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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 3217, Cotham VIC 3107 or by phone or e-mail as shown above. Visit our website at <https://vicroadsassociation.org>



Dear Members,

It is that time of year when we remember everyone who served Australia (or other countries) during the wars. I am still adding stories to *Roads to War* and often take a moment to pause and reflect on the sacrifice made by past generations. My memories are not necessarily prompted by Anzac Day or Remembrance Day – they often emerge from a name or event mentioned in passing or an item in the news. Because of my research in writing *Roads to War*, commemoration of these men and women is probably more in my mind than most.

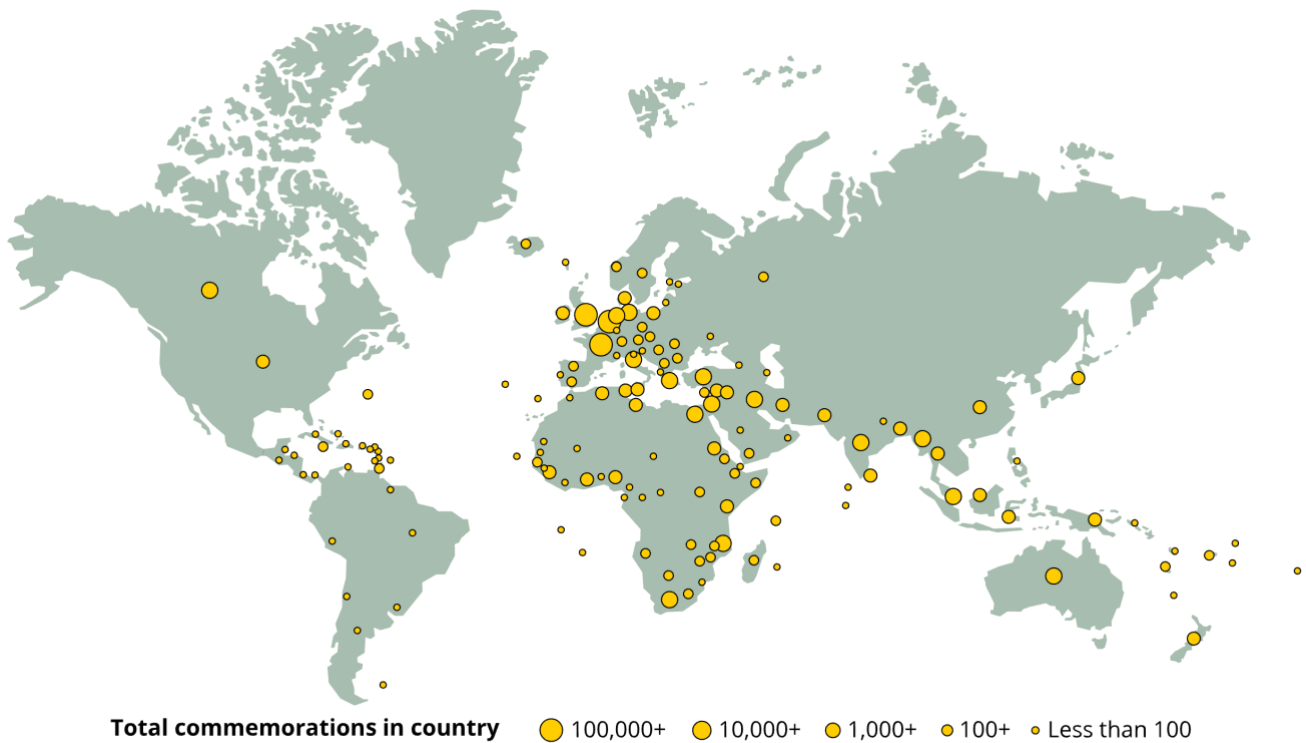
War is currently raging in Ukraine and Palestine and in other places that don't touch Australia's sensitivity as much - places like Myanmar, Sudan, Nigeria, Somalia, Burkina Faso, Syria, Mali, Congo, Ethiopia, Yemen, Pakistan/India, Haiti, Libya, Iraq, Colombia and Afghanistan. These wars have erupted because of events such as political unrest, terrorist insurgency, civil war, gang war (in the case of Haiti), border disputes, and ethnic violence. If you add drug wars, you can include Mexico to the list.

Mankind doesn't seem to learn.

All of the men from the CRB (and its successors), who were killed in service are buried in graves or commemorated in cemeteries administered by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC).

The CWGC) is an intergovernmental organisation of six countries whose principal function is to maintain the graves and places of commemoration of Commonwealth military service members who died in the two World Wars. The six countries are Great Britain, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, India and South Africa.

The map below shows the location of the sites of the cemeteries under its management. It shows the range of Britain's involvement in war, and thankfully, Australians are not represented at most of these sites.



The handful of CWGC cemeteries I have visited in Asia, the Pacific Islands and Europe have all been immaculately maintained and are beautiful – if haunting - places for reflection and commemoration. Some, by virtue of their size, location or history, are heart wrenching. The first time I visited Villers- Bretonneux in France where 10,790 Australians are interred, I broke into tears immediately after entering the gate. The number of graves and their simplicity overwhelmed me and I was touched by the feeling of peace – as well as the dedication of the local people maintaining the site so respectfully.

I had a gentle uncle who fought there – and survived – but not so my mother's cousin, whose daughter was born as battle raged in the area. Poor Malcolm Rankin. He wrote a letter home just a few weeks before his death saying how keen he was to get back home to see his child.

Commemoration can take a number of forms such as a special ceremony or celebration or through the creation of an object, work of art, music, writing or a memorial. Writing this story is, in itself, a commemoration.

Commemoration played an important role in helping Australians to come to terms with the physical and emotional costs of the First World War. Well before the war had ended, Australians began to commemorate the contribution of those who had served. At the end of

the war, a great many communities across the country rallied to build local war memorials, providing places for grief and reflection.



Villers-Bretonneux cemetery taken from atop the tower – 2008.
The trees have since been removed.

The Australian Government also established days for commemoration: Armistice Day (celebrated across the world and now known here as Remembrance Day) marked the end of the war and Anzac Day became a public holiday. Since this time, Australians have continued to commemorate the First World War, both here and overseas.

These commemorations continued with later wars – the Second World War, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War and other conflicts.



This is a photograph of the first Anzac Day march, held in Brisbane on 25 April 1916 to mark the first anniversary of the landing of the Australian and New Zealand troops on Gallipoli Peninsula, Turkey.

Such was the nature of the world wars that vast numbers of casualties were never found or never positively identified. Over 35,000 Australians from these wars have no known grave but a headstone denoting every Australian soldier is nevertheless erected. Those with no known grave are also commemorated on a Memorial to the Missing - in Australia and across the world.

The inscription on the headstones of the unknown graves reads:

An Australian Soldier of the Great War

Known unto God

An example is shown below – although the example shows two soldiers interred in the one grave.



Two Australian Unknowns in one grave in Hoge Crater Cemetery, Ieper, Belgium.

I think that it was the stark simplicity of the headstones and the vast number of unknown soldiers that affected me when I first entered the cemetery at Villers-Bretonneux. These poor souls died unknown deaths in unknown places and now, many are largely unknown to the families who once nurtured and cherished them. It moves me even further to think they are so far from home that it was impossible for their loved ones to stand by their grave. Mum's cousin, Malcolm, was one who perished in anonymity and I may have walked past him during my visit to Villers-Bretonneux. I hope I did. As far as I know, I was the first family member to visit the site of his memorial – some 70 years after his death.

Many Memorials to the Missing are within war cemeteries, and the unidentified graves at those cemeteries would doubtless include some of those who are listed on the memorials. Yet, even

today, our war dead are occasionally found or identified, and the numbers on Memorials to the Missing and of identified graves change to reflect this.

This is what happened to one of the men on the CRB's Roll of Honor (sic) for the First World War – Vivian George Taylor. I wrote his sad story in a fairly recent newsletter. His file in the National Archives of Australia states that he was buried in an isolated grave $\frac{3}{4}$ 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 in an unknown grave.

Later in my research 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.”

A new headstone has been erected to commemorate Vivian. The only image of it that I could find is on the site of the Virtual War Memorial and the quality is not good. It is shown below. It is engraved with the Australian Service Badge, his service number, rank, name – initials and surname – unit, date of death and age. Below the cross is a personal inscription chosen by relatives. In Vivian’s case, it reads: A Loyal Soldier Lost, Loved and Never Forgotten – Lest We Forget.



Vivian Taylor's new headstone at the Villers-Bretonneux cemetery.

As with all official commemorations, Memorials to the Missing are maintained in perpetuity and with all possible care and respect.

The name of a single Australian is inscribed beside his Commonwealth allies on a memorial in the UK; Lone Pine Memorial at Gallipoli bears the names of over 4,000 ANZACs and the Australian National Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux commemorates over 10,000 missing Australians. Sadly, there are still more on memorials across the world where Australians have fought and died.

I shall end with a commemoration in the form of a poem – In Flanders Fields by John McCrae. It was written in 1914 – near the beginning of the war.

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly

Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

We should not glorify war. The only reason we should commemorate Anzac Day is to grieve, honour and respect the men and women who did not return from war – as well as those that returned.

FAREWELL TO HEAD OFFICE – WEDNESDAY 8 MAY AT 10 AM

To date, we have 170 enrolments meaning that there are still 30 places vacant. If you want to come, please register with Jill Earnshaw at jillmearnshaw@gmail.com People who have not pre-registered will not be admitted – including walk-ups on the day.

Likewise, if you have any colleagues who are not members of the Association but you think they might like to come please get them to register with Jill.

WHAT'S COMING UP

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

The table below shows a summary of events for 2024. If any changes occur, I will inform you in future newsletters or by email.

Date	Event	Contact Person
Tuesday 28 May	10.00 am morning tea at TAC Geelong followed by a 10.30 am briefing on road safety strategy. Lunch with ex-VicRoads colleagues at a venue yet to be decided.	Jill Earnshaw
Monday 3 June	12 noon Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown Hotel	Just turn up
Monday 17 June	10 am Shrine of Remembrance – highlighting the recent upgrade followed by lunch and a possible tour of Royal Botanic Gardens	Jill Earnshaw
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. Overnight in Cooma or other Snowy town, then return to Victoria via Canberra, Albury or other options on 16 October.	Jim Webber
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.

Briefing On Victoria’s Road Safety Strategy, Tuesday 28 May at 10 am.

This will be held at the Transport Accident Commission’s (TAC) office at 60 Brougham Street in Geelong. Morning tea will be served at 10 am followed by the presentation at 10.30 am.

Samantha Cockfield, Executive General Manager, Road Safety, TAC will address us on Victoria’s road safety strategy.

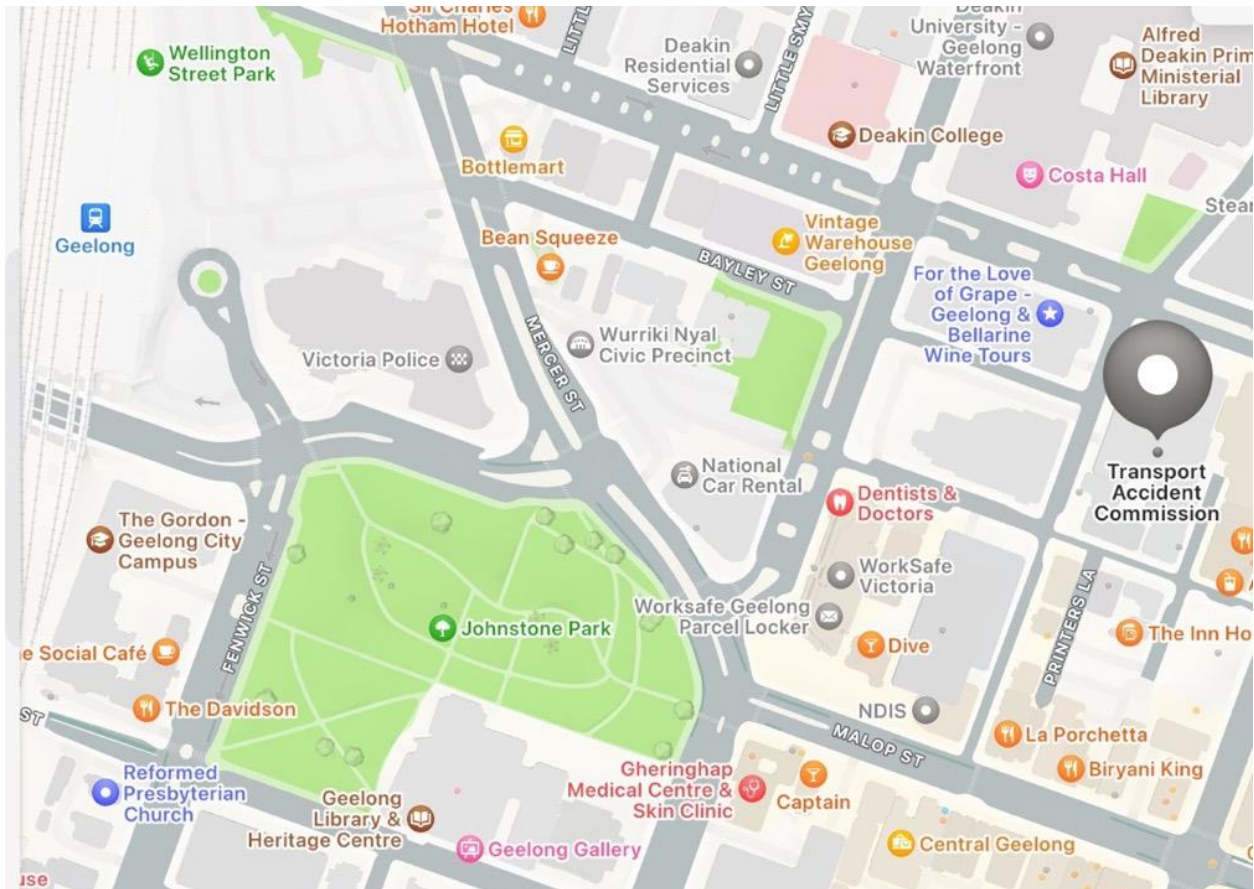
The Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030 commits to the ambitious target of eliminating death from our roads by 2050, with the first step of halving road deaths by 2030.

Victoria is a leader in road safety and has a track record in leading the introduction of lifesaving road safety policies including mandating seatbelts (1970), legislating random breath testing (1976) and introducing speed cameras in (1986).

Yet people continue to die or be seriously injured on our roads.

This promises to be a very interesting presentation.

The map below shows the location of the office which is about 10 minutes walking distance from Geelong Railway Station on the left of the map.



Jill Earnshaw is managing this function and those interested in attending should register with Jill on jillmearnshaw@gmail.com

We also propose having lunch at a nearby café/hotel after the presentation. We are seeking local advice and will advise you in future notices.

Occasional Lunch at Shoppingtown Hotel, Monday 3 June at 12 noon.

Our next lunch is on Monday, 3 June. There is no need to register – just turn up.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, MARCH 2024

I am grateful to Jill Earnshaw for deputising for me as I was interstate that week. Twenty one people attended. We will post the Annual Report on our website. Highlights are:

- 290 members
- 24 new members
- 9 deaths
- 12 newsletters
- Up to date website

- 6 lunches at Doncaster, 2 dinners at Waverley RSL,
- One excursion to Ballarat and Bendigo (2 nights),
- 2 lectures - by Bernard Shepherd and Peter Don,
- Visit to the Fox Classic Car Exhibition,
- Roy Gilmour won at our Golf Day for the third time – we are considering expelling him,
- Record breaking Christmas lunch,
- Doug Thompson appointed as auditor – we are considering deifying him,
- Continuation of \$50 one-off joining fee, and
- \$5,000 (+) in the bank account.

VALE

John Cleeland wrote to inform me of the death of Harry Carlin-Smith. He said:

‘Hi David,

Harry passed away on 13 March 2024. I knew him in Traffic and Location in 1964 at Kew where he used a Mechano set model to define semi-trailer turning circles. Later with Messrs Bruns and Shipton, he formed BSC Consulting that operates to this day. There, he did the structural design for my house and retaining walls, in association with A1 Drafting of Templestowe.

Kindest regards, John Cleeland’

As promised in the last newsletter, I also include obituaries for Michael O’Shea, Alan and Heather Marshall, Armando Guifre and Joe Delaney – all of whom were non-members. They were all respected colleagues and we extend our sympathies to their families and friends.

Michael John O’Shea

Michael died on 16 January 2024.

He was born in February 1947 and was the eldest of 12 siblings living on the family dairy farm at Purnim - near Warrnambool. He went to a one-teacher school at Purnim during his primary years and to college in Warrnambool for his secondary education.

Being the eldest in the family made him everyone’s big brother and his capacity for kindness and sympathy for others was probably due to his consideration for his siblings. He loved cricket and played for Purnim in the local league.

He was successful when he sat a Victorian Public Service exam and he headed off to Melbourne and completed an accounting degree. He applied for a job in the CRB working in the Plant Branch at the Glen Waverley but returned to Warrnambool where he eventually rose to become Manager of Corporate Affairs. He met Patricia there and they were later to marry.



Michael (or Mick as he was always known) suffered serious heart problems for 25 years but this did not stop him from running in six Melbourne marathons – in his Dunlop Volleys!

He retired from VicRoads after 37 years of service and shifted to Castlemaine

Alan and Heather Marshall

Gordon Mills wrote to me about the deaths of Alan and Heather – both employees of VicRoads. They had both been ill and chose to travel overseas and were assisted to die together on 12 December 2023.

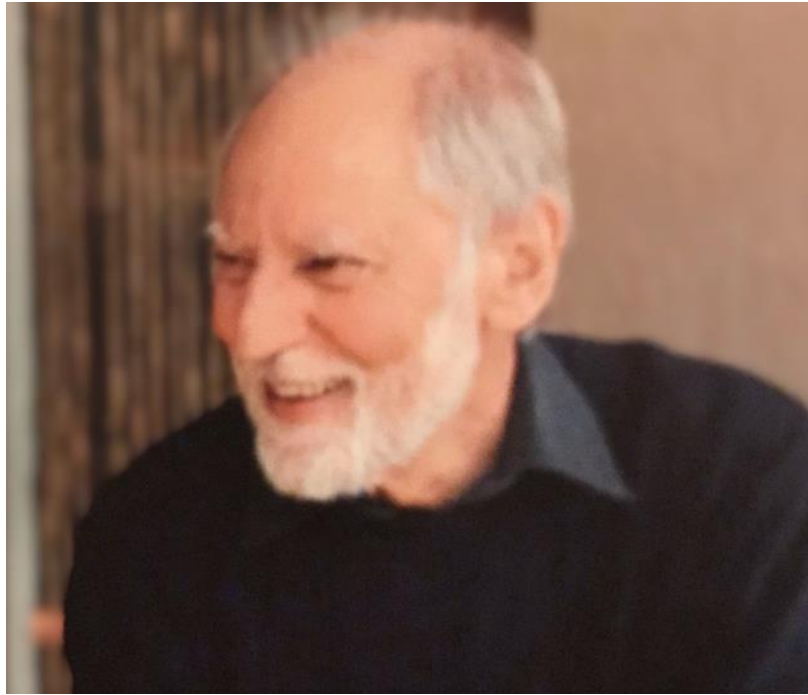
I am still awaiting details from their family and I hope to write something in more depth in the next newsletter.

Armando Guifre

Armando died in late January 2024 following a serious illness he suffered for about two years. I sent a note out to members after Frank Rappatoni first advised me of Armando's death, and I received many notes from people saying how professional he was at work, and what a delightful person he was to deal with.

For example, Steve Di Cicco who was his manager said: "Armando worked in my team for 13 years and had a unique skill set, being both a very knowledgeable bridge engineer and a proficient project manager".

Armando was promoted to Bridge Standards Engineer in 1991, working in the Bridge Investigations Section which Frank Rappatoni managed until 1994. Frank described Armando as a gentleman, respected and admired by his peers for his devotion and commitment to his work and ethical standards. After his formal retirement, he worked part-time for the last 13 years with VicRoads Metropolitan Region



I am grateful to Geoff Bouilly – who worked very closely with Armando – for penning the following obituary for his friend and colleague.

‘Armando was born in Sicily in November 1947 and his family migrated to Australia in 1953. Armando, along with his father Angelo, mother Severina and his two sisters, Lucy and Maria initially lived in Brunswick and then later moved to Hurstbridge.

Armando studied and obtained his Civil Engineering Degree at RMIT. After graduating, he joined the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, Planning and Highways Department in the early 1970s. This Organisation was merged with the Country Roads Board in 1974 which later became Vic Roads. He worked on the design of roadworks and bridges for the first stage of the Eastern Freeway.

In particular he worked on the design of the highly innovative National Road overpass and the complex Yarra River bridge. He followed this by working on the construction of the Eastern Freeway, including the large Hoddle Street Bridge over the freeway, as a member of the project delivery team. Armando’s father Angelo also worked on this freeway project, helping with concrete quality control.

During the 1980s and early 1990s Armando worked in and later managed the VicRoad’s Bridge Development Team, focussing on the use of new materials, bridge design standards and other projects related to the design and construction of new bridges and the inspection and maintenance of existing bridges.

During the mid-1990s and early 2000s, Armando undertook a leading role in the load testing of bridges by Vic Roads and other state road authorities to assess their capacity to sustain loading from proposed National Road Transport Commission’s Higher Mass Limits Vehicles. The most important of these vehicles were the 45t semi-trailers and 68t B-Doubles fitted with air-suspension triaxles. The proof load testing concentrated upon instrumenting existing typical concrete bridges to measure strains induced in reinforcement when subjected to simultaneous loading by one or more semi-trailers loaded to a gross mass of up to 100 tonnes using concrete blocks.



Load Testing In-service Bridge
with Twin 100t semi-trailers

He also coordinated the loading to failure of two disused bridges in rural Victoria. Complementary to the above, he worked in conjunction with Monash and Melbourne Universities on the laboratory testing of large-scale models of the most common forms of reinforced concrete bridges on Australia's road network.



Load Testing of Disused Concrete Flat Slab Bridge using Ground Anchors

From the early 2010s Armando worked in VicRoads Metropolitan North West Region (Sunshine) Office providing expert guidance to the team on bridge related issues. During this period Armando managed the development and delivery of the contract to rehabilitate and upgrade the historic Church Street Bridge over the Yarra River, whilst still maintaining traffic and tram operations on this bridge.

Armando was a highly respected member of the Vic Road's and the broader Australian bridge communities, both as an engineer and a person.

In addition to his many work-related achievements, he had a lifetime interest in music, which he enjoyed sharing with a wide range of friends. He also undertook major renovation tasks at his Hurstbridge house with the same enthusiasm and attention to detail that he showed in his engineering work and his relationship with people.

Armando, or "Manny" as he was known to his many friends, was in all ways a true and generous friend. He also had a wicked, hilarious sense of humour, which made him fun to be around.

He is survived by his much-loved wife Karen and his two daughters, Lisa and Sarah, who were the pride of his life, and their families.

He will be sadly missed by all who knew him.'

Desmond Joseph (Joe) Delaney AO

Joe died on 3 February 2024, aged 97 years. His funeral was held at Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church in Deepdene on 12 February. A large number of his colleagues from the CRB/RCA/VicRoads were in attendance.



Joe was honoured for his work as a top-level transport bureaucrat, and more so for his post-retirement volunteer efforts working in high administrative positions on various boards at iconic Victorian institutions.

Joe was born in October 1926 in the small settlement of Bushfield near Warrnambool.

I did not know Joe professionally but I met him about 12 years ago when I joined a group of engineers and planners for a monthly talkfest and lunch, where most of Australia's transport problems were solved. We called ourselves the Grizzlies. Joe approached me on my first day and enquired if I was one of the Jellies from Woodford – next to Bushfield. I was. My father's family were pioneers of that area and Joe and my father both attended Woodford Primary School - although not together.

I often heard stories told by my Woodford aunts and uncles about the Delaney's of Delaney's Corner where one of Joe's forebears brewed quite a respectable, if illicit, whisky. Joe wrote about it in his family history.

Joe was a boarder at St Patrick's College (SPC), Ballarat, for two years in 1943 and 1944. A solid academic achiever, Joe recorded the fourth highest academic score in his Matriculation year.

In his time at St Patrick's Joe was a councillor in the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Sodality of Our Lady, and the Holy Name Society. He was also a member of the choir, and the senior Literary and Debating Society.

According to the 1944-45 College Annual, the members of the (St Vincent) Conference performed acts of charity by visiting the Ballarat Base Hospital weekly, and Nazareth House and the Benevolent Home on alternate Sundays. Joe was President of the Conference in 1944 and this sense of duty and care for others carried over into his later life. Joe also competed in the college athletics and captained the second eighteen football team. Later in life he also played football for an SPC Old Boys team in the Amateurs competition in Melbourne.

After leaving school and graduating as an engineer, Joe held various titles including being the Chief Engineer for the Victorian Transport Commission and the Director of the Melbourne Transportation Study in the 1960s, the Chief Transport Planner for the Commonwealth Bureau of Roads, the Director of the Victorian Coordination Council and the Director of Resources and Development for the Department of Premier and Cabinet.



The initial Study Team for the Melbourne Transportation Study. From left to right: Louis Fouvey (Melbourne Metropolitan Tramways Board), Bob Evans (MMBW and later, CRB), Lionel Cunningham (Melbourne City Council), Joey Delaney (Study Director, MMBW), Ian (Euan) Richards (Victorian Railways) and David Ferguson (CRB).

In retirement, Joe was the President of the Mercy Hospital for Women Board for 15 years, was the founding Chairperson of the Caroline Chisholm Centre for Health Ethics, was a Senator for the Australian Catholic University and chair of its Victorian Chapter, and was also a member of the Historic Buildings Council of Victoria.

In 2000, Joe was awarded an OAM for service to the community through the Victorian Catholic health and aged care system, particularly relating to restructuring the Mercy Health Care Service and expanding the range and location of facilities available to Victorians.

He was honoured as a SPC Legend in 2016. Throughout his life he kept close contact with many Old Boys through a friendship network which met monthly at the Harp Hotel in Kew.

Joe was a devout Catholic and lived the Christian creed in all his endeavours. He was loved by all who knew him – across the entire community and through his humble wisdom he was an uncritical mentor to many people.

Joe was a truly remarkable person.

NEW MEMBERS

I am pleased to advise that the following members have joined the Association: Karen Macdonald, Brian McNamara, Dr Brian Scantlebury, Robert Steel and George Mavroyeni

NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Norm Henry from Warrnambool wrote as follows.

‘David.

Congratulations to Kel for his response to the "spin" from the Minister. Interesting to note these days, that when issues relating to road conditions are raised, responses relate almost exclusively to maintenance. Very rarely is the need for rehabilitation part of the consideration or solution.

To me, the nail in the coffin for VicRoads (and the Victorian public) must surely be the assessments that the original Head Office was no longer a requirement for the State’s road authority.

The deliberate demise of the internationally accredited road authority (VicRoads) that we were all proud to be a part of is hard to accept.

Looking back at the lost structure and expertise of the past road authorities, it seems obvious to me that important aspects relating to research, records, professional training, industry standards etc, will be diluted - if it exists at all in the current structure. There needs to be an orchestrated campaign to force the State Government and the Department of Transport and Planning to get back to basics in the management of the road network.

I guess we could all see this coming but were unable to influence Government and external forces.

I would like to wish ‘Good Luck’ to the powers to be, but I am not feeling that generous.

Regards, Norm’

Max Lay wrote about Matthew Flinders as follows.

‘Hi David.

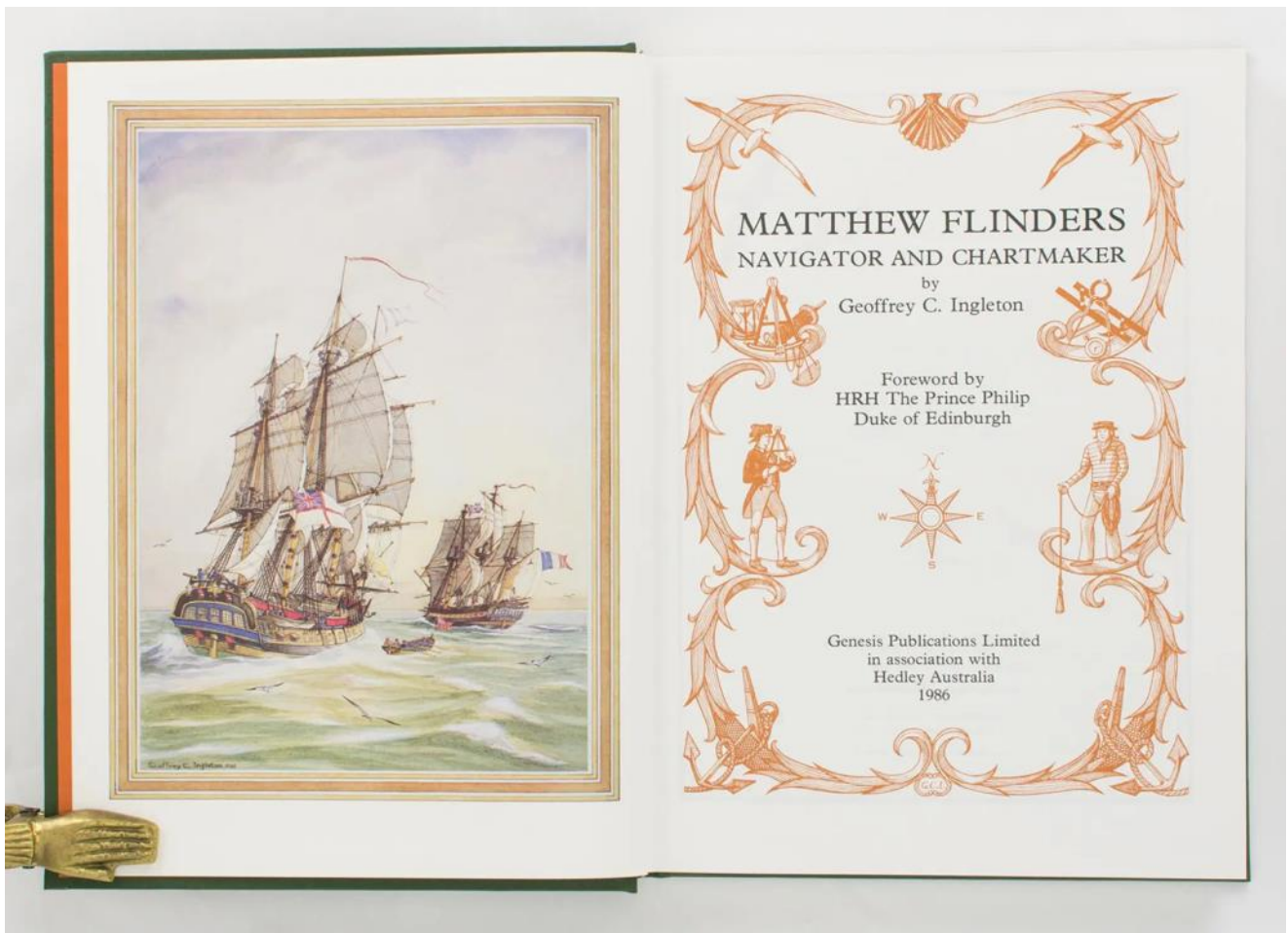
I enjoy the newsletters.

Your comments on Hugh Orr’s paper on Matthew Flinders caught my eye and I thought I should remind you of Geoffrey Ingleton’s truly magnificent and beautiful book, “Matthew Flinders - Navigator and Chartmaker” published by Genesis and Hedley in 1986. Whilst Genesis is based in Surrey, Hedley is in Farm Rd in Alphington just four kiloetres from our old office in Kew.

Geoffrey was born in Bairnsdale and died in 1998. He was a leading maritime historian. Copies of the book have recently sold for about \$400.

Best wishes

Max Lay’



An etching of the Investigator by Geoffrey Ingleton is shown on page 27.

Graeme Walter wrote about Head Office as follows:

‘Hi David

A sad day and at least they cannot take away the fond (and very occasionally not so fond) memories a large number of us had working in 60 Denmark Street.

The saddest aspect for me is that the institution that mentored me, and so many other people, and in my opinion set best practice standards in all the activities it performed has been reduced to what many still working in the industry consider a very poor cousin in respect to technical capability and the striving for excellence in our various disciplines.

As long as I am breathing, I will retain those memories.

Thanks to you for your commitment in keeping us all informed and the Alumni ongoing.

Regards

Graeme Walter’

John Liddell wrote about melanoma awareness as follows:

‘In December 2023 I noticed a small pea-shaped lump on the back of my leg about 15 cm below the knee. In a week it was a bit larger and darker. I saw my doctor - who is luckily a skin specialist. He was very concerned about it and he cut it out a few days later and sent it for testing.

The report was that it was a fairly aggressive melanoma and some cancer cells may have escaped. I was referred to an Oncologist and admitted to hospital for day surgery. First, they injected a cancer seeking dye into my arm and used a PET Scan to see whether there was any cancer. More cancer was taken from the initial site and a Lymph Node was removed from my groin. This is defined as Stage 3 Melanoma.

I then had another PET Scan where a radioactive substance is used to detect any cancer. Luckily, there was no evidence of any cancer. Unfortunately, the statistics are that of people with Stage 3 melanoma, around 20% of people will have the cancer return and will not survive beyond 5 years.

I was given two options for further treatment and chose the most proactive one of immunotherapy where I go on a 12 - month program. It involves a cancer killing radioactive drug which is put into a vein by a drip for about 30 minutes every six weeks. I have a blood test a few days before the next cycle so that the Oncologist can review the results. There will also be some scans. This is all covered by the PBS.

At the end of the 12 months, they will review the need for further treatment.

The moral to this story is to have regular skin inspections and to check out any strange lumps etc.

Luckily, I detected the melanoma at an early stage and with the immunotherapy program, I am very hopeful that this can be managed.

John Liddell’

Editor’s note: I can assure you that John’s advice is very wise. My daughter, Sara, had a very similar experience but we caught the melanoma early and she is now clear.

John Nation wrote about the condition of our roads follows:

‘Hi David

I can no longer mention to those I now meet, that the organisation I used to work for was the CRB/Road Construction Authority/VicRoads, given that the state of Victoria’s roads is so bad

The photo and caption below sums up the situation.

What can we do as a group to get the Government to address the situation?

Regards, John’



Rob Steel OAM wrote to me as follows:

‘Hi David

I am an old CRB/VicRoads employee – from 1977 through to 2003.

A surveyor, I started in Benalla under the fearsome Reg Patterson. I then did 10 years in Melbourne - including four years of my life associated with the West Gate Freeway Project - initially with Oz Kayak doing the geometry control manuals as part of the design documentation, then two years on site including surveying the match-cast segments in the casting yard with Graeme Nelson - and with David Jellie hassling us all from Moray Street.

I then returned to Benalla Region after a stint on the Hume Freeway Project,

I pulled the pin in 2003 when it became apparent that old people over 40, who loved and nurtured the road and bridge network, were not required because the future belonged to the young graduates who had no sense or appreciation of the legacy they were inheriting.

They have since stuffed that legacy!

Life has been pretty good for this former CRB man and it is amazing how often I walk into a contractor’s office, or a council office and run into a former CRB man.

The old mutual respect is there, and consultation and negotiations go from there.

I keep hearing stories of the VicRoads Association membership and events and if you would like an additional member, please send me details to the address below?

Editor’s note: Details were sent to Rob and he is now a member.

The surveyors in the pre-casting yard did an excellent job. We produced 2,070 segments with the most stringent geometry control. The required accuracy of measurement for match casting

of balanced cantilever segments is much stricter than for normal concrete work. All survey readings of horizontal offsets and levels were taken to one tenth of a millimetre.

Each segment was unique – no two segments were the same. Work in the pre-casting yard was around the clock. There were three single cell casting cells and two twin-cell casting cells in the factory and we produced on a daily basis, one segment per cell. All segments for the entire project met the specified tolerance when erected in their final positions in the bridges. Not one joint needed packing in both structures.

This wonderful result, was in no small measure, due to the skill of the surveyors in manufacturing such precise segments.

The reference Rob made to me hassling everyone, I think, is tongue in cheek – or just plain cheek!

LEST WE FORGET

Sergeant Dudley Keith Keats, VX12827

Dudley was born in Yambuk, near Port Fairy, in Western Victoria in August 1917 and he enlisted in the Army on 27 March 1940. His occupation was given as ‘labourer’.

He served in the 2nd/11th Australian Field Ambulance in the Middle East, New Guinea and Borneo – for a total of 1,440 days (nearly four years) – in addition to 583 days of active service in Australia. He also served for a short time in England.



Dudley Keats' pay book photograph – 1940.

When he was taken on strength he was initially posted to ‘No. 3 Aust. Spec. Hosp’. I interpret this as No. 3 Australian Special Hospital but I can find no reference to such a hospital. However, the archive is quite clear that he embarked on 15 May 1940 – barely six weeks after

enlistment – aboard HMT X5 and he arrived in Gourock, Scotland on 19 June. It was here that he transferred to 2/11 Field Ambulance.

A field ambulance is the name used by the Army to describe a mobile medical unit that treats wounded soldiers very close to the combat zone. The Field Ambulances formed an intermediate level in the casualty evacuation chain that stretched from the regimental aid posts near the front line and the casualty clearing stations located outside the range of the enemy's artillery.

Dudley's file mentions him training at Tidworth and Colchester (in England) and Glasgow (Scotland). He was admitted to his own hospital in November 1940 with a fractured clavicle (collarbone) – although there was no reference as to how he was injured.

He arrived in the Middle East on 3 March 1941. During his period in the Middle East, he was transferred around to other field ambulances (the 2/8th) and general hospitals (2nd, 4th, 11th). During this time, he was accidentally injured with second degree burns to his left arm and chest. In November 1941 he was admitted to 7th General Hospital with a fractured wrist. The archive mentions that he also carried out 'Special Duties' a number of times when he was a batman to the senior officers.

There are no clues in the archive to indicate exactly where Dudley served in the Middle East although it is definite that he was in Tobruk as his name is on the Rats of Tobruk Honour Roll. The 2/11th Field Ambulance was transferred to Palestine and then in March 1941 to Egypt as part of the 9th Division. By the end of March 1941, the 9th Division was spread along the north coast of Cyrenaica with the German forces pushing the allies westward. At this time, 2/11th Field Ambulance was in Tobruk. The unit was to remain in the Tobruk area for the next seven months enduring the siege. It was relieved on 20 October 1941. After leaving Tobruk the entire 9th Division was granted a period of rest and then commenced training for their next operation.



22 July 1942 - Egypt - Tented wards of 2/11 Field Ambulance.

The 9th Division was then sent to relieve the 7th Division in Syria, with 2/11th Field Ambulance relieving the 2/4th Field Ambulance in January 1942. Duty in Syria was generally quieter than

it had been in Cyrenaica with non-battle rather than battle casualties predominating. Of these casualties, malaria was the most significant. The Division moved south to the Western Desert in June 1942.

By early July 1942 the bulk of the 9th Division had moved into position in the vicinity of El Alamein. 2/11th Field Ambulance, having been reinforced by a mobile team and vehicles from the 2/8th Field Ambulance had the responsibility of operating the active Main Dressing Station for the divisional front from 10 to 25 July 1942. During this time there were a number of hectic periods as a result of major battles and a total of 1,157 casualties were treated. The Unit was actively involved in the battle of Alamein treating a stream of casualties.



Walking wounded and members of the 2/11th Field Ambulance at the Advance Dressing Station, El Alamein, 1942.

Dudley was evacuated back to Sydney in February 1943. The unit reassembled at Kairi in North Queensland during April 1943, and they then moved to Milne Bay during August to prepare for the landings at Lae. When the Brigade moved to Finschhafen in October, Advanced Dressing Stations supported troops moving to Kumawa and Zab, while the Mobile Dressing Station was established at Heldsbach Plantation. In March 1944 the 2/11th Australian Field Ambulance was withdrawn to Ravenshoe in Queensland. In early 1945 they were part of 1st Australian Corps that was given the task of liberating Borneo. In March 1945 they moved to Morotai which was acting as the staging point and landed on Tarakan Island in May where they remained until the war concluded.

Dudley was discharged on 16 November 1945.

He joined the Board on 6 June 1946 and worked in Warrnambool Division as a Cost Clerk. Tragically, Dudley died on 6 June 1974 as the result of a car crash near Woodford – a few kilometres outside Warrnambool.

Colonel Robert (Bob) Charles Handley

I was not able to find a service record or archive for Bob but, in the history of the Engineer Training Depot in Swan Street, Richmond, called '*The Swan Street Sappers*', it states that Bob was a railway engineer. He joined the 3rd Field Survey Company, Royal Australian Engineers (RAE), a CMF unit, in 1940. He then entered the Permanent Military Forces as a sergeant surveyor and was commissioned at the School of Military Engineering in 1942. He moved to 23rd Field Company in Darwin and was seconded to the North Australian Railway in November 1942. He remained in this posting at Katherine until mid-1945.



Colonel Bob Handley – circa 1969.

He joined the Board in Bendigo in 1946 as an Assistant Engineer. In 1956, he was appointed Assistant Highway Engineer. He became Divisional Engineer in Benalla in 1962, and Chief Works Engineer in 1969. Bob was appointed Chief Engineer (Special Duties) in May 1978. This was a trouble shooting appointment and could be described as an engineering audit role.

Bob retained his interest in the Army. He was Commanding Officer of the Board's Army Reserve regiment from 1967 to 1970, and Commander 6th Construction Group RAE until 1974. He was honorary ADC to Governor Generals Lord Casey and Sir Paul Hasluck from 1967 to 1970.

On his retirement, Bob moved to Merimbula NSW. He died in October 2000.

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL

This is a continuation of Hugh Orr's writing about the ships and voyages of Mathew Flinders published in Newsletter 255.

Interlude - A Fruitless Attempt to Prove van Diemen's Land an Island (Mathew Flinders was not a part of this voyage)

George Bass was commissioned to establish whether or not Van Diemen's Land was an island and sailed from Sydney on 3rd December 1797 in an 8.5m whaleboat named *Elizabeth*. Sailing southwards down the coast of New South Wales they rounded Cape Howe and then headed west. They got as far as Western Port on 5th January 1798 but then turned back not getting as far as Port Philip Bay.

Voyage of the Schooner *Francis*

The schooner *Francis*, commanded by Captain William Reed, sailed from Port Jackson on 1st February 1798 in a second attempt to rescue the last survivors of the *Sydney Cove* which had been wrecked on Preservation Island on 8th February 1797. Matthew Flinders sailed with them in order to do more charting along the coast and record what he saw. He thought there may have been the opportunity to determine if Van Diemen's Land was an island, but time did not permit this although he had his suspicions, noting the strength and direction of the tides at the start of what was to be named Bass Strait. On the 21st February 1798 they turned for home arriving back in Sydney on 9th March 1798.



Painting of the Schooner *Francis* by Philip Lock.

Editor's note: The *Francis* was the first sea-going vessel built in NSW. She was partially constructed at the Deptford Dockyard, England, and sent in frame aboard the *Pitt* to Australia to be put together for the purposes of exploration. The vessel had originally been designed for George Vancouver's discovery voyage of the west coast of North America.

She was wrecked on 21 March 1805, north of the Hunter River, Newcastle, on the Oyster Bank. Her master at the time was Captain Edwards, and there were no casualties.

Voyage of the *Norfolk* around Van Diemen's Land

Matthew Flinders, now a Second Lieutenant, and George Bass were assigned the *Norfolk* - a 25 ton, 35 foot long, 11 foot wide sloop - and instructed by Governor Hunter to try once more

to establish whether Van Diemen's Land was an island with a navigable strait between it and the mainland. If so, this would be of great economic benefit, reducing the distance required to sail around the south of the continent and also enabling ships to avoid the treacherous waters south of Van Diemen's Land.

Leaving Port Jackson 7th October 1798 and heading south, *Norfolk* was accompanied by the *Nautilus* which was going to hunt seals which were plentiful on the islands off the south coast of New South Wales. By 1st November they were able to run west and by 9th December had completed the journey through what is now known as Bass Strait, thus proving that Van Diemen's Land was an island.

They then sailed south down the west coast of Van Diemen's Land and around its south coast arriving back at Port Jackson 11th January 1799. As a result, Flinders' *A Chart of Bass's Strait between New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land*, was published by Aaron Arrowsmith in 1801.



Full-scale replica of the *Norfolk*.

Voyage of the *Norfolk* along the coast of northern New South Wales

It was recognised that there had been very little actual charting of the coast up until this time and so, hoping to find some major rivers, Flinders sailed again on the *Norfolk* leaving Port Jackson on 8th July 1799. He sailed north until he reached the Glasshouse Mountains and Moreton Bay, where he spent several weeks, and then on to Hervey's Bay but failing to identify the Clarence River - one of the continent's largest. With a six-week time limit, on 8th August he turned for home reaching Port Jackson on 20th August 1799

Voyages of the *Reliance* to Norfolk Island and home to England

Before leaving to return to England, *Reliance* made two short supply voyages to Norfolk Island, completing these in December 1799.

On 3rd March 1800 she departed Port Jackson on the return voyage to England under the command of Captain Henry Waterhouse and with Matthew Flinders on board as a passenger. Travelling via Tahiti and Cape Horn, they reached St. Helena after five weeks and then, with naval escorts giving protection against the French, sailed on arriving in Plymouth on 26th August 1800 - completing a five and a half year sojourn for Matthew Flinders to Terra Australis and the south seas.

Interlude -The commissioning of Flinders as Commander of the *Investigator*

When Flinders arrived back in London, he was now a full lieutenant with an impressive record of exploration and coastal mapping. However, he was still ambitious and eager to further his career. So, he approached Sir Joseph Banks - who he had met seven years before - with a proposal to complete the mapping of Terra Australis. This was accepted in November 1800 and Flinders was commissioned and assigned the *Investigator* to carry out the task. The reason was strategic - the French had advised they were going to continue to "explore" the South Pacific and it was feared they would claim part of Terra Australis for themselves. Also, the highly profitable East India Company was anxious that its virtual monopoly of trade in the area would be threatened by future French competition.

Voyage of the *Investigator* - England to Terra Australis

The *Investigator* was built to carry coal and had been converted to a sloop-of-war of 334 tons. It had a crew of 70, was 100 feet long, 29 feet wide and had a draft of 14 feet and was fitted with twelve six-pounder guns.

On board were six "scientists" - Ferdinand Bauer (botanical artist), Robert Brown (naturalist) with his assistant Peter Good, John Allen (mineralogist), John Crosley (astronomer) and William Westall (landscape painter).

On 16th February 1801 Flinders was promoted to commander.

On 18th July 1801 the *Investigator* set sail on the voyage to Terra Australia, and, leaking alarmingly, reached Madeira on 3rd August 1801.¹ On 17th October they reached the Cape of Good Hope and anchored in False Bay. After repairs and provisioning on 4th November the *Investigator* set sail eastwards on the long journey across the Indian Ocean. They sighted Cape Leeuwin on 6th December 1801 and reached King George's Sound - now the location of Albany - on 8th December.

¹ Investigator was in poor condition and was therefore spared from service in the war against France.



Etching of *Investigator* by Geoffrey Ingleton, 1937.

Voyage of the *Investigator* along the South Coast to Encounter Bay

On 3rd January 1802 the *Investigator* set off again sailing eastwards, close in to the shore, mapping the coastline and dropping the scientists off frequently to collect specimens and record everything they saw. Tragedy struck when eight men were lost on 21st February when the cutter was swamped returning from a search for water. Flinders named the beach nearby Memory Cove and the headland Cape Catastrophe.

On the 25th February they rounded Cape Donington and sailed into Boston Bay and the present Port Lincoln. They sailed north up Spencer Gulf in anticipation that this might divide the continent and lead to the Gulf of Carpentaria - but they were soon disappointed as the gulf narrowed to nothing. On 13th March, they sailed down the eastern side of the gulf, and on 24th March reached Kangaroo Island which Flinders named because of the large numbers of kangaroos which the crew were able to slaughter for very welcome fresh meat.

They then sailed north up - "what appeared to be yet another gulf" which Flinders named Gulf St. Vincent with York Peninsular on its western side.

On 7th April they started to sail eastwards again and the next day they sighted another sail - this was the French ship *Le Geographe* captained by Nicolas Baudin. The story of this encounter has been told many times. Baudin initially had a three-month advantage over Flinders, and therefore could have charted the complete south coast of Australia well ahead of Flinders if he had been more ambitious. On board *Le Geographe* was Francois Peron zoologist, and Louis de Freycinet cartographer, who were eventually responsible for the publication of the journals and maps of Baudin's voyage - of which the RGSSA has an original copy.

Voyage of the *Investigator* from Encounter Bay to Port Jackson

On 9th April 1802 Flinders started sailing south along what is now called the Coorong and on past Cape Jaffa and then Mt Gambier, Portland, Warrnambool, Port Campbell reaching King Island on 22nd April. On 26th April they sailed into Port Philip Bay where Flinders spent some time exploring and mapping unaware this had already been done earlier by James Grant and John Murray.

Leaving Port Philip Bay on 3rd May they sailed east passing Cape Howe and Mount Dromedary and sighting the heads at Port Jackson on 8th May 1802.

Voyage of the *Investigator* northwards up the east coast from Port Jackson

On 2nd July 1802 Flinders sailed the *Investigator*, accompanied by the *Lady Nelson* under John Murray, out of the Heads and turning northwards, continued his circumnavigation of Terra Australis. Flinders had already charted the coast as far as Hervey's Bay and by 1st August they were in territory he had not seen before. On 3rd August they entered Bustard Bay and then Keppel Bay on 9th August. By 28th September they were in the Northumberland Islands (off the coast of Mackay) and found themselves hemmed in by the Great Barrier Reef and hard-pressed to find a way through to the open sea. Eventually, near today's Townsville, they found an opening - known as Flinders Passage - and could continue northwards towards the Torres Strait.

Voyage of the *Investigator* to the Gulf of Carpentaria and return to Port Jackson

By 2nd November they had reached Thursday Island and sailed into the Gulf of Carpentaria, which they thought might have run through the centre of the continent, dividing it into two. They sailed southwards down the east coast of the Gulf until on 4th November the coastline turned west near Mornington Island and as they sailed on, they realised that the Gulf did not go through to the centre of the continent. Continuing on and up the west coast of the Gulf they reached the northwest tip of the Gulf which they called Arnhem after a Dutch ship that landed there in 1623.

Ever since leaving Sydney the *Investigator* had been leaking badly. So, Flinders had to decide, for the safety of the crew and his ship, whether to turn back or continue with the circumnavigation. He decided to continue his voyage around the continent but to sail back to Sydney as quickly as possible hoping the ship would last.

But first, he decided to put in to Kupang for repairs and provisioning. He arrived on 31st March and left soon after on 8th April 1803, as satisfactory repairs to the ship were not possible. Two men deserted and Flinders suspected that water taken on board was giving the men dysentery resulting in a number of deaths.

To minimize the time at sea due to the poor condition of the ship, speed was of the essence, so Flinders did not chart the coast of Western Australia which the Dutch had already done, or stop for the scientists to collect specimens. He sailed directly south reaching Cape Leeuwin on 14 May 1803, then east along the south coast of the continent and north up the east coast, reaching Port Jackson on 9th June 1803.

Although Flinders had been unable to do all the charting and exploring he would have liked, he had circumnavigated the continent for the first time and proved it was an island.

On their return, the *Investigator* was found to be in such poor condition that it never went to sea again and remained in Sydney as a storage hulk.

Voyage and wreck of the *Porpoise*

As Flinders had completed his principal tasks on *Investigator*, he and twenty-one of his crew, were to be repatriated back to England. On 10th August 1803, they sailed as passengers on the *Porpoise* (308 tons), commanded by Robert Fowler, accompanied by the much larger *Bridgewater* (750 tons) and the *Cato* (450 tons).

Although they thought they were well clear of the Great Barrier Reef, on 17th August, the *Porpoise* and the *Cato* struck a reef and were wrecked but ninety-four crew members including Flinders and Fowler survived. The reef is located east of Townsville and was named Wreck Reef by Flinders and still bears this name.

Fortunately, there was a sand cay nearby and the surviving crew, led by Flinders and Fowler, were able to salvage what they could and set up camp. The *Bridgewater* sailed off without rendering assistance and Captain Palmer later said he did not believe anyone could have survived. Flinders salvaged most of his charts and journals but among those lost was the chart of the west coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria.

There was nothing for it but for the survivors to rescue themselves so on 26th August Flinders took the largest cutter, named *Hope*, and with thirteen men set off to sail and row the over 1,000 miles south to Port Jackson. This he did through often difficult conditions. In one case the boat had to be lightened so everything heavy, including the precious water casks, had to be thrown overboard. They arrived back at Port Jackson on 8th September 1803 - an impressive feat of seamanship by the indefatigable Flinders.

Voyage of the *Cumberland* from Port Jackson to Mauritius

Governor King quickly organised a rescue mission to save the remaining eighty crew still on Wreck Reef. Flinders was a part of this but was none too pleased to be offered the tiny *Cumberland*, a small schooner of only 29 tons carrying a crew of just ten plus a captain, for him to sail on and return to England as originally planned. Having virtually no alternative, he decided to accept the *Cumberland* thinking at least it would get him back home directly, and enable him to do more charting of Torres Strait on the way. The other boats were the *Rolla*, which would pick up survivors on the way to China and the *Francis*, which would bring survivors back to Sydney. The three boats left Sydney on 21st September arriving at Wreck Reef on 7th October and leaving on 11th October taking off the survivors, Flinders' cat Trim and his precious charts and journals.

The *Cumberland* was leaking and one of the pumps was defective so after sailing through the Torres Strait he put into Kupang on 10th November 1803 hoping repairs could be made. However, this was not possible so he left shortly afterwards. Originally planning to sail to Cape Town, the boat was in such poor condition that Flinders decided he might not make it, so decided to put in to Ile de France (Mauritius), 550 miles east of Madagascar, arriving on 15 December 1803. Unfortunately, he did not know that Britain and France were at war and so he did not receive the warm welcome he had hoped for and was held for six years, five months and twenty-seven days against his will as a virtual prisoner of war. The story of his time on Mauritius is beyond the scope of this essay and has been covered extensively elsewhere.



The Schooner *Cumberland* (left) approaching Baudin's *Le Naturaliste* in 1802.

Voyages of the *Harriet*, *Otter* and *Olympia* back to England

Matthew Flinders' journey back to Britain was by no means straightforward. Starting from Mauritius on the cartel* *Harriet* on 13 June 1810 he was soon able to transfer to the *Otter* which was part of the British blockade and was bound for Cape Town. He then had to wait six weeks for a ship to take him back to England. On 28th August he boarded *Olympia* and sailed up the west coast of Africa and into the English Channel arriving home on 23th October 1810.

Matthew Flinders did not go to sea again and died on 19th July 1814. The publishers, G&W Nicol of Pall Mall, delivered the first copy of *A Voyage to Terra Australis* to Flinders' residence the day before his died.

* A cartel is a ship flying a flag of truce and carrying prisoners or messages between belligerents.

Editor's note: Hugh sent me the following note after reading the last newsletter.

'Hi David,

Another great newsletter and thank you for referring to me so generously! I'm so glad you could use my Flinders Notes so they will go out to a lot more people i.e. your readers - and the RGSSA will be pleased to get a mention.

Your addition of the pictures to my Flinders Notes are terrific and make all the difference to an otherwise rather dry statement of facts.

I am forging on getting more treasures on the web - nearly 70 now I think. Have just done the wreck of the *Batavia* of which we have the 1648 edition of Pelsaert's *Unlucky Voyage* journal.

Sorry about the quality of the photograph. Just taken with my phone but you can see the lovely images of the ships. A woodcut I think.'



LENNIE AND GINGER MICK

In 1932 Australia was in the grip of the Great Depression. One in three workers were unemployed. Decrepit shanty towns hugged the outskirts of the big cities.

A scrawny rabbit caught in a trap would feed a family for a week. Country roads were filled with broken men walking from one farmhouse to another seeking menial jobs and food.

On the outskirts of the South Gippsland town of Leongatha, an injured farmer lay in bed unable to walk – or work. World War I hero Captain Leo Tennyson Gwyther was in hospital with a broken leg and the family farm was in danger of falling into ruins.

But in stepped his son, nine-year-old Lennie.

With the help of his pony, Ginger Mick, Lennie ploughed the farm's 24 paddocks and kept the place running until his father could get back on his feet.

How was Lennie to be rewarded?

Lennie had obsessively followed the progress of one of the biggest engineering feats of the era – the construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. He wanted to attend its opening.

With great reluctance, his parents agreed he could go. So, Lennie saddled up Ginger Mick, packed a toothbrush, pyjamas, spare clothes and a water bottle into a sack, and began the 1,000 (+) kilometre trek to Sydney. Alone. A nine-year old boy riding a pony from the deep south of Victoria to the biggest and roughest city in the nation.

There was no social media or mobile phones. But even then it didn't take long before word began to spread about a boy, his horse and their epic trek.

The entire populations of small country towns gathered on their outskirts to welcome his arrival. He survived bushfires, was attacked by a “vagabond” and endured rain and cold, biting winds.



When he reached Canberra, he was welcomed by Prime Minister Joseph Lyons, who invited him into Parliament House for tea.

When he finally arrived in Sydney, more than 10,000 people lined the streets to greet him. He was besieged by autograph hunters. He became a key part of the official parade at the bridge's opening. He and Ginger Mick were invited to make a starring appearance at the Royal Show.

Even Donald Bradman, the biggest celebrity of the Depression era, requested a meeting and gives him a signed cricket bat.

A letter writer to The Sydney Morning Herald at the time gushed that “just such an example as provided by a child of nine summers, Lennie Gwyther was, and is, needed to raise the spirit of our people and to fire our youth and others to do things – not to talk only.

“The sturdy pioneer spirit is not dead ... let it be remembered that this little lad, when his father was in hospital, cultivated the farm – a mere child.”

When Lennie left Sydney for home a month later, he had become one of the most famous figures in a country craving uplifting news. Large crowds waved handkerchiefs. Women wept and shouted “goodbye”. According to The Sun newspaper, “Lennie, being a casual Australian, swung into the saddle and called “Toodleloo!””.

He finally arrived home to a tumultuous reaction in Leongatha. He returned to school and soon life for Lennie – and the country – returned to normal.

These days you can find a bronze statue in Leongatha commemorating Lennie and Ginger Mick.



But Australia has largely forgotten his remarkable feat – and how he inspired a struggling nation.

TRIVIA AND DIDACTIC WHIMSIES

Be careful about what you say

Last year I replaced several windows in my house. They were the expensive double-pane

energy efficient kind. But this week I got a call from the contractor complaining that his work has been completed for a whole year and I had yet to pay for them.

Boy, oh boy, did we have a battle? I proceeded to tell him, just what his fast-talking sales representative had told me last year - "that in one year the windows would pay for themselves".

There was silence on the other end of the line so I just hung up and I haven't heard back. Guess I must have won that argument.

Welcome to Queensland

At the urging of his doctor, my friend moved to Queensland. After settling in, he met one of his neighbours who was also an older man.

"Say, is this really a healthy place?"

"It sure is," the man replied. "When I first arrived here, I couldn't say one word. I had hardly any hair on my head. I didn't have the strength to walk across a room and I had to be lifted out of bed."

"That's wonderful!" said my friend. "How long have you been here?"

"I was born here."

The Recruit

Many of you know that I am a staunch Rugby League fan of Melbourne Storm. Craig Bellamy, their coach, told an interesting story about one of their recruits a few years ago.

The recruit happened to be a huge university student. He was asked by Craig: "Can you tackle?"

"Watch this," said the student, who proceeded to run smack into a telephone pole, shattering it to splinters.

"Wow," said Crag. "I'm impressed. Can you run?"

"Of course I can run," said the recruit. He ran off like a shot, and, in just under 10 seconds, he had run a hundred metre dash.

"Great!" enthused Craig. "But can you pass a football?"

The student hesitated for a few seconds. "Well, sir," he said. "If I can swallow it, I can probably pass it."

Training is essential

A new employee stood in front of the paper shredder looking confused.

"Need some help?" a colleague asked.

"Yes," she replied. "How does this thing work?"

“Simple,” the colleague said, taking the fat report from her hands and feeding it into the shredder.

“Thanks, but where do the copies come out?”

What’s in a name?

On the first day in school, a teacher asked a pupil, “What are your parent’s names?” The boy replied, “My dad’s name is smiling and my mum’s name is laughing.” The teacher said, “You must be kidding?” The boy said, “No, kidding is my brother. I’m joking.”

I shouldn’t advertise this

Sitting by the window of her convent, Sister Barbara opened a letter from home one evening. Inside the letter was a \$100 note her parents had sent. Sister Barbara smiled at the gesture. As she read the letter by the window, she noticed a shabbily dressed stranger leaning against the lamp post below. Quickly, she wrote, "Don't despair. - Sister Barbara," on a piece of paper, wrapped the \$100 note in it, got the man's attention, and tossed it out the window to him. The stranger picked it up, and with a puzzled expression and a tip of his hat, went off down the street. The next day, Sister Barbara was told that a man was at her door, insisting on seeing her.

She went down and found the stranger waiting. Without a word, he handed her a huge wad of \$100 notes. "What's this?" she asked. "That's the \$8,000 you have coming Sister," he replied. "Don't Despair paid 80-to-1."

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