

Retired Firefighters Association –May – General Meeting

Carlton Social Club, Royal Parade, Parkville

Wednesday 17th May 2006, 10.30 – 12.00hrs

Special Guest Speaker

Leading Senior Constable Peter Holland

A Member of the Major Collision Unit, Peter will give a presentation on how technology and procedures have changed over the years, when investigating the cause of motor vehicle accidents.

PRINT POST No. PP333964/0020

RFA Newsletter
If undelivered return to;
The Secretary
6 Wingara Ave.
East Keilor 3033

**SURFACE
MAIL**

**Postage
Paid
Australia**



**SALVATION ARMY WILLIAM BOOTH
MEMORIAL HOSTEL FIRE**

Ret. D.O. Les Gray recalls some facts and experiences on the night of the tragic William Booth Hostel fire.

The first exchange telephone call was to No. 1 stations watchroom about 2040 hours Sat. 13th. Aug. 1966 for a fire at the Salvation Army Hostel, Little Lonsdale Street. Simultaneously No. 1 Stns. Hose carriage and Combination Ladder, No.2 Stns. Hose Carriage and No.3 Stns Hose Carriage were turned out. Eventually as the fire unfolded 18 brigade appliances, 64 men from inner brigade areas and other districts, 4 Executive Officers, their driver/ orderlies were on scene attending the fire.

The building was of ground floor and five stories. Constructed of brick walls and iron roof, wooden floors, with internal stairways & external fire escapes at sides. The top 3 stories contained some 200 or more small cyclone wire cage like single unit cubicles about 7' x 7' x 8' high ceiling, fitted with a cyclone wire gate and a padbolt and lock (this was locked when an inmate left the building ensuring that his belongings were not stolen). The ground floor front contained a Dining room, Lounge room, Smoking room, Kitchen and Administration offices. A passageway separated these rooms starting at the front door and continuing through the ground floor. The internal stairway to the floors above also started here.

First on the scene was No. 3 Stns. Hose Carriage, Sub. Station Officer Ernie Scowan and his men ran out the first hose line up the external stairs to the fire on the 3rd. floor. Next was No. 2 Stns, Hose Carriage, Station Officer Jack Barker, myself, Fireman G. Brown and one other.

Unknown to us at the time the fire had been in progress for about 20 minutes or more before the first telephone call to No. 1 Station came in.

As the appliances arrived fire fighting and search and rescue began. In those days there were procedures but not as sophisticated as today. The job was too big then for an individual officer to manage. (Too big a building, the rapid spread of toxic super heated black smoke, so much happened within a short time, 20 - 30 minutes. On reflection no one Officer In Charge could have possibly



Front to back: Fm. Lionel Sleeman, S.O. Jack Barker, Sub. S.O. Les Gray (in helmet), S/fm. Jim McKenzie, Sub. S.O. Maurie Kane (in helmet), Fm. In white helmet assisting with victim unknown.

kept up with the movement of men fire fighting, search & rescue, bringing down 29 asphyxiated and one man burnt to death, and about 100 or so distressed men were herded to safety from the floors above mouth to mouth and other forms of resuscitation being applied in the passageway ground floor, and outside the building on the ground.

(Continued on page 4)

“GENERAL MEETING”

**Notice is hereby given of our next General Meeting to be held at the Carlton Football Club Social Club,
(Melway 29 G12)
1030 Hours, Wednesday 17th May 2006**

AGENDA ITEMS.

**Minutes of last General meeting.
President's Report.
Secretary/Treasurer's Report.
Guest Speaker: Leading Senior Constable Peter Holland, Vic Pol: Major Collision Unit
General Business.**

Please come along, bring your partner and have your say in the running of the Association. Join in the fellowship of your old friends and make new ones.

Lunch and beverages available.

**JOHN BROWN
SECRETARY/TREASURER
Ph: 03 9336 2492**

OFFICE BEARERS

President, Mike McCumisky
Vice President, Ian Fowler
Sec./Treasurer, John Brown

General Committee;

John Laverick
Ken McGillivray
Bob McNeil
John Schintler
John Wallace
Auditor; Theo Teklenburg

Diary dates 2006

August 16th. General Meeting
November 15th Annual General Meeting

Valē

Jack Cleave (MFB)
Col Davey (MFB)
Brian McMillan (MFB)

We offer our condolences to the families of these members who have gone on to a higher duty.

SICK LIST

Jim Casley	John McLoone
Ron Cass	Alf Powell
Bruce Gee	Graeme Simpson
Ernie Goodall	Kevin Sullivan
Terry Harman	
Clarrie Hart	
Ron Kennedy	

We wish these members a speedy recovery

Note: If you know of any member who may be ill please notify a committee member. We endeavour to keep you informed, but can only do this with your help.

Fire Services Museum of Victoria Inc

(Inc. – A0044465F) A.B.N. 32 047 130 364

SITUATIONS VACANT

Registered Motor Mechanic

Familiar with vintage and veteran vehicles, registered on CH plates.

To carry out inspections on a number of vehicles once a year for roadworthiness so that they can operate in compliance with Vic Roads and Association of Motoring Clubs requirements.

Re-numeration to be negotiated with the Committee.

Location:-

FIRE SERVICES MUSEUM -- WORKSHOPS

Champion Road, Newport.

Main working day is Tuesday or alternative days are Thursday or Saturday.

For further information contact Mike McCumisky on:-
H. 9808 1659 Mobile 0408 305 831

Written response to be addressed to:-
The Secretary,

Fire Services Museum of Victoria Inc

39 Gisborne Street,
East Melbourne Vic 3002
or by Fax (03) 9662 2907

Smile Again

An inventor went to the Patent Office to register some of his inventions. He went to the main desk to sign in and the lady at the desk had a form that had to be filled out. She wrote down his personal info and then asked him what he had invented.

He said, "A folding bottle."
She said, "Okay, what do you call it?"
"A Fottle" he replied.

She then asked, "What else do you have?"
"A folding carton" was the reply.
"What do you call it?"
"A Farton" he said with pride.

She sniggered and said, "Those are silly names for products and one of them sounds kind of crude."

He was so upset by her comment that he grabbed the form and left the office without telling her about his folding bucket.

Bob went to a psychiatrist. "Doc," he said, "I've got trouble. Every time I get into bed, I think there's somebody under it. You gotta help me, I'm going crazy!"

"Just put yourself in my hands for two years," said the shrink. "Come to me three times a week, and I'll cure your fears."

"How much do you charge?"
"A hundred dollars per visit."

"I'll sleep on it," said Bob.

Six months later the doctor met Bob on the street. "Why didn't you ever come to see me again?" asked the psychiatrist.

"For a hundred bucks a visit? Not me. I told my story to a bartender and he cured me after 3 beers."

"Is that so! How?"

"He told me to cut the legs off the bed!"

LETTERS

Sec/Treas. R.F.A.

Dear John

As an old Firefighter, I read with interest in your latest "Water Off Magazine", an excerpt from an Article written by John Chambers, relating to a fire at St. Anne's Hostel in 1964. John quotes "It seemed a hell of a long way to the top carrying 100 ft. of hose back then".

I immediately thought to myself, "I wonder how our modern female Firefighters would handle this same task".

Ps. I noted with interest the photo of the Weitering twins.

I was stationed with Bob at No.37 Stn. St.Kilda in the early 50's.

It maybe of Interest to members that his twin brother Ralph won the World Championship "Whistling Competition" in New York - I think in the 60's.

Yours Sincerely
Bill Bates (ex DO Retired)

NEWS FROM NEVILLE SMITH.....

Neville sure loves Wedding Cake. He has just got married again for the third time and he has declared it's for the LAST TIME.



Above: A solution to the High Rise Fire Problem

Hi John.

Sorry that I was unable to be at the Meetings last year, but last May my wife had a huge stroke while we were on holidays in Canberra, she was 3-1/2 weeks in hospital and had a big operation to save her life.

She is coming good, so I hope to be able to be with you in the middle of the year. Keep up the good work you do.

John Cannon

Fred Young Revisited

Recent publicity about Fred Young reminded me of a story I was told.

Some time in the late fifties Fred visited the old 44 station to carry out an inspection. At the time, day to day procedures had been dislocated because a new concrete floor was being installed in the engine room and the only access to the watchroom was by the window. Fred was a giant of a man and only just managed to fit his frame through the fully opened window.

When the time came to leave Fred forgot about the new concrete and stepped out into the engine room and found himself ankle deep in newly trowelled, wet concrete. The concreters became agitated but Fred remained calm and said to the watchroom man, "Ah well Johnny I may as well keep going," and took the extra steps across the engine room to exit into Hampshire Road. This did nothing to calm the concreters.

Phil Dunn

The Potato Patch

An old man lived alone in the country. He wanted to dig his potato garden, but it was very hard work as the ground was hard. His only son Fred, who used to help him, was in prison. The old man wrote a letter to his son and described his predicament.

Dear Fred,
I am feeling pretty bad because it looks like I won't be able to plant my potato garden this year. I'm just getting too old to be digging up a garden plot. If you were here, all my troubles would be over.

I know you would dig the plot for me.
Love, Dad

A few days later the old man received a letter from his son. Dear Dad,

For heaven's sake Dad, don't dig up that garden, that's where I buried the BODIES.
Love, Fred

At 4 a.m. the next morning, the Major Crime Squad and local police arrived and dug up the entire area without finding any bodies. They apologized to the old man and left. That same day the old man received another letter from his son.

Dear Dad,
Go ahead and plant the potatoes now. That's the best I could do under the circumstances.
Love, Fred

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to our new RFA Members. We hope you will enjoy our quarterly Newsletter. If you have any interesting stories about your time in the Brigade, or snippets from other organisations you have been involved with, send them to our editor, John Laverick. He is always looking for copy and space fillers. To those on the sick list, we wish you a speedy recovery.

Due to all the events on in Melbourne during March and April it is now proposed to have the RFA luncheon normally held at this time, at the Training College in September 2006. The details will be advertised in the August Newsletter.

At the February General Meeting, Rod Knowles raised the question as to whether the committee should submit applications nominating previous members of the MFBB to have their name put on one of the fire appliances. I said that the Committee would discuss this and report back. My apologies to Rod, after re-reading the covering letter and criteria from the Awards Committee and speaking to Ian Hunter, the

recommendation from Ian, was that the preferred method would be to forward any applications from the members via the Committee. This was the correct information published in the November Newsletter. The Committee has discussed Rod's comments from the last meeting and agree that applications be forwarded via the RFA Secretary on to the Awards Committee for consideration.

There are a number of people that have given years of dedicated service to the Brigade and they could be recognised by having their name on an appliance.

In the future we may see some well known and some not so well known names added to the appliances.

I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting. In the meantime travel safely.

Regards,
Mike

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT



At our February meeting, former long serving President, Don Brennan moved that long serving committee members, Bob McNeil, John Wallace and

Ian "Chooka" Fowler be made Life Members for their long time on the R.F.A. Committee.

Well done boys. These members give up a lot of their time and travel long distances to carry out their duties. This was seconded by Frank Churchill and passed unanimously.

New Members:

Brian Trembath, Kevin Vaughan, Dave Nicholson, Laurence Christensen, Jack Cooper, Bruce Gee, Bill Killen, Kevin Baird, Henry Brockmuller, Neil Shaw. During the Commonwealth Games the Fire Museum asked for Volunteers to help Members to open from 0900-1500 hours each day. Those who gave up their time were Geoff Annal, Don Brennan, John Brown, Russ Coulter, Graham Duncan, Ian Fowler, Ken Heddle, Brian Jackson, Fred Kerr, Ian Munro, Les Napper, Ron Rae, Keith Sanders, John Schintler, Ron Turner, John Wallace, John Williams. Thank you all for your great support.

The Museum normally opens Fridays 0900-1500 hours and on Sunday from 1000-1600 hours and it's well worth a visit. No. 1. Stn. still have a display on Friday mornings.

Once again, at our February meeting, the nominations for names on appliances failed to get a

result. The only name nominated failed to get a seconder. It appears that members as a group do not want to nominate anyone. As individuals, we did vote at the Union Luncheon for a former member for this honour.

On a sadder note, we have lost more of our members. The M.F.B. if requested, will send along an appliance as a token of respect. For a former employee, the M.F.B. DO NOT CHARGE for this request and will respond, providing circumstances permit. The person to contact is Commander Ian Hunter on 9662 2311, if for some reason, he is unavailable, the Director of Operations, Chief Fire Officer, Tony Murphy will authorise it. The Fire Museum can supply a Pump, complete with brass helmeted crew, but have to charge a fee, as they cannot afford the fuel and require time, as they have to arrange a volunteer crew.

FEES FOR THE YEAR 2006 ARE NOW DUE - STILL ONLY \$10.00 P.A.

At our next meeting, on Wednesday 17th May, 2006, at Carlton Football Club, our Guest Speaker will be a Police Officer from the Major Collision Unit, this will be most interesting, so try to get along to the meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Funds as at Feb. 2006:

Access Account: \$3361.22

Term Deposit: \$4549.68

JOHN BROWN SECRETARY/TREASURER

The first exchange telephone call was to No. 1 stations watchroom about 2040 hours Sat. 13th. Aug. 1966 for a fire at the Salvation Army Hostel, Little Lonsdale Street. Simultaneously No. 1 Stns. Hose carriage and Combination Ladder, No.2 Stns. Hose Carriage and No.3 Stns Hose Carriage were turned out. Eventually as the fire unfolded 18 brigade appliances, 64 men from inner brigade areas and other districts, 4 Executive Officers, their driver/ orderlies were on scene attending the fire.

The building was of ground floor and five stories. Constructed of brick walls and iron roof, wooden floors, with internal stairways & external fire escapes at sides. The top 3 stories contained some 200 or more small cyclone wire cage like single unit cubicles about 7' x 7' x 8' high ceiling, fitted with a cyclone wire gate with a padbolt and lock (this was locked when an inmate left the building ensuring that his belongings were not stolen). The ground floor front contained a Dining room, Lounge room, Smoking room, Kitchen and Administration offices. A passageway separated these rooms starting at the front door and continuing through the ground floor. The internal stairway to the floors above also started here.

First on the scene was No. 3 Stns. Hose Carriage, Sub. Station Officer Ernie Scown and his men ran out the first hose line up the external stairs to the fire on the 3rd. floor. Next was No. 2 Stns, Hose Carriage, Station Officer Jack Barker, myself, Fireman G. Brown and one other.

Unknown to us at the time the fire had been in progress for about 20 minutes or more before the first telephone call to No. 1 Station came in.

As the appliances arrived fire fighting and search and rescue began. In those days there were procedures but not as sophisticated as today. The job was too big then for an individual officer to manage. (Too big a building, the rapid spread of toxic super heated black smoke, so much happened within a short time, 20 - 30 minutes. On reflection no one Officer In Charge could have possibly kept up with the movement of men fire fighting, search & rescue, bringing down 29 asphyxiated and one man burnt to death, and about 100 or so distressed men were herded to safety from the floors above mouth to mouth and other forms of resuscitation being applied in the passageway ground floor, and outside the building on the ground.

A makeshift mortuary was set up in the dining room, East side of the passage way and another in the Lounge room, West side of the passageway, Firemen were endeavoring to resuscitate bodies in the main passage way, if they did not respond they were placed in rows in the dining or lounge rooms. It often occurred that ones given up for dead would move or cry out and of course the firemen would immediately attend to them.

I clearly remember the victims, had saliva and body fluids running out of their mouths and nose, most of them were smoke stained and unconscious, some had no dentures in, to be honest I did not like the idea of placing my mouth on theirs, F/m Lionel Sleeman working on an early rescued person said, "Pull your handkerchief out and place it over their face, push a dint in it where their mouth is and start working on them. Mouth to mouth

resuscitation was in its infancy, not too many men knew how to apply it. I didn't, and after trying I used the Sylvester manual resuscitation method instead. After this fire mouth to mouth and cardiac compression methods of resuscitation were drilled into firemen on a regular basis.

Some of the asphyxiated and unconscious men were found in their beds, in rooms, under beds, behind doors, at the head of the 3rd floor internal stairway. Eight unfortunate men were found in a toilet/shower block on the same floor, they had stood under the running showers and had wet towels covering their heads, they were apparently disoriented with heat and toxic gases, the shower block was only a short distance from the external fire escape door.

I can remember quite clearly a later word back was sent by S.O. Jack Barker, along with this was a request for Ambulances, would you believe that on this night the Ambulance Service was extended with calls, it was about 20 minutes or so later when the first arrived, every fireman administering resuscitation breathed a sigh of relief, "Thank God they are here" (it seemed like an eternity). It was comforting to see them with their Oxy-Viva resuscitators taking over from the exhausted firemen.

Due to the heat build up the victims bodies had sweated out body fluids and making it almost impossible for one man to bring them out of the building, their pyjamas or clothing just pulled off them like over ripe Bananas, firemen soon found working in pairs removing bodies fore and aft method the quickest and easiest.

As the appliances arrived on scene the officers in charge and their men acting independently of each other got to work up the external fire escapes and some up the internal stairway using hose lines off internal Millcocks. It was a difficult job as the power supply had failed or been switched off, probably by the brigade, this made search and rescue difficult, pitch black and tremendous heat and black toxic smoke. Some men had Proto B.A's. on most did not have one, most would grope along with extended arms, feeling cautiously with the back of their hands and with their feet, suddenly one would come across a body or group of bodies. The hand torches we used then were 6 volt battery acid type which soon ran down, so no light to

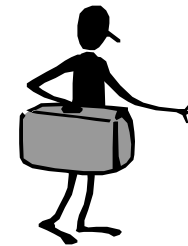
see with. Sooner or later your crew would team up with others doing the same thing.

All together approximately 100 men were led to safety by firemen, others having earlier found their own way out and assembled in a side laneway.. They were later taken to other accommodation, (the Gill Memorial Home and other Salvation Army Homes) having only the clothes they stood up in, 13 men were injured and removed to hospital.

The building was eventually vented out through the windows opened on the 3rd and 4th floors which made it a lot easier for the firemen to carry out their work. No electric/water operated exhaust fans in service then.

At one time I noticed that the Leyland Metz turn table ladder (it was made up) at front of the building. I do not know if it was used as a rescue or water tower. There was refuse from the fire above, broken glass and water everywhere on the ground, Firemen had propped up

Mouth to mouth resuscitation was in its infancy, not too many men knew how to apply it.



TRAVELLING WITH SILVER

New Orleans

Comments from a NYFD Captain I know well.

He is on loan to New Orleans after their tidal problems. There is nothing to do whilst off duty, 24 on and 24 off, so they spend their time helping New Orleans Firefighters clean up their homes, cutting trees etc.

- Sixty thousand homes condemned.
- Firefighters and Police paid \$7.00 per hour.
- A Captain in both services paid \$14.00 per hour, which leads to corruption on a large scale.
- The bodies in the water are all retrieved, but downtown there has been no garbage collection, the stench was worse than the Trade Centre.

Florida

Ex Batt. Chief on his annual 6 weeks away from New York's winter reports the results of the cyclone 2 years ago are still very evident.

The reason is supplies are now not made locally, they come in from China and there is a real shortage of tradesmen. (Doesn't this sound a little familiar?)

Pacific Islands

Anyone contemplating a Pacific Island holiday with wheel chair bound partners?

If so, ring Silver on 9715 1490 for a run down on wheel chair conditions in Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu, French Polynesia, Samoa, Cook Islands, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.

Silver

What Retired People Do (According to Silver)

Working people frequently ask retired people what they do to make their day interesting.

Well, for example, the other day I went to Sandringham Beach and went to a shop in Bay Road. I was only in there for about 5 minutes. When I came out there was a cop writing out a parking ticket.

I went up to him and said, "Come on mate, how about giving a senior citizen a break?" He ignored me and continued writing the ticket.

I called him a Nazi B#@!*%d!!! He glared at me and started writing another ticket for having worn tyres. So I called a piece of Stinking Dog S@#t!!! He finished the second ticket and put it on the windshield with the first. Then he started writing a third ticket.

This went on for about 20 minutes. The more I abused him, the more tickets he wrote.

Personally, I didn't give a damn. I came by train.

I try to have a little fun each day now that I'm retired, it's important at my age.

Darwin Awards

Named in honor of Charles Darwin, the father of evolution, Darwin Awards commemorate those who improve our gene pool by removing themselves from it.

(7 March 2005, Vietnam)

Nguyen, 21, had been drinking with friends in Hanoi, when he pulled out an old detonator he had found. It was about six centimeters long and eight centimeters in circumference, with two wires hanging out. Because it was old and rusty, Nguyen said, it couldn't explode. His friends disagreed.

To prove his point, Nguyen put the detonator in his

mouth and asked his friend to plug the dangling wires into a 220-volt electrical receptacle.

Turns out Nyugen was wrong!

The victim had little time to reflect on his mistaken, or whether 220 volts alone could have been fatal. According to police, "the explosion blew out his cheeks and smashed all his teeth." He died on the way to the hospital.

Smile

We were trying to save money as the mortgage payments were pretty high. As you know I don't drink that much - maybe a slab or two on the weekends with the boys. As a cost saving she told me we couldn't afford beer anymore and I'd have to quit.

It was tough, but I agreed. Then I caught her spending \$65.00 on make-up and I asked how come I had to give up stuff and not her. She said she needed the make-up to look pretty for me. I told her that was what the beer was for.

I don't think she's coming back.

“FROM OUT WEST” (where it actually happened)

All fire services have their characters and the MFB is no exception. The MFB's "Western District" in particular had more than its share of these characters and fortunately, some very talented poets among them who were regular contributors (under aliases) to the newsletters of the time.

These poems and anecdotes reflected upon actual events that occurred both on the fire ground and to the Firefighters during their on and off duty lives.

Les Gray, who spent much of his career out west, has collected many poems and anecdotes from his time in the brigade. Les believes (and we totally agree with him) that these should be preserved for posterity, a heritage to be shared with the younger generation of firefighters.

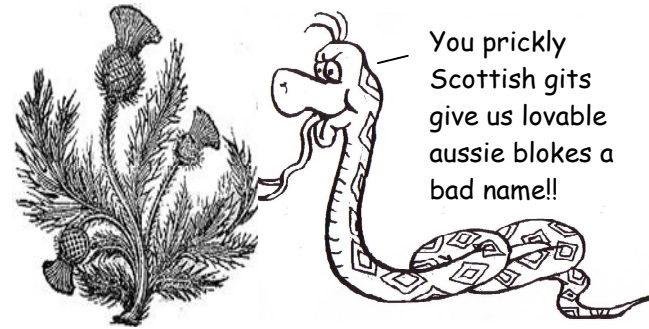
JOCK'S ANTIDOTE

He came from bold and Scottish stock, that would na fixed a hide,
He was a son of Sunshine--- since eer he start to ride,
We may not hope to see such men – as the future goes,
Those brave firemen of the MFB, the Scottish Sub. S.O.'s.

We were fighting a large 'grassy', in Lachlan Road near School,
Using Knapsacks and our beaters – sticking to golden rule,
Of keeping on the burnt stuff, for there's nought so grim and dire,
Of seeing ones Hose Carriage well alight by fire!

The job was nearly over, mopping up with broom and rake,
When Jock was heard to holla, "I'VE BEEN BITTEN BY A SNAKE!"
The panic was in order --- it's the truth you can rely,
Even used Alf Powell's small trouser belt, as a tourniquet to apply.

Now Jock leaned back and rolled his eyes – 'E said "I dinna ken!"
"Why a snake will bite a Scotchman and not Australian men."
So we placed him in the "hose car" --- in his hour of need,
And raced him orf to Ospital at the utmost speed.



They took him into Casualty and placed him on a table, Les Gray said, "Jocka say your prayers – whenever you are able,
Say all you want to say old chap – all that's in your power,
Cos if it were a tiger's bite, you've only got an hour."

But like all fairy stories, we have a happy ending, And Jock's report to Mr. "P" to No. 1 is wending, T'was not a snake Sir, the report will read, --- this'll make you whistle,
I was bitten by my native flower – a bloody big Scotch Thistle!

P.E.A.K.

non-de-plume

Alias - Elwyn Ashley Kitchener Powell (Alf)
Jock Campbell (Sub Station Officer No. 44 Station)
Alf Powell (Senior Fireman No. 43 Station)
Les Gray Sub Station Officer (No. 43 Station)
Mr. P. (Chief Fire Officer Mr. J. Patterson)

your goal. No critical incident support and debriefings, you just returned to your station and had a cup of tea with your shift mates and got over it.

Firefighters, who took their turn on watchroom duty, were able to answer the phone and take a "Fire Call" from a member of the public. They would get the details correct because they knew their turn-out area after regularly riding the station bike around the streets testing alarms and checking hydrants.

How good were we?

“Abbo”

Back in the Days of Old

Back in the days of old when the science of firefighting was just "Guts and Water", with rotary pumps on open hose carriages, knapsacks and beaters for grass and scrub fires. No fancy helmets with visors, no gloves, no high tech uniforms that fitted comfortably when wet, no breathing apparatus for first on scene crews, just a handkerchief stuffed in your mouth to do the initial search, or you sucked on a wet canvas hose for the air that would percolate through it.

No O.H & S rules and regulations that prevented you from taking an experienced, calculated, risk to achieve

LOVE & DETERMINATION OVERCOMES ADVERSITY

This contribution is a "Good News Story" about the family of a member of the RFA who with his wife, are very proud grandparents, and parents of the "Churchill" family 5 children, 13 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren

Eighteen years ago a baby boy Steven was prematurely born to John and Debra Churchill who already had a daughter Catherine 3 years old. The impact on their lives of having a son and brother, who, due to the trauma of the birth was afflicted with Cerebral Palsy, was enormous.

At that time it was not known how much the affect of the premature birth and Cerebral Palsy would have on Steven's future life and even if there were to be one, All their aspirations and future dreams had to change and new challenges faced. Out all of this there was one certainty, he would be loved and given every opportunity to follow as "normal" a life as possible. The 24x7 love and effort and proactive action by John and Debra coupled with Steven's natural determination has brought him forward from babyhood to adulthood and can only be admired.

Stevens's disability severely affects the use and co-ordination of all of his limbs and he is confined to an electric wheel chair that provides his mobility and he requires assistance for his other needs. John and Debra's fight to have Steven included into mainstream schooling, following on his sister Catherine's path through the State School system in Broadmeadows where they live was not easily won. He requires a personal aide (carer) at school for his non- academic requirements. This relies on special funding through the Education Department and even when granted is given only on a yearly basis and each year the struggle begins again with no certainty of an outcome even though his ability is clearly demonstrated, imagine the stress this has caused!

The lack of function in Steven's hands and fingers means that physical tasks such as handwriting have been made very difficult. With the greatly increased workload required at V.C.E. level, this has meant an increased dependency on the use of computers to keep pace in assessment tasks and exams. However whilst the use of standard laptop technology has partly helped to reduce his workload, he is only able to type with one finger meaning that he required double the time normally given to other students in order to complete both assessment tasks and exams. In the case of his English exam for example, this resulted in him requiring six hours examination time in total, making for an extremely physically exhausting exam schedule.

Despite these limitations he is proud of his achievements at school, first at the Jacana Primary and then at Gladstone Park Secondary College.

In Year 10 he was awarded the Certificate of Excellence for English in recognition of being the highest overall achiever in English. He also received a Certificate of Distinction for overall achievement.



Above: Steven Churchill's natural determination and the devotion of his family has brought academic excellence.

In Year 11 he was awarded the Certificate of Excellence for SOSE that recognised him as the highest overall achiever in English, History and Philosophy.

In Year 12 (2005) he received the General Excellence Award making him Dux of the year level for course work completed prior to exams.

He was awarded the Strathmore Rotary Club Junior Rotarian of the Month Award in recognition of Outstanding Effort and Achievement following nomination by his school principal.

This year he received an ENTER score of 92.5 which included a 'perfect' study score in English of 50 and a score of 40 in Literature and has been accepted into Melbourne University, and he has chosen Bachelor of Arts as a lead into a career as a journalist.

Would you believe the same issues of funding for an aide have had to be battled again by his mother and father, but this time with Disability Services as his eligibility with the Education Department is finished, fortunately they been assured there will be funds available.

We are now looking forward to more 'Good News Stories' in the future.

Frank and Ellen Churchill.

Dementia Countdown For Boomers

Australian researchers warn dementia will become the next big health concern for ageing baby boomers, following a landmark report that predicts the incidence of dementia will triple in the next four decades.

Alzheimer's Australia national executive director Glenn Rees says as the first wave of baby boomers began retirement last year, the number of Australians affected by dementia was expected to reach the half-million mark in the next 40 years.

"The prevalence of dementia has increased 62% in the past decade and will be the number one cause of disability for our ageing baby boomer population ahead of cardiovascular disease, cancer and depression," Mr Rees said.

"The report highlights grave concerns about the current treatment and support of people with dementia and also paints a bleak picture of the fate of many aging Australians unless dementia is seriously embraced as a national health priority," he said.

More than 60% of patients in Australia's nursing homes and aged care facilities have dementia or cognitive impairment, yet only 6% of residential care beds are dementia-specific.

"Clearly, all aged care should embrace quality dementia care and the number of dementia-specific services should be significantly increased as soon as possible," he said.

The report, commissioned by Alzheimer's Australia, entitled "The Dementia Epidemic: Economic Impact and Positive Solutions for Australia", highlights the spiralling social and economic burden of dementia on an already under-resourced aged care system and the growing number of elderly Australians with dementia living without effective treatment and care.

Prof Henry Brodaty, of the University of New South Wales Academic Department for Old Age Psychiatry and chairman of Alzheimer's Disease International, notes that in 2002, 162,000 Australians were affected by dementia with more than 6600 of these aged under 65.

"Even though there is no cure for dementia, the need for early diagnosis is, and will be critical in improving the of life for people with dementia," Prof Brodaty said. To is GPs would need more access to specialist services and adequate remuneration.

"If dementia is detected early, people living with dementia and their families can benefit from early intervention programs, effective drug treatments, community support, long-term care planning, and ultimately, delayed institutionalisation and enhanced quality of life," he said.

According to Mr Rees, "Stigma and ignorance about dementia results in many people with dementia and their families and carers becoming isolated and

not accessing the support that is available in the community."

According to the report's author, Access Economics health analyst Lynne Pezzullo: "Within the lifetime of most Australians, neurodegenerative diseases, in particular dementia, will replace systemic disorders such as cardiovascular disease and cancer as major threats to Australian health.

"With an aged care system stretched to the limit, people with dementia and their carers are financially burdened, with carers currently providing 80% of the value of informal care without compensation," she said.

"However, as the dynamics of society change many demographers are questioning whether younger generations will commit themselves to provide the home-based care of the past, and consequently, the greater the potential direct costs of dementia."

In 2002, the total cost of dementia was \$6.6 billion, of which \$3.2 billion was in direct health costs, making it the most expensive mental health item in Australia. It is estimated that direct costs

associated with dementia will grow by 84% by 2011.

Dementia care was "caught between a rock and a hard place", Mr Rees said. Currently, it does not fit completely within either the aged care or mental health portfolios, both under long-term funding pressures.

"Unless a national coordinated approach is undertaken that involves inter-generational planning and acknowledges the need for health and aged care planning and spending to grow in real and relative terms, the fate of many elderly Australians will be uncertain - particularly for people with dementia complicated by psychiatric needs," he said.

"To protect the health system from a further \$3 billion blow-out in the next decade - and to allow people with dementia a greater opportunity for a healthier life - it is essential to have greater investment in research, more dementia-specific and well-resourced community and support programs, and early diagnosis and treatment to delay institutionalisation," Mr Rees concluded.

"Managing the challenges presented by dementia will be the overwhelming priority of health care in the 21st century."

Dementia Helpline: 1800 639 331 or visit www.alzheimers.org.au.

Source: Lifetime, publication of the Over 50's Association.

Enjoy Your Time of Life

Have a great day...SMILE, life is so short...

Old age, I decided, is a gift.

I am now, probably for the first time in my life, the person I have always wanted to be.

Oh, not my body! I sometime despair over my body ... the wrinkles, the baggy eyes, and the sagging butt.

And often I am taken aback by that old person that lives in my mirror, but I don't agonize over those things for long.

I would never trade my amazing friends, my wonderful life, and my loving family, those who have passed through... for less grey hair or a flatter belly.

As I've aged, I've become kinder to myself, and less critical of myself. I've become my own friend.

I don't chide myself for eating that extra cookie, or for not making my bed, or for buying that silly cement gecko that I didn't need, but looks so avant-guard on my patio.

I am entitled to overeat, to be messy, to be extravagant.

I have seen too many dear friends leave this world far too soon; long before they understood the great freedom that comes with aging.

Whose business is it what I choose! What I do, what I read or play!

Whose business is it if I am on the computer until 4 a.m., and sleep until noon?

I will dance with myself to those wonderful tunes of the 60's, and if I, at the same time, wish to weep over a lost love... I will.

I will walk the beach in a swim suit that is stretched over a bulging body, and will dive into the waves with

abandon if I choose to, despite the pitying glances from the bikini set. They, too, will get old.

I know I am sometimes forgetful. But there again, some of life is just as well forgotten ... and I eventually remember the important things.

Sure, over the years my heart has been broken. How can your heart not break when you lose a loved one, or when a child suffers, or even when a beloved pet gets hit by a car?

But broken hearts are what give us strength and understanding and compassion.

A heart never broken is pristine and sterile and will never know the joy of being imperfect.

I am so blessed to have lived long enough to have my hair turn grey, and to have my youthful laughs be forever etched into deep grooves on my face.

So many have never laughed, and so many have died before their hair could turn silver.

I can say "no", and mean it. I can say "yes", and mean it. As you get older, it is easier to be positive.

I know I care less about what other people think.

I don't question myself anymore.

I've even earned the right to be wrong.

So, to answer your question, I like being old.

It has set me free. I like the person I have become.

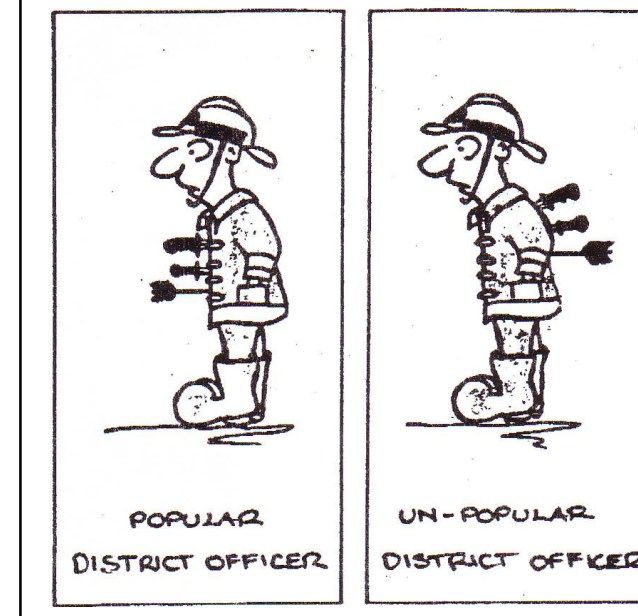
I am not going to live forever, but while I am still here, I will not waste time lamenting what could have been, or worrying about what will be.

And... I shall eat dessert every single day.

Author unknown!

Every calendar's days are numbered

The cartoon below was sent in by one of our members. Appearing in a publication a few years ago it reflected a culture of the time and we wondered if it has any relevance today.



GEELONG REUNION Dates For Your Diary



Monday 1st May
Monday 27th
November

Shell Club
Bacchus Marsh Rd.
Corio

Contact:

Bill Icke 5244 1822
John Wallace 5278 4734

TAKEN TO THE CLEANERS

“The Catman May - But Old Spots Will Never Come Back”

The above slogan was used by a dry cleaning firm in Glenferrie Road Malvern in the 50s and 60s. It supposedly indicated that their service was so excellent there was no need to worry about stains on garments not being removed. Some others could, no doubt, boast this claim, but their methods may have raised some eyebrows.

“Hey Fred, have you got a job for your van yet”? This query by Ken Croft referred to the fact I had just purchased a second hand Volkswagen Kombi van and was looking for a part time delivery round to fit in with my MFB hours. I replied in the negative and that I was still looking.

“Well, how about this, a dry cleaning firm in Chapel Street Sth Yarra is advertising for drivers and vans, and seeing I have just bought a Matador van perhaps we could work this one between us.”

After more discussion we agreed to meet the owner on the following Monday morning. It was at that meeting that Ken and I were let into the “Grand Plan.” We were to go with a driver in his van and pick up dry cleaning at houses which acted as agents for our “Friend.” Whilst articles were being picked up, Ken and I were dropped off at adjoining streets to try and talk more people into becoming agents in their streets.

At about 3pm, with a van half full with clothing and quite a few agents signed up, we returned back to the shop in Chapel Street and unloaded the clothing into the respective bins. One of the agents had given me a pleated skirt to return with rather a large stain, about the size of a matchbox, which had not been removed on a previous pick up.

“The Boss” aggressively plucked the skirt from my hand and commenced to rave and rant about “Some bitches being hard to please.” He yelled out, “Charlie, get the get the Bloody Dome.” Charlie reappeared with the Dome, a wooden dolly about the shape and size of an infants head, and he clamped this into a vise on the bench.

The stain had certainly disappeared but so had the material which had housed it.

The boss placed the stained area of the skirt over the top, sprayed it with a liquid and then commenced to scrub with a wire brush, quite vigorously for a short time. He removed the garment and inspected same. Well, the stain had certainly disappeared but so had the material which had housed it.

“I think you’ve rubbed it a bit hard” said Charlie, and this was greeted by a torrent of abuse by the boss. We expressed our concerns re the treatment and were responded to with the inane comment, “Well mate, some spots are more stubborn than others.”

We both couldn’t see the logic in this remark, so we said we would not be joining his little scheme and we would like our fifty quid back which we had paid that morning. Of course he came back with a host of reasons why this could not happen. So, after arguing for a few minutes, we departed and went to the bank and cancelled our cheques.

I was stationed at No35 Station Windsor, at that time and some months later we had a call to the same building in Chapel Street, Lo and Behold, it was now occupied by the “Salvos.”

“It’s the way we have in the Fire Brigade.”
F. C. Kerr



Walter and Kathleen O'Shannessy - 60 Years Together!

Retired S.O. Wally O'Shannessy and wife Kathleen celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary last February.

The photo left, appeared in the local Mornington newspaper along with some comments from Wally and Kathleen about their life together.

They met at a Northcote dance and married soon after. Wally joined the Fire Brigade in 1950 spending 33years in the job till his retirement.

Now living in Mornington, Kathleen plays bowls and has been club champion twice. Wally plays pool and is the over 80 champion, “but he’s the only player over 80” added Kathleen!

We wish them many more happy anniversaries together.

NO NURSING HOME FOR ME!!!

About two years ago my wife and I were on a cruise through the western Mediterranean aboard a Princess liner. At dinner we noticed an elderly lady sitting alone along the rail of the grand stairway in the main dining room.

I noticed that all the staff, ship officers, waiters, Busboys, etc. seemed very familiar with this lady. I asked our waiter who the lady was, expecting to be told she owned the line, but he said he only knew that she had been on board for the last four cruises, back to back.

As we left the dining room one evening, I caught her eye and stopped to say hello. We chatted and I said, "I understand you've been on this ship for the last four cruises." She replied, "Yes, that's true." I stated, "I don't understand" and she replied without a pause, "It's cheaper than a nursing home." So, there will be no nursing home in my future. When I get old and feeble, I am going to get on a Princess cruise ship.

The average cost for a nursing home is \$200 a day. I have checked on reservations at Princess and I can get a long term discount and senior discount price of \$135 per day. That leaves \$65 a day for:

1. Gratuities which will only be \$10 per day.
2. I will have as many as 10 meals a day if I can waddle to the restaurant or I can have room service (which means I can have breakfast in bed every day of the week.)

3. Princess has as many as three swimming pools, a workout room, free washers and dryers and shows every night.

4. They have free toothpaste, razors, soap and shampoo.

5. They will even treat you like a customer, not a patient. An extra \$5 worth of tips will have the entire staff scrambling to help you.

6. I will get to meet new people every 7 to 14 days.

7. TV broken? Light bulb need changing? Need to have the mattress replaced? No problem! They will fix everything and apologize for your inconvenience.

8. Clean sheets and towels every day and you don't even have to ask for them.

9. If you fall in the nursing home and break a hip, you are on Medicare. If you fall and break a hip on the Princess ship, they will upgrade you to a suite for the rest of your life.

Now hold on for the best! Do you want to see South America, the Panama Canal, Tahiti, Australia, New Zealand, Asia or name where you want to go? Princess will have a ship ready to go. So don't look for me in a nursing home, just call shore to ship.

BON VOYAGE

PS:

And don't forget, when you die, they just dump you over the side at no charge!

PUT A STOP TO TELEMARKETING CALLS

In the 12 months to June 2005 nearly 900 of the complaints about privacy received by the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) concerned telemarketing.

If you're annoyed at being interrupted at home by a telemarketing call, you can register your name on the Australian Direct Marketing Association's (ADMA) 'Do not contact' register. It has 500 member organisations, including banks, insurance companies and charities. You can request not to receive mail, email, phone and SMS communications.

Fill in the online form at www.adma.com.au or send your opt-out request ADMA Do Not Contact Service, Reply Paid 4054, Sydney 2001. ADMA's consumer information number 1300 792 664.

After submitting your details, it'll take ADMA 45 days to process your request, after which you should

receive less addressed advertising mail and fewer unsolicited telemarketing calls from ADMA member companies.

However, registering for the service won't stop you getting household flyers from local retailers and telephone calls from market research firms, real estate agents and local businesses, or from businesses that don't belong to ADMA.

Late last year the Minister for Communications, Senator Helen Coonan, released a discussion paper about options for a national legislated 'do not call' register. Under one proposal companies would face penalties if they phoned someone who'd listed their phone number on the register.

Source: *Australian Consumers Association's Choice Magazine, March 2006 edition.*

CANCER PREVENTION

At least one in three cancer cases are preventable and the number of cancer deaths could be almost halved by the implementation of effective cancer prevention programs.

More than 15,500 cancer deaths each year are due to smoking, sun exposure, poor diet, alcohol, inadequate exercise or being overweight.

Following is simple advice that will help you to reduce your risk of some common cancers.

The Cancer Council Australia advocates for a concerted and comprehensive national approach to the prevention of cancer.

Avoid tobacco smoke

The most important preventable cause of cancer is smoking - which directly causes more than 11,000 new cases of cancer each year. That is 12.5% of all new cases of cancer.

More than 7,800 deaths every year are caused by cigarette smoking.

Quit smoking - your health and your budget will benefit.

If you are a non-smoker, limit your exposure to other people's smoke.

Protect your skin

Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world with around 374,000 Australians treated for a non-melanoma (non-life threatening) skin cancer, and more than 8,800 diagnosed with a melanoma each year.

Over 1,300 Australians die from skin cancer each year.

It is important to protect yourself from the sun when ultraviolet (UV) radiation levels are high.

The Cancer Council Australia recommends you use all of the following sun protection measures:

- Stay in the shade, especially between 10am and 3pm, when UV radiation is at its strongest
- Wear a hat that protects your face, neck and ears
- Wear sun protective clothing
- Use a broad spectrum, SPF 30+ sunscreen to skin left exposed and reapply every 2 hours, and
- Wear close-fitting sunglasses to protect against eye damage.

Protect your face, but don't forget the rest of your body.

The most common sites for the deadliest form of skin cancer, melanoma, are the lower legs for women, and the upper back for men.

Have a healthy diet and exercise regularly

In Australia, more than 2596 of cancer cases and more than 7,600 cancer deaths are attributed to obesity, physical inactivity, poor diet and drinking alcohol.

Overall, these factors account for almost 19% of the total burden of all injury and disease in Australia, including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, arthritis and some cancers.

Early detection

Every woman who has ever had sex should have a Pap test every two years.

Be on the lookout for any changes to your breasts. If you do notice any change, talk to your doctor as soon as possible.

If you are over 50, have a regular mammogram.

Women aged 50 to 69 are eligible for free two yearly mammographic screening.

Be aware of the signs of bowel cancer: bleeding or a change in usual bowel pattern persisting for more than two weeks.

If you have any unusual bowel symptoms, see your GP immediately.

Men, check for any changes (a lump or anything unusual) in your testicles. Talk to your doctor if you notice anything or have any concerns.

Check your body for suspicious spots.

See your doctor if you have any new skin spots, or a spot that has changed in size, colour or shape.

If detected early, skin cancer has a 95% cure rate. The earlier a skin cancer is reported to your doctor, the more likely treatment will be successful.

Possible cancer warning signs

- Unusual discharge or bleeding
- Any unexplained change in toilet habits
- A lump in the breast, neck, armpit or anywhere else in the body
- New skin spots, or a spot or mole that has changed in size, colour or shape.

If you have any of these symptoms you should talk to your doctor without delay.

Source: Cancer Council Australia

Health Awareness

Several years ago I wrote regarding having blood tests for Haemochromatosis or Iron over-load. The symptoms of this complaint is lethargy and can seriously affect the major organs of the body.

Venisections, the taking of blood regularly, does help this problem. I did have very positive replies to that article.

I'm now suggesting, particularly at our age and the job we had we should be having annual medical checks.

If you are finding breathing a little more difficult - find out why. Shortness of breath may lead to a stress test for the heart or xrays and scans for chest obstructions or both. Request these tests from your doctor.

A breathing problem could be Pleural Plaque which can be related to asbestos exposure. At this stage it is

deemed not to be too serious. However, that is not to say it will not develop into something more sinister as Asbestosis and then Mesothelioma.

Most big law firms eg; Slater and Gordon, have a register. If you have been diagnosed with Pleural Plaque, or worse, **register**.

A very good Respiratory Physician is Dr Tony Lasse at Taralgon, phone 5174 5901.

There is now available a "Messomark" blood test particularly for this problem and are to be taken every six months to check any variation.

Not all pathology groups do this test, but Gippsland Pathology do. The cost is \$120.00 and at this stage there is no Medicare rebate.

Any queries, don't hesitate to call me on 9707 3083

Trevor Reed

WHO, WHERE & WHAT?

After a break in the last edition of 'Water Off' we continue the series with three new photos. We won't tell you who, where or what they are until the next issue of 'Water Off'. We are asking you.

What you can send us is something about the history of the subject; a different photo of the same subject; or a story (humorous or serious) about the subject. It's up to you.

We will then print the best replies that we receive in the next issue (space permitting), assuming of course, that the photos are identified correctly.

Many thanks to all those who responded to the last "Who, Where & What?" and we look forward to hearing from you again.

If you think you can identify any or all of the photos, you can either ring:

The 'Water Off' Editorial Committee

03 9808 1659

or send an email to:

firechaser@optusnet.com.au

FOR THE WINNERS.

The Editorial Committee of 'Water Off' will issue a certificate for all those who correctly identify the photos in the "Who, Where & What?" segment. The certificate will be in color, in A4 size and will be frameable. It will include the name of the winner and the month and year.

Good luck!!!



Who is this fire with his medal at the Police and Fire Games (Melb) in 1995?

Where is this fire?



What is the building burning in this fire scene photographed by Chris Maxwell?