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



Dear Members,

It is that time of year again when we turn to family and friends for comfort and cheer – and presents. I have one friend who thinks that it is not the thought that counts, it is the present!

I want to wish a happy and sharing Christmas to all of you and your families as well as your friends and their families and friends.

Charles Dickens, the writer of the quintessential book about Christmas – *A Christmas Carol* – said, "I have always thought of Christmas as a good time; a kind, forgiving, generous, pleasant time; a time when men and women seem to open their hearts freely, and so I say, God bless Christmas!"

For Christians, Christmas is the annual festival commemorating the birth of Jesus. It is celebrated on 25th December by billions of people around the world. It is also celebrated culturally by many non-Christians, and forms an integral part of the holidays surrounding it. If you go into a shopping mall in Bangkok, Shanghai or Dubai you will see what I mean. Regardless of your religious beliefs, it is nevertheless, a time of good will where people of all cultures can express their love by meeting, eating together and exchanging presents – although in my case, I would rather give presents to charitable causes because there is nothing I need, except perhaps, for a body that behaves itself.

The traditional Christmas story is that Jesus was born in Bethlehem according to the prophecy of the Annunciation. When Joseph and Mary arrived there, the inn had no room, and so they were offered a stable where the Christ Child was born, with angels proclaiming this news to shepherds, who then spread the word.

One thing that I remembered in my early childhood was the visit of the Three Magicians bearing gifts. I thought that 'Magi' must have been the plural for 'Magicians'. No wonder they could find their way to the stable by just following a star. I was also curious about their gifts. What would a baby do with gold and what was frankincense and myrrh? I should remind you that I excelled at Sunday School.

Later in life, I learnt that the Magi are commonly referred to as "kings". But there is nothing in the Gospel of Matthew that implies they were rulers of any kind. The identification of the Magi as kings is linked to Old Testament prophecies that describe the Messiah being worshipped by kings.



The Three Magi, Byzantine mosaic, c. 565, Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, Italy (restored during the 19th century). As here, Byzantine art usually depicts the Magi in Persian clothing, which includes breeches, capes, and Phrygian caps.

Christianity begins with Jesus Christ. The effects of His life and His teachings, and the experience of His death were the origins of the Christian community today.

Jesus was a Jew, as were all the apostles. Thus, the earliest Christianity is, in fact, a movement within Judaism; the very acknowledgment of Jesus as "the Christ" professes that he is the fulfillment of the promises originally made to the Hebrew patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

No one knows the real date of birth of Jesus. No date is given in the New Testament, so why do we celebrate it on the 25th December? Also, the birth of Jesus probably didn't happen in the year 1 but slightly earlier, somewhere between 2 BCE/BC and 7 BCE/BC.

The first recorded date of Christmas being celebrated on December 25th was in 336, during the reign of the Roman Emperor Constantine who was the first Christian Roman Emperor.

However, there are many different traditions and theories as to why Christmas is celebrated on December 25th. The church fixed the date as December 25th, the date of the winter solstice in the Roman calendar and it is nine months after the Annunciation on March 25th, and also the Roman date of the spring equinox. And because of different calendars, some Christian groups celebrate Christmas as late as January 7th.

We will never know. But it is indisputably a time for fun and laughter for children, delighting in their gifts from Santa Claus with the adults sharing their pleasures.

But the naughty British comedian, Benny Hill, puts another perspective on Christmas.

*Roses are reddish
Violets are bluish
If it weren't for Christmas
We'd all be Jewish.*



WHAT'S COMING UP

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

The table below shows a summary of the last few events for 2024 and a tentative program for 2025. The dates for the occasional lunches are fixed as are the dates of the Snowy Hydro 2 road trip, the Annual General meeting and the TAC presentation on 14 July. The visits to other authorities and organisations have not been finalised, but we will let you know in future newsletters once they have been confirmed.

Date	Event	Contact Person
Tuesday 10 December	12 noon for 12.30 pm, Christmas lunch, Waverley RSL	Ken Vickery
2025		
Monday 3 February	12 noon Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown Hotel	Just turn up
Late February	10.30 am Presentation by Will Tieppo, Deputy Secretary, Network Design and Integration, Department of Transport and Planning covering the transition from VicRoads to the current arrangements, organizational rationale and challenges.	Jill Earnshaw
Tuesday 4 March to Thursday 7 March	Road trip to Cooma to visit Snowy Hydro 2 Project	Jim Webber
Tuesday 25 March	12 noon Annual General Meeting at Waverley RSL followed by lunch at 1.00 pm.	Ken Vickery
Monday 7 April	12 noon for 12.30 pm Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown Hotel	Just turn up
April	10.30 am Presentation by Mark Trajcevski on the National Broadband Network at their Operations and Management Centre, 1010 LaTrobe Street, followed by lunch at a local site.	David Jellie
May	Presentation by Major Road Projects Victoria.	TBA
Monday 2 June	12 noon for 12.30 pm Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown Hotel	Just turn up
Monday 30 June	12 noon for 12.30 pm Mid-year lunch at Waverley RSL	Ken Vickery
Monday 14 July	10 am TAC presentation on road behaviour and tour of Road to Zero Education Centre at Melbourne Museum followed by lunch at on-site restaurant.	Jill Earnshaw
Monday 4 August	12 noon for 12.30 pm Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown Hotel	Just turn up
September	Possibly a visit to Major Projects Victoria.	TBA
Monday 6 October	12 noon for 12.30 pm Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown Hotel	Just turn up
October	Visit to the Alston (Metro Trains) Facility in Ballarat to see the building of world class trains. Could be linked to a regional visit.	Jill Earnshaw
Monday 3 November	12 noon for 12.30 pm Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown Hotel	Just turn up
Tuesday 9 December	12 noon for 12.30 pm Christmas lunch at Waverley RSL	Ken Vickery

We are investigating a few more options with a view to having one more technical visit. We will keep you posted.

Occasional Lunch at Shoppingtown Hotel, Monday 3 February 2025 at 12 noon.

There is no need to register – just turn up.

Christmas Luncheon at Waverley RSL – Tuesday 10 December at 12 noon.



This is a final notice for our most popular function. Partners and friends are most welcome. We have already received over 100 registrations.

It will be held at the Waverley RSL Club which is located at the eastern end of Coleman Parade near the Glen Waverley Shopping Centre. If you wish to travel by public transport, the RSL is opposite Glen Waverley Station which is the end of the line. There is ample off-street parking adjacent to the centre.

We propose to start at 12 noon and sit down to lunch at around 12.30 pm.

The cost of the lunch will be \$50 per head payable in advance. This cost covers a two course (main and dessert) with two options for each course with alternating serves. Drinks are available at the bar located in the room at bar prices. It is easier if you have photo ID for entry to the club. Your driver licence will do.

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

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

BSB: 083323

Account number: 170934017

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

This is an excellent venue and last year's lunch was the most successful ever. It would be wonderful to catch up with you to celebrate Christmas.

Road Trip to Snowy Hydro 2 – Tuesday 4 March to Thursday 7 March.

We have locked in these dates. We will stay the first night at Orbost where I will give a talk on the Snowy River Crossing Project before dinner. We will then drive up to Cooma the following day where we will have a presentation in the afternoon. The Cooma Show is on Thursday. We will let you know of the details once they have been finalised.

Annual General Meeting – 25 March at 12 noon at Waverley RSL followed by lunch at 1.00 pm.

The business of the meeting will be to present our Annual Report and elect committee members. If you would like to nominate for the committee, please contact our Secretary Jill Earnshaw on 0438 777 352 or jillmearnshaw@gmail.com

We will also receive the Treasurer's report, confirm our auditor for 2025 and confirm our fees – all as required by our Rules of Association.

Following the meeting, we will have lunch in the Dining Area.

I will provide more details later.

CHANGE OF EDITOR

As I intimated a few months ago, I am stepping back from my role of President and editor of the newsletter. I am very pleased to say that John Wright has volunteered to take over the editor's duties. John is an excellent writer as was evident in the serialised story of his experiences working in Papua New Guinea which I published a few years ago, and in the story below about our Great Alpine Road trip. It is a great relief to pass the baton smoothly to the next runner with no chance of dropping it.

Leanne Knudsen has also agreed to assist John in formatting the newsletter. Anyone who worked with her will remember her great skills in design and publishing.

Jill Earnshaw will also be an important contributor to the newsletter as she has since she joined our committee.

I won't be going away altogether. I will continue to write a few articles and work with John in getting the newsletter delivered to your screen. I have asked John to take full ownership of the form and content of the newsletters according to his style and design.

Finally, I want to say how I appreciate members writing to me on all sorts of matters and I hope that you will continue to do this – but address them to John and not me.

I think this is a great team and I am confident that they will continue to connect us together. The newsletter is the most important medium for us to communicate with each other.

I have included John's contact details in the banner at the top of the front page.

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

Great Alpine Road Trip – 6th to 8th November 2024

John Wright submitted this excellent report on this trip as follows:

Each year, the VicRoads Association invites its members and their partners to take a hosted regional tour of up to 3 days to visit places of special interest and meet local people who were involved in building and managing our great road network.

In recent tours, members have visited the great volcanic plains of the southwest, viewed wheat silo art, toured a huge Benalla factory making concrete segments for Melbourne's major projects, and watched armoured vehicles being fabricated at the Thales plant in Bendigo. In

2025 we plan to visit the Snowy Mountains to see the major tunnelling project that will provide pumped storage for renewable energy generation. On 6 November 2024 our group began a 2-day tour of the Great Alpine Road. Stopping for lunch at the Moe Racing Club we joined a reunion of former Gippsland regional staff, pictured below.



Moe lunch. From left to right: Allan Roach, John Clinch, Graeme Newman (on our tour group), Michael Mattingley, Greg Fox (standing), David Gellion, Daryl Marks, Wayne Moon, John Paulet.



Moe lunch. From Left to right. Neil Jones, David Jellie, Bill Collins, Trish Collins, Iris Whittaker, Russell Meehan, Rosslyn Wright, John Wright.

Our drive to Moe recalled long years of planning and building the many town bypasses east of Melbourne – Dandenong, Berwick, Pakenham, Drouin and Warragul, which are now connected to provide a seamless freeway experience as far east as Yarragon.

For those members who grew up in Gippsland, the Latrobe Valley is now a very different place from that which existed in the early 1950s, when new power stations and thousands of houses seemed to be popping up overnight. Then, it was Gippsland's coal-powered version of the Snowy Scheme, and many Victorians were quietly proud of this great State enterprise that was going to take us into the future.

Now, the scars of that great assault on the landscape are slowly disappearing and six of the Valley's nine mighty power stations have gone, along with most of the brown cloud that hung over the valley and stained the washing. Yallourn's sole remaining power station will close in 2028, and the two Loy Yang stations are planned to follow in 2035 and 2046. Despite this, the big Valley towns we passed through seemed to be thriving, with new local industries replacing electricity and coal mining jobs.

Just west of Sale we passed what had once been the headquarters of the National Safety Council of Australia (NSCA), whose Victorian Division rose to prominence in the early 1980s as Australia's premier emergency search and rescue agency. Things started to go awry in 1988 when chartered accountants discovered that most of the equipment containers on the NSCA's books, supposedly holding assets supporting \$300 million of bank loans, either did not exist or were filled with junk. It turned out that the NSCA's new Executive Director, a brilliant German conman operating under the alias of John Friedrichs, had trousered the funds in one of the largest frauds in Victorian history.

Our first overnight stop was in Bairnsdale, famous for its Catholic church which annually attracts about 80,000 visitors who come to see its amazing murals, painted by out of work Italian artist Francesco Floreani during the Great Depression. Until the RCA was created in 1983, Bairnsdale was the home of the CRB's most eastern Division. The group met for dinner at the *Mitchell River Tavern*, formerly the Orient Hotel at the eastern end of town.

The Great Alpine Road

The original Alpine Road between Harrietville and Omeo started life as a packhorse track servicing the 1860's gold fields of Dargo, Omeo and Cobungra. The track was upgraded to a road in 1883 to accept horse drawn coaches. In 1923 the CRB took over responsibility for this road, appointing William (Bill) Spargo as supervisor. Bill operated out of a stone cottage at Hotham Heights, which the CRB expanded, at his request, to accommodate up to twenty visiting skiers.

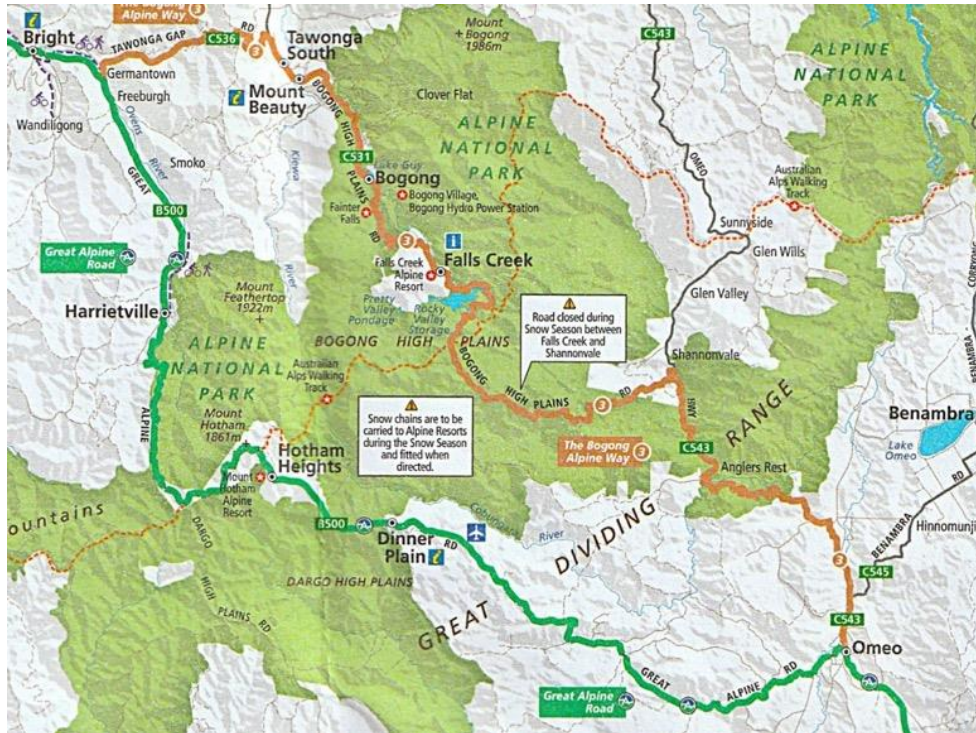
From 1925, the cottage operated as a guesthouse and was the forerunner of the Hotham Alpine Resort. Despite servicing several ski resorts and the township of Omeo, parts of the Alpine Road remained unsealed until the late 1990s.

In 1996 the *Great Alpine Road* was created when a Declaration renamed the Ovens Highway from Wangaratta to Harrietville, the Alpine Road between Harrietville and Omeo, and the Omeo Highway between Omeo and Bairnsdale. The new name recognised the status of this premier mountain tourist route as being equal to that of the world-famous *Great Ocean Road*.

On this occasion, our group would be examining the original Alpine Road between Omeo and Harrietville.



The Great Alpine Road



The Great Alpine Road (in green)

On 7 November, after breakfasting at Bairnsdale’s *House of Blooms*, our group set off for Omeo, stopping for coffee at Swift’s Creek at the junction of its namesake stream and the Tambo River.

In Omeo’s wonderfully hilly main street, the group met for lunch at the venerable Golden Age Hotel, which like many goldfield hotels had experienced a lot of bad luck with fires, including the Big One in 1939. The original Golden Age Hotel was erected in 1854, and the current building represents its 4th reincarnation.



At lunch we were joined by Rick Anderson, a retired engineering surveyor and contract administration officer from the Northeastern Region, who had driven from Benalla to meet us. Rick had very kindly offered to host our tour of the Alpine Road and provide our group with the benefit of his detailed knowledge of the area. Rick’s Dad was Noel Anderson, a well-known CRB design supervisor who sadly passed away in 2022.

To facilitate his guided tour of the 110 km road between Omeo and Bright, Rick had prepared handouts detailing the following points of interest he would show us.

Rick Anderson

The Cuckoo Clock Shop. Omeo's Cuckoo Clock shop attracts thousands of visitors a year. It is owned and run by Leonie Prendergast who, at 92 years of age, made us all feel old. She retired eight years ago but after two years she decided retirement wasn't all that it is cracked up to be, so she re-opened her business.



Russell Meehan, Trish Collins, Leonie, Bill Collins and Iris Whittaker

All her clocks are brought out from Germany and I noticed that they ranged in price between about \$300 and \$3,000.

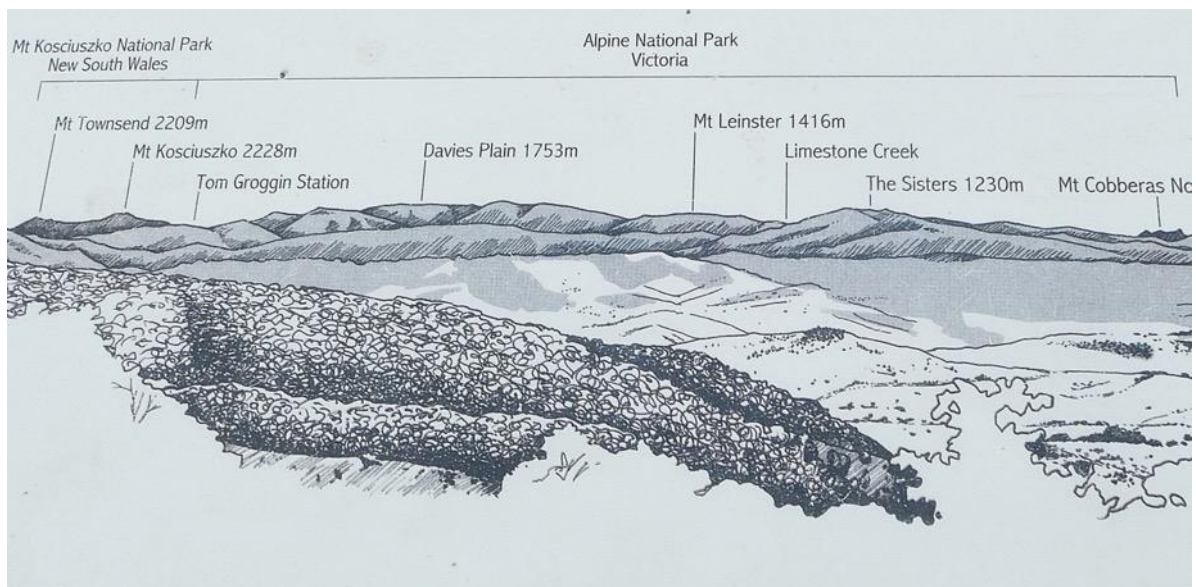
Oriental Claims Diggings. Located just 2 km south of Omeo, this mining site was the reason for the establishment of Omeo. Contrary to popular belief, the Oriental Company was a European firm that mined this area from 1876 to 1904 using hydraulic sluicing to recover about 58,000 ounces of alluvial gold. Nevertheless, many Chinese miners were also present, including Ah Fong and his small group who extracted 6,000 ounces of gold.

In an early example of environmental action, hydraulic sluicing was banned here in 1904 because of its impact on Livingstone Creek. We found the site to be a pleasant picnic area with a small suspension footbridge over the creek and a network of walking trails leading to old water races and remnant gravel cliffs up to 30 metres high, now mostly hidden by the regenerated bush on the 200-hectare site.



At the Oriental Claims Site

Mount Kosciuszko Lookout. About 8 km from Omeo a roadside lookout sign promised us a glimpse of distant Mt Kosciuszko. Unfortunately, it was lost in the haze, but the view of other, nearer features, including Omeo, made the stop worthwhile.



Cobungra Station. This 6,500-hectare property, about 22 km west of Omeo, was established around 1851 by Mr George Gray from Wangaratta as prime grazing land for his cattle. It has recently undergone significant improvement as a producer of Wagyu Beef and is now valued at over \$53 million.



Hotham Airport. Opened by then Premier Steve Bracks in 2000, the airport services nearby ski fields at Dinner Plain, Mt Hotham Resort and Falls Creek Resort. At an elevation of 1,300m it is Australia's highest airport and is now owned by the Grollo family. Despite the fact that the airport was not open, we saw many vehicles in its car park.



Dinner Plain Alpine Village. At 1,570 m above sea level, the village's 200 lodges house 230 permanent residents and many more in the June to October ski season. Subject to strict planning and development controls, the lodges are surprisingly uniform in building style, materials and colours. With access to the nearby airport, the village has become an exclusive, eclectic area favoured by skiers who often spend winter there. In summer, its proximity to the National Park has made it increasingly popular with horse riders, bushwalkers and bike riders.



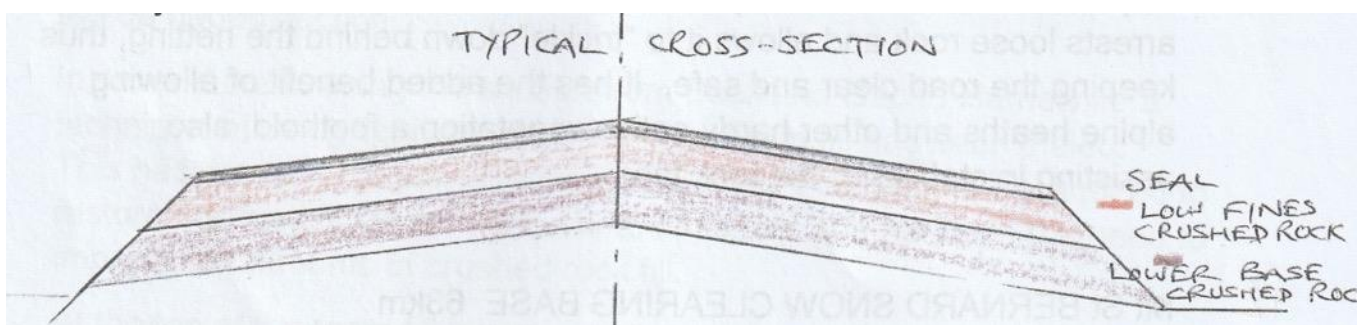
Rosslyn Wright at the snow gauge at Dinner Plain.

Mother Johnson's. Mother Johnson was an enterprising lady who operated a long-gone shanty that catered to horse and coach traffic and local miners. Nestled amongst the snow gums 46 km from Omeo, the site is now one of two snow clearing bases with living quarters for seasonal crews who ensure that the road on both sides of Mount Hotham is kept open during heavy snowfalls.

Until about 10 years ago, this site was the location of the Resort Management Board's ticket box. It was removed when online bookings became the primary method of obtaining a permit for resort parking and overnight stays at Mt Hotham Village.

Brandy Creek. Once the location of a gold mine, Brandy Creek was the place chosen by Rick to show the group how road construction above the snowline had evolved to handle the challenges of frost heave and snow clearing. Rick told us that until 1999 the Omeo approach to Mt Hotham was unsealed, and often became almost impassable due to frost heave, requiring continual grading and a very high maintenance effort.

To combat frost heave, most of the Alpine Road pavement has been constructed as a "frost free", free-draining sealed pavement. This consists of normal crushed rock sub-base with a 200mm–300mm thick free draining crushed rock layer, sealed with a two-coat chip bituminous seal, generally using size 14mm/7mm aggregate to waterproof the pavement and to withstand the blades of snow clearing machinery.



Other snow management features of this section included orange line marking and orange and yellow poles to delineate the road and help drivers assess snow depth. In places where the road could disappear completely in heavy snow, even taller orange poles displayed signs advising drivers which side of the poles they should be driving on.



Inspecting the frost-free pavement at Brandy Creek.

Mt Hotham Alpine Resort Area. Considered the 'Powder Capital' of Australia, Hotham is the only ski resort in the Southern Hemisphere where the village is located on top of the mountain, ensuring endless awe-inspiring views and ski-in, ski-out opportunities from wherever you are in the village. Its many ski lodges, hotels, bars and entertainment venues make it an attractive, all-year-round venue.

The resort has 13 chair lifts, 3 terrain parks and 35km of cross-country skiing, and caters for a wide variety of non-skiing activities like tobogganing, dog sled tours and snow mobile rides. There were no trees, just bare rocks and wide, open grassy meadows. Passing through the village's ski tunnel (below), we could see Mt Hotham - Victoria's 3rd highest mountain peak at an elevation of 1882m. Even though it had been a warm day in Omeo, it was bitterly cold.

Just beyond Mt Hotham, we stopped at a solid-looking wooden cross, which bore no legend. We discovered that the cross does not mark a grave but was erected there back in the 1920s to mark the highest point in the Alpine Road at an elevation of 1845 metres.



The Cross at 1845 m elevation.

A little further along, we came to Danny's lookout, named after Danny Cavedon, a legendary mechanic who, as the RACV roadside service man for many years, came to the aid of many motorists stranded on the mountain. The lookout point boasts spectacular views to Mt Buffalo, Mt Feathertop and down the Ovens Valley to Harrietville and beyond from an elevation of 1705m.

At Mount Blowhard, not far beyond Danny's Lookout we passed through an area of deep sidling cut, which was prone to rock falls due to the steep cross slope and frost heave. Here, the almost vertical side of the cutting had been stabilized by an extensive installation of anchored rock fall netting, which arrests loose rock and allows it to safely "trickle" down behind the netting. In addition to stabilizing the rock face, the netting has the added benefit of allowing alpine heaths and other hardy native vegetation a foothold.

Landslip Area. On the long, steep descent from Mt Hotham towards Harrietville, we stopped to see an innovative landslip stabilisation method.



Rick Anderson, David Jellie, Iris Whittaker and Graeme Newman casting expert eyes at a landslide site.

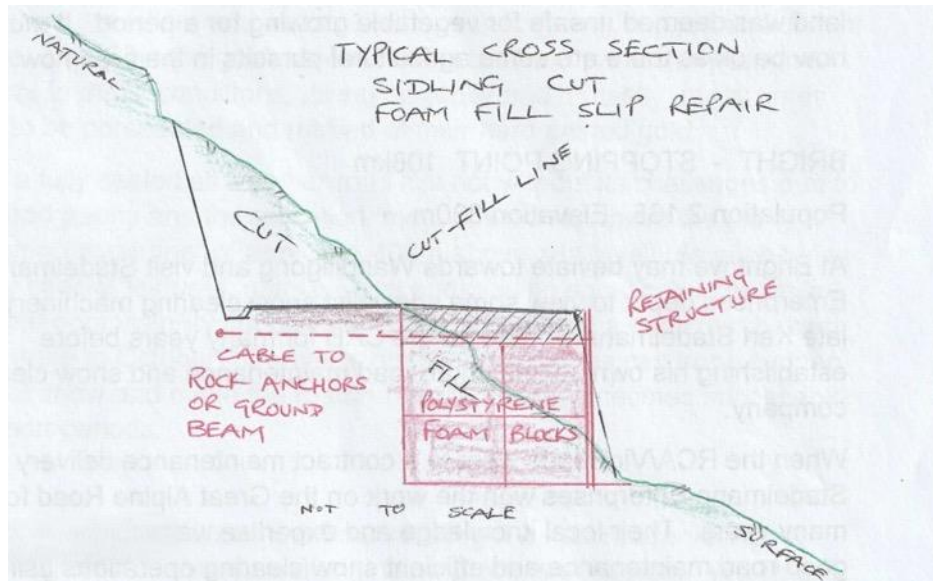
Roads constructed on steep cross-slopes are often in cut on one side and fill on the other. The filled area can slip downhill due to water infiltration or when trees stabilising the base of the fill rot away. Many roads built in this way were not designed to be widened or to carry the volume and weight of today's traffic. When a slip failure occurs, what remains is usually only one traffic lane, or less, and significant traffic disruption and costly earthworks are required to repair the damaged section.

In several areas along our descent into Harrietville, land slips have been repaired using blocks of expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam instead of structural fill.

The stacked EPS blocks, each measuring about 1m x 1m x 8m (8 cubic metres) weigh about a tonne and easily support the roadway. The blocks greatly reduce the weight load of the fill required to restore the road formation (an equivalent volume of rock fill would weigh 20 times as much). They are quick to construct, and remove the need to import large amounts of crushed rock fill.

Above the EPS blocks, a pavement layer of crushed rock with a sealed surface or asphalt is applied to spread the load and offer a robust wearing surface to match the adjacent road. Additional stability can be afforded by "tying" the retaining structure back to bedrock on the cut side of the formation if required, as shown in Rick's diagram below.

Due to the possibility of bushfire damage to the EPS blocks, a veneer of crushed rock is usually constructed as a shield on the face of the fill. To date none of the foam fill slip repair areas has shown any sign of distress or failure.



Bright. At Bright we visited Stadelmann Enterprises’ depot to view some specialist snow clearing machinery. The late Karl Stadelmann worked for the CRB for many years before establishing his own construction, road maintenance and snow clearing company.

When the RCA/VicRoads went to a contract maintenance delivery model, Stadelmann Enterprises won the work on the Great Alpine Road for many years. Their local knowledge and expertise proved invaluable to good road maintenance and efficient snow clearing operations using specially imported machines from Europe.



At Stadelmann's depot in Bright. From left to right: Russell Meehan, John Wright, Rosslyn Wright, Iris Whittaker, Bill Collins, Trish Collins, Rick Anderson and David Jellie.

Our last evening was spent in Bright, where a major car rally featuring hundreds of beautifully restored vehicles was in progress. Consequently, every dinner venue in Bright had been booked out. We were fortunate to find a good dinner venue at the Happy Valley Hotel in Ovens, 28 km from Bright, where we enjoyed a great meal and a wonderful evening.



The happy Travellers – Iris Whittaker, Russell Meehan, Graeme Newman, Trish Collins, Bill Collins, John right, Rosslyn Wright and Rick Anderson.

Can you help?

I received the following message from Mark Kennedy.

‘I am hoping someone will be able to help me locate the site of a former CRB work camp, please.

My father worked for the CRB in 1950-1951 as a plant operator building half of the access road to what was to become the Eildon reservoir.

He always remembered his time there with great fondness and told many stories about it when I was growing up.

I never thought to ask him where the camp was actually located when he was alive and would now like to see the area for myself.

I realise that it would only have been a temporary site and there will not be any obvious remains, but hopefully someone will be able to point me in the right direction for its location so I can at least see whereabouts it was sited, visit, and think about what it all must have been like in his time.

Thanking you all in anticipation!

Mark Kennedy’

Noel Osborne has already responded to me as follows:

‘There was a camp at Big River and one at Mansfield - still maintained in 1965. It was part of the Mansfield area that I was assigned in that year when I was working at Benalla Regional office. The Big River camp was used by both Dandenong Region and Benalla when we had works in that area.

I can remember Overseer Theo Hydere and his small gang camped there during bridge maintenance work on one of the timber bridges. Both camps were used during the reconstruction of the road from Eildon to Jamieson and the reconstruction of the Mansfield to Jamieson Road and bridges on the Howqua and Jamieson bridges prior to the flooding of the new lake.

It has been a few years since I travelled those roads but the Big River camp was just upstream of the now existing road and on a flat section of land quite close to Big River.

The Mansfield Camp was just north of the Mt Buller Road about three miles from Mansfield. I hope that will help Mark follow in his father’s footsteps

Cheers
Noel’

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Divisional Engineers Conference, Road Construction Authority

The photograph below was taken at the annual Divisional Engineers Conference in 1986 prior to the formation of VicRoads.



Left to right: Neil Jephcott (Bairnsdale), Ian Gardiner (Ballarat), Stan Hodgson (Dandenong), Tom Russell (Chief Executive of RCA), Tom Glazebrook (Bendigo), Bruce Phillips (Warrnambool), Colin Roy (Geelong), John Waddell (Horsham), Howard Ellis (Metropolitan) and Brian Chandler (Benalla).

Blythwood Grange

This photograph was taken at Blythwood Grange probably in the 1990s when Reg Patterson was CEO of VicRoads. Can anyone recall what the event was? I know quite a few names but I need assistance from members to fill in the gaps.



To help you, I have cut the photograph into two – so that the faces are clearer. I look forward to your responses.





Frederick W Fricke

Tom Fricke contacted me via David Rolland with the following details about his grandfather, F. W. Fricke. He wrote:

Frederick William Fricke (15 July 1870 - 15 December 1949) grew up on “Park Farm” near Carisbrook, Victoria. His father had migrated from Hanover, Germany to Victoria at the age of 16 in 1854, where he became a successful farmer. F. W. Fricke attended Carisbrook Primary School and Maryborough Grammar School, Victoria. Before joining the Country Roads Board, he was Officer in Charge of Local Government in the Department of Public Works.

Frederick W Fricke was one of the first three Board Members of the Country Roads Board (CRB) being appointed at its inception in 1913. He was Chairman between 1938 and 1940, and retired in 1940 after 55 years working for the Victorian Government. He is credited with the initiation of the planning and building of the Great Ocean Road. It is quoted from 1916 that Mr Fricke said, “A great road should be cut along the seaboard of Victoria’s Western district to link isolated towns and provide a Riviera for tourists”. (“The Sun,” September 27, 1963, p.30). In 1940 the “South Gippsland Ensign” published a detailed article on his retirement dinner at Foster, where he was thanked for the transformation of South Gippsland’s roads from “mud sledge tracks to the finest network in the State” during his time as a Board Member.



The opening of a new road by F.W. Fricke on a penny farthing bicycle.



F. W. Fricke on the left at a tree planting ceremony on the Great Ocean Road

As Tom has said, F. W, Fricke was a member of the first Country Roads Board and the third Chairman - succeeding William Calder and William McCormack - also original Board

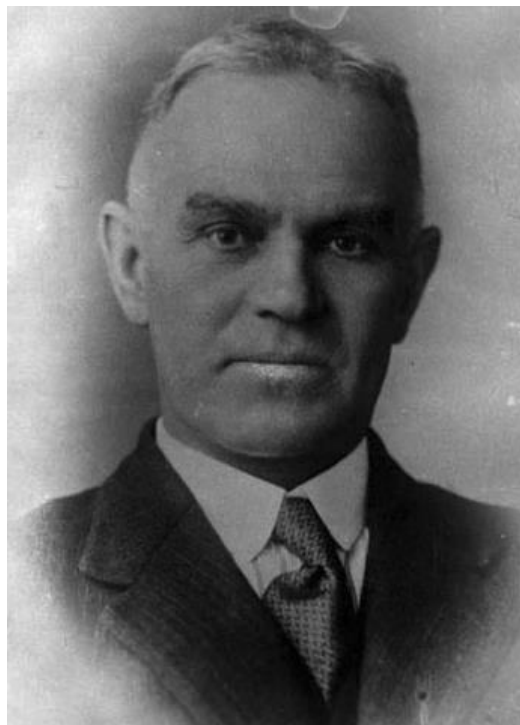
members). Tom's letter enlightened me about his first name. In all my historical research through Annual Reports, Government gazettes, *Reminiscences of Life in the Country Roads Board, Roads for the People*, newspaper reports and other documents, he was always referred to as F. W. Fricke. Now I know that his first name was Frederick.

There is scant reference to him in *Reminiscences of Life in the Country Roads Board* but Nancy Costelloe recollected one story:

"You were supposed to be there (at work) by 9 a.m., but the red line wasn't ruled until 9.05 a.m., so you got five minutes grace. But Mr Neville would run out and he would stick a minute red dot on the book at 9 a.m. and then he knew that anybody who signed under the red dot hadn't been there at 9 a.m. Of course, they all did sign 9 a.m. He would go to them and say, 'You were not here at 9 a.m. because you signed under that dot; you could not have been there at 9 a.m.. Ada Phillips was so incensed over it when he caught her one day - Ada Phillips was somebody to be reckoned with - and she marched straight into Mr Fricke, I think it was, who was on the Board at the time, and demanded that this stop, and it did stop."

Nancy also remembered Frederick Fricke – who was Chairman for a short time (1938 to 1940) – as a reserved man and for most of his term as Chairman he was ill.

Another recollection by Joe Muntz was that the people of Bridge Branch went for a drink at the Occidental Hotel every second Friday (pay day) and Fricke and Dale - the Secretary of the Board - also went to have a beer at the bar. This would have been at the time when the CRB was located in the Exhibition Buildings. Dale was later to become Chairman between 1945 and 1949.



F.W. Fricke – date unknown.

JHA/WR.



Melbourne

15th May, 1940.

Dear Mr. Fricke,

As you will be proceeding on leave prior to the expiry of your term of office as Chairman of the Country Roads Board, I desire, on behalf of my colleagues and myself, to convey to you the Government's deep appreciation of the lifetime of public service rendered by you to the State of Victoria in the course of your career.

During your long association with the Country Roads Board, extending from its establishment to the present time, first as an original member, and later as Chairman, your sound administrative ability and intimate knowledge of the road conditions and requirements of the State, your enthusiasm for the adoption of progressive methods of construction and maintenance, added to your close association with, and intimate knowledge of, municipal government in Victoria, have contributed materially to the excellent results achieved by the Board during the past quarter of a century, thereby placing Victoria in the forefront of road development in the Commonwealth.

We are indeed glad that, despite your arduous duties over so long a period, you are still possessed of good health, and we hope that you may be spared to enjoy, in the company of Mrs. Fricke and your family, many happy years of rest from your labors, and to see the continuation of the great work to the promotion of which you have contributed so much by your foresight and zeal.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,


MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.

F. W. Fricke, Esq.,
Chairman,
Country Roads Board,
CARLTON.N.3.

Road maintenance in 1915.

The following text is extracted from the 2nd Annual Report, 1915, under the heading *The efficiency of the road man*.

‘The important part played by the workmen, particularly on road maintenance, is not sufficiently recognised.

The roads of England and France are conceded to be the best-maintained roads in the world, a condition due largely to the fact that they are constantly cared for by thoroughly experienced and trained workmen, known in these countries respectively as length-men or patrol men, who, with years of training, have become highly-skilled tradesmen and who take an interest and pride in their work.

In this country, owing to systematic maintenance of roads having been so little practised, and casual labour having been usually relied upon for occasional road repairs, the number of men experienced and trained in proper methods of road maintenance is limited, and until the men are so trained and encouraged to take an intelligent interest in their work the best results will not be attained. Shire engineers should therefore be at some pains to instruct the road men in their duties, and also to explain the reason for each operation.

The engineer in most instances has a wide area of country to cover, and can only pay occasional visits to the outlying districts of his shire, consequently, the road men may have to work for days or even weeks on their own initiative, and it is therefore essential that they should be educated and encouraged to make themselves masters of their trade. The time has arrived when the idea should be dispelled that road work may be undertaken by any class of unskilled labour.'

Road Maintenance 100 years later.

Many of you will think that I am going on too much about road maintenance but safe roads are vital to our economy and leisure. They link communities by transporting people and freight, provide safe access for leisure, trade and industry and open up markets for commerce and education. I contend that our road network is one of the most the most valuable assets in the state – if not, the most.

In *The Age* on Thursday 21 November, there was an article entitled 'Roads so bad 'speed limits have to be cut''. I shall paraphrase the article. It said that – according to transport officials - 500 km of roads are in such poor condition that reduced speed limits and other safety measures are required. These measures were required "pending work to fill potholes or fix cracking and other damage".

They also blame the flood of 2022. It said the floods were so bad that many roads needed rebuilding "stretching the state's road maintenance resources". To my mind, this is definitely a factor, but on the other hand, we have always experienced flooding on the road network and some of the worst roads in Victoria did not experience flooding that I know of. However, in the current era of climate change, flooding will become more frequent and a factor in future road maintenance.

The article went on to say that in 2023/2024 the State resurfaced or rehabilitated 422,000 sq m of regional roads – a huge drop from the 9 million sq m treated in the previous financial year. Even that figure was less than its target of 12 million sq m. Likewise, resurfacing and rehabilitation in Melbourne fell over the same period.

The Department secretary, Paul Younis, said that they were doing less resealing (or resurfacing) and more road strengthening. He said that road maintenance funding came from multiple sources and that "the government has announced a \$964 million road repair program to try to fill potholes, resurface rough sections of roads and other maintenance".

Here are just a few photographs I downloaded from the internet showing the current condition of roads in Victoria.



The main street of Meredith.



The Goulburn Valley Highway.



A pothole on the Melba Highway.

The article in *The Age* prompted our member, Norm Butler - former VicRoads Regional Manager, Traralgon - to respond in a letter to *The Age* on Saturday 23 November as follows:

At last, the Department of Transport has admitted that it's cutting back on resealing roads and diverting the money into reconstruction works ("Roads so bad that speed limits have to be cut", 21/11).

Unfortunately, this approach was prevalent in the 1980s and resulted in road systems in municipalities falling into a ruinous state. Shires in Gippsland had ratepayer uproar about

the badly potholed and patched roads. The councils complained vociferously to government about lack of funds, when the problem was how the funds had been used. It took about five years to turn this situation around by increasing the bituminous reseals of all roads and cement stabilisation of the most severely damaged sections.

In Victorian rural areas, much of the road system was built with naturally occurring gravels and unbound crushed rock which needs a secure waterproof surface to maintain strength and freedom from potholes.

The new departmental policy deprives these roads of the essential waterproofing reseals needed when the existing bitumen perishes.

If the "new" policy continues, Victorians will be faced with more potholes and broken roads.

Max Lay also expressed a similar view.

He wrote to me saying: *My concern is that I thought that we had learnt that with our paving practice the first item tackled in pavement maintenance should be to seal any cracks. It is simple and easy to do, particularly with the leadership of people like we had at VicRoads. I saw no suggestion of a working overall maintenance strategy in the Age report.*

Alarm bells were ringing in 2017, when the Victorian Auditor General's Office warned the government was not spending enough to maintain the 24,000 kilometres of freeways and arterial roads it controls.

Road maintenance funding had decreased by about 60 per cent in real terms since 2010 – a time period that included four years of Coalition government – as the population swelled and their deteriorating condition posed a “growing risk to public safety and increases road user costs”, the auditor said.

Fifteen per cent of the road network was in “very poor” condition, an increase from 11 per cent in the decade to 2016, and the auditor general said that trend would continue unless the state changed how it looked after them.

Very little has happened since then and I suspect the road system has further deteriorated.

LEST WE FORGET

In this newsletter, I am honouring two roadmen of the CRB - both named Smith.

Private Ernest (Ernie) Henry Smith, V505043

Ernie Smith was Patrolman in Charge in Bairnsdale Patrol. He retired in March 1983 and the following details were provided in *Interchange* magazine of June 1983. He had 43 years of service with the CRB. After starting in Bairnsdale Division in December 1941, Ernie spent 33 months with a specialist unit in New Guinea during the war.

Assuming he retired at around 65 years of age, his date of birth would be 1918 or thereabouts. If he was born in 1918, and enlisted in 1941, he would have been 22 or 23 years old when he joined the Army. Furthermore, it is likely that he lived in Gippsland.

I think I have found the right Ernie Smith among the 361 Smiths (with a first or second name of Ernest and who enlisted in the Australian Army during the Second World War) – and that is Ernest Henry Smith. He was born on 23 March 1918 in Newmerella in NSW but he lived

with his wife, Lorna Elsie, at 8 Swan Street, Bairnsdale. He was over 23 years of age when he joined up and he gave his occupation as 'labourer'. He enlisted at Bairnsdale late in 1941 and passed his medical on 7 January 1942 which meant his early career at the CRB was barely a month.

Ernest Henry Smith served in New Guinea – in two stints between June 1943 and July 1944 and October 1944 and November 1945 – which equates with the report in the *Interchange* magazine and provides further confidence that he is the right person.

He was attached to the 33rd Works Company and trained initially in Watsonia in Victoria before transferring to Queensland in May 1943. He embarked in Townsville aboard the SS *Taroona* on 2 June 1943 and disembarked in Port Moresby four days later. There are no further entries in his record until his return to Australia aboard the *Canberra* – leaving Port Moresby on 6 July 1944.

Back in Australia. He transferred to 17 Works Company and embarked on the *Katoomba* in October 1944 and disembarked at Aitape in New Guinea a week later.



Ernie Smith's enlistment photograph – 1942.

He flew back to Australia from Madang in November 1945 and was discharged from the Army in December 1945.

Employment and Works Companies were assembled and deployed to build the infrastructure needed to support military operations. In New Guinea, roads and remote facilities were rudimentary at best and, in some cases, non-existent at the outbreak of war. Ports, railheads, supply dumps, transshipment and handling facilities, roads, transit camps and all manner of temporary accommodation had to be built maintained, moved and rebuilt throughout the war.

Ernie's war time training and experience would have been a great training ground for his role as a road patrolman where he was required to work through floods, storms and fires at all hours to keep the roads safe for the public.

In 1997, Ernie was still living in Swan Street, Bairnsdale, at Number 16, four houses up from his original address at Number 8. He applied for a War Service Pension at that time.

I can't explain why Ernie was never issued with a VX Army number.

Corporal Russell (Russ) Sydney Smith, VX70614

Russell was employed by the CRB as a timekeeper in 1937 and enlisted in the AIF in January 1942 when he was 26 years old. He was born in Heyfield in January 1918 and gave his occupation as 'Ganger'.



Russell Smith's paybook photograph - 1942.

He gave his mother's name as his next of kin but on his Attestation paper this was crossed out and replaced by 'Wife Joan'. Near the end of his archive, it records his marriage to Joan Anderson on 3 November 1945.

Russell was allocated to 2/4th Australian Armoured Regiment Workshops. He was initially located at Broadmeadows and Puckapunyal and in June 1942, he was transferred to Ballarat. As the name implies, the workshops supported the armoured regiment comprising mainly tanks.

Russell was then deployed to NSW and Southport in Queensland where the regiment received

orders to move to New Guinea. He embarked on SS *Duntroon* on 25 August 1944 for Madang where his regiment provided support to infantry operations against the Japanese. There were two squadrons in the Regiment. B Squadron moved to Bougainville and C Squadron to Aitape. I think Russell was in the latter because there is no mention in the archive of him ever being in Bougainville. It is likely that he took part in the advance towards Wewak and the capture of Niap in January 1945. The tanks assisted in taking Wewak in May but Russell did not participate in this because on 15 January he was admitted to the 2/5th Field Ambulance (a field hospital) suffering from dengue fever - a condition which was to dog him for some time.

Dengue is a mosquito-borne viral disease occurring in tropical and sub-tropical areas such as New Guinea. Symptoms are high fever, rash, muscle and joint pain, headache, pain behind the eyes, bleeding and nausea. Those who become infected a second time are seriously at risk of developing severe disease and shock which can be life threatening. There is no specific medical treatment and victims are usually treated with fluids and pain relief.

In Russell's case, he was evacuated back to Victoria by plane, and he did not return to New Guinea. It was in November 1945 that he married but the archive shows he was hospitalised a number of times towards the end of 1945. No specific causes were mentioned but I suspect it may have been related to dengue.

He was discharged in April 1946. After the war, Russ returned to the Board as an Overseer and remained in that position until being reclassified to Superintendent of Works in Benalla Division in 1964. He retired from the CRB in August 1977.



The Chairman, R.E.V. Donaldson, presenting Russell Smith with his 40 years of service award in 1977.

Russell died in Shepparton in October 1987.

TRIVIA AND DIDACTIC WHIMSIES

Memories of Jack Hibberd and Dimboola

My literary agent who assisted me in publishing my two books - *Decent People* and *An Accidental Engineer* – is John Timlin. I knocked on his door one Sunday morning with my first draft and he welcomed me into his home and his breakfast. His office was lined floor to ceiling with books that he had been involved in publishing and he said that he would have a look at my draft and get back to me. I heard nothing for weeks. I was sure that he'd thrown it out or considered it not worthy of comment, and I thought of all those stories I had read about authors being rejected time after time.

However, he did get back to me with comments on my draft – which at that time was a single book – and he suggested it should be split into two. In fact, he was the inspiration for the naming of *Decent People* because his review of my draft described it as a worthy history of my ancestors arriving in Australia – all of them decent people.



John Timlin.

We became friends. I was quite humbled because John is well known in Melbourne's literary and theatrical circles. He was a pioneer of the Australian Performing Group and it was he who took out the lease of the famous Pram Factory in Carlton which was to etch itself into Melbourne's theatre *oeuvre*. He worked with people such as Graeme Blundell, Bruce Spence, Jack Hibberd, John Romerill, Kerry Dwyer and Max Gillies.

Bruce Spence said of him, "He did the things we wouldn't stoop to do. He got us the money that gave us the freedom to do what we creatively wanted. He spoke to the bureaucrats. He was the respectable face fronting all us ratbags just wanting to tear the place apart". Arguably the most iconic stage work he was involved in was *Dimboola*. I am sure many of you have seen it. It was written by Jack Hibberd and John owns the rights to it. Jack Hibberd died in October and John wrote about his many happy memories of his friendship with him.

"In the mid distance I saw the trundle with the box on top, a modest looking coffin inoffensive to Jewish tradition for the plot where Jack would be buried. My eye shifted to the hearse and I knew instantly it was a Roller. Jack Hibberd, Marist Brothers, Bendigo, the eloquent medico son of Jim a Bendigo plumber, and his mother, Maura, who knew a thing or two about racehorses. What would they have made of their son turning up for his last show in a Rolls Royce? What marque? Silver Ghost? Surely not the Sceptre, the all-electric Roller. Not for Jack who resisted the encroaching world of bytes, useless with a mobile phone, just spidery handwriting and an astonishing memory for verse and music. And invention, absent the bytes: Barry Oakley reviewing *Sweet Water*, Jack's last collection of poetry, ". . . pristine and beautiful, memorably mirrored by a master wordsmith."

A Stretch of the Imagination, an acknowledged classic, and *Dimboola*, his wedding reception play seen by 1.4 million people are the best known of his plays which all feature experiment with his unique language best described by the critic, Jim Davidson, as 'ocker baroque'

I first met Jack in, would you believe, a pub near the university called the Mayfair. It was a student mecca but also a watering hole for the inimitable down and outs who frequented Carlton.

I was introduced to Jack by Dinny O'Hearn who knew that Laurie Clancy and I planned a new journal called *The Melbourne Partisan*. I had few literary credentials except for writing the vaguely satirical *Student Worker Alliance* column for *Farrago* which Laurie edited.

But a more useful qualification was my employment testing scales on the waterfront for the Customs Department. My security clearance and collaboration with a few wharfies enabled acquisition of banned books for review in *Farrago*. I was finally stopped in my tracks when Customs officials searched my ute and confiscated the then banned *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *Tropic of Capricorn*, *Portnoy's Complaint* and, amazingly, my birthday present edition of

Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. I particularly objected to that confiscation and pointed to the Cambridge University colophon on the cover. "Mate", the officer said almost conspiratorially, "We know you can't tell a book by its cover." I guessed they were right about that but I kept pursuing its return till 3 months later the *Tractatus* was returned accompanied by a letter saying that the other books would be retained as evidence.

Anyway, Jack gave us a sheaf of his latest poetry and Laurie said later he was knocked out by the sophistication and intricacy of his language given that his undergraduate degree had been medicine. We all became regulars at the Mayfair spending some time drinking and a fair bit thinking, particularly about football.

Jack's job in North Melbourne as a locum for the drug and alcohol addiction specialist, Dr. Jagoda, enabled regular visits to my factory, somewhat grandiosely titled International Weighing - though it did own a billiard table for our diversion. By then, his career as a playwright was well under way and I recall seeing *White With Wire Wheels* at Melbourne University and meeting his collaborators Graham Blundell, Kerry Dwyer and David Kendall. Betty Burstall started La Mama in Carlton originally as a dinner venue for the arts community. Having seen La Mama in New York, she decided to convert the space to a theatre. The first production was Jack's *Three Old Friends* and he had three old friends playing and directing, Graham Blundell, David Kendall and Bruce Knappett.

Of course, *Dimboola* is Jack's best-known play and derived partly from his reading of a Chekhov play, *The Wedding*, about a wedding reception in which the audience, as guests, become active participants in the event. Jack wrote this in Ireland in 1969 and posted the script from London to Graham Blundell in two separate envelopes. At that time, Graham was also working with ideas of audience involvement and breaking down the so-called Fourth Wall separating performers from their audience. The arrival of that script was quite fortuitous, and he premiered *Dimboola* at La Mama in 1969. This first audience, including many Carlton footballers, were the supposedly real guests at the wedding of Maureen Delaney and Morry McAdam in *Dimboola* where it was celebrated by the inebriated Father O'Shea. The show was a knockout but, to properly stage it, a bigger auditorium than La Mama was required.

Jack persuaded me in that year to lease and be guarantor for the rent of a much larger venue, the Pram Factory in Drummond Street, Carlton. Both he and Graham Blundell had been rejected by the Trustee Company administering the property as poor credit risks. It was hard to see how a doctor could be a worse credit risk than an itinerant company director. I suppose it was poetic justice three years later when the CEO of that Trustee Company was jailed for embezzling millions of dollars from depositors.

The APG's professional production of *Dimboola* was brilliantly directed by David Williamson and filmed on 16mm by Ross Dimsey. This is probably the best record of an entire Pram Factory production despite failure of one camera and the indifferent sound recording. Everybody should have a look at this film if only to see Evelyn Krape's hilarious tap dance routine to the music of *Animal Crackers in my Soup*. All the performances were memorable, very funny and often punctuated by Bruce Spence as Morry the bridegroom saying in a variety of intonations "No worries" to the many disasters threatening the ceremony.

The play took off after that and was produced in Melbourne at Eddie and Jack Kornhauser's Chevron Hotel directed by Tim Robertson. The amazing success of Tim's production was informed by his own performance as Darcy, the father of the bride in the original Pram Factory production. It was a full house nearly every night but had to end due to the room being committed to another show.



A 1975 production of Dimboola, staged in Dimboola.

The astonishing run attracted the Bonaparte Theatre Restaurant in Kings Cross and we negotiated terms of performance with a very sharply dressed John Harrigan and his offsider, Jimmy Ryan. His slightly twisted left arm was a left over from what were his reputedly victorious confrontations with Sydney standover men. This production was directed by the brilliant Brian Syron, an indigenous graduate of the New York Stella Adler school and co-founder of the Australian Playwrights' Conference. He had the imagination, prestige and stamina to keep the show running continuously for nearly two and half years. Every three months or so the royalties would go into serious arrears, and I would threaten legal action to remove the performing rights. A cheque would arrive usually shaved by some hundreds and off we would go again.

Meanwhile the show had attracted international interest, and we licensed a London production at the Aer Lingus reception rooms. The producers had agreed not to alter the script without the writer's permission. The first inkling we had of gross rewrites was that a friend said it featured a lot of UK slang and was being presented as a version of the *Carry-On* movies loaded with 'cor blimeys'. Jack saw red about this and I flew to London to close it down and seek damages. The threat of an injunction was enough, and it petered out a few weeks later.

By this time a film was mooted, and the show was attracting investor interest. We were invited to attend a meeting at one of those ancient Collins Street city legal firms named after long dead founding partners such as Pavey, Wilson, Cohen and Carter who put together Carlton and United Breweries and the legendary Collins House Group, controllers of base metal mining and refining in Australia. "This is the big time I said to Jack. "Better smarten up your bag of fruit for the meeting."

To say Jack dressed flamboyantly for that meeting would be gross understatement. From memory, he wore an orange jacket covering something like a Beatles T-Shirt, a pair of slightly cream flares while carrying a brief case full of his collected poetry and plays. All topped by a bright blue Beanie We were sent to the heavily marbled 31st Floor to await the presence of our legal luminary who sent a secretary to usher us in. She had meanwhile done a forensic on my colourful companion, offered a cup of tea and asked when we could expect **Doctor** Hibberd.

Eventually we were ushered into the presence and shown graphs of currency movements and tax rates in various jurisdictions. He unfolded a plan whereby I, as the literary agent, would grant performance rights to a company in Amsterdam who would transfer funds to the non-taxable Netherlands Antilles and then to Hong Kong where we could collect the funds tax free from a blind trust. Seemed incredibly complicated so I asked what this arrangement would cost. Nearly nothing he said compared to the tax Jack would otherwise have to pay. However, we would be up for \$2,000.00 to cover his costs of travelling to Sydney to settle the deal with his Dutch counterpart's solicitor. He offered to round up a set of documents in the next office and off he went.

Jack had not exactly warmed to the proposed shenanigans and, as he left, Jack, quick as a flash, said, "He's been taking heaps of notes. Have a geek at his diary." I leant over and reading backwards could see immediately we were not the only party being billed for the Sydney trip and the other three clients were also to be slugged two grand each. We made a polite exit.

There had also been some inquiries from Europe and the US and soon there were pirated productions going on in Zurich, Munich and Lille all under the banner of Werner Schmidt who denied any debt to *Dimboola* despite numerous reviews alerting people to its antipodean origin. Another production surfaced in America, but the producers argued that plays about weddings were not copyright. We could not contest their clear pirating without going to enormous expense in the American legal system.

Back in Australia we were experiencing a more than usual delay in payment of royalties, so I decided to front Harrigan and Ryan and flew to Sydney. Surprise, surprise they were no longer around, and the cast had been given a week's notice. I met with our solicitor and found they had left town and were now holed up in Bali, the proud owners of a couple of bars.

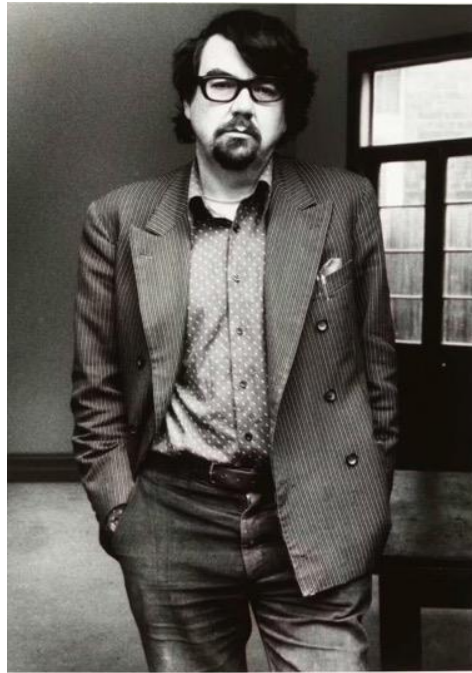
However, we did have a shaky guarantee of performance by the owners of the building who were ostensibly leasing it to the producers. Our Pram Factory solicitor, Phil Molan had moved to Sydney and thought we should issue summonses for the \$4,000 we were owed. The papers had to be served in person on the two brothers who controlled the theatre restaurant building. and Phil said his professional process servers could not get near them. He thought they were living in the Mandarin Club. Phil, ever the joker, suggested I sign in to the Club using my Chinese name, Lin Tim, instead of the Irish original. I wasn't happy with this and rang my showbiz friend, Leon, to seek his advice. It was succinct: If you go into the Mandarin with legal documents, you'll be used as shark bait by morning.

So, we never received our \$4,000 but a few years later the brothers were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment after their toy importing business was proven to have a white substance in many of their offerings. Their mother was also found guilty of conspiracy and, when sentenced to three years jail, immediately dropped dead in the dock. *Dimboola* had been used as a money laundering front by the family.

I still get requests for the rights to perform *Dimboola* and over 1.4 million people have seen the play to date. Though I have only discussed *Dimboola* today there were many other adventures. I have just finished revising and updating his website which shows the depth and breadth of Jack's achievement across the whole spectrum of the arts.

Jack has enriched my life through his genius and the warmth of our friendship. I went to see him at Boorangarra to ensure his TV was set up to watch the Carlton game. I reminded him of when we both attended the 1970 Grand Final which Carlton won miraculously and changed the game forever. The ground was so crowded, 112,000 people, we had to stand on our beer cans to see the game. I said “Do you remember Jezaulenko’s mark fifty metres from us. When he heard the name “Jezaulenko” his face lit up, and was creased with a great smile signalling one bright moment through the fog of his dementia.

On November 5th 2024 we have Guy Fawkes Day, the American election and the Melbourne Cup. This will be the first Tuesday in 50 years that Jack won’t be ringing me to put his \$50 bet on the Melbourne Cup.”



Jack Hibberd.

Golf Club Sign

Here is an actual sign posted at a golf club in Scotland UK:

1. Back straight, knees bent, feet shoulder width apart.
2. Form a loose grip.
3. Keep your head down!
4. Stay out of the water.
5. Try not to hit anyone.
6. If you are taking too long, let others go ahead of you.
7. Don't stand directly in front of others.
8. Quiet please ... while others are preparing.
9. Don't take extra strokes.
10. Well done ... Now, flush the urinal, go outside, and tee off!

Did I read that sign right?

In an office:
Toilet out of order..... please use floor below

In a laundromat:

Automatic washing machines: please remove all your clothes when the light goes out

In a London department store:

Bargain basement upstairs

In an office:

Would the person who took the step ladder yesterday please bring it back or further steps will be taken

In an office:

After tea break staff should empty the teapot and stand upside down on the draining board

Outside a second-hand shop:

We exchange anything - bicycles, washing machines, etc. why not bring your wife along and get a wonderful bargain?

Notice in health food shop window:

Closed due to illness

Spotted in a safari park:

Elephants please stay in your car

Seen during a conference:

For anyone who has children and doesn't know it, there is a day care on the 1st floor

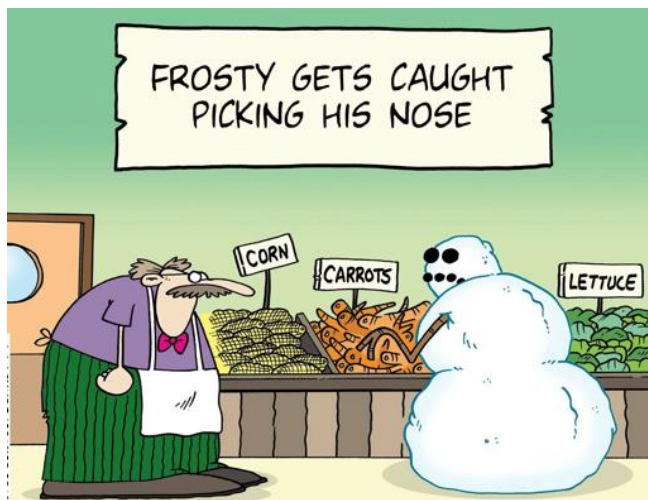
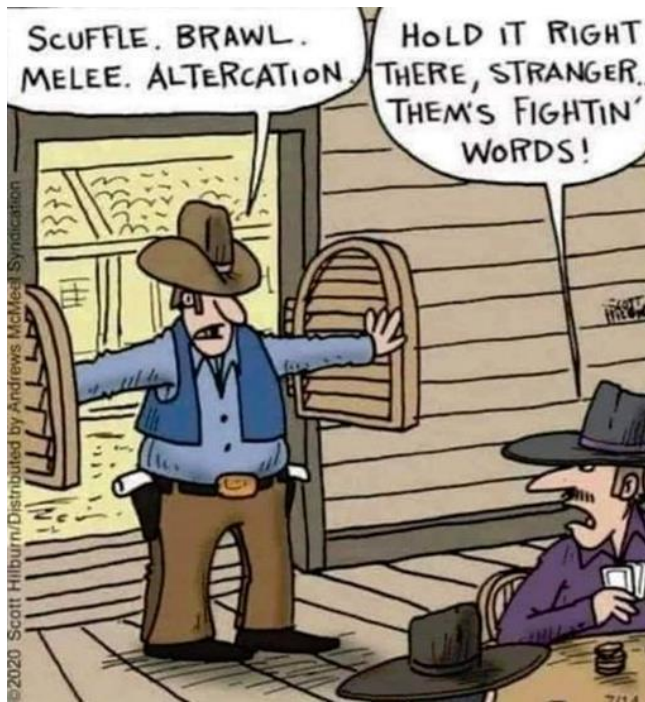
Notice in a farmer's field:

The farmer allows walkers to cross the field for free, but the bull charges.

On a repair shop door:

We can repair anything. (Please knock hard on the door - the bell doesn't work).





WHAT DO YOU CALL AN ALLIGATOR IN A VEST?



AN INVESTIGATOR.



David Jellie
President and editor
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