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Dear Members,

This newsletter is mainly about the farewell to Head Office at 60 Denmark Street, Kew, held on Wednesday 8 May. I will defer some of the usual articles until the next edition.

The farewell proved to be a great success.

Two hundred people attended. The Department of Transport and Planning did a wonderful job in opening up the building, setting everything up including audio/video arrangements, organising parking and providing gourmet catering for morning tea. It really was outstanding and we are very grateful to their people who worked so hard and imaginatively to make a great occasion for us.

From our end, I want to thank Jill Earnshaw for leading our sub-committee of Patsy Kennedy and Jim Webber in liaising with the Department to make the day such a success. I also want to thank Nick Szwed for the management of the website and the design of the photo montage and Iris Whittaker who managed the registration list and the name tags. Finally, I would also like to thank Jill and Peter McCullough for sharing some of their memories with us.

Nick has posted the photographs taken on the day on our website. If you want to have a look at them please visit <https://vicroadsassociation.org/farewell-to-vicroads/>

Perhaps the star turn of the day was Tom Glazebrook the long-term Divisional Engineer in Bendigo. He captivated all of us with some of his recollections, the best of which was his famous statement that the best view of Head Office was in the rear vision mirror of his car on his way back to Bendigo. This was from a man who celebrated his 98th birthday the day before.



Tom Glazebrook and Barbara Forrester.

It was sad that Stan Hodgson had to withdraw at the last moment because of a COVID contact in his family. Stan has a more intimate knowledge of the building than anyone. In 1958, he was appointed by the Chief Engineer to be the Liaison Officer between the Board and the architects, Leith and Bartlett, during the design and construction of the building. However, we were able to recognize Stan's contribution in his absence with a round of applause.

Three weeks prior to the celebration, the Department invited Stan and myself into their Spring Street office for a televised interview and some parts of this are included in the vox/pops videos I circulated to members (and non-members). I hope you enjoyed them.

I also circulated two other videos. One was a timeline of the CRB through to the DTP and the other was the ceremony held by current staff of the DTP which was held the day after our celebration. Unfortunately, there is no video of our celebration.

I thought it was appropriate to wear a tie at the ceremony because, when I started work at Head Office in 1967¹ – just after the opening of the building - you had to wear a tie – even when working outdoors.

We had an amazing roll up of people including staff who shifted to Kew from the infamously uncomfortable offices at the Exhibition Building through to staff who worked there during its last days before Head Office closed for business.

Late last year, the VicRoads Association wrote to the Minister seeking an event to mark the milestone of the departure from the two buildings at 60 Denmark Street, Kew. This was the genesis of the 8 May event held especially for those of us who no longer work for VicRoads or its predecessor organisations.

It marked the end of an era for these buildings but the popularity of the event was also testament to the broader history of the organisations that we were a part of, and the friendships we all made during our time there. While buildings close, those friendships remain.

Our thanks go out to all those people who had a part in ensuring that history is preserved. We are all part of that history as another chapter closes. So, we took photos, shared reminiscences, told stories and caught up with friends and colleagues.

We were joined by former staff from lots of areas – from Kew as well as those from regions who did their cadetships here, or work stints or just had to visit for meetings. We had former colleagues here from policy and operational areas – from Finance, Legal Services, Information Technology, Human Resources, Communications, Enforcement, Administration and Building Services, the Corporate Development and Policy areas, the Library, Planning, Property and Estates, Overseas Projects, Data Management, Regional Services, Metropolitan Region, Technical Services, Quality Assurance, Survey and Road Design, Traffic Management, Bridge Design and Construction, Laboratory and Materials Research, Registration and Licensing and Custom Plates, as well as engineering staff from across the organisation.

I also paid tribute to the staff in our regional offices who implemented the organisation's program of works, liaised with and assisted the municipalities on regional issues and maintained the rural road network. Many of the organisation's operations were decentralised to the ten Regional Divisions. Nonetheless, the Regional Managers were in constant contact with Head Office and many millions of miles were traversed by officers between Head Office and the regional offices in the course of their duties.

I acknowledged the former Divisional Engineers and Regional Managers in attendance – Tom Glazebrook AM, Colin Roy and John Waddell. I failed to mention two others – Bob Solly and Mal Kersting. I apologise Bob and Mal! I hope this sets the record straight.

Strong leadership was crucial to the development of the CRB and its successors, its people and functions. All of us found mentors who guided us and contributed to building up an invaluable corporate knowledge of Victoria’s road network. We were proud of our achievements. Some of these people were there on the day but most were not. But they will always be remembered for their leadership and friendship; steering the organisation through good times and hard.

Below are some of the photographs taken on the day.





Seated: Loretta McKenzie, Lorraine Butcher, Peter Guest and Carmel Zappia.
Standing: Graham Briggs and Alison Pinto.



Nick Szwed, John Griffith and Gary Veith.



Ted Barton and Edgar Bartrop.



Rosy Law, Carol Bate, Bernard Toulet and Clive Mottram.



Jim Winnett, Graham Gilpin, Ken Vickery and Ted Barton.



John Ford, Jan Weinberg and Nick Szwed.



Peter McCullough, Jill Earnshaw and David Jellie.



Alan Mackinlay, Ken Mathers and Ross Gordon.



Front row from left: Birute Don, John Nation, Geoff Allen and Graham Brookes.
Second row from left: Colin Roy, Bill Sagers, John Ford, Jan Weinberg, Lyn Briggs, Julie Cooper
and Paul Cooper.



Front row: Bruce Hartnett, Julie Klein, Kerry Willis, John Rebecchi and John Clark.



Tom Glazebrook, Lindsay Clay, Ted Barton and Jim Trajcevski.



Julie Cooper, Paul Cooper, Jeanny Griek, Alison Pinto and Graham Briggs



Mal Kersting and Michael Barker.



Richard Bortko and Alison Pinto.



Clive Mottram and Iris Whittaker.



Ken Barnhill, Nick Szwed, Jill Earnshaw and Allan Bowman.



Graham Briggs, Liz Pollock, Paul Cooper, Julie Cooper and Jeanny Griek.



Geoff Lawrence, Lance Midgley and Noel Osborne.



Allan Bowman, David Nash, Rob Gilpin and David Williamson.



Murray Duckworth, Jurgen Heselschwerdt and Mary Spilar (at the pub afterwards).



Roger Thorp, Joe Black and Lester Watt.



Murray Duckworth, Geoff Hose and John Baldock (at the pub afterwards).



Jill Earnshaw and Jim Winnett (at the pub afterwards).



John Scully and Martin Habgood.



John Griffith, Gary Veith and John Liddell.



John Nation and Noel Osborne.



Rob Gilpin, Kerry Willis, Mal Kersting and John Moylan.



Rob Steel and Jill Earnshaw.



Robyn Robb and Edgar Bartrop.



Shelley Marcus, David Nash and David Williamson.



Sue Woess, Wendy Goad and Patsy Kennedy.



Asha Jamini and Jennifer Parry.



Niele Garcia, Anjila Gregory, Roger Thorp and Owen Thomas.



Maria Natoli, Merlyn Gillespie, Rosy Law and Barbara Forrester.



Robyn Seymour and John Liddell.



Biruta Don and Thuan Nguyen.



Wendy Nelson, David Nelson and Murray Carman.



Chris Boardman, Jill Earnshaw, David Challman and Joe Black.



Patsy Kennedy and Greg Ryan (at the pub afterwards).



Lee Scott, Geoff Lawrence and Richard Bortko.



Jim Winnett, Jeanny Griek, Jill Earnshaw, Murray Duckworth, Asha Jamini and Allan Bull.



John Cunningham, Colin Roy and Bill Sagers.



Warren Blandy, Martin Habgood and David Williamson.



Jim Webber and John Wright.



Lance Midgely, Bill Degnan, Mary Spilar and Lyn Briggs.



Ian Thiele, John Nation, Russell Bittner and John Wright.



Noel Osborne (in his tie and overalls) and Rob Steel.



Sue Woess, Loretta McKenzie, Lorraine Butcher, and Peter Guest.



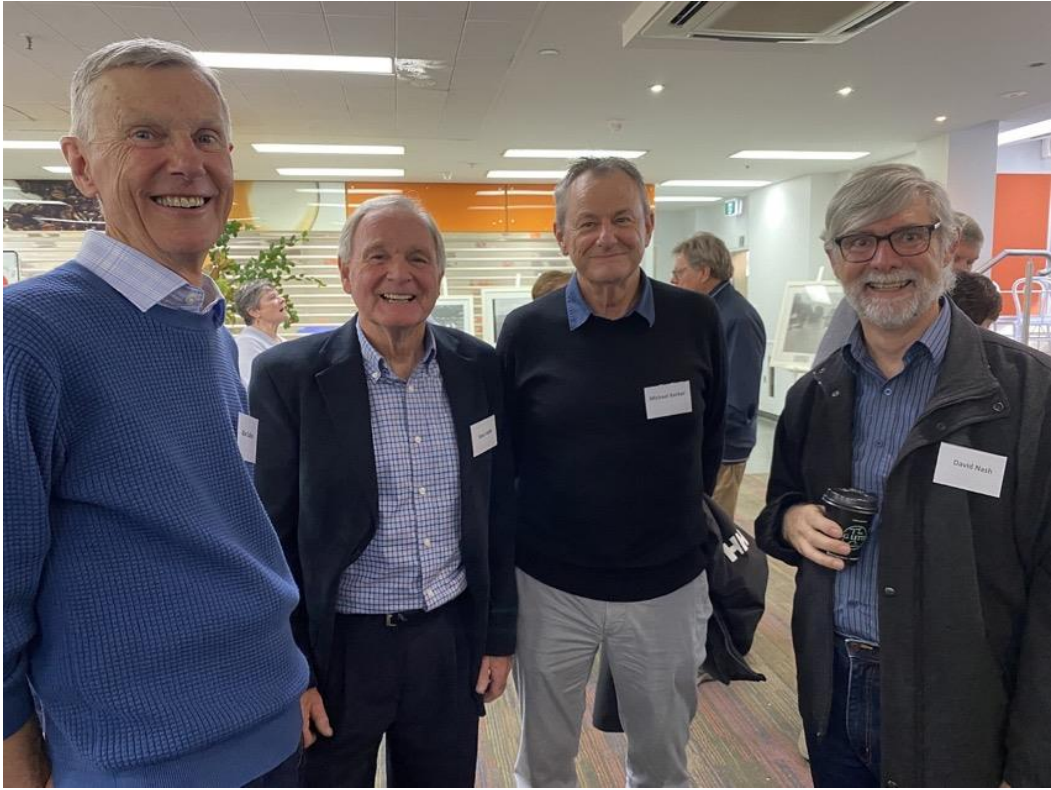
Kerry Willis and John Allison.



John Lewis and John Harding.



Graeme Price and Di Nobes.



Alan Collins, Gary Veith, Michael Barker and David Nash.



John Davis, Wendy Nelson and Allan Bull.



David Williamson, Allan Bowman and David Jellie (at the pub afterwards).



Chris Boardman, Bruce Wood and Bruce Ford.



Warren Blandy, Greg Ryan, Kevin Fox and Mary Spilar (at the pub).



Jim Trajcevski, Ken Vickery and John Baldock.



It was truly a memorable occasion and I received many messages from members saying how much they enjoyed the day. It made me think of the very fine people I worked with and their willingness to assist me in the real world of work. Apart from a short stint as a surveyor setting out new roads in Geelong North, joining the CRB was my first job – and I quickly realised I didn't know much. But Erwin Matzner took me in hand and he led me into the intricacies of bridge design – a skill set so distant in the past and so different now in the computer age – I couldn't design a bridge to save my life!

I hope you don't mind if I share some of my reflections about Erwin.

He was my first boss in Bridge Design Division. I was fortunate to know him. He was a very gentle and unassuming man, spoke nine languages fluently and was a talented cellist. The languages he spoke included the main Eastern European ones (including Russian) as well as French, German, Italian and English. His death certificate described him as engineer and teacher and this is very apt – he taught me more about bridge design, as my first mentor, than

anyone else. He was, in my view, an outstanding designer. He had textbooks in Serbian, Russian and German and, like many European engineers, often used graphical design methods.

Erwin was Jewish and he was always known at the CRB as Erwin Matzner. However, I visited his grave in the Boroondara Cemetery in Kew and saw that his name was in fact, Matzner-Levi. In a book written by J. Romano entitled *Jews of Yugoslavia 1941-1945. Victims of genocide and participants in the national liberation war*, Belgrade, 1980, the following entry – translated from Croatian to English - was included:

Matzner, Ervin, revolutionary (Rijeka¹, January 15 1915 - 1998). Son of Bruno and Irma b. Levi. He moved to Croatia in 1931 with his family from Andrychow, Poland, where his father worked as a clerk in the cement industry. After the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia, he was a technical student in Zagreb. He joined the partisans in 1943 as a fighter in the units of the 26th Dalmatian Division.

I am sure that this is Erwin. His birth date is exact and I know that he attended university in Zagreb, although he didn't mention his Polish heritage – he always claimed to be Croatian. And, of course, his mother's maiden name was Levi.

The 26th Dalmatian Division was a Yugoslav Partisan division formed in October 1943. The division mostly operated in Southern Dalmatia where it fought against parts of the German 2nd Panzer Army, 118th Jäger Division, 7th SS Division, and the 369th Infantry Division. Until the end of 1943, the 26th Division fought defensive operations in Makarska on the Peljesac Peninsula and on Korcula Island - against German forces advancing into Dalmatia after the capitulation of Italy. By 1944 only Vis Island remained unoccupied and the Division's main task was to prepare a defence for the anticipated German invasion – which was eventually cancelled. Vis was turned into large naval-air base for the Yugoslav Partisans and the Allies.

The 26th Dalmatian Division also carried out several seaborne landings on Dalmatian islands either alone or jointly with Allied British and American Commandos. In the final battles of the war, the division liberated Bihac, Gospic, Senj and Krk Islands and was also involved in battles near Klana and Ilirska Bistrica.

Erwin did not talk about his wartime experiences but he told me once that, when local engineers were captured by the German army, they were put to work by the Germans repairing bridges bombed by the Allied forces. To overcome sabotage, once a bridge was repaired, the Germans tied all the engineers and other workers to the bridge, and then they test loaded the bridge. If the bridge failed, everyone went down with it.

Erwin and his wife, Zlata Ana, and their infant daughter, Iris, arrived in Fremantle in May 1955 aboard the *Australia*.

Erwin retired in 1976 after 20 years of bridge design in the CRB, to concentrate on his beloved cello.

¹ Rijeka is a Croatian port city on Kvarner Bay in the northern Adriatic Sea. It's known as the gateway to Croatia's islands.



Erwin Matzner in 1978 – two years after his retirement.

I feel I had a special relationship with Erwin – and perhaps he with me. When I was working for him around 1962, he asked me if I would take his daughter, Iris, to an evening at the Melbourne Film Festival which I was very pleased to do.

He died on 4 June 1998. Since writing this memory, I have come to realize how much I loved and respected this man. I lost touch with him after he retired and that was my loss. I am ashamed that I neglected him but I take comfort in stopping at his grave to pace a stone on it – as is Jewish custom - and to remember him - on my frequent walks through the Boroondara Cemetery. He was a remarkable person.

I still have my slide rule and seven figure logarithm and trigonometric tables book but all those calculations can now be done with the touch of a fingertip on a computer keyboard.

Like everyone starting a new job, I made a completely new set of friends. Working in close proximity to many people was exciting especially as many of them were from Asia and Europe. It opened my eyes to the wider world and I joined in the lunch-time solo school with John Boston, Jim Winnett, David Ferguson, Bill Peyton, John Fargher, Andy Guthrie and others. We even set up a fortnightly solo school whereby we rotated around each other's homes. I lived with my aunt and uncle and when it was my turn, my aunt would set up two card tables and provide a delicious supper. Most of us smoked and the atmosphere must have been incredibly foul.

Bridge Division was a male domain. I remember two women who were tracers – Mrs Halafoff and Mrs Leah Lengyel. Mrs Halafoff was an architect in her home country – I think Russia - but her qualifications weren't recognized in Australia. This happened to a lot of migrants to Australia including later waves of nationalities such as the Vietnamese. Leah Lengyel looked like a European countess. She was tall, elegant and slightly aloof and, in winter, she wore a full-length fur coat which would be very much out of favour now.

Marj Robertson also worked in Bridge Branch mainly administration. She was born Marjorie Australie Gilbert in Battersea, London, to Mabel and Charles Web Gilbert.

Web was an Australian sculptor who went to London in 1914 to make his mark in the European art world. It was there in this Bohemian world that he met Mabel, an artist and artist's model. Web wanted to go to France to meet the great French sculptor, Auguste Rodin, but the outbreak of the First World War soon after his arrival meant he had to remain in England. Too old to enlist, he nonetheless joined the Australian Imperial Force as a war artist and he travelled through France to gather information for the accurate representations of the battlegrounds and events for the dioramas displayed in the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. He also sculpted the statue of Matthew Flinders in Swanston Street.

During the Second World War Marj met Rob Robertson who was training to be a pilot in the RAAF. While training in an American bomber at Tocumwal he had a crash landing due to a mechanical problem with the plane. He was badly injured and was discharged from the RAAF and went to work in the Drawing Office at Victoria Barracks where Marj was already working as a tracer. In 1954 she started with the CRB.

Rob died in 1969 aged 55 and in 1969 she married Bruce Addis one of the senior engineers in Bridge Branch. In the 1990s she developed macular degeneration and went completely blind but under Bruce's care she lived to over a 100.

Marj was very involved in the Social Club at the CRB. The club organised various functions throughout the year including the annual ball, the children's Christmas party, the staff Christmas party and various fund-raising activities for charities. When she retired, she became an inaugural member of what is now known as the VicRoads Association – an association of past members of staff – and she was the second President of that organisation. She remained a loyal member to the last.

There were two other women I recall, both of whom were typists/receptionists on the Second Floor where Bridge Division was located. They were Dorothy Smith and Joyce Kerfoot. They were excellent typists and showed great patience towards tenderfoots like me when I had to correct some of my correspondence.

In fact, Joyce has left a legacy for all Australians. She was an avid collector of glass. The Kerfoot Collection of Australian Studio Glass was begun by Joyce in the late 1970s, and has gradually expanded to over 150 works. It is housed in the Wagga Wagga Art Gallery which is the home of the National Art Glass Gallery. It houses a world class, nationally significant collection of contemporary art glass, featuring approximately 700 pieces.

Many of Australia's leading glass artists are represented in the collection. Joyce lived in Wagga Wagga and in the late 1940s, she was one of the founding members of the Wagga Wagga Art Society, and she actively participated in their activities until 1958, when the Kerfoot family left Wagga Wagga for Melbourne. In 1977 her interest in glass began when she first acquired a piece of blown glass from the Jam Factory in Adelaide. The studio art glass movement in Australia was still in its infancy at this time, and early on Joyce was able to purchase works at affordable prices by the pioneers of the movement.

So, while we had few women in this branch of the CRB, those that we did have were pretty special.

If you have any recollections about working at 60 Denmark Street, Kew – please send them to me. Peter Flavelle sent the following one.

Peter Flavelle on working at Head Office

Peter wrote to me as follows:

‘Hello David,

I worked on the 6th floor in the Costing Section. On my third day I had to help with counting money (coins) in the Revenue Section. From memory, I used a weight on a scale which would be used to balance say \$50 dollars in \$1 coins. Easy work, at which I excelled.

On Day 4, Jimmy Dunbar explained to me how the stationery requisition system worked - he filled in the requisition form for one long weight and I was directed to the lower ground floor to collect it.

The storeman looked at my requisition, smiled, and directed me to a seat while he fetched the long weight. After a while I realized I had been had. Many other workers after me had their requisitions attended to after a long wait.

Regards, Peter.’

Letters of Appreciation

Here are just a sample of letters of appreciation sent to Jill and me.

‘What a great day! I hope you are basking in the glory/afterglow of a day very well done.

Rob Steel.

‘Thank YOU again for a terrific and sometimes quite emotional reunion ...’

Kevin Fox

‘Just wanting to thank both you and David (and anybody else) for organising the marvellous reunion at Denmark Street this week.

The event certainly reinforced my views that the CRB/Roads Corporation/VicRoads were great places to work for (hope I didn't leave any corporation names off the list, with all the name changes we had).

I occasionally meet up with Robyn Robb, the Prices, and John Anderson in a little group, but to catch up with all those other people was truly rewarding.

I intend to join the VicRoads Association so hopefully will see some of those former colleagues again.’

John Allison

‘Well done to you and your team for organising the farewell. It was definitely a great success’

John Davis

‘I am now back in Brisbane and so pleased that I was able to attend Wednesday’s Farewell to Kew. Living up here I don’t get to meet up with friends and colleagues from my days with CRB/RCA/Vic Roads very often so I am greatly appreciative of the efforts of you, David Jellie and your committee in organising the function.

I was chuffed to hear the praise given by the Regions to the Highway Record Survey maps to which I had much input and was delighted to see the reaction of David to the Engineer's football team photo.'

John Waters

'Well done, for all your organizing for yesterday. It was great travelling down memory lane highway. I especially enjoyed your recollections session.

Sorry I couldn't keep Tom in line, there's no show without punch when he's about! He thoroughly enjoyed himself. In fact, he was a bit overcome by it all in the end. Congratulations for a job well done.

Lindsay Clay

(We are so pleased that Tom got out of line and thank you to Lindsay for bringing him down from Bendigo the day before the event, and looking after him with such care!)

'I just wanted to say what a wonderful job you did for the Farewell and how much I enjoyed it. All the past work friends so great to see.

I got lots of hugs and kisses which were most welcome. I was so pleased to see Lance Midgley he was smiling away in his special chair. I always had a soft spot for him even before his accident.'

Lyn Briggs

'Thank you for the invite to that special occasion. It was so good to catch up with all acquaintances and best friends. Thank you for doing all that work. It was excellent in every way. God bless and keep in touch.'

Merlyn Gillespie

'Wonderful event yesterday. Thank you very much for putting it together and giving me the opportunity to attend.'

John Merritt

'Thank you for such a lovely morning, and the effort that you have put into it all. Thank you once again.'

Di Nobes and Graeme Price

'Thanks for all the work you put into the organizing of today's event. It was a wonderful morning and much appreciated by all present.'

Peter McCullough

'Thank you and congratulations on the great celebration on Wednesday. It was a great morning and so lovely to see so many familiar faces. You and the team did such a great job.'

Alicia Grogan-Jones

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.

Please note that the visit to the Shrine of Remembrance is being re-scheduled from the date advised in earlier newsletters. We will let you know the date once arrangements have been finalised.

Date	Event	Contact Person
Monday 3 June	12 noon Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown Hotel	Just turn up
Tuesday 2 July	12 noon for 12.30 pm Lunch at Waverley RSL	Ken Vickery
This function is being rescheduled. We will inform you once a date is finalised.	10 am Shrine of Remembrance – highlighting the recent upgrade followed by lunch and a possible tour of Royal Botanic Gardens.	Jill Earnshaw
Monday 5 August	12 noon Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown Hotel	Just turn up
Monday 19 August This date is confirmed.	10.30 am West Gate Tunnel Project. Details to be provided at a later date.	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, Glen Waverley RSL	Ken Vickery
2025		
Monday 3 February	12 noon Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown Hotel	Just turn up.

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.

Lunch at Glen Waverley RSL, Tuesday 2 July at 12 noon.

This mid-year event has no other purpose than to have a great time over a delicious lunch. Parking is readily available in the adjacent carpark. Please register with Ken Vickery by texting or calling him on 0409 561 168 or send him an email on kenvickery@tpg.com.au

NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Laurie Watson

Laurie wrote to me in response to the story about Lennie Gwyther's trip to see the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge that I included in the last newsletter. He wrote:

'Hi David

You might be interested to know that the boy, Lennie Gwyther, who rode his horse from Leongatha to see the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge was my uncle. He was born around the time construction started and was fascinated by the project from an early age. For his second birthday, his grandfather gave him a foal that was born on the same day that Lennie was born. He named the horse "Ginger Mick" and they grew up together.

He followed the building of the bridge in newspaper articles he read in the newspapers that were thrown from the train which ran through the family property.

Lennie was quite introverted but very bright and creative. He made his mother a washing machine when he was quite young.

After returning from Sydney on Ginger Mick he didn't speak about his adventure as he didn't want to brag or big note himself which was often the way in those days.

Readers might be interested in a book entitled "The Bridge" by Peter Lalor which includes a chapter about Lennie's Ride.

Cheers Laurie'

TALKING OF OTHER REUNIONS

A group of 40-year old girlfriends discussed where they should meet for dinner. Finally, it was agreed that they should meet at the Ocean View restaurant because the waiters there had tight pants and nice buns.

Ten years later, at 50 years of age, the group once again discussed where they should meet for dinner. Finally, it was agreed that they should meet at the Ocean View restaurant because the food there was very good and the wine selection was good also.

Ten years later at 60 years of age, the group once again discussed where they should meet for dinner. Finally, it was agreed that they should meet at the Ocean View restaurant because they could eat there in peace and quiet and the restaurant had a beautiful view of the ocean.

Ten years later, at 70 years of age, the group once again discussed where they should meet for dinner. Finally, it was agreed that they should meet at the Ocean View restaurant because the restaurant was wheelchair accessible and they even had an elevator.

Ten years later, at 80 years of age, the group once again discussed where they should meet for dinner. Finally, it was agreed that they should meet at the Ocean View restaurant because they had never been there before.

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