

though timid. I've learned to almost never give anyone a break in traffic, since they won't take it!" Where did he see those timid drivers, I wonder?

Finally, here is some home-brewed Aussie advice to visitors of the back-packer variety, who do more walking than driving, provided by *Cheap Accommodation Australia - Australian Sunrise Lodge*: "Probably most people have heard of dangerous and scary things one might come across when travelling in Australia...There are highly publicised dangers like: crocodiles, sharks, deadly "Sea Wasp" box jellyfish, venomous snakes and the deadly "Sydney Funnel-Web spider". To put things in perspective, cheap Sydney accommodation visitors should consider the following government statistics:

Accidental causes of fatality in Australia for the ten years 1984–1994: Spider bite 4; crocodile attack 8; shark attack 11; snake bite 28; and hornet, bee, wasp 31. The total of all these: 82, compared to PEDESTRIAN ACCIDENTS 4,973. So you can see that the most important time for cheap accommodation Australia visitors to take care is simply when crossing the road."

## Memorials for Road Crash Victims

by Colin Grigg

Cold statistics for traffic deaths are alarming enough. But for each extended family involved, the impact is more than statistics. It is a period of stressful grief. This grief is expressed in many different ways. There is a growing international tradition to place memorials at the very site where death occurred. Other people express grief in other ways.

At the conference "Senses of Place" held on 6-8 April, 2006, at the University of Tasmania, Dr Jennifer Clark, a former Harkness Fellow and current member of the School of Classics, History and Religion at University of New England, was an invited speaker. She has a special interest in roadside memorials and convened the initial International Symposium on Roadside Memorials in 2004. She manages the online discussion group, "Memorial Culture Network".

The paper was based on extensive field studies of hundreds of roadside memorials in Britain, Europe, Australia and New Zealand and collaborative work in the U.S.A. The construction of place in the presentation combined visual images, text from the memorials, with an analytical commentary.

The paper, which she presented, examined the ways in which memorials for the victims of road trauma transform the roadside from 'passing-through' space into specially marked and claimed place. Memorial makers assume authority to identify, individualise, separate, protect and sacredly observe 'spots' by the roadside especially dedicated to ordinary individuals.

In this process values not normally associated with road travel or the roadside are given to these created places. For example, particular mention can be made of the way in which roadside memorials serve a spiritual function and can act to mark a change in direction from the earthly journey to the heavenly one. This spot then acts as an ongoing focus for a whole range of eclectic mourning rituals that the public and government authorities are forced to respect. The roadside memorial marks the place where the dead can be sensed and where communication with them can take place. Here is something much more than a physical space - it is a created place with protocols that cover the metaphysical as well.

The illustrated Power-Point presentation particularly focussed on the process of transformation. It examined issues related to ownership of the place, control of the memorial act and the defence of the right to memorialise in public. It examined the life of the place and attitudes to it, understandings of it and interactions with it. The roadside memorial marks out performance space. The roadside memorial phenomenon challenges the functional purpose of roadsides and highlights the importance of recognising the site of tragic and unexpected death. In so doing, roadside memorials alter the physical appearance of the roadside and create debate within the community about places and purpose. In particular, they stimulate debate about public versus private space; the suitability of memorialisation and protecting the sensibilities of those who see it; hierarchies of feeling; and the role of subliminal communication emanating from these newly created places of significance. Areas of argument and dispute can be highlighted as separate and sometimes competing voices.

