or rode your bike to school.
- The radio network expanded from three stations to thousands.
- Your parents were suddenly free from the confines of the Depression and the war, and they threw themselves into working hard to make a living for their families.
- Only one wage was needed to buy a house and raise a family. Not all households had a car.
- You weren't neglected, but you weren't today's all-consuming family focus.
- Your parents were glad you played by yourselves. They were busy discovering the post-war world.
- You entered a world of overflowing plenty and opportunity; a world where you were welcomed and enjoyed yourselves.
- You felt secure in your future, although the Depression and poverty were remembered deeply.
- Polio was still acrippler. Everyone knew someone who had it.
- You came of age in the 1950s and 60s.
- You are the last generation to experience an interlude when there were no threats to our homeland. World War 2 was over, and the Cold War, terrorism, global warming, and perpetual economic insecurity had yet to haunt life.
- Only your generation can remember a time after that War when our world was secure and full of bright promise and plenty.
- You grew up at the best possible time, a time when the world was getting better.
- If you have already reached the age of 77, you have outlived 99% of all the other people in the world who were born in this special 16-year time span.

The secret of success

A martial arts master was deep in meditation when his young pupil stormed into the room frustrated with another loss.

“Master, why does my ability not improve? I’m always defeated.” he sighed.

The master, pensive and forever patient, answered: “My dear pupil, have you seen the gulls flying by the setting sun, and their wings seeming like flames?”

The student, ready to gain more knowledge responded, “Yes, my master, I have.”

The master continued, “And a waterfall, spilling strongly over the stones without taking anything out of its proper place?”

“Yes, my master, I have witnessed it.” the student replied.

“And the moon ... when it touches the calm water to reflect all its enormous beauty?” asked the master.

The student nodded, “Yes, my master, I have also seen this marvellous phenomenon.”

The master sighed, “That is the problem. You keep watching all this rubbish instead of training.”

Font used in this newsletter

From the feedback I received regarding the font and size of print to make reading the newsletter easier to read, I have decided to continue with the Trebuchet font but I have enlarged its size from 10 to 11 points. However, I have made headings 12 points.

Tell me what you think.

David Jellie - Editor
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