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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>*

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Dear Members,

I feel a rant coming on and I need to get a few things off my chest.

Everything in our modern world is connected. Although I propose to talk ostensibly about Victoria's infrastructure, I can't ignore other issues such as education and training, immigration and taxation.

As I write this there is a lot of discussion in the media about a booming demand for infrastructure. This includes a million new affordable homes over a five-year period (you guess how much this will cost), eight nuclear power submarines (\$368 billion), power stations of all types (wind both onshore and offshore), solar, gas and, if the Opposition has its way, nuclear and coal (hundreds of billions of dollars). In Victoria the Big Build moves on – North East Link, West Gate Tunnel (initially announced at \$5.5 billion in 2015 rising to \$10.2 billion and still counting), the Level Crossing Removal Project (largely completed) and the Suburban Rail Loop (\$216 billion in March 2024). The Melbourne Airport Rail Project has been shelved for the time being. And the Metro Rail Tunnel is still underway (nearing completion at an initial estimated cost of \$10.9 billion but now out to \$14 billion and rising).



Artist's impression of North East Link.

The North East Link Project is a 10 km long tolled freeway connecting the Metropolitan Ring Road at Greensborough with the Eastern Freeway at Bulleen. This connection is a high priority but many of the planning decisions have been made behind closed doors. The adopted route is contentious. The more direct route would appear to have provided a better level of service but it has never been explained why it was rejected. If there were good reasons not to accept

it, why not explain them. In 2016, the estimated cost was \$10 billion. In 2017, it rose to \$16.5 billion and it has now been raised to \$28.1 billion.

I haven't the slightest idea how to compile an estimate of cost of these huge projects especially when their implementation often commences before all investigations and approvals have been finalised – and, it seems, nor does anyone else. In our current political environment, the emphasis is on making the big announcements on projects and then launching into them with no accurate estimate of their costs. These large cost overruns severely compromise project works and budgets of other government sectors - so the pain is further dispersed. This approach to project delivery has no luxury of time and our political masters have little appreciation of the consequences of their decisions.

I cringe when I hear politicians of all colours announcing that they have the panacea for all our problems. Take Snowy River Hydro Scheme 2 for example. It started in March 2017, when the Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, announced the plan. He said it would cost \$2 billion dollars and would be opened within four to seven years i.e. 2021 to 2024. In August 2023 the estimated cost was \$13 billion and the earliest completion date was 2028. I can't find more up to date estimates but the current delay in drilling is sure to extend both cost and program. Some pundits reckon it will now cost \$25 billion and won't be commissioned until the 2030s. Keep in mind that the existing Snowy Hydro scheme only produces two per cent of Australia's electricity output and that Snowy Hydro 2 is merely a battery to be used during peak demand. We could end up spending \$25 billion for about one per cent of our power needs. Makes nuclear energy look pretty cheap!



Snowy Hydro 2 Project.

All these projects are big political statements. They compete against each other for resources, expertise and manpower and, in doing so, they raise the price of infrastructure. In this regard, Australia must be one of the most expensive countries in the world to build. The highest bidders get the cream and there is little left for the punters like us. Our local plumber disappeared from domestic duties because he could earn much more on a big project and work regular hours. Who can blame him?

Where are we going to find the skills say to design and operate nuclear power stations? Both sides of politics are now aiming to reduce immigration and university intakes are being curtailed at a time when they should be increasing to meet the infrastructure demand. Farmers will no longer be able to engage contract labour from the Pacific Islands to pick their fruit and many services in health and education will have to be cut. Some politicians espouse reduction

of immigration based on the argument that too many international students stay on in Australia and steal jobs and houses from dinky di Aussies, but this is fallacious. 84 percent of international students return to their home countries and the 16 percent who stay on, are in the high-end bracket such as health professionals, researchers, scientists and engineers. We need them!

And what about our existing infrastructure? Roads, railway lines, transmission lines, water and sewerage systems (all of which were built at a time when much of it now needs refurbishment or replacement) are allowed to deteriorate. The failure to maintain infrastructure repudiates investments made by previous generations. For example, the road network plays a vital role in social and economic development. Without adequate and timely maintenance, roads inexorably deteriorate, leading to higher vehicle operating costs, increased numbers of accidents, and reduced reliability of transport services. When repair work can no longer be delayed it will often involve extensive rehabilitation, and even reconstruction, costing many times more than simple maintenance treatments if carried out earlier. The need to protect the existing network and keep it in good condition is paramount, taking precedence over new investment. This goes for all infrastructure.

Where is the planning? There was absolutely none for the Outer Rail Loop and all these new suburbs required for housing have to be connected to services, have safe and efficient access by public and private transport and have all the other facilities required for healthy living – schools, health clinics, parks, community centres, shopping precincts and the like. I don't see any evidence of this as yet.

And finally, where will the money come from? It is political death to mention raising taxes. The political mantra over the last decades is that taxes in Australia are high. Australia's average income tax rate of 24.9 per cent was the fourth-highest of the developed world, behind Denmark, Iceland and Belgium, and well above the 15.4 per cent average for the 38 OECD countries. However, Australia's average income tax rate ranking does not take into account social security contributions in many other nations – and that means it does not provide an accurate comparison between OECD countries. To get a more accurate comparison of how reliant Australia is on taxes on income, it is necessary to include social security contributions. When taken this into account, Australia is the ninth-lowest-taxed nation at 29.2 per cent – significantly reducing its total tax burden and putting it well below the OECD average of 34.8 per cent.

Another alternative is to seek investment from the private sector. I really don't want to think about that! It was recently announced that Victorian motorists have paid \$13 billion to drive on CityLink since it opened 24 years ago. Over that time, tolls have grown nearly three times higher than inflation. And we are set for further pain, with annual 4.25 per cent price increases locked in till 2029 thanks to the deal with the Victorian Government to build the West Gate Tunnel Project. To illustrate how things have changed over the last two decades, Transurban spent \$1.8 billion from 1996 to 2000 building the project linking the Tullamarine, West Gate and Monash Freeways (including building the Burnley and Domain Tunnels and the Bolte Bridge). They have spent a further \$2.2 billion on widening the Monash and Tullamarine Freeways to increase travel speeds – but also traffic numbers and revenue.

I am too old to worry about this, but now that I have got that off my chest I will turn to happier thoughts.

## WHAT'S COMING UP

Please remember that partners and friends are always welcome to all 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.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Contact Person</b>
Monday 5 August	12 noon Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown Hotel	Just turn up
Monday 19 August	10.30 am West Gate Tunnel Project – see details below.	David Jellie
Monday 9 September	10 am Shrine of Remembrance – followed by lunch.	Jill Earnshaw
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
November	A regional trip to replace the previously proposed visit to Snowy Hydro 2 in Cooma. See note below.	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
<b>2025</b>		
Monday 3 February	12 noon Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown Hotel	Just turn up.

### **Occasional Lunch at Shoppingtown Hotel, Monday 5 August at 12 noon.**

Our next lunch is on Monday, 5 August. There is no need to register – just turn up.

### **Visit to the West Gate Tunnel (WGT) Project on Monday 19 August.**

The format is as follows:

- We will have an interactive Zoom meeting on our computers or phones – probably on Friday 16 August. I will inform you of the details closer to the date. Officers from Major Road Projects Victoria (MRPV - formerly the West Gate Tunnel Authority) will describe the scope of the project, including the nature and program of works and answer any questions we might like to ask.
- On Monday 19 August we will meet in the foyer of the MRPV's office at 180 Lonsdale Street in the city at 9.30 am. The office is just around the corner from Russell Street. At 10 am we will board the bus(es) for a tour of the WGT project. The bus(es) will stop at strategic locations around the route. We propose to return to the city between noon and 12.30 pm.
- There will be MRPV officers on the bus(es) to provide commentary and answer questions.



Expert gourmards from MRPV have suggested that, on our return, we take lunch at the Crafty Squire Hotel at 127 Russell Street. It is likely that the bus could deliver us to the pub if there are enough takers.

Members and friends will have to register with me for the bus trip with a cut-off date of 26 July so that the Authority can make final arrangements with the bus company. I realize that this is quite soon but the MRPV have requested that date so please act promptly. My preferred contact is [pdjellie@hotmail.com](mailto:pdjellie@hotmail.com) Alternatively, you can text me (David Jellie) on 0418 105 276. I would rather not take phone bookings. For those people who have already registered, there is no need to do it again.

**Important.** Please indicate to me whether you propose to have lunch at the pub or not as I want to forewarn the pub of the likely numbers.

Don't forget that partners and friends are welcome to join us.

## 9 September – Visit to the Shrine of Remembrance

We will provide further details in the next newsletter but if you want to register early please contact Jill Earnshaw via email [jillmearnshaw@gmail.com](mailto:jillmearnshaw@gmail.com)

## November – Regional trip

You have been previously informed that the trip to Snowy River Hydro 2 project has been rescheduled to next year. We plan to replace it with another trip. We will finalise arrangements at our next committee meeting on 5 August and all details will be included in the August newsletter.

## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

### Visit to Transport Accident Commission (TAC), Geelong, Tuesday 28 May

We had an attendance of about 40 people at the headquarters of the TAC in Geelong. We were briefed on Victoria's Safe System Approach by Sam Cockfield, Antonietta Cavallo and John Matta on Victoria's road safety strategy.



## Embracing the Safe System Approach

### What we embrace now

- aim to eliminate death and **very** serious injury
- anticipate and accommodate human error
- design our roads and vehicle so that crash forces are limited to levels that are **within human tolerance**

### Our future

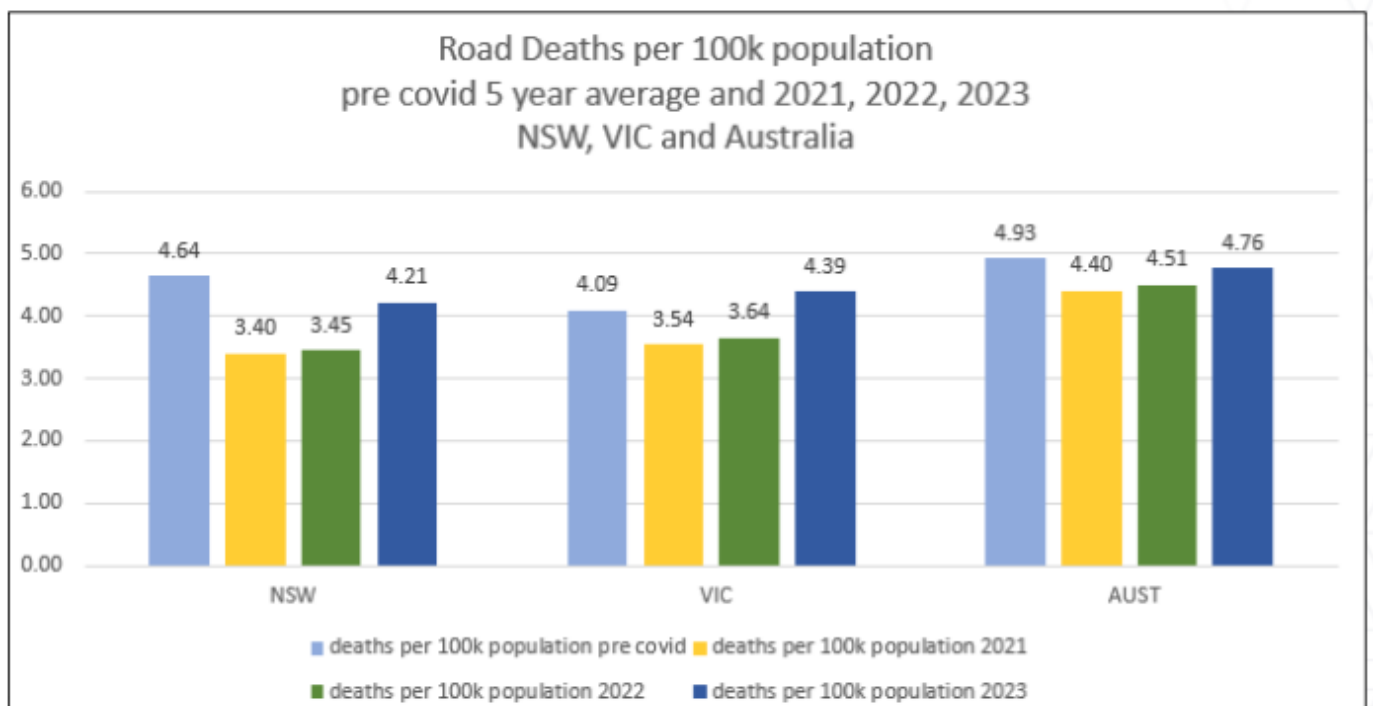
- motivate those who design and maintain the roads, manufacture vehicles, and administer safety programmes to **share responsibility for safety**
- ensure safety is not be **compromised for the sake of other factors**
- **Partner** with businesses and industry to consider road safety

Some of the key highlights of the road safety challenge facing TAC and the Victorian are:

- The number of lives lost on our roads is unacceptably high.
- More than 6,000 hospitalisations and 1,200 severe injuries annually.
- Road trauma costs more than \$6 billion per year.
- Upward fatality and serious injury trend post COVID-19, based on population and travel, and growing.
- Severe injury claims account for 60 to 74 per cent of costs, bed days and disability.
- Serious crashes are dispersed across the road network (200,000+kms).
- More fatal crashes occur on rural/regional roads.
- Rural people are usually the ones killed on rural roads.
- More serious injury crashes in urban and greater Melbourne areas.

## How we compare with others

- Victorian lives lost per 100,000 population was 4.39 in 2023, which is more than twice the rate of the leading OECD country in 2022 (Norway 2.14).
- Victorian lives lost per 100,000 population has been increasing over the last 3 years. NSW has experienced a similar increasing trend over the same period. The 2023 rates across Victoria, NSW and Australia are more comparable to pre-Covid averages.
- The 2022 Victorian lives lost per 100,000 population of 3.64 was lower than the OECD average of 4.28. The OECD comparison was not available for 2023.



Significant trauma reductions cannot be achieved without:

- substantial risk reduction on a network level and
- a wide range of interventions such as:
  - infrastructure safety upgrades
  - speed management and traffic calming
  - vehicle fleet improvements
  - Increase in today's enforcement levels.

Multi-disciplinary interventions broadly applied could prevent about 80 per cent of all serious injury crashes.

The four key pathways of the Safe System Approach are Safe Vehicles, Safe Roads, Safe Speeds and Safe People. Each of these is briefly discussed below.

## **Safe Vehicles**

Safe cars protect occupants in two ways by:

- Reducing injuries if a crash occurs, and
- Preventing crashes from occurring.

If every driver upgraded their vehicle to the safest in its class, serious trauma would be reduced by a third.

Each additional star on a car's safety rating improves the safety of that vehicle by about 12 per cent.

Cars that are over 15 years old are involved in a large number of fatal crashes especially in rural areas.

## **Highest Priorities for Safe Vehicles**

- New cars to have Lane Keeping Assistance and Autonomous Emergency Braking. Motoring organisations to have a key role in promotion and Commonwealth Government in regulation.
- Encourage drivers to buy the safest they can afford – both new and used.
- Remove older, less safe vehicles from market.

## **Safe Roads**

The major challenges are:

- Death rates on country roads are four times higher than for metropolitan roads.
- Approximately, half of all road fatalities in Victoria occur on high speed (100 and 110km/h) country roads.
- Over 60 per cent have crossed the centre line.
- 225,000 intersections – 60 per cent of metropolitan deaths.

## **Strategies**

### High Speed Roads

- Continuous safety barrier on divided roads.
- Centreline barrier on undivided roads.
- Signs and delineation including audio tactile line marking.
- Speed limit reductions.

### Intersections

- Roundabouts.
- Traffic lights (including those with safety platforms).
- Side Road Activated Speeds (SRAS).

- Splitter islands and advances warning signs.

### Pedestrians and cyclists

- Raised pedestrian crossings and platforms.
- Threshold treatments, median islands.
- Strip Shopping Centre speed limits.
- Pedestrian refuge islands.
- Bicycle lanes.

### **Safe Speeds**

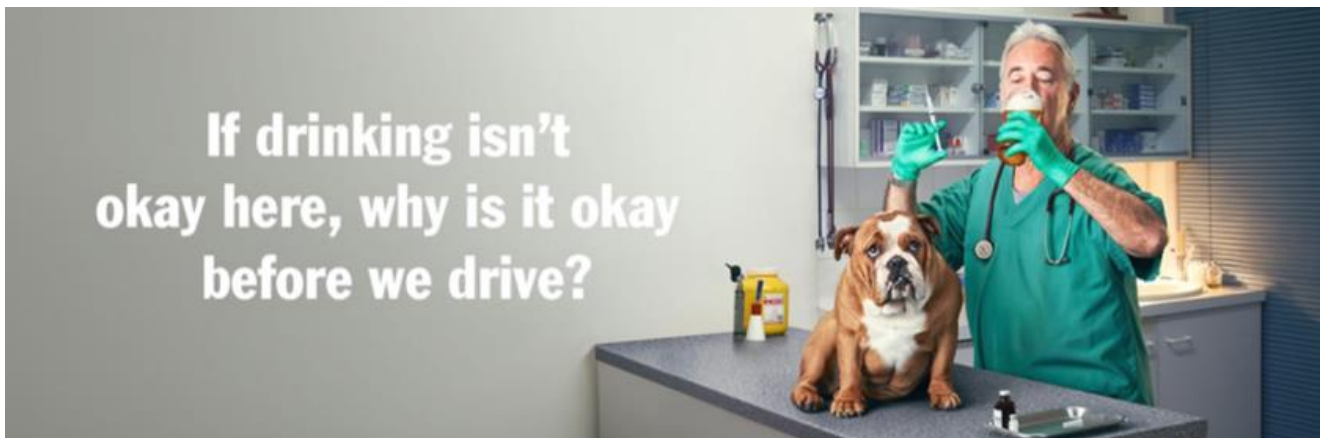
The issues are:

- Impact speed is directly related to injury severity.
- Higher probability of serious injury at higher impact speeds for drivers involved in frontal and side impact crashes.
- Travelling 5 km/h above the speed limit is associated with a 44 per cent increase in crash risk, while driving 10 km/h above the speed limit more than doubled the crash risk of drivers travelling at the speed limit
- Travel speed is highly correlated with the speed limit. There is a high correlation between driver speed choice and the speed limit.

### **Safe People**

#### **Effective measures**

- Deterring unsafe behaviours.
- Motivating safer decision making.
- Building community readiness and support for change.
- Preventing high risk behaviours.



Building community acceptance of alcohol and driving separation messaging, potential for policy change in future.

The presentation was very enlightening and encouraged much discussion. I again extend my thanks to Sam, Antonietta and John for their presentations. They too enjoyed the session and they have invited us back next year to further explore other issues – not to Geelong but to the Melbourne Museum where they have similar facilities. We will certainly take up this offer.



## **Mid-year lunch at Waverley RSL, Tuesday 2 July**

We had an attendance of 37 people. I forgot to take a photograph to prove but believe me the meal was delicious. Thanks to Ken Vickery for organising it.

### **NEW MEMBERS**

I am pleased to advise that the following members have joined the Association:

Kerry Willis, Geoff Chambers, Bruce La'Brooy, Liz Pollock and Allison Pinto.

### **NEWS FROM MEMBERS**

#### **David Williamson**

David wrote:

'John Liddell's experience with melanoma and its treatment (reported in your April newsletter) prompted me to write to you. In March this year I had the great pleasure of meeting Professor Richard Scolyer. Richard, together with Professor Georgina Long, are Co-Medical Directors of the Melanoma Institute Australia and are the joint 2024 Australians of the Year for their pioneering work on the treatment of melanomas based on immunotherapy.

In May 2023, Richard suffered a seizure while overseas and was subsequently diagnosed with glioblastoma, an aggressive brain cancer with an average survival period of 12 to 18 months. Rather than accept the inevitable, Professor Scolyer and Professor Long set about the task of applying their considerable knowledge and skills gained from the immunotherapy treatment of melanomas to Richard's brain tumour. Richard thus became the guinea pig, at considerable risk to himself. His journey is well chronicled – just Google Richard Scolyer / brain cancer or tune into Australian Story on ABC iView (Patient Zero – Richard Scolyer). Latest scans show that there is no sign of cancer twelve months on from his initial seizure. Nevertheless, his progress is not without its speed bumps and it is obvious that Richard is well aware that his future is far from certain.

Exercise is clearly an important part of Richard's life and recovery. He committed to cycle the first three days of Tour de Cure's *Signature Tour* in March this year – approx. 300 km over some challenging terrain in Tasmania. Tour de Cure is a charity that raises funds for cancer research and patient support, largely by conducting multi-day bicycle tours. My daughter Kat (a rider) and I (support crew and volunteer) have been involved with Tour de Cure since 2019. Meeting Richard was a highlight of our tour – he's such a humble and inspiring human.

Significant progress has been achieved in the treatment of and survival rate of many types of cancers – unfortunately not so with brain cancers. Hopefully, this will change due to the skills and courage of Professor Scolyer and Professor Long. These two are true Aussie heroes.

If you have a few dollars to spare, please consider donating to the work of the Melanoma Institute Australia [www.melanoma.org.au](http://www.melanoma.org.au)



Professor Scolyer, Kate and David on the Tour de Cure.

## **John Liddell**

John wrote to me regarding the Annual Traffic Census as follows:

‘Fred Davenport and I managed the Annual Traffic Census in Metropolitan Division for a number of years in the late 60s and early 70s.

The Census was conducted on the second Wednesday in March which was considered to be the most average day of the year. It was a 12-hour count from 7 am to 7 pm in quarter hour segments and classified into cars and trucks with one axle, two axles and three or more axles. The counts were on classified roads being State Highways and some of the more important Main Roads.

There were generally three people to a site and they had clipboards with counters attached to them and a number of single hand-held counter. Counts were recorded on A4 sheets. Overtime was paid.

I remember trailing along behind Tom Russell who was head of Bridge Design and recording the names of volunteers as many staff put their hands up. Many of these were regulars each year thinking that a day off work and being paid overtime was a good deal.

The 1967 Board of Works Planning Scheme included a fairly futuristic network of new Freeways and major Arterial Roads and was the master plan for traffic in Melbourne. I expect that Freeway Planning Division and Traffic and Location would have had a major input into where traffic counts were taken so that future traffic growth could be monitored and programs developed on a logical, needs basis.

I lived in South Blackburn, south of Canterbury Rd and east of Middleborough Rd and the proposed Gardiners Creek Freeway was to be located in paddocks behind my house. This was never built and is now residential land. I expect this was the fate of many other proposals. Metro Division had about six supervisors, who were responsible for all the sites in their area to ensure staff had turned up, knew what to do and sometimes took over for short periods to give staff break for personal need etc. I cannot remember how many sites were involved but probably about 50 to 60.’

## **Geoff Elston**

Geoff, who is not a member but obviously gets the newsletter, wrote:

‘Thanks, David, for the section about Ivor Preston.

I lived near Ivor and spent a few good years driving to and from Kew with him. I have often wondered about him since he moved north.

I distinctly remember walking a section of the Ring Road reservation with him and he suddenly darted off because he had spotted a red tailed cockatoo.

It was a passion of his.’

## **Norm Butler**

Norm wrote:

‘Hi David

Thank you again for a very enjoyable newsletter.

I was very much taken with Noel Osborne's resume of his time in Benalla Division. I arrived late in Noel's time there.

I well remember the day that Noel left to go off for National Service. He was just about out the back door of the office when Divisional Engineer (DE) Bob Handley caught him carrying off a CRB leather satchel, much valued by all engineers at that time.

"Are you taking that satchel with you?" said DE Handley. "Yes, of course" said Noel.

"When I was a young engineer" said DE Handley, "All that I had to carry my stuff in was a cut down sugar bag"

"Not very dignified for a Divisional Engineer" said Noel who continued on his way to National Service. For all I know Noel still has that CRB satchel’

## **Maz (Marilyn) OConnor**

‘Hi David,

Thank you for sharing stories and photos of the recent Farewell to Head Office.

I have very fond memories of my time with CRB/RCA/VicRoads and a lot came to the forefront as I took a stroll down memory lane.

I started my working life at the age of 16 as a young and shy typist in the 5th Floor South Typing Pool. I remember being trained as Relief Telephonist, a job I loved, filling in when required. I also did stints in Estates, and Traffic Permits. After about three years in Head Office, I moved to the Johnson Street Bridge Project Office in South Melbourne which kick started my Administration career. Upon opening of the Bridge, I moved to Bridge Costing Section at 1 Princess Street, then to the Bridge Construction Branch. From there I moved across to the Traffic Engineering Division and I resigned in 1991.

I met many, many wonderful people during my time at CRB/RCA/VicRoads.

I now find myself living in Far North Queensland on the Atherton Tablelands (beautiful part of Australia), semi-retired and loving life.

It would have been wonderful to attend the farewell, but it was just a little further than 'just down the road' to attend.

Thank you once again for sharing. I would be happy to share more memories, but didn't want to overdo it this time.'

## **Bruce Wood**

Bruce is a new member of the Association.

His career with the CRB commenced in 1973 and he worked in planning. Design, surveying and drafting for 22 years following which he worked for various contractors and consultants and his own company for a further 28 years.



Bruce Wood.

Selected experience includes:

- Melbourne Metro Rail Project as the Ground Penetration Permit Coordinator.
- Gladstone GLNG on Curtis Island with Bechtel as a surveyor.
- Indomet Coal Indonesia Haul Roads BHP/Bechtel using Inroads and mentoring junior designers - including facilitating and publishing CAD manual for the project.
- Weipa Haul Roads, Rio Tinto/Bechtel, using Inroads.
- M80 Ring Road widening with Parsons Brinckerhoff - Survey and Design using Inroads.
- Peninsula Link bid with Parsons Brinckerhoff using Inroads.
- Tullamarine Calder Interchange pavement overlay design with Parsons Brinckerhoff.
- Eastlink Reference design with VicRoads. Bid with Parsons Brinckerhoff, and detail design with Parsons Brinckerhoff using Inroads.
- Indomet Coal project Indonesia - Senior Designer for BHP/Bechtel – Brisbane.
- Feature Survey and Design M80 Ring Road Project Melbourne.
- Eastern Gas Pipeline - Sale to Sydney – Surveyor.
- Eastlink - Dandenong Section Bid and Design – Thiess John Holland.
- Design team member, Weipa Haul Road Design – Bechtel.

- Dublin Light Rail – Sinclair Knight Merz – Designer.
- Fast Rail Project – Fisher Stewart – feature survey for numerous projects.
- Hume Freeway Project – VicRoads – Surveyor.

He has kept his letter of appointment all that time.

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS:  
ROADSBOARD KEW  
TELEX AA 31650



ALL CORRESPONDENCE  
TO BE ADDRESSED TO  
THE SECRETARY

TELEPHONE ENQUIRIES  
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EXT. 2325 MR A R FLEER

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VICTORIA 3101 AUSTRALIA

14 Mar 73

PLEASE QUOTE

Mr B J Wood  
1 Cleary Street  
SPRINGVALE SOUTH 3174

Dear Mr Wood

I wish to advise that approval has been given to your appointment to the position of Draftsman Class 1, Right of Way Division at a salary of \$2395 per annum within the range \$1995 - \$5785, progression beyond \$5240 per annum being subject to the successful completion of an approved course of study.

As documentary evidence of your date of birth and qualifications is required, would you please arrange to submit this as soon as is convenient.

It is understood that you will be able to commence duty on Monday, 19th March, 1973 and I would be grateful if you would report to the Staff Officer (Mr W H Waugh) at 8.30 a.m. on that date.

Yours faithfully

*G. C. Rodgers*  
G C RODGERS  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY  
(PERSONNEL)



Bruce likes the outdoor life and enjoys sailing, snow skiing, 4x4 driving and camping. Recently he sailed from Cairns to Thursday Island on the H.M.B. *Endeavour* replica.

## Lance Midgley

Lance needs little introduction to most of us. He served in VicRoads and its predecessors for 44 years and played a significant role in other road industry organisations. His career has involved considerable research into pavement materials and design.





Lance commenced work with the CRB in 1967 and was initially appointed to a position in the Traffic and Location Division. Over the next 44 years, he worked five times in Regional Services, twice in Major Projects, once on a secondment to the Northern Territory and three times in the Materials Research Division (MRD). As a result of the various appointments during his career and for other reasons, he needed to move his residences 19 times.

The main highlights of his career can be summarized as follows:

1. Following the failure of the pavement on the Wallan to Broadford Section of the Hume Freeway – after it opened to traffic in the mid 1970s - Lance was appointed as the Materials Engineer for the Project. He was also responsible for the materials quality for the duplication of the next section of the Hume Freeway then under construction between Seymour and Euroa. Lance, with the help of MRD Geologist, John Jobson, sourced a slightly plastic granitic sand as the new additive to the pavement mix. This achieved a much better grading by significantly reducing its permeability, improving cohesion and compatibility but, more importantly, eliminating the brittle nature of the previously used mixture.

That was not the only change. Very close control of the crushed rock production at the plant was implemented. The quarry had been established at a VicRoads nominated site on private farmland in Avenel. Other improvements included closer control over wetmix production, specifying (and achieving) higher pavement compaction levels and increased frequency of pavement density testing with results assessed on a statistical analysis. Most, if not all, of these features have now been incorporated in VicRoads' standard specifications. The pavement has since performed very successfully over the past 40 years.

2. In 1988, as the Project Materials Engineer working on the Western Freeway – Melton Section, Lance reported on the innovative pavement construction procedures to combat the swelling and shrinkage characteristics of the expansive clay subgrades in the area. This approach has subsequently formed part of a procedure now incorporated into VicRoads practices.
3. In 1993, after being appointed back to the Division as Manager Pavement Technology, he assisted in updating the VicRoads Pavement Design Guide for which Geoff Jameson, Team Leader Pavement Design was the main author.

4. In 1993, Lance was appointed as the VicRoads representative on the Austroads Pavement Research Group (APRG) for the next five years, most of which as the Chairperson of that group. The group was responsible for the production, implementation and management of a strategy for pavement research and development in Australasia. As a result of his leadership, in 2000, he was recognised by Austroads with a Fellowship Award for his outstanding achievement of major national significance in the delivery of Austroads objectives in the field of pavement research.
5. During his time as Chairperson of APRG, Lance also took on the role as the Inaugural Chair of a new Australian Asphalt Pavement Association/Austroads body called the Institute of Higher Education. This entity offered nationally accredited postgraduate award programs in Roads and Pavements, Asset Management, and Project Management. The organisation is now known as the Centre of Pavement Engineering Education (CPEE). Lance served as Chairperson for the first four years of its establishment. For his service, he was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of the valuable contribution made towards the establishment and successful development of CPEE since its inception in 1995.
6. In 2023, Lance was presented with Lifetime Achievement Award by the National Transport Organisation (previously ARRB) recognising his dedication and extensive contribution during his extended career with the CRB, RCA and VicRoads.



Dr Max Lay and Lance Midgely launching the VicRoads Pavement Design Guide.

Lance also submitted his recollections of the Materials Research Building. This is what he said:

The Materials Research Building was established in 1964 adjacent to, but separate from, the Head Office building. It comprised six floors, four of which were mainly laboratories where materials testing was performed. Concrete and steel testing on the lower ground floor, soils testing on the ground floor, Geotechnical and Pavements on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor and bitumen, chemical and electronics on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. As I recall it, Asphalt Division was located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor and Metropolitan Division on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor.

I had two stints in MRD, the first as Pavement Design Engineer from 1973 to 1976 and then again as Manager Pavement Technology in 1992. MRD relocated out to East Burwood in 1996

where the Department was later renamed GeoPave following commercialisation of all Technical Services Departments.

During my time in the Materials Research building, there were many notable characters including:

- Dr David Currie, the Materials Research Engineer. An excellent intellect with a very inquisitive mind always challenging people to justify their expert advice.
- Dr Jim Holden, Manager Geotechnical Services who established the root barrier system to combat the damaging effect that tree roots have on adjacent pavements.
- Bruce Phillips, Team Leader, Pavement Materials Quality, who won the inaugural ARRB Director's prize award for developing an artificial aggregate with high skid resistance properties.
- Kelvin York, Senior Scientific Officer, who in 1976 co-authored with Dr Currie, the authoritative Standard Specification for Pavement Materials of the CRB, a specification of distinction at that time.
- John Jobson, Senior Geologist, instrumental in developing the use of slightly plastic granitic sand as an additive to non-plastic harsh crushed rock that was very successfully used in flexible unbound sprayed seal pavements on major freeway construction in the 70s and 80s.

As mentioned above, this development arose from the failure of the pavement on the Hume Freeway - Wallan to Broadford Section, where cement works flue dust had been incorporated as an additive in the fine crushed rock. Up until then, this product had been used in constructing pavements in the metropolitan area where they were overlaid with a 50 to 100 mm layer of asphalt. This asphalt surfacing protected the pavement in the medium term from fatigue cracking in the cemented crushed rock layer from reflecting through to the surface resulting in pavement distress requiring rehabilitation.

Two significant items of testing plant that were purchased during his time at MRD were:

- The Pavement Strength Evaluation (PaSE) Deflectometer used to quickly assess the structural condition of in-service pavements in a non-destructive manner.
- The Sideways-force Coefficient Routine Investigation Machine (SCRIM) used to measure the skid resistance under wet road conditions travelling at constant speed measuring both wheel paths independently.

Lance is also a staunch supporter of the VicRoads Association and attends most of our functions, despite being wheelchair bound as a result of an accident in ?



VicRoads Pavement Strength Evaluation Machine

## BLASTS FROM THE PAST



Team photograph of Mulgrave Freeway – Section C – July 1971

Back Row: Gerry Hoggard (Surveyor), Lionel Copleman, Bill Bouly, Bob Gillingham and Harry Clarke (all Clerks of Works)

Middle Row: Ewen Jarvis (Draughtsman), Brian Cross (Surveyor – hidden), Tom Leong (Bridge Engineer), Harry Kruize (Roadworks Engineer) Bod Parker (Laboratory), Jack Harris (Clerk of Works), Graham Jehu (Laboratory), Bruce Chipperfield (Roadworks Engineer), David Capon (Laboratory), Alan Hamley (Roadworks Engineer), Tony Check (Clerk), Doug Dick (Laboratory), Tony Whittle (Laboratory) and Rob Bosworth (Chainman)

Front Row: Kerry Burke (Roadworks Engineer), Merv Williams (Project Engineer), Jim Jennings (Superintendent of Works), Ted Goddard (Roadworks Engineer) and John Waddell (Bridge Engineer)

The photograph below was brought to the Farewell to Head Office function by John Waters. It shows the Engineers and Surveyors team of 1966 who did battle against the Administration team out at Eltham.

There are some gaps in the names of the personnel and I would be most grateful if anyone can help fill those gaps. I also wonder if anyone has a photograph of the Administration team – or any other team for that matter.

John remembers the stirring address given by our coach, Tom Russell. He said, “You can all play footy, go in hard, don’t get injured, but beat the Admin.”





Back Row - left to right: Maurie Johnson, Murray Cullinan, ?, ?, Rod Aujard, Tom Russell (Coach),  
?, David Jellie and Lester Watt.

Front Row – left to right: John Waters, Barry Munce, Max Palmer, Gary Moffat, Bob Meggs,  
Howard Hughes, ?, Gary Battershill, ? and Ian Adderley.

## **LEST WE FORGET**

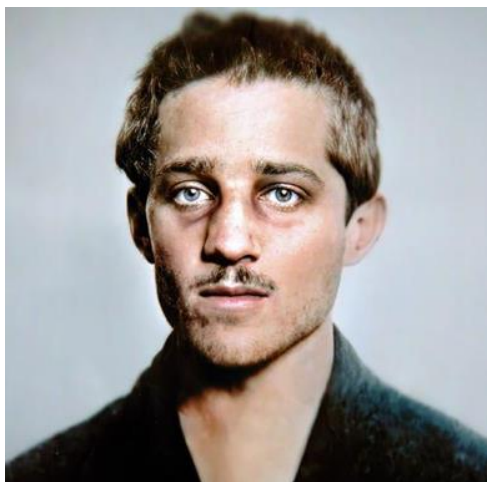
Rather than providing a profile of one or more of our servicemen or women who worked for the CRB or its successors, I thought I would include the introduction I wrote for *Roads to War*, about the origins of the First World War. I hope you find it interesting.

The Great War - or the First World War - wreaked carnage, slaughter and destruction on a scale that had never been seen before. It was rooted in the imperial power of Queen Victoria's family. Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, King George V of Great Britain and Tsar Nicholas II of Russia were first cousins. They called each other by pet names – Willie, Georgie and Nicky and they kept in touch regularly.

Prior to the war, the countries of Europe had created alliances. These alliances promised that each country would support the other if ever war broke out between an ally and another power. There were alliances between Russia and Serbia; France and Russia; Germany, Italy and Austria-Hungary; Britain, France and Belgium; France, Britain and Russia; and Japan and Britain. The alliance between France, Britain and Russia, formed in 1907, called the *Triple Entente*, caused the most friction among nations. Germany felt that this alliance surrounding them was a threat to their power and existence. Conflicts between these alliances eventually led to the formation of the two sides of the First World War.

On 28 June 1914, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria was assassinated by a young Serbian, Gavrilo Princip. Princip was a revolutionary nationalist seeking Serbia's freedom from Austria and the unification of Yugoslavia. Ferdinand was chosen as the target because he was the heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. On the day of his assassination, the Archduke travelled to Sarajevo to inspect imperial armed forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina, former Ottoman territories acquired by Austria-Hungary in 1908. While Ferdinand was travelling in an open car in Sarajevo, Princip fired into the car, shooting Ferdinand and his wife Sophie, killing both of them.





The man who started the First World War, Gavrilo Princip, photographed in his prison cell at the Tereziin fortress, 1914. He died in prison in 1918 from tuberculosis.

At first the monarchs of Europe did not take the incident too seriously. They expected that Serbia would apologise to the Hapsburg Emperor, Franz Josef of Austria-Hungary, which it did. But, with Serbia's apology not proving abject enough, relations between Serbia and Austria-Hungary were broken off. This finally alerted Europe's family of kings to the danger that threatened them.

As all the alliances of Europe clicked inexorably into place, the crowned heads worked feverishly to avert the inevitable but they proved to be toothless. Their constitutional powers counted for almost as little as their cousinhood. Although, technically, Franz Joseph, Nicholas II and Wilhelm II may have been able to curtail the coming hostilities, they were at the mercy of more powerful forces: the generals, the politicians, and the industrialists – and especially the arms manufacturers. Ultimatums were made but national pride, military glory and delusions of imperial expansion swept aside the protestations of the crowned heads. The result was that Austria-Hungary declared war against Serbia, with German support. Russia then came to Serbia's defence, therefore initiating the First World War.

This act of violence, by a hitherto unknown Bosnian-Serb nationalist seeking to end the rule of Austria-Hungary in Bosnia and Herzegovina, cascaded through all the alliances of Europe and led to the outbreak of the First World War.

The war was fought mainly in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. The Central Powers of Germany, the Austrian-Hungarian Empire and the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) were pitted against the Allies of France, Great Britain, Russia, Italy, Japan and later, the USA. The aftermath saw the destruction of the dynasties of Germany, Russia, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey and the destabilization of Europe which continued for many years. Some say that it still continues.

Europe has always been a melting pot for warfare. The mixture of ethnicity, religion, language and fragile political and economic alliances is what I remembered from my history lessons at school. Because of Australia's roots, I learnt most of it from a British perspective, but I was also aware of other national protagonists opposed to the British throughout history – including the French (from Joan of Arc to Napoleon Bonaparte), the Indians, the Zulu Kingdom, Ireland, and the Boers in South Africa – to name a few.

At the end of the First World War, the distrust that persisted between nations and the humiliation suffered by some, along with the revenge of the so-called 'victors', laid the groundwork for the Second World War. It is still being felt today. The establishment of the

European Union in 1993 was seen as an antidote to the extreme nationalism that arose from both World Wars. It was focused primarily on the values of human rights and democracy where member nations could work together and integrate their resources and skills for harmony and peace. It was not, as many people think, built only on economic or trade principles.

Britain's recent withdrawal from the European Union shows how difficult it is for some nations to give up their past. The UKIP Independence Party, which played a significant role in Britain leaving the European Union, still extols the glory of the old British Empire with an agenda of expelling migrants and rejecting multiculturalism. Its populist, right-wing roots are also seen elsewhere such as in the USA and in other parts of Europe.

During the First World War Australia's population was about five million, from which over four hundred thousand men and women enlisted to serve. Forty per cent of all adult males in the nation joined up. Reading through the files of the servicemen in this narrative, there is a strong sense of loyalty to the British Empire. They were all British subjects - no one was described as Australian. Their flag was the Union Jack and they all pledged their loyalty to His Majesty the King. Their army was even designated the Australian Imperial Force (AIF).

There was no doubt about Australia entering the war. The Australian Prime Minister, Joseph Cook, declared that "*when the Empire is at war, so is Australia at war*". Our participation was a given and Australia offered men and materiel even before Britain's divided government had decided to participate and before it had requested our assistance. When Britain and Germany eventually went to war on 4 August 1914, Australia automatically became involved as a Dominion of the Empire. Australia pledged full support for Britain and greeted the outbreak of war with great enthusiasm. In fact, Australia fired the first shot in the Great War when a cannon was fired across the bow of a German ship trying to leave Port Phillip Bay in Melbourne. This was four hours after war had officially been declared.

The Australian press, initially hesitant, took to the war enthusiastically. All press releases were monitored and censored by the British Government and jingoism was rife. Even the churches supported the cause and the middle and upper classes were especially enthusiastic. However, there was reserve among the lower classes, the trade union movement and the strong Communist movement that existed in Australia at that time. Although they could not anticipate what was to come, maybe they had some innate feeling about the concept of 'cannon fodder'. Perhaps they realised that they were the class that would be most affected through the inevitable consequences that war would bring – exposure in the field of battle, disruption of commerce and trade, the scarcity of goods and services, social distress and unemployment. They had the most to lose. Their sacrifices would be harder to recover from than those of their better off cousins.

Another cause bubbling along at the time was the question of Irish Home Rule. It divided Irish Catholics and Ulster Protestants even in Australia, and the Easter rebellion in Ireland in 1916 and the two attempts to introduce mandatory conscription in 1916 and 1917 were constant sources of friction within the Australian community.

The war that they volunteered for was the first to adopt the ingenuity of the Industrial Revolution. Technology was used as never before to kill or maim the enemy from great distance and threats loomed on land and sea, and in the air. Aircraft were used for the first time to observe enemy positions, drop bombs and strafe targets on the ground. It was the first war to use chemical warfare which led to gas masks being issued to troops for the first time.



Australian soldiers fitted with gas masks.

The first tanks were launched, flamethrowers were introduced and large ships on the sea were designed as landing and take-off platforms for aeroplanes. Submarines were used for the first time on a large scale to attack enemy ships. It was a German submarine that sank the RMS *Lusitania* off the Irish coast in May 1915 killing 1,200 people – the first step in America eventually entering the war in 1917.

Barbed wire was used for the first time as a defensive weapon. Its strands of twisted wire and sharpened spurs snagged soldiers in battle and acted as barriers to attack. It was placed in front of trenches or arranged in such a way that enemy ground assaults were funnelled into areas covered by machine gun and artillery fire. Barbed wire fences were ubiquitous on the Western Front, where snared soldiers made easy targets for small-arms fire.

Trench coats were introduced. They replaced the earlier era's full-length, woollen great coats, which became heavy when wet. British officers serving in the trenches turned to established English clothing firms such as Burberry and Aquascutum for khaki-coloured, waterproof coats with deep pockets large enough to hold maps and a belt at the waist with metal D-rings for attaching gear.

Wristwatches had been around in some form for decades, mostly as jewellery worn by women, but they became standard equipment for soldiers and pilots who didn't want to be fumbling for the traditional pocket watch while launching artillery-supported ground assaults or flying combat missions.

Other innovations new to warfare were wireless communications, steel helmets and the military use of X-rays used by surgeons tending to the wounded. Guide dogs were used to detect land mines and as couriers.



British Mark I tank with anti-bomb roof and "tail," 1916.

There were other innovations not associated with the battlefield which have now become the norm. Women were enlisted for the first time and blood banks, IQ tests, and films for propaganda were introduced.

But the most telling factor was the ability of the protagonists to manufacture their weapons of destruction in such vast quantities. Both sides had the resources to provide their armies continuously with ships, tanks, bombs, aeroplanes, guns and cannons of all description. Machine guns were refined to the point that they became supreme killing machines, decimating frontal attacks by infantry or cavalry by their rapid and sustained firepower.

It will never be known how many people died but it is generally thought that the total number of military and civilian casualties in the First World War, was around 41 million. The European Union has estimated that there were 20 million deaths and 21 million wounded. The total number of deaths includes 9.7 million military personnel and about 10 million civilians. The Allies lost about 5.7 million soldiers while the Central Powers lost about 4 million. This toll was only made possible because of the new technologies and style of warfare.



German infantrymen operate a Maxim machine gun in the First World War.

According to the Australian War Memorial, 62,000 Australian men were killed and 156,000 were wounded, gassed or taken prisoner. The First World War remains Australia's costliest conflict in terms of deaths and casualties.

The German empire in the Pacific came to a sudden end following the outbreak of the war in 1914. In August, New Zealand troops landed on Samoa and the Germans capitulated without resistance. In German New Guinea there was fighting but little bloodshed. The first significant Australian action of the war was the landing on Rabaul (now part of Papua New Guinea) in September 1914 to take possession of German New Guinea and the neighbouring islands of Bougainville and the Bismarck Archipelago. Australia also annexed Nauru which Germany had occupied since 1877. In October, Japanese forces<sup>1</sup> occupied the Marshalls and Carolines and the remaining German islands north of the equator.

Taking the German colonies in Africa was not so easy. Anglo-French forces swiftly overran German possessions in Togoland in August 1914. In the Cameroons, German forces resisted the Allies until February 1916 – taking the effort of 64,000 British, French and Belgian men opposed to a German force of 1,500 Europeans and 5,500 African soldiers. Unlike the Germans, the British were reluctant to use African soldiers.

German East Africa covers the modern nations of Burundi, Rwanda, the Tanzanian mainland and part of Mozambique. Under the leadership of one of the greatest guerrilla leaders in history, Colonel Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, who deployed a force of 15,000 men (including 12,000 Africans known as Askaris), the German forces tied down over 370,000 troops of the British Empire. This remarkable campaign came to an end, 12 days after hostilities ended in Europe. The British losses were huge. In East Africa, the British suffered the loss 347,000 men. 336,000 were due to sickness rather than bullets or shells.

In German South West Africa (Namibia), German rule ended in 1915 with a defeat by South African forces. Early in the 20th Century, there was an uprising against brutal German colonialism and the punitive action taken by General Lothar von Trotha from 1904 to 1908 has been described as the first genocide of the century.<sup>2</sup>

In hindsight, the campaigns against German possessions in Africa made little contribution to the eventual Allied victory, and absorbed many troops that could have been used more effectively in other theatres. The British campaign against the German colonies was a reflex action of an imperial power. The German colonies were raided simply because they were there and so the British wanted to flex their muscles. In truth, the colonies would have made only a minimal contribution to the German war effort and the British would have done far better if they had left them alone.

Coming back to the home front, in November 1914, the Royal Australian Navy made a major contribution when HMAS *Sydney* destroyed the German raider SMS *Emden*. *Emden* had captured or sank 25 civilian vessels in the Indo-Pacific area and shelled Madras in India. The Germans had erected a fake fourth funnel to disguise the ship as a British cruiser.

After *Emden's* defeat, the only other German warship in the Indian Ocean was SMS *Königsberg*; which had been blockaded in the Rufiji River in Tanzania, and remained there until her destruction in July 1915. The destruction of *Emden* meant that Australia was

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<sup>1</sup> An ally during the First World War.

<sup>2</sup> Between 50,000 and 65,000 Herero people and 10,000 Nama people were killed in the genocide. The first phase of the genocide was characterized by widespread death from starvation and dehydration, due to the prevention of the Herero from leaving the Namib desert by German forces. Once defeated, thousands of Hereros and Namas were imprisoned in concentration camps, where the majority died of diseases, abuse, and exhaustion.



no longer under direct threat from Germany, and many of the RAN ships designated for the nation's defence could be safely deployed to other theatres. Over the next two years, troop convoys from Australia and New Zealand to the Middle East sailed without naval escort, further freeing Allied resources.

The landing on Gallipoli in Turkey by the AIF, together with troops from New Zealand, Britain, India, Canada and France, was Australia's first land campaign. It was ill-conceived and led by incompetent commanders and ended with the evacuation of all allied troops in December 1915. Close to half a million soldiers - nearly 180,000 Allied troops and 253,000 Turks - had been killed or wounded. Australia suffered 28,150 casualties at Gallipoli, including 8,700 dead, nearly one-sixth of the casualties it endured during the Great War.



Anzac Beach, Gallipoli, 1915.

There was another war – especially in the Middle East but also in France – that ravaged the young men of Australia. It was venereal disease (VD). The Australian Army's losses to VD in the First World War were enormous. An estimated 63,000 VD cases occurred among the 417,000 troops of the AIF. That is, one in seven of the soldiers who joined the AIF contracted VD at some stage of the war. That many soldiers were the equivalent of three infantry divisions. Given that the average VD treatment time was six weeks, the high number of VD infections effectively meant that for six weeks of the war, the AIF commanders had lost three infantry divisions.

When I was researching the stories of the soldiers of the CRB, I found that a number of them contracted VD but, except for a few, I have not mentioned it. There is a school of thought that descendants might be saddened to read about their brave forefathers contracting VD but I have taken the view that the consequences of the scourge and stigma of VD had a very real impact on the lives of those who suffered. I am not scornful or judgemental about this. These were young men exposed to the horrors of Gallipoli and the Western Front who must have thought seriously about their mortality. Going to a brothel in Egypt or France may have been their only chance of a sexual experience with a woman. Many came from remote, rural communities where there was little or no chance of any such experience. Let us not punish them for their human frailty.

For those afflicted, the ghastliness of the treatment of repeated daily injections of heavy metals such as silver, arsenic and mercury and the application of caustic ointments was punishment

in another form - but the size of the epidemic had one positive outcome. Because the Army needed to return afflicted men to the battlefield as quickly as possible, the focus shifted from moral indignation to a medical issue. As a result, treatment for sexually transmitted diseases improved exponentially during the war years.

Soldiers with VD were punished by having their pay docked, but this disapproving attitude was soon dropped due to the sheer number of affected men. There were terrible consequences for those infected and they deserve our understanding and sympathy. The impact of VD may have affected their lives just as profoundly as battle wounds, gassing or shell shock, so we shouldn't stigmatise them.

After the evacuation from Gallipoli and a period of retraining in Egypt, the majority of the AIF was redeployed to France and Belgium to serve on the Western Front. The losses on the Western Front were heavy and gains were small.

It is hackneyed to say that the First World War was a war of attrition. The campaign strategy of both sides was to provide their armies with sufficiently vast quantities of soldiers, artillery, shells, planes and other war materiel so that they could outlast their opponent. The use of trenches created a static war. The trenches provided good protection for soldiers, and great quantities of very heavy shells were required to destroy them. This required a large number of heavy artillery units that were difficult to manoeuvre around the war-torn battlefields which, in winter, turned into sludge deep enough to drown in. Thus, attacks took the form of long grinding offensives where the enemy's men, supplies, equipment, and morale were slowly worn down and their ability to replace their losses of men or materiel was eventually used up. The German Spring Offensive of 1918 was an attempt to break the deadlock of trench warfare and, despite the large amount of territory captured, it was the attrition suffered by Germany that led to the collapse of their army.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

A03042

Troops of 53rd Battalion AIF wait to don equipment for the attack at Fromelles, 19 July 1916. Only three of these men survived.

In 1918 the Australians reached the peak of their fighting performance in the battle of Hamel on 4 July. Master-minded by Australia's most famous General, Sir John Monash, it was all over in ninety-three minutes. Military historians cite it as first modern battle under a commander of genius using a combination of infantry, the Tank Corps, the Royal Artillery and the Royal Air Force. The Americans participated, and Monash had to withstand, by extraordinary force of personality, a last-minute attempt by US General Pershing to withdraw them.

During a glorious period of victory in August and September 1918, the AIF was the virtual spearhead of the British army. They had a series of conclusive victories at Chuignes, Mont St Quentin, Péronne and Hargicourt. Monash commanded a force of 200,000 men (including Americans) during the breaking of the Hindenburg line. It was a series of victories unsurpassed in the annals of the British army and, according to military historians, the 5,000 AIF dead was a remarkably light cost. Imagine thinking that 5,000 deaths were little to pay!

By the end of the war, Monash had acquired an outstanding reputation for intellect, personal magnetism, management and ingenuity. He also won the respect and loyalty of his troops. He was regarded with great respect by the British – much more than by his native Australians. Keith Murdoch (war correspondent) and Charles Bean (Australia's official war historian) begrudgingly acknowledged his achievements but were critical of Monash's ambition brought about by his Jewish origins. Historian Roland Perry, author of *Monash: The Outsider Who Won a War*, put it bluntly: '*Bean didn't like Monash because he was Jewish. Murdoch didn't care whether he was Jewish, gypsy or geranium; his motive was that he couldn't manipulate him.*'

Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery had no such doubt. He declared later: "*I would name Sir John Monash as the best general on the Western Front in Europe*". And he was so revered by Australians that 300,000 people attended his funeral in 1931, and 10,000 soldiers led his casket mounted on a gun carriage through the streets to Melbourne's Brighton cemetery.



Lieutenant General Sir John Monash GCMG KCB VD DSM OC Croix de Guerre.

Another war front was the Middle East. This campaign began in 1916 with Australian troops taking part in the defence of the Suez Canal and the Allied re-conquest of the Sinai Desert. In the following year Australian and other Allied troops advanced into Palestine and captured Gaza and Jerusalem; by 1918 they had occupied Lebanon and Syria and on 30 October 1918 Turkey sued for peace.

The 'War to end all Wars' was a farce. It ended imperialism in Germany and Russia and commenced the diminution of the British Empire. The concept of imperial might was a strong motivating factor in the war. But there can be no doubt, that the most significant consequence of the First World War was to sow the seeds for the Second World War where imperialism was reborn, albeit in different forms – in the Third Reich in Germany and the Empire of the Golden Sun in Japan.

During my research for this work, I was struck by the patriotism – bordering on fanaticism – of Australians towards Mother England. Early in the war, there were proud rallies for our gallant boys being killed but these wilted as the imperial masters faltered again and again. The newspapers, initially filled with jingoism and propaganda, degenerated into puzzlement and despair. The glorious deeds of Australia's young men began to look like pointless suffering.

And what was this war like for the Australian men who ventured to the other side of the world? During the war, many of the local newspapers throughout Australia published letters sent home to friends and families. I researched some of them in the Colac Herald. My uncle had written home from France and his letters were published. I also read others but the one written by Driver John Alphonsus Gately of Elliminyt – a 26-year old slaughterman - stuck in my mind. He wrote to a friend in November 1917 as follows:

*It is nearly two years now since I left the old town of Colac. A good number of the boys will be missing when 'the ship comes home', but that can't be helped; one has just got to take his chance. It will be a good experience – and a good trip – for those lucky enough to return. I have travelled many miles since I left Colac, having been to Egypt, England, France and Belgium. I went to France from Egypt in March 1916. I have seen much since then. I have had some close calls, but I have been lucky. At Bullecourt a shell burst alongside me and blew me off my horse.*

*I have seen most of the boys from Colac. I did not meet poor George Power, though I was quite close to him at Pozières when he was killed. Teddie Honan was also killed near there. We lost a lot of men at Pozières, and good fellows they were too. Poor ----- was blown to pieces and his brothers were wounded. V. Bartlett was killed while carrying a wounded man out of the trenches. When we came out of Bullecourt I met a lot of Colac boys, including Bob Dunoon, Johnnie Lee, Alexander, J. McMahon, Geoff Power, Luke Monkivitch<sup>3</sup>, Bell, Box, Bill and Lew Ballagh, and a lot more. Tom Carmody is at present in England, ill, and his uncle, Joe Carmody is in one of our batteries near me. Joe Lee is in Egypt: he has won several war medals. Bert Cox and Charley Sell are with ----- . Mat Burns is in France but I have not seen him. Albert McLennan is with me; his brother Charley was killed at Bullecourt. Our battery lost a lot of men there. I was not sorry when the day came to say goodbye to it though I had a lot of mates buried there and it was hard to come away.*

*One makes real friends here, and it makes it hard when they get knocked, but it is a case of every man for himself. This is not the case though when the battle is on. One does not think of anything then. It is when it is over and they fetch the wounded and dead back that one feels it. When you see the graves with the little wooden crosses over them, and one has time to think, that is the hard part of it. But still it cannot be helped. You just take your chance; if you are lucky well and good and if you get knocked it is bad luck.*

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<sup>3</sup> Luke was my grandmother's brother. He was killed at Passchendaele on 5 September 1917 – one of 38,000 casualties.

*The winter is terrible, the mud and snow being awful. We were hoping it would finish this spring but we have another winter before us. That is the thing we do not like facing. However, we shall just have to put up with it.*

*We were all sorry to hear of the death of Dean Nelan. He used to shake us up when we were altar boys. I have been thinking of my school days. Remember me to the nuns, who were so good to us. Especially remember me to Sister Patrick, who was so good and kind to me when I used to drive their cab to the Corunnun school. I got my leave last January and had a good time in England. In addition to the fine theatres etc. I went through the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, and in fact, all the principal buildings. The people treated me well. Remember me to all the old boys and other friends.*

Driver Gately was later discharged from the army as medically unfit because of disability due to military service.

And what about the people left at home? They were as far away as it was possible to be. Censorship made communications difficult to the point of impossibility. Mail was heavily redacted and sometimes, not delivered. Many families did not know where their sons or husbands were. When letters did arrive home, they were months out of date. Anything could have happened in the intervening period and, sadly, it was often the case. Even after the end of the war, families were not sure of the fate of their loved ones and they had to rely on organisations like the Red Cross to search lists to try and find names – lists of the dead and wounded, or of those missing, or of those interned.

For those who did return, there was little assistance available in transitioning back into civilian life nor were there many benefits provided by the Government. There was no guidance to families about the implications of the impact of the war on the servicemen – all they knew was that they were ‘different’. The term ‘shell shock’ was first coined by a British psychologist Charles Samuel Myers to describe the type of post-traumatic stress disorder many soldiers were afflicted with during the war. It was sometimes termed ‘psychosis’ and it was never seen to such an extent as in the First World War because of the terror and might of bombardment inflicted on both sides.

For many, the sorrow persisted for life – often a shortened life because of wounds, shell shock, disease and gassing.

Throughout the narrative for the First World War, I have included photograph details of some of the dioramas displayed at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. These dioramas were designed and sculpted by Lieutenant Charles Web Gilbert who was born in Cockatoo near Maryborough in 1867. Late in 1917, Gilbert joined the Australian Imperial Force as a sculptor in the War Records Section, and after the war travelled throughout France gathering information to make accurate models of the battlegrounds now displayed in the dioramas. In 1920 he began work on the memorial to the AIF’s 2nd Division for Mont St Quentin, France. His work for the rest of his life was predominantly commemorative.

Gilbert’s daughter, Marjorie Addis, had a long career working as a draftsman and administrator in the Bridge Branch of the CRB.





The Battle of Mont St Quentin – Diorama by Charles Web Gilbert.  
Australian War Memorial.

## **AND NOW FOR SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL**

This is a story of a talent found late in life. It is about Charlotte, the daughter of a friend of mine. She was diagnosed as autistic in her late 40s. During the pandemic lockdowns, she began to make mosaics and her untapped talent blossomed as she found how much she loved creating them and writing a story for each one.

She is a mosaic artist making wall plates, basins, bird baths and bee baths. She recently made this one which she's named Ewe. It is 33 cm diameter and 5 cm deep.



These are her words describing its creation.

*'This gorgeous girl is not just a piece of art, she also has a story, please read.'*

*When I (the artist) was a little girl, I loved playing in the shearing shed while my Dad and my uncle gave the sheep their new haircuts!*

*I remembered how I loved touching the sheep while they were still woolly; there were often prickles and grass seeds, but if I gently felt further down towards their skin, the wool was so soft, natural and beautifully scented with lanolin. It made my fingers feel smooth and warm. The sheep would receive their trim, then slide down the little ramp to be with their fellow groomed mates. They always looked a little stunned. Suddenly they felt lighter! They'd stamp their feet at the farm dogs, as if to say 'Today I want to be boss!' They sometimes ate fresh green nettles and I always wondered how they could bear being stung!*

*All of these memories, and more, went through my 50+ year old mind, as I lovingly created this Ewe.*

*In my mosaics you won't just find another design, you'll find a story from my heart.*

*This Sheep has been made from White ceramic tiles, which I carefully hand cut into the shape of curls, her stunning golden eyes are made from glass, her face is adorable and made freehand style. She's framed in green grassy glass, also with beautiful jewelled silvery white and inky blue glass.'*

Below is a honey ant from Western Australia.



Charlotte describes this plate as follows:

*Throughout the deserts of Western Australia and the Northern Territory, you'll find the tiny, mighty honey ant.*

*These sweet little ants make a very tasty snack to those who seek their bush tucker.*

*This ant which I've created is certainly sweet, but not destined to be snacked on, instead he's been created to go in in the garden and live out the rest of his days to make you smile.*

*His beautiful big orange honeypot has been created from beautiful glass, which shimmers in the most striking way. Surrounding the honey ant is wattle.*

*I've hand cut each piece of glass and terracotta.*

*Framing this piece is rich chocolate brown glass and iridescent blue glass.'*

The final one on show today is a blue-ringed octopus.



Charlotte said:

*'This magnificent octopus has been created from luxurious expensive materials. Each tile laboriously hand cut and shaped using my own hands.*

*Absolutely no shortcuts were taken.*

*I drew the image free hand style, then filled the octopus with gorgeous pieces.*

*Solid glass blocks frame the art. Bright turquoise pigments have been added to each.'*

What I think is beautiful about this story is that Charlotte's latent talent suddenly erupted – not only the talent for creating the pieces but for writing about them so sensitively. It has given



her great confidence. She has befriended fellow mosaicists and she loves talking about her work. Makes me think that autism is just a word.

If you would like to see more of Charlotte's work visit <https://tickledpinkmosaics.etsy.com/>



## **TRIVIA AND DIDACTIC WHIMSIES**

### **Trampolin de la Muerte Highway – Colombia**

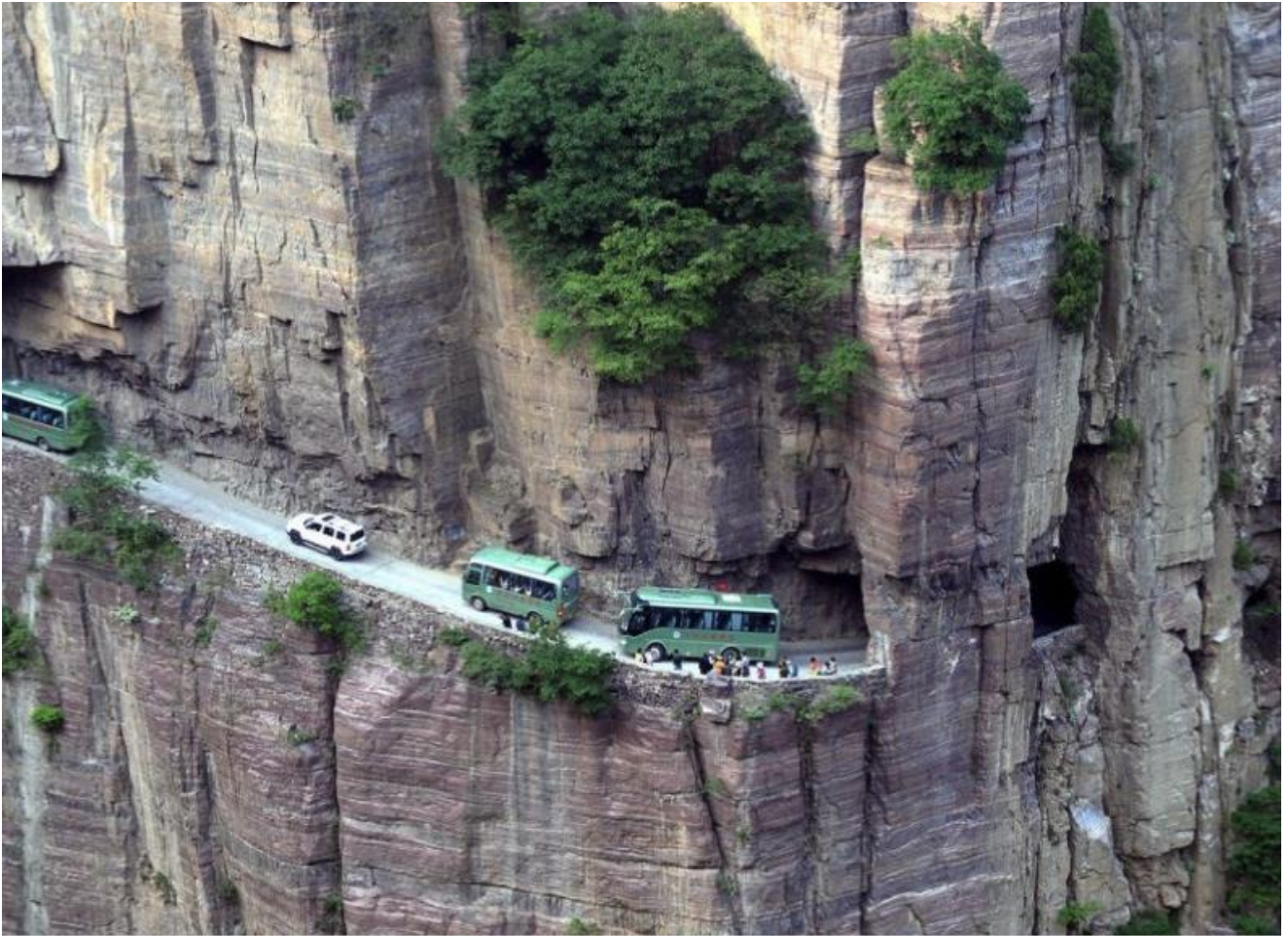
When I hear people talking about the grandeur and drama of the Great Ocean Road, I often smile to myself. In my life with the Overseas Projects Corporation of Victoria and indeed, as a tourist, I have seen more 'dramatic' roads – in China, Nepal, Pakistan and Corsica – to name some I remember.

But I have never been to Colombia and I don't know if I want to after seeing these pictures. Its name translates to Trampoline of Death.

The rugged route, also called Trampolín del Diablo, or The Devil's Trampoline, ranges from 1,968 feet above sea level to 9,186 feet above sea level between the Amazon rainforest and the Andes mountains in the country's Putumayo region, but that's the least frightening fact about the road.

The road, which spans 45 miles from Mocoa to Colombia's San Francisco is one of the most dangerous in the world. Rains cause frequent landslides and turn the unpaved, dusty single-lane into unstable mud. The road is only about 10 feet wide, and each half mile averages about 18 hair-raising curves. As if that wasn't enough, dense fog makes the trek even more dangerous. Numerous people have died driving the route, their cars plunging into the valleys below. According to [dangerousroads.org](http://dangerousroads.org), the death toll is in the hundreds, and there are shrines along the journey in memory of the lives lost.

Trampoline of Death was built in 1930 to transport forces during the Colombia-Peru war, but the treacherous conditions depleted the soldiers even before they made it to the battlefield.







## **The Deaf Italian Bookkeeper**

A Mafia Godfather found out that his bookkeeper, Guido, had cheated him out of \$1 million.

His bookkeeper was deaf. That was the reason he got the job in the first place. It was assumed that Guido would hear nothing and would therefore never have to testify in court.

When the Godfather confronted Guido about the missing \$1 million, he took along his lawyer, who also happened to be proficient in sign language.

The Godfather said to the lawyer, "Ask him where the money is."

The lawyer, using sign language, asked Guido, "Where's the money?"

Guido signed back, "I don't know what you are talking about." The lawyer told the Godfather, "He says he doesn't know what you are talking about."

The Godfather pulled out a pistol, put it to Guido's head and said, "Ask him again or I'll kill him!"

The lawyer signed to Guido, "He'll kill you if you don't tell him."

Guido trembled and signed back, "OK! You win! The money is in a brown briefcase, buried behind the shed at my cousin Bruno's house."

The Godfather asked the lawyer, "What did he say?"

The lawyer replied, "He said you don't have the guts to pull the trigger."

Don't you just love lawyers?

## **Who was Jesus?**

There was great debate at Divinity College about the origins of Jesus.

There were three good arguments that Jesus was Black:

1. He called everyone brother.
2. He liked Gospel.
3. He didn't get a fair trial.

But then there were three equally good arguments that Jesus was Jewish:

1. He went into His Father's business.
2. He lived at home until he was 33.
3. He was sure his Mother was a virgin and his Mother was sure He was God.

But then there were three equally good arguments that Jesus was Italian:

1. He talked with His hands.
2. He had wine with His meals.
3. He used olive oil.

But then there were three equally good arguments that Jesus was a Californian flower child:

1. He never cut His hair.
2. He walked around barefoot all the time.
3. He started a new religion.

But then there were three equally good arguments that Jesus was Irish:

1. He never got married.
2. He was always telling stories.
3. He loved green pastures.

But the most compelling evidence of all - three proofs that Jesus was a woman:

1. He fed a crowd at a moment's notice when there was virtually no food.
2. He kept trying to get a message across to a bunch of men who just didn't get it.
3. And even when He was dead, He had to get up because there was still work to do.

## **Jewish Mother**

A Jewish friend sent this story to me.

The United States had elected its first woman President, Susan Goldfarb. She was also the first Jewish President. She called her mother a few weeks after Election Day and said, 'Mom, I assume you'll be coming to my inauguration?'

'I don't think so. It's a ten-hour drive, your father isn't as young as he used to be, and my arthritis is acting up again.'

'Don't worry about it Mom, I'll send Air Force One to pick you up and take you home. And a limousine will pick you up at your door.'

'I don't know. Everybody will be so fancy-schmantzy, what on earth would I wear?'

Susan replies, 'I'll make sure you have a wonderful gown custom-made by the best designer in New York.'

'Honey,' Mom complained, 'You know I can't eat those rich foods you and your friends like to eat.'

The President-to-be responds, 'Don't worry Mom. The entire affair is going to be handled by the best caterer in New York, kosher all the way. Mom, I really want you to come.'

So, her Mom reluctantly agreed and on the following January 20, Susan Goldfarb was being sworn in as President of the United States. In the front row sat the new President's mother, who leant over to a Senator sitting next to her and said, 'You see that woman over there with her hand on the Torah, becoming President of the United States?'

The Senator whispered back, 'Yes I do.'

Mom said proudly, 'Her brother is a doctor'.

## **Road rage**

Fred rear-ended a car on his way to work this morning. Not a great way to start the day.

The other driver got out of his car, and he was a dwarf. He looked up at Fred and said "I am NOT happy!"

And Fred replied "Well, which one are you?"

And that's how the fight started.

## **Ken Vickery thinks this is funny!**

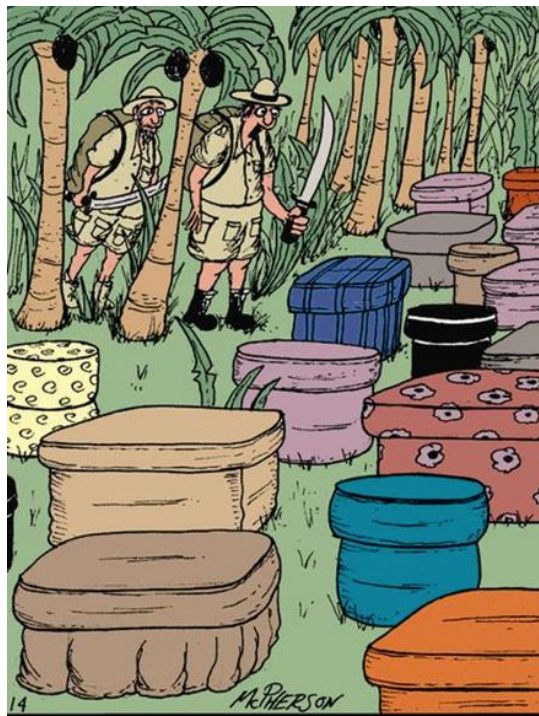
He has been studying up the history of Roman roads.



**WITHOUT A SINGLE DEGREE, THEY BUILT US  
ROADS THAT HAVE LASTED AN ETERNITY...**



**AND THEN, THE ENGINEERS ARRIVED!!!**



**"Great Scott, Ingrey, it's  
the Ottoman Empire!"**