

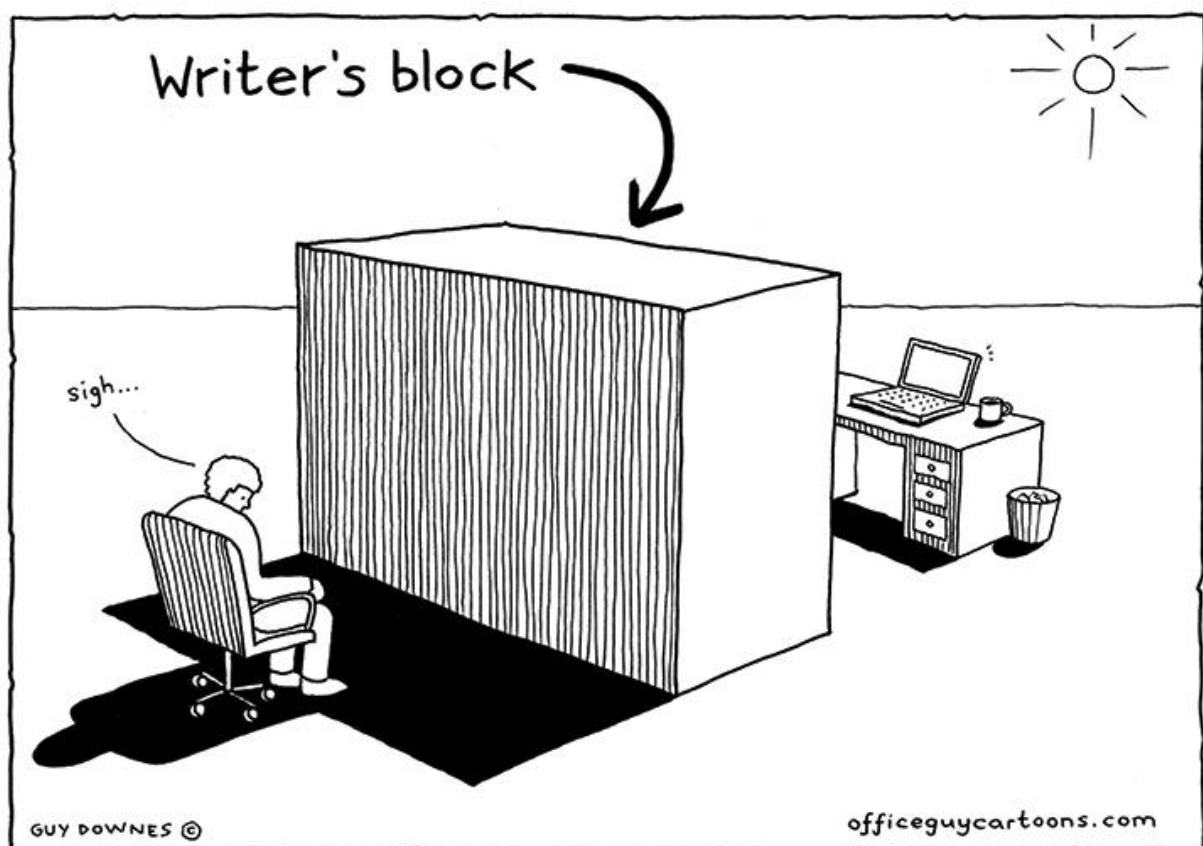
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Membership of the Association is available to all who have been members of VicRoads or forerunner organisations or the spouse of deceased members, and bestows on them all the rights of the Rules of Association. Cost of membership is a once only fee of \$50. Enquiries about membership or receipt of the Newsletter by e-mail should be directed to the Secretary, VicRoads Association, PO Box 80, Kew 3101 or by phone or e-mail as shown above. Visit our website at <https://vicroadsassociation.org>

Dear Members,

I am suffering from writer's block.

I have no idea about what to write in this introduction.



I started with a bit of a rant about the escalation of infrastructure project costs, but I became depressed.

So, I think I will write about the things I love. I hope a stream of consciousness will take over and the words will flow off the keyboard.

For example, I love children. They are innocent, honest and fun-loving. Children don't learn to lie until about three years of age. This is when they start to realise that you aren't a mind reader, so they can say things that aren't true without you always knowing. Children lie more

from four to six years of age. I love that honesty and don't despair of their dishonesty. It shows they are becoming wise to the real world.

I also love the honest reaction of children to their curiosity. I can still see the expression on the faces of my children when my father took them across the paddock to the chook house to collect the eggs. Their hands slid under the chooks to retrieve the eggs, and their faces lit up with wonderment at the feel and warmth of the eggs. They couldn't get back to Nanna quick enough to tell her about the miracle they had just witnessed. She burst into a huge grin and picked them up and smothered them with love.

I remember too, nursing my grand-daughter one night. She was the type that usually twisted and squirmed to get to the floor, but this night she fell asleep in my arms. She looked heartbreakingly innocent and peaceful and when her mother came to take her away, I successfully argued that it was best for her to remain in my arms. As parents, I bet we have all stared closely in awe at our children (or grandchildren) as they slept – as I experienced that night.

One of my aunts used to love squeezing the lobes of our ears. We thought she was barking mad but I have a similar fetish as I love touching my grandchildren's hair. Happily, they don't seem to mind. I love mothers looking at children in their prams fussing with love and wonderment. A miracle of life.

I also love children trying their best. I went to watch my grandson run in a cross-country race and it was the non-athletic kids trying their hardest that won my heart that day. They were heroes!

Now for other things that I love.

I love the smell in the bush after rain and the sound of the bell birds – at least that is what we called them.

I love it when the shell of a hard-boiled egg breaks away cleanly without blemish on the surface of the egg. I love cracking the toffee on top of a crème brulee and the feeling you get when you thrust your hand in a bag of wheat. I love it when you successfully catch a wave in the surf and slide down its height and coast into the shallows.

When I played sport, I loved it when I did something exactly as I intended. I kicked a winning goal in a football match once from a boundary throw in. I had decided to try and catch the ball in the air and get my foot to it. There was no time to lose. That is exactly what I did despite two opponents holding me – and I still remember it and love the memory of it 60 years later. I loved it when the tennis ball pinged straight off the sweet spot of my racquet – and the same with a cricket bat. To sweetly hit a golf ball is a wondrous feeling.

I love going to the cinema. I am a sucker for being drawn into a plot but I have been known to walk out when it is too boring, silly or violent. I recently loved 'The Holdovers' – a film about a curmudgeonly classics teacher at a boarding school in America who had to remain at the school over the Christmas holidays to look after a cranky student who had no place to go. It was gentle, funny and human and I loved it.

I love writing and painting. Neither is a chore and both are passions.

I love mangoes, roast pumpkin, minted peas, any fruit salad with limoncello, tomato and onion pie, and Asian food. I also love Italian and French food. I also love tripe and chicken's feet.

I love different genres of music especially the plaintive tones of traditional Irish music. The song 'Lass of Aughrim' moves me to tears but I love it so.

I hope you don't think I am being self-indulgent. Let me know what you love!

WHAT'S COMING UP

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

The table below shows a tentative summary of events for 2024. Some activities have not been confirmed but we will update details when they are finalised.

Date	Event	Contact Person
Monday 5 February	12 noon Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown Hotel	Just turn up
Monday 4 March	1.15 pm – 3.00 pm - Peter Don, Rail Futures, <i>Growing Victoria's Regions- Rail the Catalyst for Regional Growth</i> to be held at the Phyllis Hore room at the Kew Library.	David Jellie
Thursday 14 March	12 noon Annual General Meeting followed by lunch at 1.00 pm, Waverley RSL	Ken Vickery
Tuesday 2 April	12 noon Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown Hotel	Just turn up
Monday 13 May	10 am Shrine of Remembrance – highlighting the recent upgrade followed by lunch and a possible tour of Royal Botanic Gardens	Jill Earnshaw
Monday 3 June	12 noon Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown Hotel	Just turn up
Monday 24 June	10.30 am TAC Geelong for briefing on road safety strategy followed by lunch with ex-VicRoads colleagues.	Nick Szwed
Tuesday 2 July	12 noon for 12.30 pm Lunch at Waverley RSL	Ken Vickery
Monday 5 August	12 noon Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown Hotel	Just turn up
Monday 19 August	10.30 am West Gate Tunnel Project	David Jellie
Monday 7 October	12 noon Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown Hotel	Just turn up
Friday 25 October	12 noon. Annual Golf Day at Greenacres.	Jim Webber
Monday 14, Tuesday 15 October	Regional trip to Traralgon (for lunch with ex-VicRoads staff), overnight in Orbost & then to Cooma to be briefed on the engineering and financial aspects of the Snowy 2.0 Project from 2pm to 3:30pm.	Jim Webber

	Overnight in Cooma or other Snowy town, then return to Victoria via Canberra, Albury or other options on 16 October.	
Monday 2 December	12 noon Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown Hotel	Just turn up
Tuesday 10 December	12 noon for 12.30 pm, Christmas lunch, Waverley RSL	Ken Vickery
2025		
Monday 3 February	12 noon Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown Hotel	Just turn up.

Occasional Lunch at Shoppingtown Hotel, Monday 5 February at 12 noon.

Our first lunch for 2024 will be held on Monday 5 February. There is no need to register – just turn up. Please note that the Occasional Lunches are held on the first Monday of the designated month except for the one on Tuesday 2 April.

Monday 4 March 2024 at Kew Library, 1.15 pm to 3.00 pm.

Peter Don of Rail Futures will give a presentation to us on *Growing Victoria's Regions- Rail the Catalyst for Regional Growth*,

The Kew Library is in Cotham Road, Kew, next door to the campus of Trinity Grammar School (to the east), and Alexandra Gardens (to the west). It is a couple of hundred metres east of the junction of Cotham Road and High Street. The 109 tram to Box Hill stops opposite the library at the corner of Cotham Road and Charles Street. There is plenty of street parking in the area. The Phyllis Hore Room is at the south end of the building and can be accessed from the car park.

If you wish to attend, please register with me by email only on pdjellie@hotmail.com

Peter is a member of the Rail Futures Institute. Rail Futures is an independent, non-partisan group formed to advocate sustainable rail solutions for public transport and freight problems. Its membership includes experienced rail professionals, engineers, and economists. The Institute believes the case for rail solutions needs to be argued with sound commercial, economic, and social reasoning, and it contributes to better public debate on transport problems from a rail perspective.

Annual General Meeting - Thursday 14 March at 12 noon at Waverley RSL followed by lunch at 1.00 pm.

At this meeting I will present our Annual Report and we will also elect committee members. If you wish to nominate for the committee, please contact our Secretary Jim Webber at jameswebber1717@gmail.com or 0412 064 527.

We will also receive the Treasurer's report, confirm our auditor for 2024 and confirm our fees – all as required by our Rules of Association.

I will try to make it as interesting as possible and promise it will not go beyond 12.45 pm!

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

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

Christmas Lunch – Tuesday 12 December at 12 noon

What can I say? We had a record attendance of around 95 people, a delicious meal and lots of good will and laughter.

It was wonderful to see so many travel to Melbourne from the regional areas. They included John Allen (I apologise John as I failed to mention you on the day), Geoff Lawrence, John Liddell, Peter McCulloch (and his chauffeur son), Lance Midgley, Paul and Noela Tucker, and Laurie Watson. It was very appropriate that Laurie won the Christmas hamper assembled by Jill Earnshaw and to have Geoff Lawrence as a train companion back to Ballarat. I wonder if the wine made it home!

There were also some for whom it was their first Christmas party – John Boston, Martin Habgood, David Keam, Paul Petridiso, Lloyd Rowe and Anne White, Neville Schmidt, Gernot and Robin Schubert.

I have probably missed a few in these lists – please forgive me.

Nick Szwed has posted a lot of images on our website but I will add a few of my own photographs showing the nicest people there – plus a few others!









VALE

I extend our condolences to the family and friends of Sue Harris who died on 22 January. Sue worked in the Human Resources Division for many years and ultimately became its Director.

NEW MEMBERS

I wish to extend a warm welcome to Bruce Hartnett AM as a new member of the Association. Bruce became a CRB Cadet in 1965 and from 1969 to 1975 he spent six years on Post Graduate Study leave. He then worked in Transport Planning with the Board for a year before moving on. He had another return to organisation as a member of the Advisory Board in the 1980s.



Bruce was a Board Member of the RACV Club and in 2004 he joined the Board of the Victorian Superannuation Fund (VicSuper) and was appointed Deputy Chair in 2009. In July 2014, he took over as Chair and he stepped down on 31 December 2016.

He served on the Board of Odyssey House Victoria for eight years including a term as Chairperson. He was also President of the council of the School for Student Leadership, a residential, transformational experience for year 9 students in State Government schools. He also served on the Australia Day Committee (Victoria) and was a member of the Melbourne Forum.

MISSING CONTACT DETAILS

We sent letters out to all members (or partners of deceased members) who had previously received hard copy newsletters in the mail. The following contacts have not responded and will be removed from our database if we can't find them. As a last effort, please let us know if you can enlighten us about any of them. If you can, please contact our database manager, Iris Whittaker, at irisw25@bigpond.com

Donald Collis, Bill Degnan, Emery Faraday, Jean Graff, Margaret Grey, Edward Hall, Clive Hamilton, John Hart, Albert Haslett, Emil Horbelt, Malcolm King, Gordon Mills, Dawn Newby, Ken Powell, David Rowland, Jenny Tolley, Stanley Turner, and Eileen Walsh.

ENQUIRY REGARDING ALAN LEAKE

I have had an enquiry from a friend about Alan (or Allan) Leake who apparently worked in the drawing office in Denmark Street in the 1970s. In his spare time, he was a musician (drummer) with the Storyville Jazzmen – renamed the Storyville All-stars in 1975.

I have found a reference in the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia referring to a wake held for Allan Leake at the Rosstown Hotel in Carnegie on 20 October 2000. It states that he was born in 1935. There is also a recording of an interview with Alan Leake in the History of Jazz in Australia collection in the National Library.

If you have any memories of Alan, would you please contact me?

HEAD OFFICE CLOSURE CELEBRATION

We are yet to meet with the Department of Transport and Planning about the details of the celebration in April. I will communicate with you separately once we receive any further details.

I note that the main building and the southern car park have been fenced off.

NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Phil Symons

Phil has been doing some amazing work in restoring and enhancing photos for *Roads to War* and the newsletters. I told him I thought it was magic! Phil explained where the magic comes from.

As an example, look at the three images below of a soldier of the First World War which he did for the Wahgunyah Historical Society.

The first is the low-resolution original - in pretty poor condition. The top corners have frayed away and there is an ugly grease running up the centre.

The other two are the enhanced versions – one in black and white and the other in colour. Phil said both are exactly the same resolution and sharpness. By viewing them side by side and zooming to the same level you will see the detail is the same. Phil reckons the brain interprets the colour version slightly different to the black and white.

Me? I think it is magic!



The original.



Black and white and colour.

The soldier is James Duncan McMillan.

Phil has also scanned a lot of photographs of Dandenong and Metro Divisions from Stan Hodgson's photo album. You can access them via the following link.

<https://1drv.ms/f/s!AjnJFBZO7qH1gZV4Qg5GNlzkQqhC9g?e=SkZNg8>

David Keam

David wrote to Iris Whittaker as follows:

'It was nice to catch up at the RSL in December.

Thank you for forwarding these newsletters. They are, to put it mildly, extensive and detailed.

I was hoping to make it to the upcoming occasional lunch but unfortunately, I have had a fall from my bike and have sustained a fractured pelvis which will render me rather immobile for a couple of weeks at least.

I look forward to future newsletters and to catching up at upcoming events.

Regards
David Keam'

John Scully

'David,

Thanks for another fine, well written, interesting and witty newsletter.

I noticed the names of Mal Kersting and Norm Butler. I knew them both and enjoyed working with them.

I visited Traralgon a number of times. On one trip, Norm took me on a two-day trip that must have covered a lot of eastern Victoria. Towns included Omeo, Gelantipy, etc and across border into New South Wales! It was fantastic.

I am sorry that I missed the trip to Horsham and the Stick Shed. The silo art is amazing. I must pay more attention to your list of forthcoming events. The head office celebration looks very interesting.

And another obituary shows what talented and accomplished people have worked for VicRoads and its predecessor organisations. Makes me feel proud just knowing I once worked there.

Don't be too despondent about the Bombers for 2024. I think they could surprise. Remember last year they beat Collingwood convincingly for three quarters and looked very good.

Best wishes, John.'

Geoff Kloot

'Hi David

Happy New Year! I hope that you had a pleasant Christmas.

The purpose of this note is to seek your thoughts as a structural engineer on a questionable idea for reducing the impact of floods on private homes.

One of my favourite sayings is that "If you always do, what you always did, you will always get, what you always got". So, if we just repair the damage done to homes by floods then we will continue having to do the repairs. In the days when floods occurred perhaps 20 years apart that may have been acceptable; now the floods are occurring less than 20 months apart.

One option is to move the town, or parts of it, to higher ground. This is prohibitively expensive and generates the situation where a homeowner's property has zero value. In addition, most of the community infrastructure in the area such as roads and services are abandoned. My idea is to lift the houses above the flood level. This is where your structural background comes in.

I will use a weatherboard house on stumps as the easiest example to illustrate the concept. The steps are described below.

1. The services including sewerage and drainage are disconnected.
2. Steel beams are slid under the bearers of the building. The beams are suitably braced so that they stay in position relative to each other.
3. The steel beam structure is progressively jacked up until the required floor level is reached.
4. Drilled piles are installed to support the steel structure.
5. Minor repairs are undertaken to address any damage that occurred during the jacking process.
6. The services are reconnected.
7. Stairs or ramps are provided to restore access to the home.

The benefits of the process are:

- The materials used in the original house are not wasted. A new house could be built on the property at a higher level but that would be very expensive.
- The community infrastructure can continue to be used.
- The owner retains the title to their land and it has value.
- It should be possible to insure the property.
- Possibly the flood effects would reduce because the building is not such an obstacle to the flow of the floodwaters.

So, there it is. Even if the idea is impracticable, I feel better for getting it documented.

I am not seeking an engineering analysis for the idea but rather your views on whether such a scheme, (possibly with modifications), could have merit.

I am quite comfortable for you to highlight all of the things that I have overlooked that would make the idea impracticable. I am also conscious of the fact that a brick veneer home would

need the bricks dismantled and the slabs on which many homes are now being built are probably not designed for lifting.

However, there must be a better way than continually repairing homes in time for the next flood.

Any thoughts you have on the above would be very much appreciated.

Kind regards

Geoff

Editor's Note. I will respond to this in the next newsletter but I would be pleased to hear other views on this or other solutions.

Ray Brindle

'Hello David. A neighbour of mine here at Fountain Court village in Burwood, Peter Carroll, was, I believe, an employee of the CRB back in the 60s-70s. I think he spent time in Metro, among other things. Do you know of him?

Peter was a lively fellow and in good spirits when we had drinks last Friday. Yesterday I heard that he had died during minor surgery on his hand. I don't think he was a VicRoads Association member but, if he was indeed a former CRB man, others may remember him and might be interested to know of his sudden death.

Ray.'

LEST WE FORGET

In this newsletter I include the story of a CRB colleague who was shot down over Germany and incarcerated as a prisoner of War.

Flying Officer Hartley Trevor Sargeant, V44681, 419278

Hartley was born in Essendon in 1918 and enlisted in the CMF in January 1940 (V44681). On 17 July 1942, he joined the RAAF (419278).

Hartley started work with the CRB in 1937 after working for A. G. Healing – the bicycle makers. He had put a note in with Zercho's Business Collage that he was looking for a change, and out of the blue, he received an invitation from the CRB. He started work in the old Dunlop Building in South Melbourne doing clerical work for the Mechanical Branch, but he was soon transferred to the drawing office. At enlistment, he described himself as a mechanical draftsman.



Hartley Sargeant's paybook photograph – 1942.

Hartley undertook training in Bradfield Park (Initial Training School) and Temora (Elementary Flying Training School) from the time of his enlistment (July 1942) to February 1943. He then embarked from Sydney for Canada arriving there on 2 March 1943. After more training in Edmonton, he went by sea to the UK arriving there on 1 September 1943.

He was a navigator in RAF 214 Squadron (Federated Malay States). No. 214 Squadron was formed in 1917 as part of the Royal Naval Air Service but changed to 214 Squadron after the formation of the Royal Flying Corps. Its name was expanded in recognition of the gift of aircraft purchased with funds subscribed to the British Government through the Federated Malay States War Fund which was inaugurated by the *Malay Mail* in 1940.

No. 214 Federated (Malay States Squadron) spent the entire Second World War operating with Bomber Command. Hartley flew a total of 40 operational flights over two tours of duty.

The following account of events is recorded on the website of No. 214 (Federated Malay States) Squadron, Royal Air Force.

'On 14 March 1945, the mission of Flying Fortress Mark III HB802 BU-O to Lutzkendorf failed to return. It was brought down by light flak at 3,000 ft on its way home. All ten crew members were taken as Prisoners of War. Alternatively, it may have been shot down by the rear gunner of Hptm Martin Becker's Me 110 of Stab IV/NJG6. Becker claimed nine 'Lancasters' were shot down that night - this being the last, at 23.37 hrs, approximately three miles south east of Baiersbronn (near Strasbourg and Stuttgart).

Flt/Lt John Wynne was the pilot of the other 214 Fortress which was shot down on March 14, 1945 and gives further insight into the loss of HB802. Quote: "The other Fortress accompanying mine was flown by Norman Rix DFC, who became a celebrated architect. His aircraft, some miles further south than mine, was shot down over Stuttgart and Rix was lucky to survive. His parachute opened a few seconds before he crashed into the top branches of a pine tree. As a POW, Rix saved the Bavarian village of Ettringen from destruction by the advancing U.S. 7th Army. Having been marched to Ettringen, he persuaded his guards to

lay down their arms and then took control of the village. The next day, he went forward to meet an American tank patrol and informed the astonished commander that Ettringen was already in British hands. A formal handover was arranged for the following day. No shots were fired and no civilians injured. Sadly, Rix's achievement was never recognised by the authorities, but the villagers of Ettringen have not forgotten what he did.'

The crew of Flying Fortress Mark III HB802 BU-O consisted of two RAAF (including Hartley), three RNZAF and five RAF airmen The following letter was sent to Hartley's father on 15 March 1945.

'Dear Mr Sargeant,

I am writing to offer you the sincere sympathy both from myself and the whole squadron in the anxiety you have experienced since learning that Pilot Officer Hartley Trevor Sargeant, is missing from air operations.

He was the navigator of an aircraft which took off to operate against the enemy on the night of 14th/15th March, 1945. No message was received from the aircraft and it failed to return. Nothing has since been heard of it or of any of the crew.

There is a possibility that Pilot Officer Sargeant may have escaped from the aircraft by parachute, or in a forced landing in enemy territory, in which case he would be a prisoner of war, and news of this would not reach us perhaps for many weeks. The International Red Cross would be the organisation to receive any further news and they would pass it immediately to the Air Ministry. The Air Ministry would then communicate with you direct, thus avoiding any necessary delay.

I feel most deeply for you in this anxious time. If there is anything I can do to help, please let me know. I join with you in hoping and praying that he is safe.

*Yours very sincerely,
D.D. Rogers'*



A Mark III Flying Fortress in flight - similar to the one that Hartley came down in.

Details of Hartley's account of leaving the aircraft are in his archive. He described how the light flak damaged the starboard engine which then caught fire. The crew were ordered to fix parachutes. Hartley said that he left the aircraft after the bomb-aimer. The skipper was the last to leave. The plane was at about 5,000 feet and, from his parachute, Hartley could see the aircraft, still on fire, explode on impact. He landed in snow in the Black Forest. He hid in a small box suspended above the snow, but armed civilians with dogs sensed him out and, after being frisked for arms, he was marched back to the village of Rippledon and handed over to the German Army authorities.

Hartley was captured with two other airmen – Pilot Officer A.R. Irvine (RAAF) and Flight Lieutenant N. Rix (RAF). All crew members of his plane survived to become prisoners of war.

He was interned at a transit camp at Ludwigeburg (in Stuttgart) for a period of 12 days. He described the accommodation as 'fair but crowded', with no facility for bathing and poor sanitation. There were no recreational facilities and he was not required to work. He described the guards as being very 'loud voiced'. Pilot Officer Irvine was the only person he knew in the camp. He said that the German rations were 'little and poor' but the cooking facilities were fair.

Fortunately for Hartley, the war ended not long after he was captured. The official date of the end of the war in Europe is 8 May 1945, but there must have been some sort of cessation of hostilities preceding that date as he was repatriated to the UK on 7 May 1945.

Back in the UK, he was interviewed about his interment – as were all POWs – and the information about his experiences was recorded in the debriefing.

After his debriefing, he was asked for anything else he needed to record. He said "I cannot speak for camp treatment since I was on the march most of the eight weeks I was in captivity."

He arrived back in Melbourne on 22 October 1945 and was immediately discharged.

He resumed work in the Mechanical Branch of the CRB and was a popular and well-respected member of staff. Late in his career, he mused at how elementary the plant was before the war – whether it was bought in or designed by the CRB itself. There were no hydraulics or pneumatics in those early days. The designs were experimental. A prototype was made and, if it worked, more would be made with progressive improvements.

After the war, one of the most pressing problems in Mechanical Branch was the maintenance of the equipment used in the Bituminous Surfacing (BS) Units around the state. Hartley was appointed to tour around the countryside regularly to visit the BS Units and sort out their problems – including non-mechanical ones.

He remained with the Board (and the Branch) for 40 years.

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

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL

I want you to brace yourself because I am going to tell you a bit of a story about silo art.

My wonderfully strong and fit, eldest son, Dugald, was severely struck down with a tick bite. He had been camping at our favourite place in southern New South Wales when he was bitten on the cheek. At first, it did not worry him but later it transpired that he had acquired Queensland Tick Typhus which hospitalised him with fever, nausea and overall debilitation. As soon as his GP saw him, he sent him straight to the Alfred Hospital where he was admitted immediately. It was pretty scary but he has now made a full recovery.

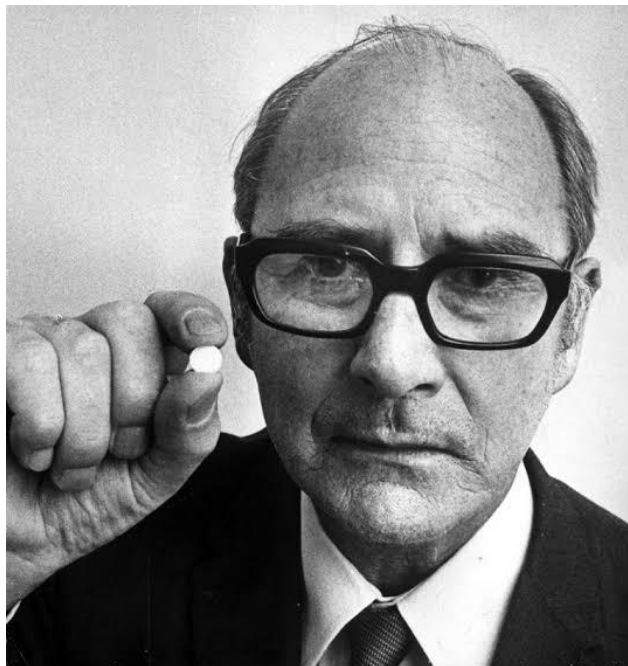
Now you are probably asking what has this got to do with silo art?

I will now explain. During one of my visits to see him, I described the VicRoads Association excursion to Bendigo Ballarat last November, and I described the silo art in Horsham that so took my fancy. I mentioned that it had been done by an elusive artist who has the pen-name of Smug. I searched for an image of Smug on the internet but could find nothing – and I told Dugald this. To my surprise Dugald said that he met him last year.

Dugald had been working at a friend's place near Murtoa and he saw Smug painting a silo there using a cherry picker. Had I known about this silo, we would have definitely gone to see it during our tour.

The art on the Murtoa silo was the culmination of a community group's four-year quest to have their silo painted. Smug has transformed the drab silo into a meaningful piece of public art portraying 29 local birds and one radiant bird to represent one in 30 Australians suffering a bipolar condition. The work was inspired by the discoveries of a former Murtoa resident, Dr John Cade, a psychiatrist who made a globally important contribution to the understanding and early medical treatment of mental health in the 1940s – work that changed the quality of lives for thousands of people.

At a time when the standard treatments for psychosis were electro-convulsive therapy and lobotomy, lithium had the distinction of being the first effective medication available to treat a mental illness.



John Cade – 1912 to 1980

He was also inspired by the James Hill Taxidermy Bird private collection held in the Murtoa Museum, the largest of its type in the Southern Hemisphere. The birds inspired the concept for the artwork.



The Murtoa Silo artwork by Smug.

I am also excited to tell you that I have found an image of Smug.



Sam Bates aka Smug.

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, Smug lives in Glasgow in Scotland but does work throughout Europe – as well as his native Australia. Below is a random sample of his work.



Portrait of June Barber - London



Hobart



Portrait of Helge – an illiterate man - Norway



Amsterdam

A PALINDROME POEM

Once you have read this poem, read it backwards.

I am part of a lost generation.
And I refuse to believe That
I can change the world.
I realize this may be a shock but
“Happiness comes from within”
is a lie and
“Money will make me happy.”
So, in 30 years, I will tell my children
They are not the most important thing in my life.
My employer will know that
I have my priorities straight because
Work

Is more important than
Family
I tell you this
Once upon a time
families stayed together
But this will not be true in my era
This is a quick fix society
Experts tell me
30 years from now, I will be celebrating the 10th
anniversary of my divorce

I do not concede that
I will live in a country of my own making
In the future
Environmental destruction will be the norm
No longer can it be said that
My peers and I care about this Earth.
It will be evident that
My generation is apathetic and lethargic
It is foolish to presume that
There is hope

Jonathan Reed

And all this will come true unless we choose to reverse it.

FAST, FREQUENT AND FAIR BUSES FOR MELBOURNE

Infrastructure Victoria is an independent advisory body with three functions:

- preparing a 30-year infrastructure strategy for Victoria, which is reviewed and updated every three to five years
- advising the government on specific infrastructure matters
- publishing research on infrastructure-related issues.

It also assists government departments and agencies to develop sectoral infrastructure plans.

Infrastructure Victoria takes a long-term, evidence-based view of infrastructure planning to inform community discussion on infrastructure issues. It does not directly oversee or fund infrastructure projects.

In a recent research report into Melbourne's bus network, it concludes that a fast, fair and better-connected bus network is needed for the city, especially in the under-serviced outer growth areas.

The report builds on previous research conducted over two years into the challenges and opportunities for Melbourne's bus network, including one of the largest ever studies of community attitudes to buses.

Buses can provide faster and more frequent services, operate for longer hours and use routes that better connect shopping precincts, train stations, and other activity centres. This will give more people access to public transport, reduce road congestion, improve social equity and cut Victoria's transport emissions.

Like other cities in Australia and around the world, Melbourne can also benefit from a network of bus rapid transit connected to activity centres and the rail network. This would radically change the way Melburnians move across the city and locate high quality transport near more homes, schools and businesses.

Bus rapid transit has the potential to return around \$2.60 for every dollar invested. Infrastructure Victoria estimates it can also support more than 80,000 extra passenger boardings every day. That's more than the total number of passengers that take a train from Flinders Street station every day.

When combined, their proposed reforms can lead to an extra 164,000 bus boardings and remove up to 63,000 vehicles from Melbourne's roads every day – the same number of vehicles that travel through the Domain Tunnel daily.

Infrastructure Victoria made ten recommendations as follows:

- Increase the frequency of bus services, beginning with outer and growth area suburbs.
- Optimise the bus network through fast and direct routes.
- Extend operating hours to match passenger demand and improve timetable integration.
- Strengthen the role of community transport.
- Speed up buses through on-road priority and smarter technology.
- Plan and deliver bus rapid transit across Melbourne.
- Improve the bus stop and interchange experience.
- Substantially reduce bus fares relative to other modes.
- Update the Principal Public Transport Network to align it with existing and future mass transit bus routes to be delivered through Victoria's bus plan.
- Provide funding certainty for growth area buses.

The full report can be found on Infrastructure Victoria's website.



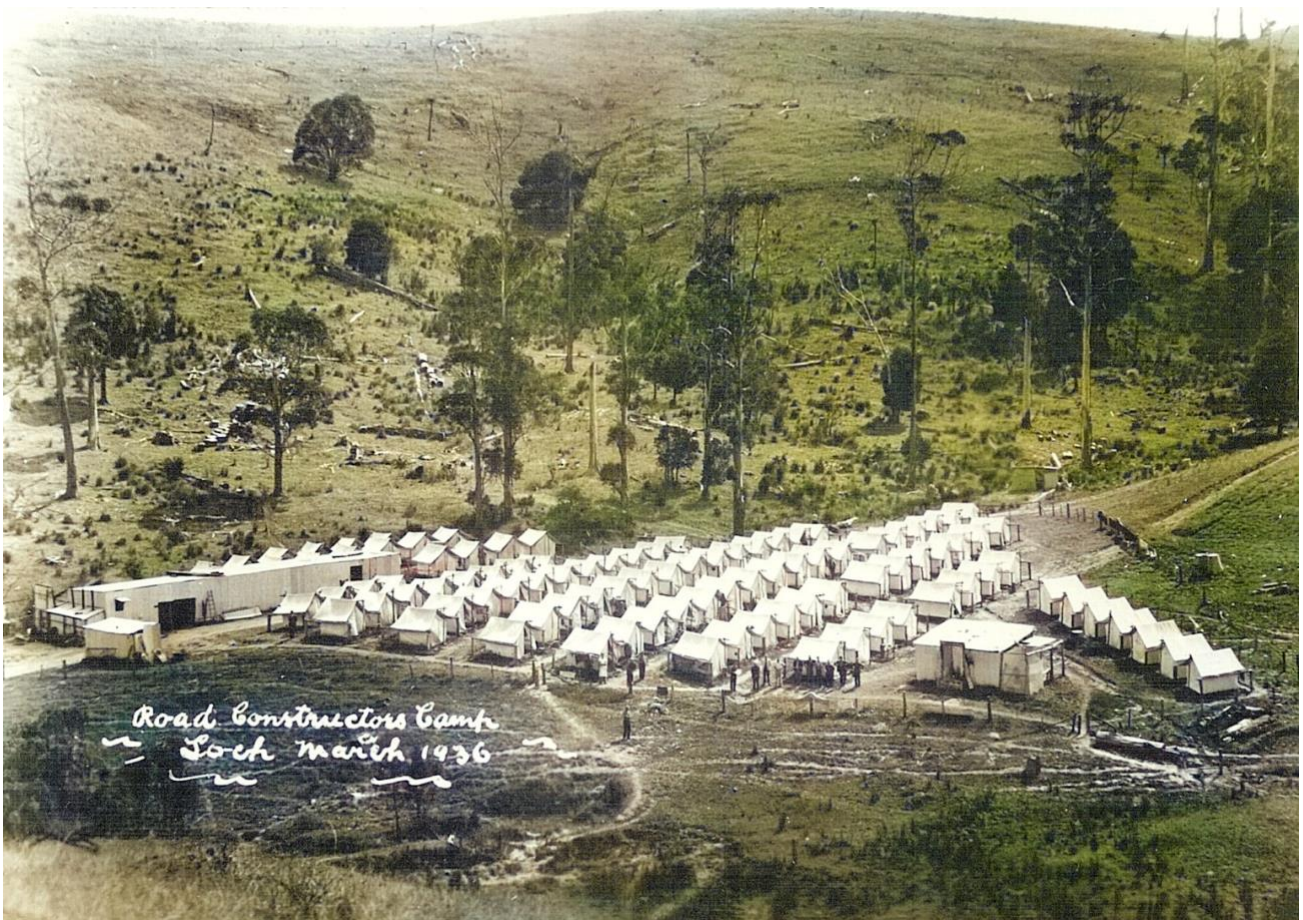
A Ventura bus operating on Route 670 in Melbourne's Eastern suburbs.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Here are a couple of photos that I have not seen before. Stan Hodgson gave them to me.

The first one needs no explanation. Victoria's roads were built by men who lived in these camps. They lived here during the week and went home every weekend or fortnight. Some lived in them permanently. There are many stories that can be told about life in these camps and some of them are included in *Reminiscences of Life in the Country Roads Board*.

Probably the most important ingredient for a successful camp is the quality of the cook. In 1977, I lived for a while in the camp at Seymour – although we had huts and not tents – and the cook was terrific.



Road construction camp at Loch in South Gippsland – 1936.

Although I can't see any evidence in the photograph, there would have been an area where horses were stabled. The decade of 1935 to 1945 saw a transition from horse drawn road plant and manual labour for the potentially unemployed, based at remote camp sites, to a situation of war, manpower shortages and mechanization.

Unemployment relief was important to Victorian road construction in remote areas, up until the outbreak of the Second World War. Unemployment relief funds controlled by the CRB reached a peak in 1935-36, and declined thereafter. Whereas in the mid 1930s the emphasis was to reduce manual labour on tasks such as tree grubbing, the later 1930s saw the introduction of large machines for this work - where possible.

In 1934-35, eighty-one municipalities were involved in 124 day-labour and 50 contract camps, largely involving developmental roads in remoter and poorer shire, with 80 per cent of funds going to wages. Fruit grower's roads in the Shepparton area and forest produce roads received the greatest attention. The Bonang-Gelantipy road, the Buchan-Ensay road, the Omeo Highway, and the Beechworth-Wodonga road each had day labour camps and, in 1937, a significant forest road was built between Noojee and Erica. Others of the 'unemployed' laboured on the Orbost-Buchan, Lindenow-Dargo and Upper Rose River roads.

The second photograph shows the CRB's first car – an Itala – on its epic journey around Victoria. As the name implies, Itala is an Italian car company which operated in Turin between 1904 and 1934. The car was affectionately known as 'Prudence'.



The Board members on a road inspection trip in 'Prudence' – circa 1913-1914.

The location is unknown but I hazard a guess that it is Gippsland. The road looks as if it needs a bit of attention.

After searching the internet, I have concluded that Prudence was an Itala 25/35 tourer powered by a 5401 cc 4-cylinder engine. I found the following image on-line and it seems to be a pretty good match to the image above.



TRIVIA AND DIDACTIC WHIMSIES

The power of ChatGPT.

I have slightly re-written part of the introduction to this newsletter as follows:

‘I love children. They are innocent, honest and fun-loving. Children don’t learn to lie until about three years of age. This is when they start to realise that you aren’t a mind reader, so they can say things that aren’t true without you always knowing. Children lie more from four to six years of age. I love that honesty and don’t despair of their dishonesty. It shows they are becoming wise to the real world.

I also love the honest reaction of children to their curiosity. I can still see the expression on the faces of my children when my father took them across the paddock to the chook house to collect the eggs. Their hands slid under the chooks to retrieve the eggs, and their faces lit up with wonderment at the feel and warmth of the eggs. They couldn’t get back to Nanna quick enough to tell her about the miracle they had just witnessed. She burst into a huge grin and picked them up and smothered them with love.

I remember too, nursing my grand-daughter one night. She was the type that usually twisted and squirmed to get to the floor, but this night she fell asleep in my arms. She looked heartbreakingly innocent and peaceful and when her mother came to take her away, I successfully argued that it was best for her to remain in my arms. As parents, I bet we have all stared closely in awe at our children (or grandchildren) as they slept – as I experienced that night.

I also love children trying their best. I went to watch my grandson run in a cross-country race and it was the non-athletic kids trying their hardest that won my heart that day. They were heroes!

Now for other things that I love.

I love the smell in the bush after rain and the sound of the bell birds. I love it when the shell of a hard-boiled egg breaks away cleanly without blemish on the surface of the egg.

I love writing and painting. Neither is a chore and both are passions.

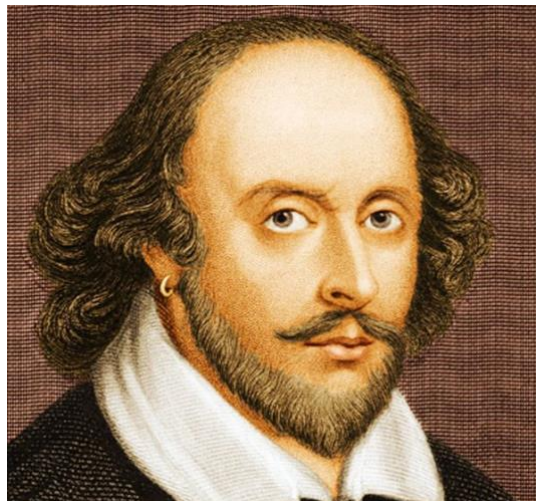
I love mangoes, roast pumpkin, minted peas, any fruit salad with limoncello, tomato and onion pie, and Asian food. I also love Italian and French food. I also love tripe and chicken's feet.'

Now, I want to introduce you to ChatGPT. The Wikipedia entry for ChatGPT describes (in part) the program thus:

'ChatGPT was launched on November 30, 2022. Based on a large language model, it enables users to refine and steer a conversation towards a desired length, format, style, level of detail, and language. Successive prompts and replies, known as prompt engineering, are considered at each conversation stage as a context.

By January 2023, it had become what was then the fastest-growing consumer software application in history, gaining over 100 million users and contributing to the growth of its valuation to \$29 billion. Some observers raised concern about the potential of ChatGPT and similar programs to displace or atrophy human intelligence, enable plagiarism, or fuel misinformation.'

To demonstrate this facility, let us look at the text above and see how ChatGPT would write it if it were William Shakespeare.



Hark, dear reader, lend thine ear to my humble musings on the joys that doth course through my veins. Verily, the tender souls of children, those cherubic beings, doth enchant my very heart. In their innocence, honesty, and mirthful spirits, a love profound doth stir within mine breast. Ere the age of three, their tongues betray no falsehood, for they know

not the art of deceit. Yet, as the years unfold, a revelation dawns upon them - that thou art no seer of minds, and so, they weave tales unbeknownst to thy discerning gaze.

'Tis not despair that doth grip me, but a joyous recognition of their burgeoning wisdom. Aye, from the tender age of four to six, their fibs doth weave a tapestry of understanding, for in dishonesty, a glimpse of the real world doth manifest.

Methinks, too, upon the honest reactions of children to the wonders that do surround them. Mine own offspring, led by mine father's hand to the chook house, did marvel at the warmth of eggs 'neath feathered companions. Their eyes aglow with wonder, they rushed to Nanna with news of this miraculous encounter. Her visage adorned with a grin wide as the horizon, she embraced them, drowning them in love's sweet embrace.

In moments etched in memory, I recall cradling mine grand-daughter, a creature oft inclined to wriggle and squirm. Yet, on this night, she lay in mine arms, a picture of innocence and tranquility. As her mother sought to take her away, I pleaded, and she remained, a sleeping cherub in my protective hold. As parents, have we not, in quiet awe, observed our progeny as they slumbered, as I did on that sacred eve?

Furthermore, the valiant efforts of children in pursuit of their aspirations do warm the cockles of mine heart. I witnessed mine grandson in a cross-country race, and 'twas the non-athletic youths, striving with all their might, who became the heroes of mine eyes.

Now, gentle reader, attend to the other loves that doth kindle my fervor. The redolence of the bush after rain, accompanied by the melodious songs of bell birds, doth enrapture my senses. The satisfaction derived when the shell of a hard-boiled egg relinquishes its hold without a flaw upon its surface is a joy unmatched.

The arts of writing and painting, not burdensome tasks but fervent passions that fuel mine spirit, doth bring me unbridled delight. And lo, the culinary delights that dance upon my palate - mangoes, roast pumpkin, minted peas, fruit salads laced with limoncello, tomato and onion pie, and the diverse offerings of Asian, Italian, and French fare. Even tripe and the humble chicken's feet find favour in mine discerning taste.

In conclusion, these simple pleasures, as varied as the hues in nature's palette, weave a tapestry of love and joy that envelops mine very being.

Shakespeare may have been too obvious a case so let us see how Ernest Hemingway might have written it.



Children, pure in their innocence, captivate my affection. The honesty they wear like a badge, fades as the years unfold. By the tender age of three, they grasp the art of deception, realizing you lack the sorcery to discern their untruths. From four to six, lies weave through their tales, a sign not of despair but of a growing wisdom in navigating the harsh truths of the world.

The unfiltered curiosity of children strikes a chord within me. I recall vividly the visages of my progeny as my father guided them to the chook house, hands venturing beneath the hens to retrieve warm eggs. Their faces aglow with wonder, they rushed to Nanna, eager to share the miracle. Her grin, a testament to shared joy, enveloped them in an embrace saturated with love.

A particular night remains etched, cradling my grand-daughter, a sprite prone to spirited wriggling. Yet, on this eve, she succumbed to slumber in my arms. Innocence and tranquility radiated from her form. When her mother sought to reclaim her, I successfully argued for the serenity of continued embrace. Such moments, as parents, we all hold in quiet awe, gazing upon our slumbering progeny.

The valour displayed by children striving earnestly tugs at my heart. Witnessing my grandson in a cross-country race, it was the unathletic contenders, exerting their utmost, who emerged as the heroes of that day.

And now, my adoration extends to other facets of life.

The aroma of the bush post-rain, accompanied by the harmonious melodies of bell birds, creates a symphony that resonates deeply within me. The gratification derived from a hard-boiled egg, its shell parting flawlessly, is a simple pleasure of unparalleled satisfaction.

Writing and painting, not burdens to bear but fervent passions that fuel my spirit, bring me enduring joy. Culinary delights—mangoes, roast pumpkin, minted peas, fruit salad kissed

by limoncello, tomato and onion pie, Asian, Italian, and French fare—all find a place in my heart. Even the unconventional flavours of tripe and chicken's feet evoke a sense of culinary love.

I didn't have the courage to put the Shakespeare version in and ask it to write like David Jellie.

In both cases, the responding text was produced in an instant. There was no momentary pause while the program reacted and responded to the task.

By the way, which version do you prefer?

Which Twin has the Toni?

Some of us will remember the advertisements in the papers and the magazines – Which Twin has the Toni?

It was one of the most famous advertising slogans in the 1950s and 60s. The first advertisement appeared in America in 1949. The image of twins, one with a salon perm and the other with a home perm became famous around the world and was very familiar with readers of magazines like Woman's Day and the Women's Weekly in Australia.

Toni was synonymous with home permanents, and the first advertisements actually started in 1950 as a live TV variety show on CBS in America. The show was called Toni Twin Time and it was hosted by a then utterly unknown actor called Jack Lemmon. It was basically a talent show that promoted Toni home permanents using guest sets of twins, one of whom would demonstrate the advantages of a home perm. The Toni Twins, Arlene and Ardelle Terry acted as hostesses. At the end of the show, one twin's hairdo was looking a mite bedraggled, whilst the other twin's permanent wave was still in perfect shape. Jack Lemmon would then challenge the studio audience to guess which twin had the Toni Home Permanent. Of course, the twin with unruffled hair was the one with the Toni.

Toni was purchased by Gillette in 1948 for \$12 million from founding brothers Neison and Irving Harris. Toni is still around a bit in America, but its product line is no longer big and Gillette is now part of Proctor & Gamble.



Jack Lemmon with twins Arlene and Ardelle Terry

Which Twin has the Toni?
(and which has the TD beauty shop wave? See answer below.)

Compare Toni with any other permanent—any home wave, any beauty shop wave—and you'll find *there's no finer wave at any price!*

The secret of lovelier hair is yours with a Toni Home Permanent. For your Toni wave is so soft, so easy to manage, so elegant-looking that people will probably ask if you have naturally curly hair! But before trying Toni you'd like to know:

Will Toni work on my hair?
 Of course. Toni waves any kind of hair that will take a permanent, including gray, dyed, bleached or baby fine hair.

Is it easy to do?
 Absolutely easy! If you can roll your hair on curlers, you can give yourself a Toni. It's so simple—simple that each month more than two million women use Toni.

Why do most women prefer to use TONI?
 Because the Toni Working Lotion is not a harsh, hair-drying substance. In-

stead it's a mild cream lotion, made especially for home use, to gently protect your hair while beautifully softening and curling. That's why some Toni waves look more natural, even on the first day.

Will my TONI wave be loose or tight?
 With Toni you can have just the amount of curl you like, from a loose wave to a tub of rich ringlets. Just follow the simple directions for timing.

How long will my TONI last?
 It's guaranteed to last as long as a \$15 beauty shop wave... or your money back.

How much will I save with TONI?
 The Toni Kit with plastic curlers costs only \$5. You can use the curlers again and again. So for some great waves all you need is the Toni Wash Kit. It costs just \$1... yet there's no finer wave at any price.

Which twin has the TONI?
 The blond beauty on the left belongs to Marcelle and Jeanne Facione of Long Island, New York. Jeanne, on the left, has the Toni. And the other "I" or never had a permanent so much before. My Toni curls look so soft and natural. It's 2 things most Toni waves from now on!

The wave that gives that natural look...Toni

MARCH 1950

Circa 1950s.

The VicRoads Association had its own Toni twins in attendance at our Christmas lunch last December.



Jill Miles and Jill Earnshaw.



Iris Whittaker (right) and her sister, Gaye.

And there was another pair who could be termed twins.



Alva (Jim) Winnett and Stan Hodgson – between them nearly 195 years of wisdom.

No-one noticed

A man stood in a metro station in Washington DC and started to play the violin; it was a cold January morning. He played a total of six pieces for about 43 minutes. During that time, since it was rush hour, it was calculated that a thousand people went through the station, most of them on their way to work.

Three minutes went by and a middle-aged man noticed there was a musician playing. He slowed his pace and stopped for a few seconds and then hurried on to catch his train.

A minute later, the violinist received his first dollar tip; a woman threw the money in the till and without stopping continued to walk.

A few minutes later, a man leaned against the wall to listen to him, but he looked at his watch and hurried off. Clearly, he was late for work.

The one who paid the most attention was a three-year old boy. His mother tugged him along – obviously in a hurry - but the child stopped to look at the violinist. Finally, the mother pushed him on but as the child continued to walk he kept turning his head all the time. This action was repeated by several other children. All the parents, without exception, forced their children to move on.

Over a period of 43 minutes, the violinist performed six classical pieces, two from Bach, one Massenet, and one each from Schubert and Ponce.

No one knew that the violinist was Joshua Bell, one of the world's finest violinists. He is the Music Director of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, a worldwide star soloist, and former child prodigy. He is one of the world's great virtuosos, and one of the biggest names in classical music.

Out of 1,097 people that passed by Bell, 27 gave money, and only seven actually stopped and listened for any length of time.

In total, Bell made \$52.17. This included a \$20 note from someone who recognised him. In the 45 minutes the musician played, only six people stopped and stayed for a while. About 20 people gave him money but continued to walk at their normal pace. When he finished playing and silence took over, no one noticed it. No one applauded, nor was there any recognition.

He played some of the most intricate pieces of music ever written with a violin valued at 3.5 million dollars.

Two days before his performance in the subway, a Joshua Bell recital sold out at a theatre in Boston and the cost of the seats averaged US\$100.

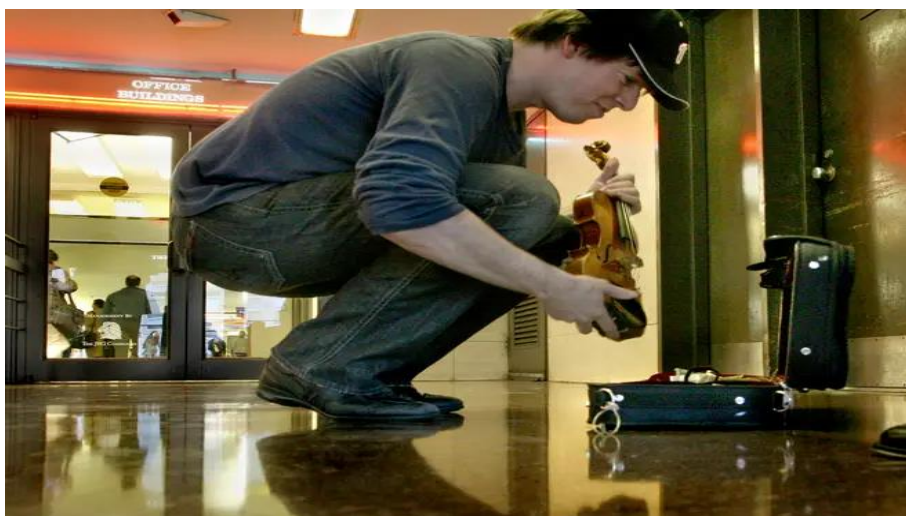
This is a real story. Joshua Bell playing incognito in the metro station was organised by the Washington Post as part of a social experiment about perception, taste and the priorities of people.

The outlines of the experiment were: Do we perceive beauty? Do we stop to appreciate it? Do we recognize talent in an unexpected context?

Ahead of the experiment, the newspaper quizzed American conductor Leonard Slatkin about his predictions. Slatkin said, "Out of 1,000 people, my guess is there might be 35 or 40 who will recognise the quality for what it is. Maybe 75 to 100 will stop and spend some time listening." Slatkin thought Bell might make \$150 from his musical metro endeavours.

One of the possible conclusions from this experience could be:

If we do not have a moment to stop and listen to one of the best musicians in the world playing the best music ever written, how many other things are we missing?





Violinist Joshua Bell busking in the Washington metro.

You can see it on Video-2019-01-03-05-45-24.mp4

Good advice



A job well done



Children's Logic

"Give me a sentence about a public servant," said the teacher.

The small boy wrote: "The fireman came down the ladder pregnant."

The teacher took the lad aside to correct him. "Do you know what pregnant means?" she asked.

"Sure," said the young boy confidently. "It means carrying a child."

Late Conversion

An atheist was being chased by a grizzly bear in a Canadian forest. He prayed to God and asked Him to turn the bear into a Christian so that it would have mercy on him.

The bear cornered the atheist whereupon a flash of lightning struck the bear. The bear fell to its knees, clasped its hands, bowed its head and prayed: "For what I am about to receive I am truly grateful."

Art Appreciation

An Englishman, a Frenchman and a Russian were viewing a painting of Adam and Eve frolicking in the Garden of Eden.

"Look at their reserve, their calm," mused the Englishman. "They must be British."

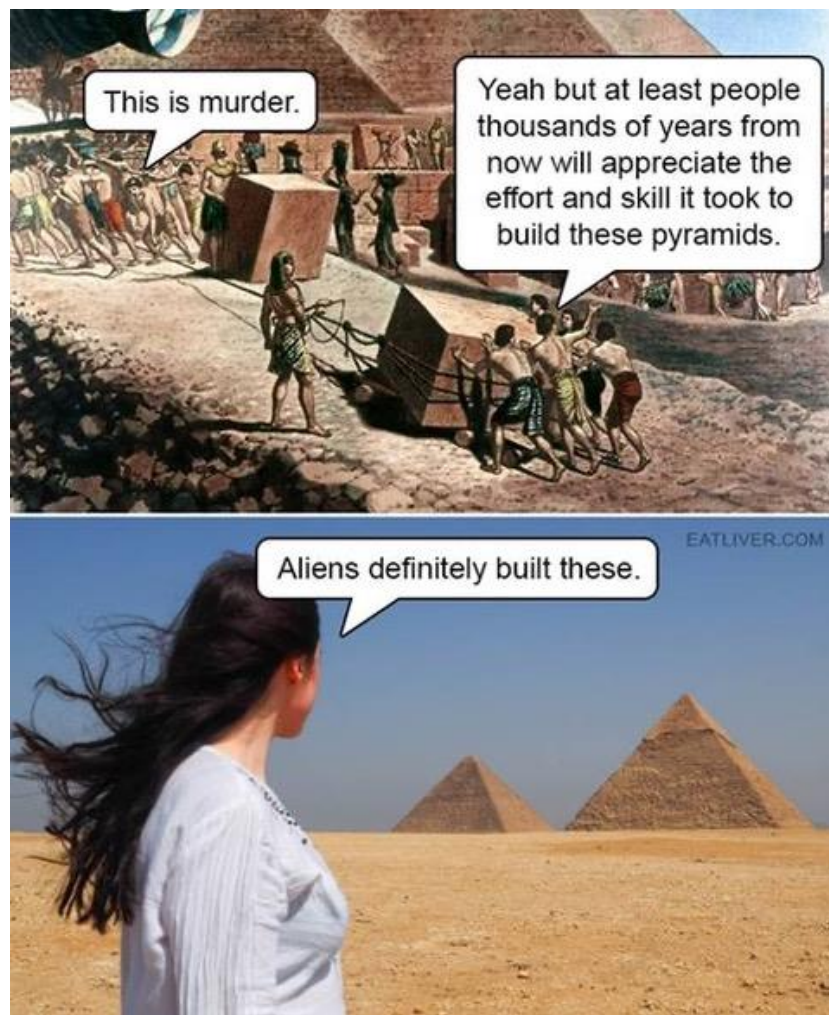
They pondered this possibility, but the Frenchman and the Russian soon shook their heads in disagreement.

"Nonsense," said the Frenchman. "They're naked, and so beautiful. Clearly, they are French."

Although the Russian and the Englishman agreed on this point, there still seemed to be something amiss.

"No clothes, no shelter," the Russian pointed out. "They have only an apple to eat, and they're being told this is paradise. Clearly, they are Russian."

Cruel History



Good Advice

A boy got on a bus and sat next to a man reading a book, and noticed he had his collar on backwards.

The small boy asked why he wore his collar backwards.

The man, who was a Priest, said, ... 'I am a Father...'

The boy replied, 'My Father doesn't wear his collar like that...'

The priest looked up from his book and answered, "I am a Father of many.'

The boy said, "My Dad has four boys, four girls and two grandchildren and he doesn't wear his collar that way!'

The priest, getting impatient, said. 'I am the Father of hundreds', and went back to reading his book.

The little boy sat quietly thinking for a while, then leaned over and said, "Maybe you should put your pants on backwards instead of your collar.

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