

Hi-tech historian

Tony Malloy turned to technology to preserve old signs of the times, writes **Richard Conrad**

A YARN Deer Park web designer Tony Malloy read in *The Sun News-Pictorial* about 30 years ago inspired a hobby that has just won him a \$2000-plus laptop.

Malloy won a MacBook as first prize in Google Australia's My Maps Awards for creating a photographic collection of fading old Melbourne signs.

"I can picture the day sitting in Nana's kitchen in Shepparton when I was about 10 or 12," Malloy says.

"While eating breakfast, I read an article in the *Sun* — a short piece with a photo of an old sign atop a building — and the author made an impassioned plea to document these signs before they disappeared.

"It must have struck a chord because that simple idea stayed with me for more than 25 years.

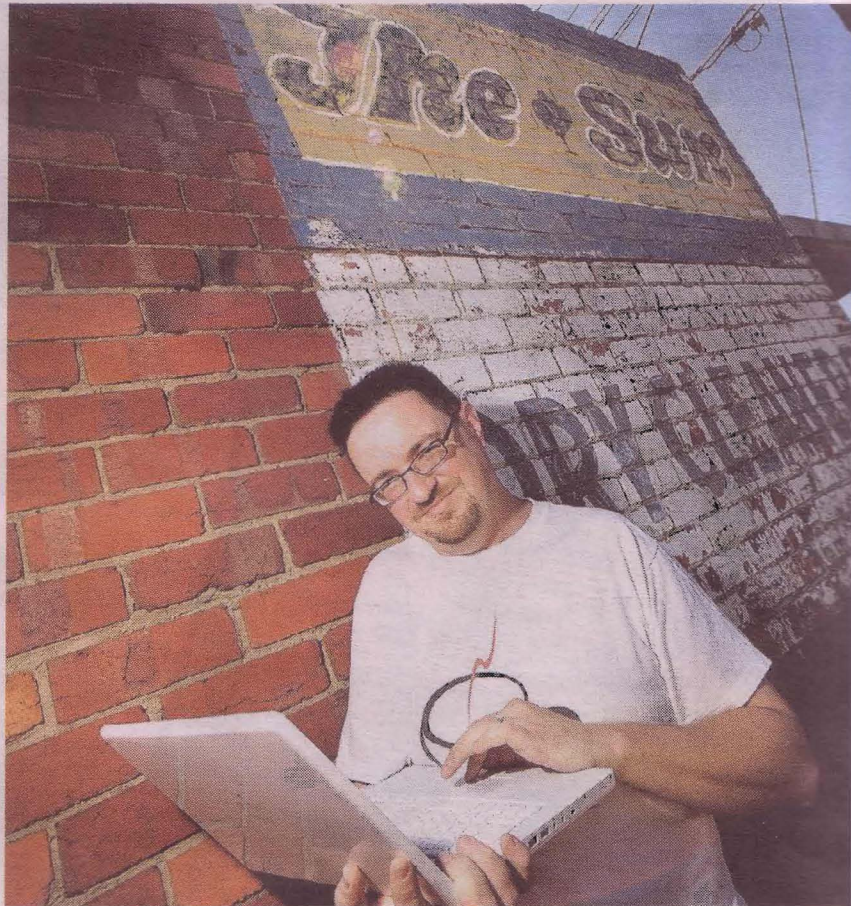
"Now, thanks to digital cameras, the internet and Google Maps I've been able to act on that idea and it all just came together.

"It may be a little late for many of the signs that were around when the original article was written, but hopefully it's not too late for many more."

Malloy says he now spends most of his life walking along Melbourne footpaths — particularly around inner-city areas — staring up at the higher walls of buildings, because that's where most of the older signs have survived.

There are now more than 100 photos of old Melbourne signs tagged on a Google My Map, *It's A Sign — Melbourne's History In Old Signs*.

Malloy has been assisted by a fellow



Sign post: Tony Malloy beside an old *Sun* newspaper sign at Kingsville South.

Picture:
CAMERON TANDY

he's never met, called Andrew, who has added about 30 photos to the map.

"The aim is for it to be an ongoing collection, concentrating on Melbourne — but it's set up so it can go nationwide or global," Malloy says.

The sign project is also online at a site called Our Fading Past.

links >
maps.google.com.au
www.ourfadingpast.com