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Dear Members,

By now, it will be no news to you that the Government has directed that both buildings at the CRB/RCA/VicRoads headquarters at Kew will be closed early in 2024. Most of the staff will vacate the office in November to be relocated to Ringwood, Sunshine and Melbourne CBD.



Although a cliché, all I can say is that it is an end of an era. There will be little left to show of VicRoads once it is demolished, although my happy memories of 60 Denmark Street, Kew, are not of the building itself but of the people I worked with there – the characters and my mentors. I commenced work with the CRB two weeks after the building was opened and I cringe now about how callow and inexperienced I was. If I can say that I had a satisfying career, it is due to the friendship, support and loyalty I received from my colleagues. There was always someone there who could help me when I floundered and, in some cases, who inspired me. Soon, I will not be able to drive or walk past these memories.

I would like to hear your stories about Head Office. One of my earliest memories was how hot it was in summer. There was no air-conditioning and sometimes we had to knock off because there was no cross breeze to cool us down. But I want to hear your stories so please send them in to me. John Wright has a similar recollection and his story is included later in this newsletter.

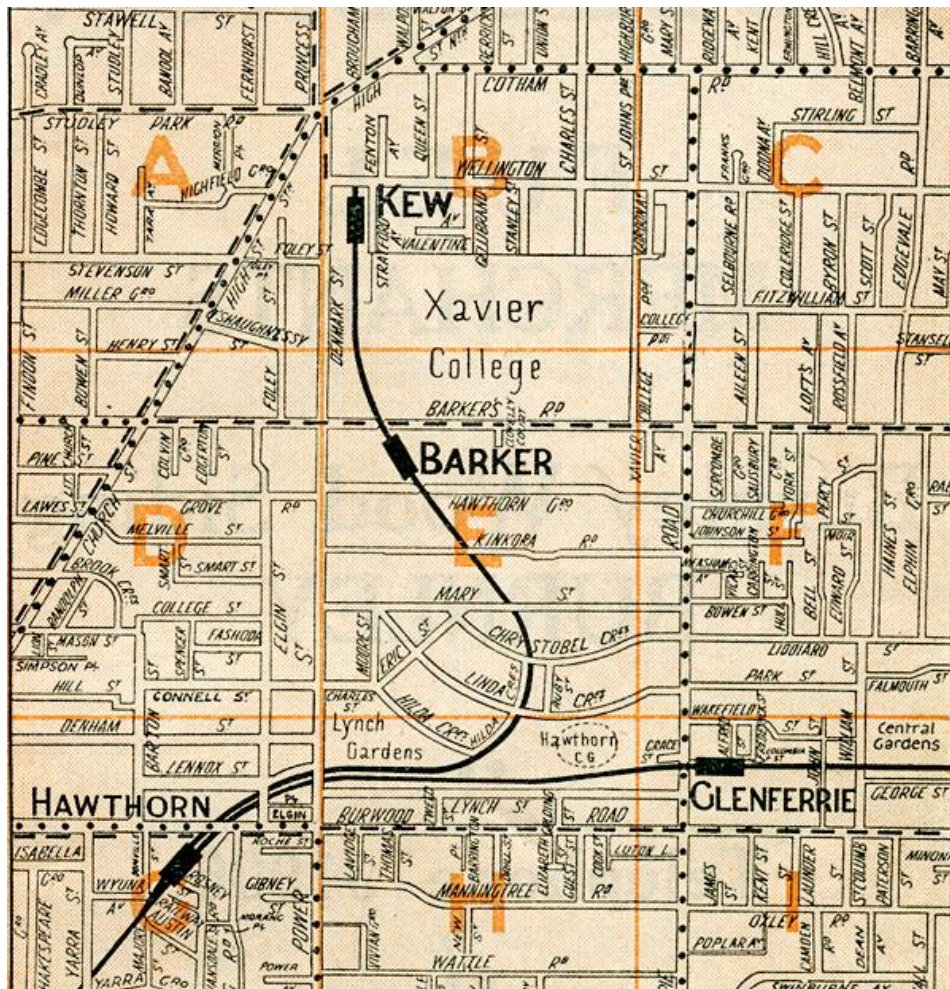
I also want to write a history of the site which will extend over a couple of newsletters, starting with this one. The building was located on the site of the Kew Railway Station so that one way or another, it has had a connection to transport for the last 136 years.

In the beginning ...

Kew Junction was built in 1851 and by the end of that decade, there was a vibrant shopping centre there. As Kew developed there was a push by local residents to have better public transport. In 1876, a bus service was established. The buses were horse drawn carriages which conveyed inhabitants to Hawthorn Station and Richmond Station and hence to the city. There were concerns that the poor service provided by these buses adversely affected the property values in Kew and, if a railway line was provided, it would open up the area and attract more residents. In 1884, there were 116 buses a day travelling to and from Kew.

The buses were overcrowded, irregular, rough as guts ride – and did not operate on Sundays. Sometimes they were unable to climb the incline at Hawthorn Station and ladies had to walk to them in the rain. As a consequence, a push started for a rail link to the city or a tram or both.

Lobbying for the railway started in earnest in 1880 and there were many angry meetings and deputations to the Government until 1884 when Kew Station was included in the Railway Construction Act 1884¹. The Bill allowed for the line to terminate south of Wellington Street. The railway was to be a spur line connecting Kew to Hawthorn Station with an intermediate station at Barkers Road. This is shown on the map below.



The Kew-Hawthorn Railway alignment.

¹ Organised by the Minister for Railways, Thomas Bent, it became notorious for the large number of railway lines it authorised, and was dubbed the "Octopus Act".

In all the excitement of getting Kew included in the Bill, the lobbyists did not note the legislated terminus location. This started a new round of negotiations. The locals wanted the line to go west of Power Street and terminate at the Kew Hotel. There were angry meetings and it was decided that a poll should be held to decide where the terminus should be. As expected, the results favoured the terminus at the hotel but only 331 of the possible 761 voters participated.

The Government stuck to its guns and contracts were let in 1886 and works were completed in time for the station to be opened in December 1887. The line was just a single track. In 1890/91 there were 714,159 outward passengers to Hawthorn (nearly 2,000 passengers per day), 430 tons of goods (outward) and 14,324 tons (inward). Despite these impressive figures, there were complaints from the travelling public. The initial building was just a shed – called ‘Shantyville’ – but this was remedied with the completion of a brick building. The carriages were old and dilapidated and some had no glass in the windows. Crowding was rife and First Class passengers often had to ride in Second Class carriages. Worse still, ladies often had to cram into Smoking Carriages.

There were complaints about the timetable. Passengers wanted more services on Saturday mornings and they wanted all trains to stop at Richmond. I wonder if this may have been for the benefit of football followers. Another problem related to the handling of goods. The floors of the wagons were not at the same level as the floors of the drays – making handling difficult and as a consequence, goods traffic declined. It was cheaper to load and off-load at Hawthorn and collect goods for Kew from there.



There were a number of peak hour services which ran from Flinders Street station (Melbourne) to Kew, but in 1938 all but one of these were diverted to the Ashburton line, where traffic was growing. This had an adverse effect on Kew traffic, as passengers for Kew had to cross over a footbridge at Hawthorn to change trains, and the mainline trains were usually already crowded by the time they reached Hawthorn.

At the end ...

At about the same time the off-peak trains were replaced by road buses. The last passenger train ran on 18 August 1952 after years of decline. Goods trains were finally withdrawn in 1957, and the railway was dismantled in 1958-59.

The reasons for the decline of patronage on the Kew railway line are not clear. By this time, the electric tram line was well established and was easier to access by passengers. The Kew Railway station was remote when compared with the tram which ran along the main street.



The last passenger train from Kew – August 1952.

Mind you, the Kew railway line competed with the tram for over 50 years. A horse tram service from Victoria Bridge to Kew Cemetery commenced in 1887 and was electrified in 1914 and another line was opened from Malvern Town Hall to Kew Post Office (now Q.P.O.) and Deepdene via Glenferrie and Cotham Roads on 30 May 1913.

The station became derelict before the site was resurrected to accommodate a new Head Quarters for the Country Roads Board which at that time, was housed in poor standard quarters at the Exhibition Building and other sites in Melbourne.



The derelict Kew Station before demolition - 1957.

In the next newsletter, I will write about the design and construction of the new building.

WHAT'S COMING UP

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

Occasional Lunches at Shoppingtown Hotel, 12 noon.

Our last lunch for 2023 will be held on Monday 6 November and the first one for 2024 is scheduled for Monday 5 February. There is no need to register – just turn up.

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 three newsletters so 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, including the controversial Western Highway widening between Buangor and Ararat. 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.

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 will have a briefing by RRV regarding road issues in the Bendigo region at 9.30 am.

This presentation will be at Galkangu – Bendigo GovHub at 189-229 Lyttelton Terrace just on the edge of the city. This is a four-storey mass timber structure government office building, including carpark, open plan offices and public interface.

It is a major customer service and public administration office which centralises the delivery of a range of government services previously provided at a number of different locations in

and around Bendigo. The new office development has the capacity to accommodate at least 1,000 staff and consolidate operations for multiple governmental tenancies comprising but not limited to: existing state agencies, state authorities and local government.

The mass timber structure is a first of its kind - with innovative connection details and in compliance with all structural and fire testing requirements. Local timber content and expertise were engaged during construction to ensure a minimum carbon footprint and a successful installation.



Galkangu under construction showing the timber framework.



Galkangu – Bendigo GovHub

Following this presentation, we will visit the Bendigo Art Gallery perhaps have an early lunch at the Gallery Café before returning home.

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. Partners are most welcome.

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

We are planning to start at 12 noon and we will sit down to lunch at around 12.30 pm. We have booked a separate room on the first floor with access via the lift. The cost of the lunch will be \$50 per head payable in advance. This cost covers a two course (main and dessert) with two options for each course with alternating serves. Drinks are available at the bar located in the room at bar prices. It is easier if you have photo ID for entry to the club. Your driver licence will do.

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

Payment should be made in advance via electronic transfer to the VicRoads Association account as follows:

BSB: 083323 Account number: 170934017

Please make sure when paying that you include your name as the transaction reference so that the payment can be attributed to you. Also, if you have any special dietary requirements, please let Ken know when you make your booking.

This is an excellent venue and last year's lunch was the most successful ever. We received many complimentary comments about the meals at our recent dinner in October. It would be wonderful to catch up with you to celebrate Christmas.

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

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

I briefly mentioned this excursion in Newsletter 249 but did not have enough space to be expansive. I feel that it deserves further mention.

Lindsay Fox is a self-made billionaire with a great love of classic cars. He bought his first truck when he was 19 and kick started LinFox – now Australia's largest logistics company. It operates in 10 countries in the Asia-Pacific area and operates 5,000 delivery vehicles. Fox also owns Avalon and Essendon Airports.

He has had a love affair with cars for most of his life but not your common old everyday cars. He loves rare classic cars like Mercedes Benz, Jaguar, Ferrari, MG, Bentley, Volkswagen, Porsche, BMW, Mustang, McLaren, Rolls Royce, Lotus, Aston Martin, and Lamborghini to name a few. All the cars in the collection were made between 1923 and 2020 and I understood that there are about 250 of them – of which about 50 are on display in the museum in the historic Queen’s warehouse in Collins Street in Docklands. The display at Docklands is regularly rotated so there is always something new to see.

All the cars have been donated to a Trust that assists charities in raising funds and enables everyone to enjoy the vehicles

Please understand that I am not a petrol head and I probably won’t do justice to the collection but here goes!

The first car I will describe is a 1992 Ferrari F40. It is the fastest production car ever made for road conditions. It has a top speed of 325 kph and it can accelerate to 100 kph in 3.9 seconds – which is in my view, too fast. Only 1,315 of them were ever produced and 10 came to Australia. It was the final car commissioned by Enzo Ferrari. Searching the internet, I found a couple for sale at 3.25 to 3.5 million dollars.



1992 Ferrari F40

The next car is a Mercedes-Benz 540K Cabriolet B built in 1937. The provenance of this car is that it was driven in London as part of the German Ambassador' fleet. It disappeared during the war and eventually turned up in America. I think the guide mentioned a purchase price of \$7 million. During its time, it was one of the most luxurious cars on the road along with Rolls Royce and Dusenberg.



Mercedes-Benz 540K Cabriolet B

The last car is the Mercedes-Benz SLR Stirling Moss built in 2003. The car was built specially to honour the legendary vehicle that won Mille Miglia in 1955 and to celebrate one of the best drivers in F1 history, even if he never won a championship, Stirling Moss.

In 1955, Sir Stirling took part in the Mille Miglia event, a 1,000-mile race held on the public roads of Italy. As a fun fact, each number painted on the car was related to the drivers' allocated start time. For example, Moss's winning car had the number 722 because he started the event at 7:22 AM local time.

A total of 534 cars started in the Mille Miglia event across 12 categories based on the power unit size. The smaller displacement and slower vehicles started first late in the night, while the more complex and professional cars started some hours later, in the morning.



Mercedes-Benz SLR Stirling Moss

It was a very interesting excursion and I want to thank Jill Earnshaw again for organising it.

NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Tom Glazebrook AM – Former Country Roads Board Divisional Engineer, Bendigo

Tom wrote to me some time ago regarding his recollections on the history of the crossing of the Murray River at Echuca which culminated in the opening of the new bridge on 11 April 2022. I have used his recollections and notes to write this story.

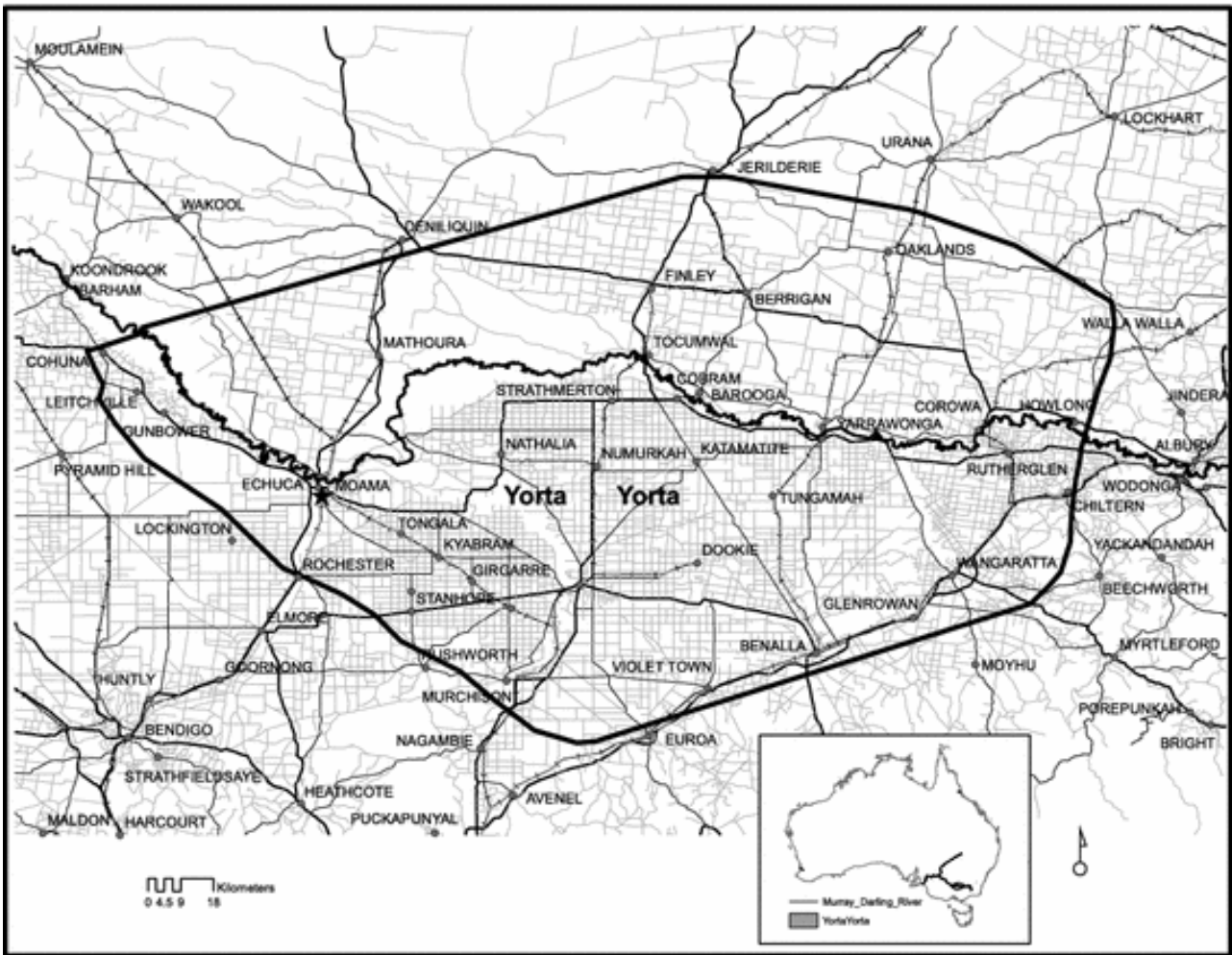
I am also indebted to Mal Kersting – former VicRoads Regional Manager, Bendigo - who provided the history of events after Tom’s retirement

In the beginning

Echuca is an aboriginal word meaning the “meeting of the waters” because it is situated close to the junction of the Goulburn, Campaspe and Murray Rivers. The traditional owners of the area around Echuca are the Yorta Yorta people. They thrived on the river system and its associated lagoons, creeks and wetlands. It provided them with fish and shellfish, birds and their eggs, water rats and turtles, and the edible roots of water plants. Nets were used to catch fish and birds and stone weirs were constructed in the river to trap fish.

The people of the Yorta Yorta Nation comprise different clan groups, all of which speak the same language. They include the Kalitheban, Wollithiga, Moira, Ulupna, Bangerang, Kwatkwat, Yalaba Yalaba and Ngurai-illiam-wurrung clans (and others). As shown in the map below, the Yorta Yorta nation extends from Euroa in the south to Jerilderie in the north and from Cohuna in the west to Chiltern in the east. The Murray River is the heart of the nation roughly bisecting the nation between northern Victoria and southern NSW.

Archaeological evidence indicates there were about 6,000 Yorta Yorta people living in the nation in the 1840s but, after the arrival of the Europeans, the population plummeted to around 1,200 people – mainly due to the ravages of small pox epidemics.



Boundaries of the Yorta Yorta nation.



Yorta Yorta country.

The arrival of the Europeans

The explorer, Charles Sturt, was the first European to discover the Murray River – in 1830 – but it was another 20 years before the first two steam boats made their way upstream from Goolwa in South Australia into the reaches of what is now Victoria. In 1853 the “Mary Ann” skippered by William Randell, and the “Lady Augusta” under Captain Frances Cadell², competed in a race up-river, starting at Goolwa, each sure of being the first to open up the Murray for traffic. The “Lady Augusta” passed the “Mary Ann” arriving at the tiny settlement of Swan Hill only hours before the “Mary Ann”. Randell took the “Mary Ann” on up to Moama, while Cadell after travelling a short distance upstream, turned back for Goolwa.

Echuca was founded by one of the most enterprising characters of the early colonial days, an ex-convict named Henry Hopwood. In 1850 he bought a small punt, which operated across the Murray River near the Campaspe Junction. Originally known as “Hopwood’s Ferry” the name of the town was changed to Echuca.

In the very early days of European settlement, wool from the large properties in southern NSW was brought to Echuca and transported down the river to Goolwa for transfer to Adelaide and overseas.

Echuca’s close proximity to Melbourne led to the Port of Echuca becoming the largest inland port in Australia. The riverboat trade was of national importance because it had the effect of opening up inland Australia for settlement and thereby increasing the country’s production of wool.

The Murray River is in New South Wales. The Victorian border is at the “High water mark” on the Victorian side. It has been surveyed and the boundaries have been recorded in the Titles Office.

At some time in the past, probably in the 1800s, the two states determined which State would be responsible for which river crossing. These responsibilities covered design, construction and maintenance of each crossing and costs were appropriately allocated. The crossing at Echuca was allocated to Victoria. In the 1930s, the two State Road authorities formalised an agreement whereby the costs for the development and maintenance of the Murray River span for new and existing Murray River bridges would be shared between the two states.

In 1878, with the progress of the rail network, the Victorian authorities opened a bridge at Echuca capable of carrying rail traffic. It was constructed in wrought iron and is a through plate girder bridge with about 18 feet between the girders. It is termed a ‘through bridge’ because traffic travels between (or through) the girders. The girders also act as barriers along the sides of the bridge.

² During the early 1870s, Cadell became involved in whaling, trading, pearling and blackbirding in North-West Australia. Cadell and others became notorious for their coercion, capture and sale of Aboriginal people as slaves.

Cadell then took up trading in the Dutch East Indies, and when sailing to the Kei Islands near New Guinea he was murdered by the cook's mate, about March 1879.



Elevation looking upstream of the original railway/road bridge at Echuca - with the new rail bridge behind it.



Looking north towards Moama along the original bridge - 2012.

After the construction of the rail bridge at Echuca, the wool trade shifted by rail to Melbourne. A road pavement was installed on the bridge at a later time to enable the bridge to have dual purposes – rail and road. The railway track ran down the centre of the road. Of course, road traffic had to be stopped when trains crossed the bridge. As the rail industry developed, trains and carriages became bigger so that when goods trains wanted to cross the river, the goods were taken across at half a train at a time which proved to be very disruptive for road traffic – which by this stage had started to burgeon.

It wasn't until as late as 1989 that a new rail bridge was opened next to the old bridge.



The new rail bridge beside the old road/rail bridge - looking downstream.

Planning for the new road bridge

In 1965, the Councils on each side of the river, Echuca City and Murray Shire (on the Moama side), commenced pressing the NSW and Victorian authorities to construct a second bridge across the river, capable of carrying more road traffic and heavier vehicles. By the time Tom Glazebrook was appointed Divisional Engineer Bendigo in 1970, no agreement had been reached on the location of a new bridge between the two States.

Tom contacted the Department of Main Roads Divisional Engineer in Deniliquin with a view to reviving interest in the project. They had frequent meetings looking at all the previous activity that had taken place since 1965. They met with their respective councils and as a result

of looking at all the factors involved, and with the assistance of Bruce Addis, the CRB's Chief Bridge Design Engineer, they selected a location for the new bridge and its approach roads.

The new bridge was to be located approximately 20 m downstream of the existing road/rail bridge. There was room to duplicate the bridge in a 100 years' time, if required, without going through the process again. On the Victorian side, this location avoided the historical pump house – which in the past, provided water under pressure to the hydraulic lifts at the old wharf. The pump house is located near the Victorian end of the old bridge and is well above flood level. Also on the Victorian side, it required relocation of the Northern Highway a couple of blocks east and the construction of a roundabout at the junction of the new highway with the Murray Valley Highway to the south.

On the NSW side, a duplicate road embankment would be built crossing the flood plain from the river to high ground to link with the existing Cobb Highway. After the new bridge was built the intention was to remove the road from the existing bridge to enable it to be used exclusively for rail traffic.

The merits of this proposal

The proposed crossing would remove through traffic from the central business areas of both Echuca and Moama. Traffic volumes were high and about four percent comprised heavy trucks.

It also provided full clearance for paddle steamers and other vessels navigating the river. Bruce Addis had proposed a single, flat arch bridge spanning the river with abutments on each side located at low water level. There were no piers in the river. This avoided the situation when there was a very strong north wind blowing which tended to swing the sterns of the boats to the south thus threatening a collision with the piers – as was possible in the case of the old bridge.

There were no known cultural issues regarding aboriginal and historical sites or sensitivities.

Both councils and both road authorities agreed to the proposal.

Tom and Bruce also considered the hydraulic effect of the proposed bridge including the one in fifty-year floods which occurred in February 1973 and May 1974. Measurements were taken during those floods and flood flows observed to ensure that the presence of the new bridge adjacent to the old one, did not adversely affect the surrounding area.

Tom obtained an allocation of funds from the CRB in 1975 to cast the reinforced concrete piles for the arch bridge foundations.

However

When the project was announced, the tourist lobby objected.

The tourist precinct roughly enclosed the old wharf, an old working red gum sawmill next to the wharf, the paddle boat jetties, and some tourist shops on both sides of the street near the wharf. The tourist lobby was getting into stride and they objected because they thought that tourists would want to take photographs of the old rail/road bridge from the wharf. The bridge is located about 500 to 600 metres away from the wharf.

This led to the Echuca City Council changing its mind and it withdrew its approval., They were concerned that it might affect tourism to their city which was becoming their main industry. A survey conducted in Moama and Echuca came down on the side of the tourist lobby. The CRB did not force the issue and as Tom puts it, “we folded up our tents and went home”. All plans were put on hold.

Tom’s retirement

After the rejection of the proposal, there were many meetings called by politicians, councils, and community leaders and the CRB requested Tom to attend them and listen to what was said. There were disputes within the community about the location of the crossing and various levels of government pledged on-again-off-again funding but there was little action. The project became an archetypical ‘Hot Potato’. By 1986, when Tom retired from the Road Construction Authority, there were up to nine options for the siting of the second bridge. At his retirement, Tom said, “I’m going to be at the Echuca bridge opening, even if I’m in a wheelchair”.

After Tom’s retirement, successive Regional Managers were handed the chalice culminating in Mal Kersting. As Mal notes, there was a long and tortured path trying to find the ‘silver bullet’ to enable a new bridge to be built.

Planning, and more planning...

A succession of DE / Regional Managers including John Coles, Bruce Phillips, Bruce Van Every and Peter McCulloch all contributed to planning for a new crossing, which culminated in a EES/EIS in 2001. Clive Mottram, Tony Hillman, Alex Lukac, Chris Reeves, Peter Ryall and many others were heavily involved and things were looking up; confidence was building that an alignment would at last be found.

The EES/EIS investigated several routes:

- (i) Central option C1 parallel to, but upstream of the existing bridge. The location of the new bridge would effectively negate the earlier concerns of the tourism lobby and not be visible from the heritage wharf area.
- (ii) Western option W1, about 3 km downstream, to the west of Echuca-Moama.

The Central option was the preferred route of the two State Road Authorities, while the Shires of Campaspe and Murray (NSW) lobbied heavily for the Western alignment.

Importantly, the Yorta Yorta elders supported the central location as it had less aboriginal cultural impact, and they made it clear that they did not support the Western option.

The outcome of the Planning Panel report was a recommendation for the Western Alignment W1, noting the Yorta Yorta concerns for cultural heritage sensitivity of the site, but reasoning that their concerns could be overcome. The Victorian Minister for Planning endorsed the Western Alignment.

Funding

At around that time, in 2000, Centenary funding was also announced by the Commonwealth Government for four Murray River Crossings, including \$36.4m for the Echuca-Moama

bridge. New crossings were subsequently built for three of the crossings at Howlong, Cobram and Corowa. Community expectations were once again heightened that the bridge would be built soon.

Mal vividly recalls his inauguration to the project which had become embroiled in often bitter and hostile political and social sentiment. Mal's role was for the Region to finalise the planning approvals for the W1 route to enable construction to commence.

Detailed site investigations were arranged, and as sated by heritage legislation at the time, the consent of the Yorta Yorta was required in order to allow the necessary testing to be undertaken. During this process, the Yorta Yorta made it clear that whilst they supported a new crossing, their earlier objections about the W1 route were to be respected and that NO meant NO!

The Act did not provide an appeal mechanism. Accordingly, the W1 route was officially abandoned in 2005.

Back to the drawing board....

Once again, the lack of a confirmed route became incredibly divisive within the community. Crowds of more than 800 people packed community consultation meetings to get updates; leading it was pretty challenging at the time.

And so, a thorough review of all previous route options, and the off-chance that any new ones might exist, was undertaken. The most practical area of focus was downstream from the existing bridge, with ideal connections to the road network and potentially manageable environmental impacts. Several potential routes that had been identified in the past looked ideal but there were practical reasons that prevented them from being pursued.

New Route

By happenstance, Echuca College advised that it was planning to relocate from its site near Crofton Street. A quick scan of the site determined that it had the potential for a new route that would enable connection from the town centres and link the Murray Valley Highway with Cobb Highway in NSW. A key factor with the site would be to determine the aboriginal cultural significance early.

Society had not been kind to the views of the traditional owners, however a strong relationship between the Region and Yorta Yorta elders was established which greatly assisted communications on a range of sensitive issues.

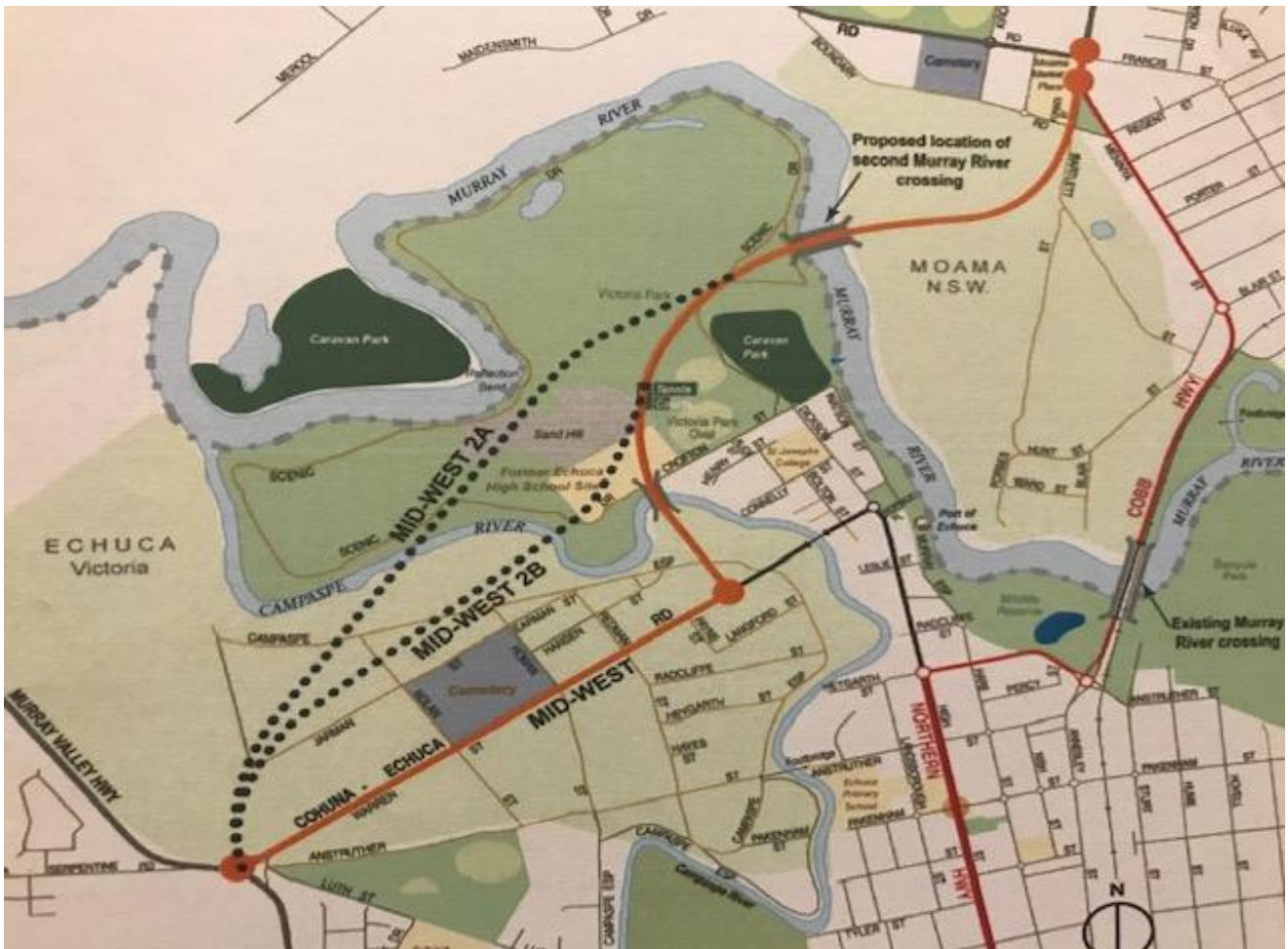
On a 43-degree summer's day, a walk-through was undertaken by Bob Adams and Yorta Yorta elders along the potential new route to determine the sites of archaeological sensitivity. Somehow, almost magically, it was found that a potential alignment could be achieved to weave through the school site and floodplain, to mitigate intrusion on the sites.

The Yorta Yorta also greatly assisted with support for a 'raft' construction treatment over sandhill remnants to avoid intrusion on potential sites of archaeological significance. This was a 'gamechanger' for the corridor, and so became the Mid-West route.

Mid-West options

Early investigations into the Mid-West alignment showed that it would:

- provide good interstate and local transport connectivity
- reduce truck traffic within the towns
- attract almost half of the existing traffic from the old bridge
- be accommodated within the floodplain
- allow for high water riverboat passage and tourist needs
- have acceptable environmental impacts



The Mid-West options.

To 'test' the Mid-West option, several variants were also investigated, to be known as Mid-West 2A and 2B. These provided for a more direct link between the Cobb Highway and Murray Valley Highway, however early investigations indicated that they had a far greater effect on the floodplain and would not be pursued on account of higher environmental and cultural heritage impacts.

At this point, community consultation was tending to sway in favour of the new route but some objection was still evident, however the growing sentiment was to "just build the bloody bridge".



One of the community consultation meetings.

Political reality

In 2010, a new Coalition Government was elected. The local member had campaigned that if elected, the Government would instruct VicRoads to investigate the Mid-West route and options 2A and 2B.

Three years later, the Government agreed to the Mid-West route.

Another EES/REF journey.

To ensure that the environmental impacts were fully understood for the Mid-West corridor, detailed investigations were carried out to gain approval for the new route, in consultation with the community and the NSW authority. It took several years to complete the EES/REF, resulting in around 15 kg of documents that were produced and tabled for consideration by an Independent Panel. A Public Hearing was convened, and although there were a number of submissions from the community in favour of the findings, not one objection was received by the Panel.

Mal vividly recalls that a huge sense of joy and relief swept across the project team on the outcome.



On site briefing for Minister Donnellan (the Minister initially thought he had encountered a protest group – although he did commit to wearing a project T-shirt on his next visit).

Left to right: Hagen Reick, Mal Kersting, Minister Donnellan, Mick McCarthy and Jason Warren.

Finally, in 2016, with compromise on all sides, an alignment was agreed upon. But there was one more concern of the tourist group. The crossing was much longer than the original proposal – about two kilometres - as it had to cross the Campaspe River as well as the Murray and the floodplains. It involved 600 metres of elevated structure including a 115 metre cast in situ balanced cantilever box girder bridge over the Murray River. The locals were concerned about the height of the concrete structure fearing it would be above the top of the trees and be an eyesore when viewed from the historic port area.

Mal arranged for some computer-generated montages of the alignment to indicate the height of the bridge as well as a computerised ‘fly-through’ and other visual aids; this assuaged the doubters and the proposal was finally approved. Design was completed in 2018 and the bridge was opened to traffic on 11 April 2022 – over 50 years after the commencement of planning.



Montage of the Mid-West bridge over Murray River

The project was constructed in four stages. VicRoads Northern Region delivered Stage 1 (the large roundabout at Murray Valley Highway/Warren Street intersection). Stages 2 and 3 – including the major bridgeworks - were delivered by the Major Projects team, and Stage 4 by RMS NSW. A great team effort.

The cost of the project was \$323.7 million.

With the wisdom of hindsight, the planning approvals and land acquisition for the new crossing include provisions for future duplication of the crossing, if and when needed.



This map shows the alignment of the new crossing. The old bridge, which is east of the Port of Echuca, connects the Cobb Highway in NSW to the Northern Highway in Victoria on the alignment shown in grey – on the right-hand side of the map. The new alignment – shown in brown - crosses both the Campaspe River and the Murray River and connects with the Cobb Highway to the north. To the south, it connects to the Murray Valley Highway at the new roundabout.

The opening day was a huge celebration for the people of the district of Echuca and Moama. The bridge across the Murray is named Dhungala and the one across the Campaspe is named Yakoia – these being the names of the rivers in the Yorta Yorta language.

However, while the opening day was a celebration for some, it was a bittersweet occasion for others. Members of the Key members of the Wollithiga clan, who represented the traditional owners of the land, did not participate in the Welcome to Country at the bridge opening. Instead, the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation, which the Victorian Government recognises as a Registered Aboriginal Party, was given the responsibility.

This was a pity, because representatives of the Wollithiga clan had provided advice on the alignment during the planning stages.



8,000 people celebrating the new bridge on the day before the official opening of the bridge.
10 April 2022.

But, on a happier note, the creator of this story, Tom Glazebrook AM, fulfilled his retirement prophecy, attending the opening as a guest of honour. Tom pointed out that he was not in a wheelchair although he conceded he had a stick. He turned 96 just a few weeks after the opening. In assisting with invitations for the opening, Mal mentioned to Minister Jacinta Allan that we might not be able to get royalty, but we could get Tom Glazebrook



Tom Glazebrook sees his vision become a reality.



Tom Glazebrook AM with Monica Morgan (Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation CEO), Jacinta Allan (Minister for Transport Infrastructure) and Allen Garner (CEO Major Road Projects Victoria) at the opening of the bridge.



The new bridge at Echuca.



Yorta Yorta Elders who assisted VicRoads with planning activities and workshops
On the far left is Prof Henry Atkinson - the main spokesperson for the group at that time. Mal Kersting greatly appreciated the company and cooperation of Henry and the other Elders.

Mal provided a final note.

‘It took more than 50 years, three major planning studies covering more than 40 potential route options, Federal and State Governments, two local Councils, numerous Agencies, an engaged community, a supportive indigenous community and the efforts of many VicRoads and RTA/RMS NSW staff to bring the second crossing to reality.

Apart from my personal involvement which stretched some 17 years, the new crossing is testament to the huge effort by all involved; the patience, dedication, and commitment to getting a good outcome for the community.

In memory of Peter Ryall.’

John Wright’s recollection of Head Office

I think I was 19 or 20 when they started building the Kew offices. They took a poll of all the staff in the Exhibition Buildings. Almost none of them wanted to work there because most of them lived in the outer suburbs. The story was that most of the Board Members lived along the High Street and Cotham Road tramlines and loved the idea of not having to drive to work. The Board of the day, no doubt remembering horseback rides to remote road projects, strongly opposed CRB staff being granted unnecessary comforts – to the extent of routinely denying heaters and demisters in cars issued to engineers responsible for roads above the snowline in the high country. They consequently considered that installing air conditioning in the new building would be an appalling concession to their lowly workers – except for the 5th floor, where they would be working, of course. I believe it was the only major office building constructed in Melbourne during the 1960s that did not have built-in air conditioning. A few years later, with some staff members collapsing from heat exhaustion during normal summers, the Board reluctantly ordered the installation, at enormous cost, of the clunky, window-mounted add-on systems that still stud the outside of the building to this day.

I still recall Sir Thomas Maltby proudly opening the building.

I worked on the 4th floor.

Trevor Phillips and Robert Morgan

I have received correspondence from Trevor and Robert on planning and road safety issues raised in the last newsletter, but because of space restrictions and mental exhaustion, I will defer them for the next newsletter. I am becoming cross-eyed!

LEST WE FORGET

In this edition, I want to remember a CRB colleague who served his country in the First World War but was killed in action in France. His name is on the CRB Roll of Honour. This is a small gesture to keep memory of him alive as well as express our appreciation.

Lance Corporal Vivian George Taylor, 2811

The name Taylor V.G. is on the CRB's Roll of Honour for the First World War. There was only one V.G. Taylor in the Australian Archives for the First World War – Vivian George. There is no record that he worked for the CRB but that is not unusual. Many of the others I investigated didn't mention it either. However, you can be fairly confident when they describe themselves in their Attestation Form as an engineer, public servant, accountant or the like. I am confident that Vivian George Taylor is the Taylor V.G. on the CRB Roll of Honour.

Taylor was born in Healesville and joined when he was 24 years old. He described himself as a labourer but in a CRB Annual Report reporting his death it indicated that Taylor was a chainman in a survey gang. He was a Lance Corporal in the 6/23rd Battalion although the CRB listing states that he was attached to the 5th Battalion. However, both battalions were formed at the same time and served in the same theatres.

He embarked from Australia in October 1916 for Egypt. It is clear that Vivian suffered ill health. He was not a robust man. He was five feet seven inches tall, ten stone in weight and had a chest measurement of 34 inches. His Service and Casualty Form shows that he was hospitalised eleven times in Tell el Kebir, Cairo, Heliopolis, Alexandria, Tell el Kebir (again), England, Étapes, Belgium, Havre as well as in the field in France. In the second hospitalisation at Tell el Kebir it recorded 'permanently in sanitary section'. In Cairo it said "rheumatism". In Heliopolis it said "congestion of lung - severe". In Havre, he spent 27 days in hospital. In August 1916 it says he was wounded in action but provides no further details.

His last hospitalisation was in December 1917 and the last entry in his record said: "Killed in Action" with a date of 5/7/18. He was 27. He completed a will leaving all his effects to his mother. These were: 2 wallets, 2 coins, photos, cards, 1 fountain pen, 1 Y.M.C.A. wallet and letters. It breaks your heart.



Lance Corporal Vivian George Taylor.

He enlisted with his younger brother, Jack, in 1915. He fought in some of the most historic and bloodiest battles of the war – at Pozieres (where three Australian divisions suffered a combined 23,000 casualties), Bapaume, the 2nd Battle of Bullecourt, Menin Road, and Poelcappelle. He entered the Battle of Hamel on July 4, 1918, before being killed the next day.



In the foreground is the grave of Herman Ernest Otto Buhmann of the AIF killed on 4 July 1918 and behind it, on the left, is the grave of Vivian George Taylor killed on the following day.

The archive states that he was buried in an isolated grave ¾ mile East North East of Villers-Bretonneux but was later reinterred in Crucifix Cemetery Plot 9 Row F Grave 8. But this was crossed out and a note inserted 'Memorial Cross Crucifix Cemetery'. However, the Commonwealth War Graves had the final word by declaring that he is buried at the Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery.



Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery.

But there is another story about Vivian's burial. I found the following entry on the Discovering Anzac/National Archives website.

"The remains of a World War I soldier that lay beneath an unmarked tombstone in France for almost a century have been identified as a Healesville man. Lance Corporal Vivian George Taylor, 27, born in Healesville in 1891, was killed in action on July 5, 1918, after fighting in some of the most historic battles on the Western Front. He was thought to be lost forever, but researchers Dennis Frank and Andrew Pittaway from Fallen Diggers have found the final resting place of Lance-Cpl Taylor, whose grave in the Villers-Bretonneux War Cemetery in France had been labelled as "unknown". Mr Frank said the pair were able to cross reference unknown graves with Lance-Cpl Taylor's date and location of death, his battalion number and his service history to pinpoint his burial location."

If ever I go back to Villers-Bretonneux I pledge that I will visit his gravesite.

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL

Norman Rockwell Revisited

I received many messages of appreciation about the Norman Rockwell story in the last newsletter but I had one interesting question from a friend in Adelaide, Hugh Orr. He asked if Rockwell ever painted African Americans. I decided to research this and came up with, what I think, an interesting story.

The short answer is that he did but it took a quite a while before he did. Rockwell worked most of his career for the *Saturday Evening Post*. The *Post* was a conservative, Middle American

magazine which we in Australia might describe as being WASPish (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant). It reflected the views of the comfortable middle-class and those people aspiring to become part of it. I doubt that sales of the *Post* in Harlem in New York or in the black ghettos of the deep south of America were very high. And certainly, when I was a child wondering at his pictures, I had no idea of the racism that gripped America at that time. Even now, it persists.

Rockwell left the *Post* in 1963 at the age of 69. He later recalled having been directed to paint out a black person in one of his paintings because the *Post's* policy was that black people should only be shown in service industry jobs.



This is one of the few paintings done by Rockwell for the *Post* in which an African American is portrayed. It shows a black waiter in a servile pose with his young, white customer.

If you recall, the American films of that era often portrayed African American men as villains or fugitives and the women were usually overweight servants and nursery maids with a home-spun 'black mammy' philosophy of subservience and acceptance of their lot. Remember Hattie McDaniel who played the servant to Vivien Leigh's Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone with the Wind*.



Vivien Leigh and Hattie McDaniel in *Gone with the Wind*.

She won an Oscar for her role but she and her escort were racially segregated from her co-stars at the ceremony and were made to sit at the back of the room at a separate table.

Such was America at that time and the *Saturday Evening Post* personified this attitude.

Rockwell then went to work for another magazine called *Look*. *Look* was a general interest magazine with an emphasis on photography and photo-journalism. Here, Rockwell was freed from the restraints of the *Post* and the painting entitled 'The Problem We All Live With' shown in the last newsletter, depicting Ruby Bridges' lonely walk to school, was his first painting for *Look*. It was inspired by the civil rights movement.



A photograph of Ruby Bridges being accompanied to school.



Ruby being honoured at the Whitehouse on the 50th Anniversary of her walk to school.
President Obama said to her, "If it hadn't been for you, I might not be here."
The original painting is in the background.

On July 14, 1964, *The New York Times* ran a story titled, "A Second Body is Found in the Mississippi." Norman Rockwell tore this page from his newspaper and saved it. The story of a racial killing in southwest Mississippi and the arson of two Negro churches mentioned another unsolved case, that of three civil rights workers missing since June 21st. The brief reference caught Rockwell's attention and laid the foundation for one of his most stirring works. In March 1965, Rockwell began *Murder in Mississippi*, illustrating the June slaying of three civil rights workers in Mississippi.

Originally *Murder in Mississippi* was to fill two pages; with the victims on the left page and the murderers, Deputy Price and the klansmen, on the right page. Pencil sketches were made for both panels. A preparatory study in black and white shows the complete horizontal picture with Price pointing a pistol, and several klansmen with sticks (incorrectly, as they were later found to have had rifles). On the bottom left-hand corner another klansman is featured – indicating that the three young men were surrounded. However, when reduced to the left page only, the murderers on both sides of the young men were removed, leaving only the shadows cast from the group on the right.



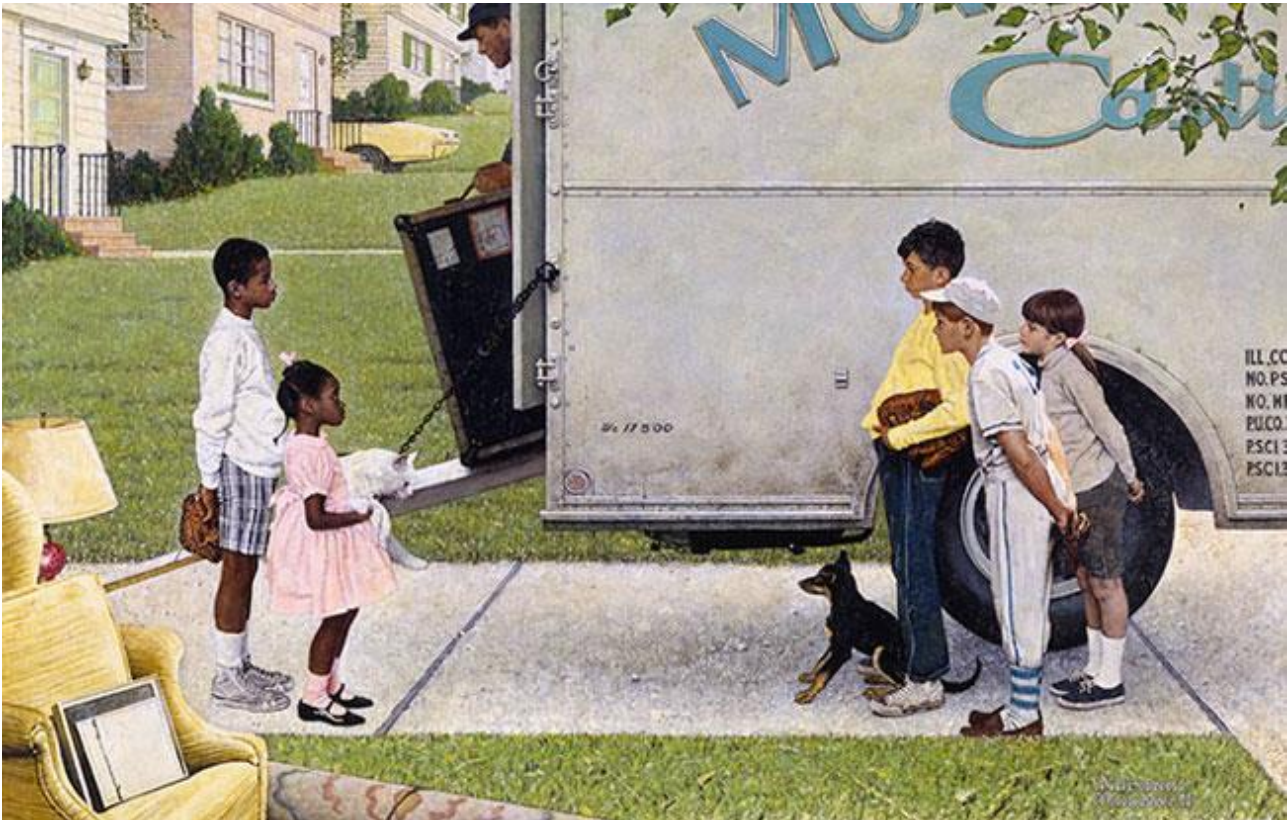
The original study for *Murder in Mississippi*.

When Rockwell submitted the single page painting to *Look*, the art director decided that the more impressionistic study (shown above) suited the article better and so it was printed rather than the finished painting. This was the only time one of Rockwell's sketches were ever published.



Murder in Mississippi – 1965. The finished (and his darkest) painting.

So it was, that Rockwell started to paint black Americans later in his career. Here is another.



New Kids in the Neighbourhood – 1967. Black and white children highlighting the tension of housing integration.

New Kids in the Neighbourhood is whimsical in that the children don't appear to display any animosity towards each other. Perhaps Rockwell is portraying the natural innocence of childhood and that racism is a learned behaviour

Rockwell's art spanned nearly six decades and reflects American history over that time. His depiction of racial images reflects the national cultural shift that happened through his lifetime. It could be said that his art is a symbol of 20th century American racial progress.

TRIVIA AND DIDACTIC WHIMSIES

Job interview

A friend of mine, Mick, who was born in Colac, applied for a specialist teaching position at the University of Melbourne.

He was short-listed with another applicant – from New Zealand – because both applicants had similar qualifications and experience. They were asked to take a written test by the Dean.

When the results came in, both men had scored 19 out of 20.

The Dean approached Mick and said, "Thank you for coming to the interview, but we've decided to give the other applicant the job."

Mick said, "Why give him the job when we both got 19 questions correct. This being Melbourne and me being Australian, surely I should get the job."

The Dean said, "We have made our decision not on the correct answers, but on the question you got wrong."

Mick exclaimed, "And just how would one incorrect answer be better than another?"

The Dean said, "Simple. On question number 7, the New Zealander wrote down, 'I'm sorry, I don't know the answer to this.'

You wrote down, "Neither do I."

The Confessional

I went into the confessional box after many years of being away from the Catholic Church.

Inside I found a fully equipped bar with Guinness on tap. On one wall, there was a row of decanters with fine Irish whiskey and Waterford crystal glasses.

On the other wall was a dazzling array of the finest cigars and chocolates.

When the priest came in, I said to him, 'Father, forgive me, for it's been a very long time since I've been to confession, but I must first admit that the confessional box is much more inviting than it used to be.'

He replied, 'Patrick, you moron, you're on my side.'

Norman Rockwell's 1943 April Fool's Day Cover on the Saturday Evening Post

Some of you expressed your enjoyment of finding the anomalies in the cover I included in the last newsletter. I confess it was a bit hard to find some of them and I think the picture I had included had been cropped a bit. But I found some answers on the internet and the main fooleries in the painting are:

1. The trout, the fishhook and the water, all on the stairway.
2. The stairway running behind the fireplace, an architectural impossibility.
3. The mailbox.
4. The water tap beside the fire place.
5. Wall-paper upside down.
6. Wallpaper has two designs.
7. The scissors candlesticks.
8. Silhouettes upside down.

9. Bacon and egg on the decorative plate.
10. The April-fool clock.
11. The portraits.
12. Ducks in the living room.
13. Zebra looking out of the frame.
14. Mouse looking out of the mantelpiece.
15. A car tyre for the iron rim of the mantelpiece.
16. Medicine bottle and glass floating in the air.
17. Fork in-stead of a spoon on the bottle.
18. The old lady's hip pocket;
19. The newspaper in her pocket.
20. Her wedding ring on the wrong hand.
21. Buttons on the wrong side of her sweater.
22. The crown on her head.
23. The wrench for a nutcracker in her hand.
24. The skunk on her lap.
25. She is wearing trousers.
26. She has on ice skates.
27. No checkers on checkerboard.
28. Wrong number of squares on checkerboard.
29. Too many fingers on old man's hand.
30. Erasers on both ends of his pencil.
31. He is wearing a skirt.
32. He has a bird in his pocket.
33. He is wearing roller skates.
34. He has a hoe for a cane.
35. Purse on the string tied to his finger.
36. Milkweed growing in room.

37. Milk bottles on the milkweed.
38. Deer under chair.
39. Dog's paws on deer.
40. Mushrooms – under her chair.
41. Woodpecker pecking chair.
42. Buckle on man's slipper.
43. Artist's signature in reverse.

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