
AlmaTourism

Journal of Tourism, Culture and Territorial Development

Landscapes of Memory and Forgetting: Memorialisation, Emotion and Tourism along Australia's Great Ocean Road

Kerr, R. *
Consulting Historian (Australia)

ABSTRACT

This article explores the history of the Great Ocean Road, described in its recent National Heritage listing as "Australia's most famous coastal drive". The road is unique in Australia as it was purposely constructed as a scenic tourist route and as a memorial to World War I servicemen. Over time the road's memorial function was largely forgotten in public memory, overtaken by its fame as a tourist route. The history of the road's setting, construction, promotion and interpretation reveals that it is a route which reflects changing, and sometimes conflicting, cultural preoccupations. Despite attempts to link its sublime setting and challenges of building the road with the heroic struggles of the servicemen in war; in spite of physical commemorative markers along the road; and in spite of the power and endurance of the "Anzac legend" in Australian culture, the connection did not resonate as intended. The road's construction and subsequent interpretation illustrate the difficulty of inscribing "memory" onto a landscape with no prior connection to the events being memorialised. Its history reveals insights into the road's cultural construction; tangible and intangible expressions of remembering and forgetting along the road; and the relationship between the road, landscape, memory and emotion.

Keywords: Australia, Tourist Route, History, Landscape, Memory

* E-mail address: rtk@tpg.com.au

Introduction

The Great Ocean Road winds for over 240 kilometres along the south-west coastline of Victoria abutting Bass Strait and the Southern Ocean. It is renowned as one of Australia's most spectacular tourist drives, revealing diverse landscapes and seascapes, including: the temperate rainforest of the Otway Ranges, lush farmlands, surf beaches and the ancient rock stacks of the Port Campbell Limestone Coast, most notably, the famed Twelve Apostles. In April 2011 the road and its environs achieved National Heritage listing for its "outstanding scenic landscape values", including some of "the world's most dramatic cliff and ocean scenery able to be viewed from a vehicle". It is described as "an inspirational landscape capable of evoking strong emotional responses" (*Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*, 2011). Less widely known, is the road's role as "the longest war memorial in the world" (Planbooktravel, 2006, p. 13). The road was built between 1919 and 1932 by more than three thousand returned "diggers" — as the Australian soldiers are commonly known — and largely funded by public subscriptions. As such, it represents a unique case study in Australia. Yet, the road's memorial function is largely overshadowed and forgotten in public imagination, usurped by its fame as a tourist route.

This article examines the history of the road's setting, construction, promotion and subsequent interpretation. It reveals that the road, as part of the physical and cultural landscape, is a space both invested with and reflective of changing, and sometimes conflicting, cultural preoccupations. The Great Ocean Road was built at a time when Australia was caught between the desire to commemorate the past and the pull of the future and modernity, as represented by the motor vehicle and the developing motor tourism industry. The Great Ocean Road is a landscape upon which purpose and meaning have continually been superimposed. The route's long history of Aboriginal occupation, including massacre sites, have largely been disremembered, while sites associated with the many shipwrecks along this rugged coast inspire more powerful and emotive memorial connections. I argue that the overshadowing of the road's memorial role reflects the difficulty of trying to inscribe "memory" and "emotion" onto a landscape disconnected from the events it is intended to commemorate; the mixed messages as to the road's primary purpose; and the transformed cultural context in which the road has operated since World War II.

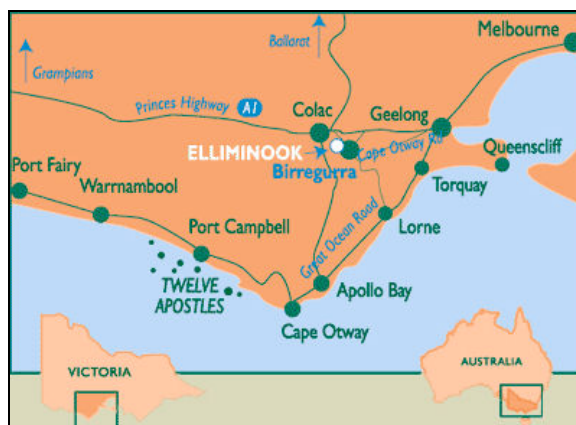


Figure 1 Great Ocean Road route (Australia-trips.info website).

Roads and routes are cultural landscapes – spaces constructed both physically and imaginatively. They embody multiple meanings, encompassing tangible and intangible elements, and are often invested with symbolism beyond their utilitarian function. Some roads assume particular significance not because of their strategic importance or engineering excellence, but because they have captured national and international imagination through their cultural symbolism. Space has become a key concept for historical analysis in recent years, informed by the earlier work of philosophers and cultural geographers, including Gaston Bachelard (1958), Henri Lefebvre (1974), Michel Foucault (1986) and Edward Soja (1989, 1996). Lefebvre postulated that space was a dynamic construct, produced by interactions between “spatial practice” – i.e. the ways in which people use and move within a space; “representations of space” – i.e. space as conceptualised and represented by architects, engineers or planners; and “representational space”, embodying complex symbolisms – i.e. the way a space is experienced and imagined by inhabitants and users (Lefebvre, 1974, pp. 33, 38-9). The idea of space as dynamic rather than static, “constructed” within local, historical and cultural contexts, has important implications for the study of roads and tourism. Recent works by Timothy Davis (2008), Rudy Koschar (2008), Anne Mitchell Whisnant (2008) and Thomas Zeller (2007; Mausch & Zeller, 2008) explore how roads in Europe and America have been culturally constructed through a range of perspectives, including those of planners, engineers and motorists; and the changing meanings or symbolism generated within particular material, historical and cultural contexts. These studies highlight the dynamic nature of the relationship between roads, landscape and national identity. Specific case studies of American scenic tourist routes – the Mount Vernon, Colonial and Blue Ridge parkways – by Davis (2008) and Whisnant (2008) reveal that those routes present a selective version of national history in their design and interpretation. In attempting to explain the cultural significance of America’s iconic Route 66, Peter Dedek describes the road as a state of mind, evoking images, ideals and experiences, and argues that in driving the route one encounters multiple layers of memory, history and myth (Dedek, 2007, pp. 2-8).

Australia’s Great Ocean Road also embodies multiple layers of history, memory and mythology. This case study aims to demonstrate that the route’s cultural significance

has been “constructed” through a dynamic and ongoing process of interaction between tangible and intangible elements including: its physical environment, visions of planners and promoters, technology, travellers’ experiences, representations in popular culture, tourism promotion and interpretation. It draws extensively on documentary sources, particularly popular media and tourism literature.

Over time, particular stories and meanings have been privileged while others were “forgotten” or overwritten, reflecting changing historical contexts. Selective memory and forgetting also reflect the legacy of Australia’s history as a settler colonial society. Lorenzo Veracini has defined “settler colonialism” as comprising the practices, mindsets and narratives that characterise settler societies – i.e. those in which an exogenous (usually white) community moves across space, displacing and outnumbering indigenous peoples through colonial policies and practices, including violence (Veracini, 2010, p. 18). As Anna Johnson and Alan Lawson explain, the settlers’ anxieties over belonging and legitimacy of possession seek resolution through attempts to indigenise the settler and expunge the memory of indigenous presence (Johnson & Lawson, 2000, p. 261). Settler colonialism is an ongoing process and is manifested in cultural practices and representations, including tourism and heritage interpretation. That process of remembering and forgetting has thus contributed to the Great Ocean Road’s cultural construction and how it is experienced and interpreted as a tourist route.

1. A Terrible Beauty

The south-west coastal region of Victoria contains remnants of an ancient and spectacular landscape, over one hundred million years old. It includes: dinosaur fossils, vegetation such as ferns, lichen, moss, and myrtle beech descended from Gondwanian forests, and Mesozoic rock platforms on the Cape Otway Coast, pre-dating the break-up of Gondwana (Cousland, 2007).¹ Aboriginal occupation of the region dates to at least five thousand years before European colonisation (Australian Heritage Database, n.d.).

Explorer, Matthew Flinders, wrote in the early 1800s, as his ship rounded Cape Otway, “I have seldom seen a more fearful section of coastline” (Planbooktravel, 2006, p. 67). In the nineteenth century, clipper ships travelling the “Great Circle Route”, sailed along the coast, harnessing the “Roaring Forties” in the Southern Ocean (Cousland, 2007, p. 33). The wild conditions and treacherous rocky coast claimed many victims, some of whom were buried on the mainland. The numerous wreck sites, some still extant, are recalled in place names such as Schomberg Rock and Loch Ard Gorge.

European settlement began in the early nineteenth century when sealers and whalers operating in Bass Strait frequented the south-west coast. In the 1840s whaling gave way to timber-getting, farming and grazing and a number of small settlements sprang up. These grew in isolation, dependent on coastal trading vessels for transport and communications (Cecil & Carr, 1988; Cousland, 2007).

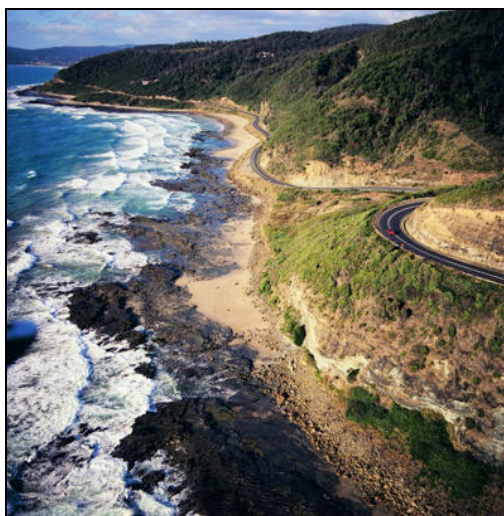


Figure 2 Great Ocean Road aerial view (Australia-trips.info website).

2. Transport and Tourism

If sea communications were dangerous, those by land were almost non-existent until the mid-nineteenth century as the terrain was so difficult. The few routes through the Otways to the coast were steep and circuitous. Visitors began coming to the area for recreation from the 1860s and by the late nineteenth century, places such as Lorne and Apollo Bay became popular destinations for Melbourne's wealthier residents who came to bathe in the sheltered waters, fish, and walk in the forest. Rudyard Kipling, who spent a short time in Australia during 1891, visited Lorne and Apollo Bay, calling the latter, "Paradise", and was inspired to make reference to them in his poem, "The Flowers". Other places along the coast such as Jan Juc and Swampy Creek (Anglesea), closer to Geelong, were also becoming popular as word of their beauty spread, with businessmen and farmers starting to build holiday houses from the 1880s. Yet, there was no land route to connect the developing coastal resorts. Access to Apollo Bay required travelling along the beach over sand, shingle and jagged rocks to cross creeks and rivers at their outlets. Around 1908 the idea of a coast road, to take full advantage of the scenic potential of such a route, was gaining popularity among local residents (Cecil & Carr, 1988). It was not until World War I, however, that serious plans for such a road began.

The genesis of the Great Ocean Road began late in 1916 as part of plans for repatriating Australian servicemen. Road construction and maintenance would be one means by which men could be gainfully employed and reintegrated into society on their return from the war. The chairman of Victoria's Country Roads Board, William Calder, suggested several potential new roads to the State War Council. Among these was a South Coast Road along the route that became the Great Ocean Road (Alsop, 1982). This road would later be invested with far greater symbolism.

3. Australia and World War 1 — Birth of the “Anzac legend”

Here, it is important to understand the significance of World War 1 in Australian history and culture. The defining moment of the war for Australia occurred during the disastrous Allied campaign at the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey between April and December 1915. The Gallipoli campaign was a monumental failure — difficult terrain and fierce Turkish defence meant that it deteriorated into a bloody stalemate and Australia suffered heavy casualties, with over 8,000 killed and more than 18,000 wounded. Yet, it became hugely symbolic. This was the first major campaign in which Australians fought as a part of the first Australian Imperial Force and were separately identified as a distinct unit — the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) (Davison, Hirst & Macintyre, 2001, p. 275).



Figure 3. Anzac Book cover by Frank Crozier, 1916. (Australian War Memorial ART 19665).

Gallipoli was said to represent Australia's coming of age as a nation. No longer merely a dependant child of Britain, Australia had made a significant contribution to the Allied war effort. The “Anzac legend” began with the war correspondent, Charles Bean, who, through his writings and images, portrayed the Anzacs as exemplifying the qualities of courage, tenacity, resourcefulness and loyal mateship. They were depicted as taller, stronger and better fighters than others (especially the British) and had a laconic wit, anti-authoritarian attitude and larrikin streak. These qualities came to be seen as defining national traits. The first official Anzac Day celebration took place on 25 April 1916, the first anniversary of the landing. By that time the term “Anzac” was widely recognised and imbued with a sacred quality as the Anzac legend was becoming firmly entrenched in Australian cultural mythology (Inglis, 1998). While enthusiasm has waxed and waned over the years, Anzac Day continues as probably the most sacred national day in Australia, which is otherwise an extremely secular country. Anzac is thus one of Australia's most powerful and enduring national foundation mythologies.

4. "Practical Patriotism": the "Anzac Memorial Highway" or Great Ocean Road

While some memorials to those who had fought and died in the Great War were built before the war ended, they usually comprised obelisks, columns, statues or honour rolls. The Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia and State War Councils resisted spending large sums on permanent monuments until after the war. Many also believed that memorials should serve "some humanitarian and utilitarian purpose" (Inglis, 1998, pp. 120-21).

The concept of a road constructed as a war memorial was novel, but the idea began to capture public imagination in 1917.² The *Australian Motorist*, Australia's first national motoring magazine, began a series of articles in February that year with the headline: "How to Preserve the Memory of the Anzacs — A Great National Anzac Highway", which envisaged a highway almost entirely encircling the continent, connecting capital cities (*Australian Motorist*, February 1917, p. 678). This and subsequent articles drew comparisons with America's Lincoln Highway, then in its formative stage, as a model for the idea of a road as a national monument and a space capable of perpetuating memory and facilitating contemplation.

In December 1917, the Mayor of Geelong, Howard Hitchcock, announced a scheme for the construction of the ocean road to be "carried out by returned soldiers as a memorial to those who had fallen" (*The Argus*, 4 December 1917, p. 7). Hitchcock believed that as well as providing employment for returned servicemen, the road's setting, beside the ocean, would be a congenial and health-restoring environment in which the men could consider future repatriation options and indulge in leisure activities such as bathing, fishing and shooting. The road would also: assist settlers in transporting produce; open up further land, including timber country, for development; and increase land values (Alsop, 1982, p. 10).

Hitchcock saw another important benefit of the road as enhancing the tourism potential of the region by facilitating motorists' access to beautiful ocean, mountain and river scenery, and the establishment of seaside tourist resorts. The idea of a scenic coastal road struck a chord with Victoria's Minister of Public Works, John McWhae, who also recognised the power of beautiful scenery in attracting valuable tourist traffic. He lamented the number of people who visited New Zealand each year in preference to Australia. Noting the coastal roads in various parts of the world which enjoyed international reputations, such as that from Sorrento along Italy's Mediterranean coast, he knew that if the beauty of the Australian coastline was opened up by good roads and facilities, tourists would be attracted from around the world (Alsop, 1982, p. 11). Hence, virtually from the outset, the Ocean Road had multiple aims and meanings. The Great Ocean Road Trust was established and chaired by Hitchcock to raise funds, employ workers and oversee the road's development in co-operation with the Country Roads Board and the Repatriation Board.

The *Australian Motorist* magazine seized upon the launch of the "Great Ocean Road Scheme" in March 1918 as signalling the "first link in the Anzac Highway" (*Australian Motorist*, April 1918, pp. 695-6). A further article in May urged the adoption of the name "Anzac Highway", as "carrying this title, a road would go down to posterity in the

same manner as the 'Appian Highway' and the more modern 'Lincoln Highway' (*Australian Motorist*, May 1918, p. 790). Although it did not officially bear that title, nor circumnavigate the continent, the "Great Ocean Road" scheme was initiated as "a Memorial to all Victorian Soldiers" (Alsop, 1982, p. 12).

The scheme received extensive and enthusiastic press coverage as patriotism ran high in the aftermath of the war and the nation searched for the most appropriate ways to honour those who had fought and died. The earliest news articles delighted in stressing the proposed road's character as a "practical memorial" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 February 1918, p. 13). This suited the characterisation of the "diggers" themselves as practical down-to-earth men of action rather than sentiment and ornament. Journalists declared that soldiers who have given their all "would not appreciate a memorial erected at great expense which would serve no useful purpose" (*Land & Transport*, May 1918, p. 11).

The road's proposed length of over one hundred miles was equated with the nation's anticipated "long memory" of the Anzacs (*Land & Transport*, May 1918, p. 11). The utility, permanence and longevity of the road were highlighted throughout its construction period as evidence of its superior status as a memorial in comparison to mere pillars, statues, obelisks or arches, which would soon decay, and whose purpose would be easily forgotten (*Cairns Post*, 20 December 1920, p. 7). These sentiments reflected post-World War I sensibilities of loss and obligation to honour the fallen in perpetuity (Hucker, 2013, p. 53). The initial plan was that bridges in each locality through which the road passed would be named after local soldiers and that trees and landscaping would also personalise the memorial, connecting sites to particular individuals, but this did not eventuate.

5. Landscape and Memory

Simon Schama (1995, p. 7) argues that "landscape is a work of the mind. Its scenery is built up as much from strata of memory as from layers of rock". Schama's thesis explores the way in which cultures view landscapes according to complex memories, myths and meanings particular to that culture. Although "diggers" worked on the road, in constructing the Great Ocean Road as a memorial to the Anzacs, memory, mythology and emotion had to be imposed to a large extent upon a landscape not directly linked to the events of World War I. Links were made, often retrospectively, between the experiences of the returned soldiers in building the road and aspects of the Anzac legend.

In the years immediately following the war it became apparent that many returned servicemen bore mental and emotional as well as physical scars and did not fit the image of the heroic Anzac constructed by Bean and others. Moreover, authorities feared the potential threat they posed for social unrest unless they could be gainfully employed and rehabilitated. The Great Ocean Road project ideally suited that task and continued to provide work for unemployed diggers in the crisis years of the Great Depression. Howard Hitchcock associated the road's environment with restoring the men to a state synonymous with the mythical image of the Anzacs. He recalled:

I well remember meeting one party of seven men at the Geelong Railway Station....They were all suffering more or less from war strain, poison gas, and the like, and could eat little or nothing....Three weeks later I met them at work on the Road at Cape Patton...and I was delighted to see that the fresh air and the tang of the ocean had turned them from invalids into healthy, vigorous, sun-tanned men (Cecil, 1990, p. 170).

The men working on the road survey reported from Cape Patton in October 1918, and confirmed that “the work which is most congenial and healthy, is proving a great benefit to the party by way of restoring each and every one to their normal health”. These men were also tourists to some extent, indulging in leisure in their spare time: “The sporting instinct which permeates us all is amply gratified by shooting, also splendid fishing”. They looked forward to their next camp at the Wye River, seeing the “surpassing beauty” of Cumberland and Mount Defiance, then enjoying “the picturesque seaside resort” of Lorne, where their survey would finish near Christmas time. They concluded by endorsing the future potential of the road as a tourist route:

The party comprises men who have travelled almost all over the world, and in no part have any seen anything that would surpass the natural advantages which this coast lends itself to in the way of being one of the Great Ocean Roads of the World (*Mornington Standard*, 12 October 1918, p. 3).

The work itself was extremely difficult and dangerous at times. The road had to be hewn and blasted out of rocky cliffs, over steep escarpments and through forest, following the natural contours of the landscape as far as possible. Place names such as Big Hill, Devil's Elbow and Mount Defiance hinted at the obstacles to be overcome. The physical difficulties and dangers faced by the men in constructing the road were linked to the hardships and sacrifices they had endured in battle and to their character. Hitchcock declared in 1931 that the Great Ocean Road commemorated “the brave men whose spiritual ideals made them defy distance and defy death”. It would “stand as a memorial to persistent self-sacrificing effort” (Cecil, 1990, p. 141).

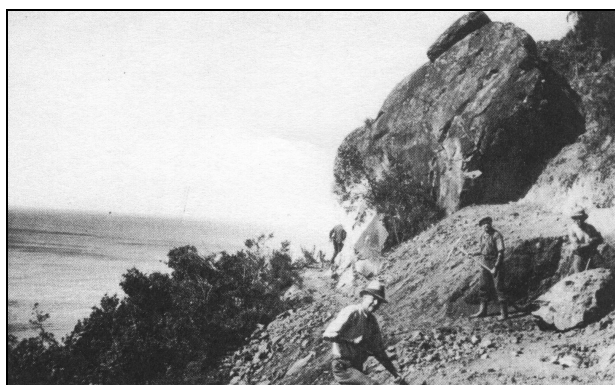


Figure 4. “Diggers” at Big Hill (Alsop, 1982, p. 30).

In 1936, George Broadbent, a passionate advocate for roads and motoring, reflected on how travelling the road could be an act of memorialisation. He wrote: "A road is symbolical of life. Its long reaches are symbolical of journeys to be done; of long marches on the field of battle; its hills of difficulties to be overcome; its shaded nooks of rest" (Broadbent, 1936, p. 30). Broadbent sought to exploit the sublime and spiritual qualities that were already associated with the road's physical environment, in order to heighten its emotional impact as a war memorial. The scenic grandeur and majesty of the location would surely inspire contemplation of great and heroic deeds.

Naming or renaming places along the route was another way in which the existing landscape could be inscribed with and incorporated into the Anzac legend. As survey and construction work was carried out, the work parties renamed principal sites after World War I battlefields. For example, Cape Patten became Mount Kemmel, Mutton Fish Cliff became Messines Ridge, and the mouth of the Grey River was renamed Suvla Bay (The Argus, 17 September 1918, p. 8). A stretch of road en route to Lorne was known as "The Somme" (Cecil, 1990, p. 128). Most of these names did not stick, however, and were not officially adopted. Those still in use are Monash Gully (named after General Monash), Shrapnel Gully and Artillery Rocks — clusters of carbonate in sandstone, resembling cannon balls — west of Mount Defiance (Stone, 1991, p. 41).

6. Memorial Structures

Permanent structures reminding travellers of the road's memorial role were few and did not appear until the 1930s. An archway, with the inscription, "Returned Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Great Ocean Road", was built near the toll gate at The Springs, but was demolished some time after the toll was removed between 1936 and 1937 (Lewis, 1999, p. 9). A new archway at Eastern View was unveiled in October 1939; however, it was dedicated to the memory of the late Major McCormack, who had been Chairman of the Country Roads Board and honorary engineer to the Great Ocean Road Trust during construction (The Argus, 26 October 1939, p. 2). Some time after 1939, tablets were added to the stone base of the Memorial Arch at Eastern View, honouring both Major McCormack and the soldiers and sailors who served in the Great War (Lewis, 1999, p. 31).

A memorial wall at Mount Defiance, unveiled in April 1935, featured two bronze tablets set in a stone parapet, 190 feet above sea level, commemorating both the late Alderman Howard Hitchcock and World War 1 servicemen. The siting of the memorial wall at one of the most spectacular look-outs along the road sought to unite the sublime scenery with the awe-inspiring memorial. The Argus enthused in its report on the opening ceremony: "The thunder of the surf on the rocks below, and the grandeur and beauty of the rugged coastline made the ceremony peculiarly impressive" (The Argus, 5 April 1935, p. 11).



Figure 5. Memorial arch near toll gate, c. 1936 (State Library of South Australia, B43968/75).

7. Memory, Motoring and Modernity

A memorial road alone could not realistically hope to attract vast numbers of tourists. Promoters of the Great Ocean Road knew that as well as commemorating the past it also represented the future. The road's memorial function faced competition from an increasingly dominant discourse promoting pleasure touring, facilitated by the modern technology of motor vehicles, film, advertising and the developing tourism industry. Internationally, particularly in America, roads were being constructed specifically as scenic touring routes and Australian promoters were keenly aware of such developments. They compared the Great Ocean Road to California's coast road — which became scenic Highway One, built between 1919 and 1937 — noting the enormous benefits brought to the state of California by tourist traffic (Southern, 2007, pp. 38-9). The Columbia River Highway, Oregon, built in 1921 and the Blue Ridge Parkway through Virginia, built in 1935 are other examples (Jakle & Sculle, 2008).



Figure 6. "Devil's Elbow", Great Ocean Road c. 1922 (Cecil & Carr, 1988, p. 3).

Of course, the Great Ocean Road was not always as "great" as its name suggested. When the first section of the road opened in 1922 The Age's assessment was scathing. The "road" was little more than a winding, unsealed narrow track — a "tight-rope". The journalist described the daunting sound of the Southern Ocean heard from the "motor car crawling round the side of the cliff like a nervous insect, with nothing but a few inches of track between it and eternity" (Alsop, 1982, pp. 35-6). Yet, the element of danger added to the attraction for some motorists, and the article concluded that both the journey and the scenery were breath-taking. Increasingly, the language and imagery of the sublime were employed in promoting the road as a tourist destination. From the late 1920s, as the road was extended around the coast, the section near Port Campbell and Peterborough received greater attention, with its dramatic limestone rock formations and its history of shipwreck tragedies.

Promoters exploited the technologies of cinema and photography to full effect in advertising the road locally and internationally. The place name, "Cinema Point" recalls the production of a motion picture in 1918 to publicise the Great Ocean Road scheme and assist in fundraising. At the time it was described as "the most comprehensive film of its kind yet produced in Australia" (Cecil & Carr, 1988, p. 74). In 1923 C. R. Herschell from the Trust toured England and America, taking with him "over 5,000 feet of film depicting scenery along the Great Ocean Road" for exhibition (*The Argus*, 15 February 1923, p. 11).

When the final sections of the road opened in 1932 celebrations included an "amateur photography and cinema competition" with prizes for the "the best picture of the road, and the best picture taken from the road". Organisers assured photographers that they would "have an abundance of material in the grandeur and majesty of the towering hills and great gorges, the sweeping beaches and the profusion of wildflower bordering the Great Ocean road" (*The Argus*, 8 November 1932, p. 11). In October 1935 *The Argus* announced that one hundred pictures taken on the road were being distributed to tourist bureaus and important hotels throughout Australia, as well as interstate and overseas passenger liners, to advertise the beauties of the Great Ocean Road, particularly among interstate tourists (*The Argus*, 24 October 1935, p.16).

Increasingly, promoters emphasised the route's scenic qualities. Many images of the road juxtaposed the "modern" motor vehicle against the backdrop of the natural environment, to which it and the road gave access. While the memorial aspect of the road continued to feature in newspaper articles during the road's construction, more often it was combined with tourism promotion. An advertisement for Lorne in March 1927 exhorted motorists to "travel the Great Ocean Road — a memorial to the AIF, and the best scenic road in Australia" (*The Argus*, 24 March 1927, p. 20). By the time the last section of road opened in 1932, the headlines emphasised "Beauty and Grandeur — Attraction for Overseas Tourists" (*The Argus*, 28 November 1932, p. 9).



Figure 7. Pioneer Tours charabanc at Lorne 1920s (Cecil, 1990, p. 83).

The road had an enormous impact on the growth of towns along its route, particularly Lorne, which enjoyed an influx of visitors year-round once the first section of road was completed. As well as individual motorists, group tours in charabancs and later, “road-liners” or “road-cruisers”, operated by Pioneer and other companies were popular. In the 1930s motoring guides, such as those produced by George Broadbent and the Shell Oil company, included the Great Ocean Road for the first time. They offered detailed route maps, scenic highlights, look-outs and side-trips, recreation options and tourist facilities at each location along the road. While Broadbent’s guides briefly mentioned the memorials at Mount Defiance, Shell made no reference to the road as a war memorial. The guides were filled with advertisements for accommodation catering particularly to motor tourists, such as Lorne’s Erskine House, which boasted, “16 Lock-up Motor Garages”, as well as service stations and garages providing petrol, parts and repairs (Broadbent, 1933, p. 64).

In 1936 the “Tourist Roads Act” was passed, allowing for roads of sufficient interest to be declared tourist roads, for which the Country Roads Board of Victoria would bear all costs. The Great Ocean Road was designated officially as a “tourist road” in 1936, further associating it with tourism rather than memorialisation. An article headed “Tourists’ Gateway to Oceanside Paradise” in *The Argus* on 14 July 1938 presaged the marketing of the Great Ocean Road in the post-war era.

8. Pleasure, Remembering and Forgetting after World War II

It might have been expected that the road’s memorial role would be revived and accentuated after World War II, commemorating those who fell and served in the second conflict as well as the first, but this did not occur. The road’s memorial function was almost entirely forgotten in the decades following the war. This was in part because of the altered cultural context and meanings for memorialising war. At the time of the road’s construction, war was seen by some as a purifying experience, “diverting attention from pleasure, leisure and material advancement to more serious, spiritual concerns” (Lake, Reynolds, McKenna & Damousi, 2010, p. 31). In the

aftermath of the Depression and another world war, Australians reacted against such sentiments; they wanted the good life. Importantly, a much more critical attitude towards Anzac Day developed from the 1950s and especially in the aftermath of the Vietnam conflict in the 1960s and 1970s.

A more hedonistic attitude towards tourism along the Great Ocean Road after World War II reflected the impact of postwar prosperity and material consumption, including private car ownership and leisure, in Australia generally. Tourism promotion placed greater emphasis on personal enjoyment, escapism and indulgence through the consumption of beautiful scenery, superior accommodation and cuisine. "Paradise" was within easy reach thanks to the comfort, convenience and speed of improved roads and motor vehicles. An advertisement for Trans-Otway coach tours in 1950 beckoned:

Say goodbye to your worries for eight perfect days and relax in the paradise of the glorious South Coast. Trans Otway's Luxury Roadliners depart each week on a pleasure packed journey along the magnificent Great Ocean Road to Lorne....There's fishing, hiking, swimming, golf, tennis or if you prefer...just plain relaxing (*The Argus*, 20 May 1950, p.8).

In the late 1950s, the section of coastline through which the Great Ocean Road passed, was often referred to as the "Riviera of Victoria", bestowing a sense of European sophistication on the "playgrounds of Anglesea, Lorne and Apollo Bay" (Australian Women's Weekly, 22 April 1959, p. 34).

Another key development in this period was the rise of beach and surf culture, and especially the beach holiday road trip. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, "Surfers Paradise" or the "Gold Coast" in Queensland, emerged as the quintessential Australian beach holiday destination, rivalling Victoria for climate and sophistication. "Surfers" also drew comparisons with the French Riviera, Miami and Honolulu in its tourism promotion. More Victorians travelled to Queensland for their holidays, especially in winter, than people from any other states, including New South Wales (Davidson & Spearritt, 2000, pp. 143-6). The Great Ocean Road's surrounds could certainly compete in terms of natural beauty and good beaches. Bell's Beach, near Torquay, first held surfing contests in the 1960s and eventually gained international fame for its unique surf conditions. The area is recognised for its role in the development of surfing and the surf industry in Australia (*Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*, 2011, p. 10). These factors ensured that the Great Ocean Road became known primarily as a touring route, synonymous with leisure and pleasure.

9. Recovering Landscape and Memory: 1980s and Beyond

In November 1982 the Great Ocean Road celebrated its "Golden Jubilee". A ceremony to mark the fiftieth anniversary of its opening included a parade of vintage cars, which travelled from the Memorial Arch at Eastern View to Lorne (Cecil, 1990). When the Memorial Arch was destroyed in the Ash Wednesday bushfires of 1983, the Country

Roads Board was reluctant to replace it, and only pressure by the local community ensured its reinstatement at the same location (Lewis, 1999, p. 31). While interest in the road's memorial role revived to some extent, particularly in the wake of renewed enthusiasm for the Anzac legend since the 1980s and especially in the 1990s, pleasure tourism continues to dominate.

Pleasure and sensory indulgence has become even more sophisticated, with guides published specifically catering to gastronomic touring. Greater emphasis is also placed on accessing an unspoilt natural environment and in exploring regions away from the roadside by bushwalking. The "Great Ocean Walk", which opened in 2005, is promoted as an accompaniment or alternative to driving the route.

Guides and interpretive material produced in the last twenty years reflect an increasing awareness and acknowledgement of the region's Aboriginal history. In the 1990s, for example, a Koori Heritage Walk opened through the Ironbark Basin, near Anglesea. The Aboriginal population suffered the devastating consequences of frontier warfare, disease, starvation and loss of their traditional lands. Only the place names — Massacre Bay, Massacre Point and Bay of Martyrs, west of Peterborough — hint at the violence that took place in this undeclared and officially unacknowledged warfare on Australian soil. No further explanation or interpretation of these place names has been revealed; however, such names were usually bestowed to record European victories rather than to commemorate the loss of Aboriginal lives (Lewis, 1999, p. 42). Recent research has identified at least thirty other massacre sites in the region, but none of the sites are publicly memorialised (Clark, 1995). In this respect, it is also a landscape of forgetting, or at least, selective memory.

Many guides devote considerable attention to William Buckley, a convict who escaped from the Sorrento penal settlement in December 1803 and spent over thirty years in the area, living with the local Aboriginal people. A number of sites in the vicinity of the Great Ocean Road have been named after Buckley, including "Buckley's Falls" and "Buckley's Cave", at the foot of what is now known as Mount Defiance. Visitors can explore the area traversed by Buckley by following the "William Buckley Discovery Trail" (Planbooktravel, 2006; Stone, 1991). Evidence of Buckley's movements is based primarily on his "memoirs", published in 1852 by John Morgan.³ Subsequent editions of Morgan's text include current place names. These works inform recent interpretive efforts, illustrating the textual superimposing of European memory on place. Tourist guides frame Buckley's story as an example of positive European interaction with the Aboriginal peoples and a tale of remarkable survival. His story is promulgated as the origin of the saying: "You've got two chances — Buckley's and none". Such "interpretation" also serves to overwrite a European narrative upon an unheard Aboriginal one, allowing no room for conflicting memories. Buckley's legend represents yet another layer of "memory" and mythology imposed upon the route. Such selective memory accords with the practices of settler colonialism.

Yet, perhaps there is some cause for optimism. Currently, the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee (GORCC) is implementing a renewal program — a three-year \$1.35 million project supported by federal government funding. The "Cultural Values" strand of the

project seeks to recover, interpret and manage the Aboriginal heritage of the region in an ongoing partnership with local Aboriginal groups.

10. Shipwreck Coast

In recent years, the coastline between Apollo Bay and Port Campbell was christened "The Shipwreck Coast" and features prominently in tourism promotion. It is the "memory" of these wrecks, with their sometimes visible remains, including wreck sites and graves, and the tragic, romantic stories they carry, that resonates most powerfully in this land and seascape, rather than the memory of World War I servicemen. The shipwreck sites engender greater emotional empathy or resonance with travellers as there is a closer connection between events and place. There is also a sense that the shipwreck coast is promoted as another aspect to be "consumed" by tourists as part of the whole experience of touring the road. Bill Bryson wrote of his trip along the Great Ocean Road in the late 1990s. After briefly acknowledging that the road was built as a "make-work scheme for veterans", Bryson concludes that "this stretch of Victoria is famous for two things: surfing and shipwrecks" (Bryson, 2000, pp. 140-41).

Conclusion

The Great Ocean Road is a landscape which embodies multiple layers of meaning and upon which purpose and meaning have continually been inscribed. It is a landscape of memory and forgetting. Conceived during World War I as both a memorial to fallen and returned servicemen and as a scenic tourist road, its memorial role became less well-defined over the long construction period from 1919 to 1932. Built at a time when motor vehicles were coming to prominence, the demands of the burgeoning motor tourism industry ensured that the discourses of pleasure and modernity overcame that of memorialising the war. That process intensified after World War II within a context of changing cultural assumptions regarding leisure, consumption and the Anzac legend. Despite attempts to inscribe memories associated with the Anzacs onto this route, and to evoke emotion and contemplation through linking the sublime setting with their awe-inspiring courage and sacrifice, it is the memorialisation of nineteenth-century shipwreck tragedies that dominates. This is largely because the shipwreck sites recall events directly associated with this place and bear tangible reminders of what happened there. Such memories are also perhaps more palatable for tourism interpretation than the sites recalling the massacre of Aboriginal inhabitants during colonial frontier warfare. The "forgetting" of uncomfortable aspects of the nation's past and the overwriting of more progressive narratives reflects the legacies and practices of Australia's history as a settler colonial society. Anzac Cove at Gallipoli, the battlefields of the Western Front and the Kokoda Track in Papua New Guinea, though not on Australian soil, are war memorial pilgrimage sites which carry far greater emotional symbolism for Australians than could ever be evoked along the Great Ocean Road — a route that has long been and will continue to be a prime tourist destination.

Roads and routes are part of the physical and cultural fabric of a nation. How they are interpreted and which meanings are privileged has important implications for understanding a nation's past, and hence for tourism development. The Great Ocean Road demonstrates the complex inter-relationships between landscape, memory, history and mythology in constructing its meaning and interpretation over time. Interpretations that recognise roads and routes as spaces where meanings are not necessarily linear, progressive or static, but overlapping, interconnected and at times, conflicting, can lead to a richer understanding of roads and routes as an integral part of the nation's cultural heritage, as well as the cultures that produced them.

References

Alsop, P. (1982). *A History of the Great Ocean Road*. Geelong, Vic: Geelong Historical Society.

Australian Heritage Database, *Great Ocean Road* (n.d.) Available at: environment.gov.au/heritage/places/national/great-ocean-road/information.html. (Accessed 20 July 2011).

The Australian Motorist, (monthly journal published 1908-1956). Melbourne: Edgerton & Moor.

Australia-trips-info website, (n.d.) Available at: australia-trips.info/Destinations/Vic/Great_Ocean_Road_Victoria_Australia/Great-Ocean-Road.html. (Accessed May 2012).

Bachelard, G. (1958) *The Poetics of Space*. Trans. M. Jolas (1994). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Broadbent, G. (1933). *Broadbent's Official Motor Guide: Melbourne to Adelaide, Incorporating Princes' Highway and Other Routes* (6th ed.). Melbourne: G. R. Broadbent.

Broadbent, G. (1936). The Great Ocean Road. Road of Remembrance. Soldiers' Memorial Highway. *The Argus, Weekend Supplement* 10 October, 30.

Bryson, B. (2000). *Down Under*. London: Doubleday.

Cecil, K. L. (1990). *The Great Ocean Road*. Anglesea, Vic: Anglesea & District Historical Society.

Cecil, K. L. & Carr, R. V. (1988). *The Roads to Lorne: The Story of Communication between Geelong and Lorne including that via the ANZAC's Highway*. Anglesea, Vic: Anglesea & District Historical Society.

Clark, I. D. (1995). *Scars in the Landscape: A Register of Massacre Sites in Western Victoria, 1803–1859*. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

Commonwealth of Australia Gazette. (2011). S53, 7 April.

Country Roads Board Victoria (c. 1964). *Country Roads Board Victoria 1913–1963 Fifty Years of Progress*. Melbourne: Country Roads Board Victoria.

Cousland, C. (2007). *Travelling the Great Ocean Road...A Journey through Time and Place*. Apollo Bay, Vic: Petticoat Publishing.

Davidson, J. & Spearritt, P. (2000). *Holiday Business: Tourism in Australia since 1870*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

Davis, T. (2008). The rise and decline of the American parkway. In C. Mausch & T. Zeller (Eds.), *The World Beyond the Windshield: Roads and Landscapes in the United States and Europe* (pp. 35-58). Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.

Davison, G., Hirst, J. & Macintyre, S. (eds). (2001). *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, (Revised ed.). South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Dedek, P. (2007). *Hip to the Trip: A Cultural History of Route 66*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.

Foucault, M. (1986). Of other spaces. Trans. J. Miskowiek. *Diacritics*, 16 (1), 22-27.

The Great ANZAC Highway: Victoria's Memorial to Her Soldiers Welding Practical Patriotism to National Service (May 1918), *Land & Transport*, 2 (13), 11-14.

Great Ocean Road Renewal Program website (n.d.). Available at: www.gorcc.com.au/projects/255/. (Accessed June 2012).

Hucker, J. (2013). Vimy Ridge, Canada's First World War memorial: restoration challenges of an early-modern structure. *Historic Environment*, 25 (1), 52-61.

Inglis, K. S. (1998). *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape*. Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press.

Jakle, J. A. & Sculle, K. A. (2008). *Motoring: The Highway Experience in America*. Athens GA: University of Georgia Press.

Johnston, A. & Lawson, A. (2000). Settler colonies. In H. Schwartz & S. Ray (Eds.), *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies* (pp. 360-77). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Koshar, R. (2008). Driving cultures and the meaning of roads – some comparative examples. In C. Mausch & T. Zeller (Eds.), *The World Beyond the Windshield: Roads and Landscapes in the United States and Europe* (pp. 14-34). Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.

Lake, M., Reynolds, H., McKenna, M. & Damousi, J. (2010). *What's Wrong with Anzac?* Sydney: UNSW Press.

Lefebvre, H. (1974). *The Production of Space*. Trans. D. Nicholson-Smith (1991). Oxford: Blackwell.

Lewis, J. (1999). *Shadows on the Landscape: Memorial Aspects of the Great Ocean Road*. Masters of Tourism and the Visual Arts thesis, University of Melbourne.

Mausch, C. & Zeller, T. eds. (2008). *The World Beyond the Windshield: Roads and Landscapes in the United States and Europe*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.

Morgan, J. (1852). *The Life and Adventures of William Buckley, Thirty Two Years a Wanderer Amongst the Aborigines* (reprinted 1996). Sydney: R. Schicht.

Planbooktravel (2006). *Great Ocean Road and Grampians, Australia's Top Touring Regions* (1st ed.). Sydney: Gregorys Publishing Company.

Schama, S. (1995). *Landscape and Memory*. London: HarperCollins Publishers.

Soja, E. W. (1989). *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*. London & New York: Verso.

Soja, E. W. (1996). *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Southern, R. (2007). *Our Road to the Coast: Behind the Building of the Main Road from Melbourne to Geelong, and on to the West Coast, 1912–1932*. Geelong, Vic: Geelong Historical Society.

Stone, D. (1991). *Explore the Great Ocean Road: Along Australia's Southern Touring Route Geelong to Mt Gambier*. Lilydale, Vic: See Australia Guides.

Veracini, L. (2010). *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Whisnant, A. M. (2008). The scenic is political: creating natural and cultural landscapes along America's Blue Ridge Parkway. In C. Mausch & T. Zeller (Eds.), *The World Beyond the Windshield: Roads and Landscapes in the United States and Europe* (pp. 59-78). Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.

Zeller, T. (2007). *Driving Germany: The Landscape of the German Autobahn, 1930–1970*. Trans. T. Dunlap. New York: Bergahn Books.

Notes

¹ Gondwana or Gondwanaland is the name given to the land mass, of which Australia, New Zealand, Africa, India, Antarctica and South America were once part, before it began to break up approximately 185 million years ago (Cousland, 2007, pp. 9-10).

² Landscapes as war memorials were rare. Exceptions include the American Civil War battlefield of Gettysburg, and Vimy Ridge, on the Western Front where part of the battlefield landscape was incorporated into the war memorial constructed between 1925 and 1936 to commemorate one of Canada's major military engagements of WWI (Hucker, 2013, pp. 54-5).

³ According to Morgan, a marine, public servant, publicist and editor, Buckley could not read or write. Consequently, the "memoir" was constructed from "rough notes" and conversations with Buckley, who was then 72 years old, and supplemented by Morgan's "personal acquaintance for several years with the habits of the Aboriginal inhabitants of the Australian continent" (Morgan, 1852, p. viii). Hence, the reliability of this source is highly compromised.