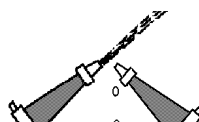




Inc/No:A16839F



“WATER OFF!”

NEWSLETTER OF THE
RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
(VICTORIAN BRANCH) INC.

May 1999

VOL. 3 No. 2

ARGUS 12-1-1914

PRAHRAN CITY HALL & “COLOSSEUM” FIRE

Barbara McCumisky continues with her historical series of significant fires in the formative years of the

In the short space of one hour on Sunday, January 11, 1914, the new City Hall and 'The Colosseum' Drapery Store in Chapel Street, Prahran, were destroyed by fire.

At 1.15 p.m. they were standing with no danger signal, save for a wisp of smoke wafting from one of the Colosseum's ventilators. By 2.15 p.m. they were both smoking heaps of ruin, in which fallen walls, girders bent like hairpins under the intense heat, and blazing piles of silks, satins and cotton materials, formed melancholy landmarks of destruction, in a vast fog of stifling dun-coloured smoke.

Involved in the catastrophe was the new portion of the Prahran Town Hall --- the City Hall, as it was called. Its roof caught alight at the height of the conflagration and fell in, the subsequent fire gutting the interior. Conway's boot shop, a hat manufacturer, a branch store of Edments fancy goods, the town hall caretakers cottage and a cottage in Macquarie Street at the rear of the Colosseum were also destroyed when the red hot walls of the Colosseum collapsed. The Telegraph Club Hotel escaped with some damage. An early



The gutted remains of the new portion of the Prahran Town Hall - the “City Hall”, as it was called.

total estimate of damage was put at 120,000 pounds, a lot of money in those days.

The first alarm reached the MFB at 1.20 p.m. A young boy was the first to notice smoke issuing from a ventilator at the rear of the building, near the packing department. It was thought however, that the fire must have been burning long before this time and gathering strength for hours, so sudden was the change from a wisp of smoke to the vast blaze which seemed to envelop the whole giant store at the same time. The windows at the rear cracked under the heat, and the warm north westerly wind fanned the flames. Even before the first detachment of the Brigade arrived from the

“GENERAL MEETING” (Note New Venue)

Notice is hereby given of our next General Meeting
To be held at the North Melbourne Football Club Social Club

Fogarty Street North Melbourne (Melway 43 B4)

1030 Hours, Wednesday May 19, 1999

Any member in need of transport from rail station please contact Secretary

Bring your Wives/Partners along and have a day out.

Our guest speaker is the well known financial expert

PAUL CLITHEROE

AGENDA ITEMS.

- **Minutes of last General meeting.**
- **President’s Report.**
- **Secretary/Treasurer’s Report.**
- **General Business.**

Lunch and beverages will be provided as usual. @ \$3 per head.
Drinks at bar prices.

JOHN BERRY
SECRETARY/TREASURER
Ph: 03 9431 2880

OFFICE BEARERS

President, Don Brennan
Vice President, Ian Fowler
Sec./Treasurer, John Berry
Public Officer, John Wallace

General Committee;

John Laverick
Bob McNeil
Ross Medwin
Ern Tamme

Auditor; Theo Teklenburg

VALE

Alex Aitken
Jeff Burzacott

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

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?

If you do, let’s hear about it. We don;t want your life story, but if you have an anecdote, be it serious, amusing, or just something you want to share with us. If you think it would be of interest to our members, send it in.

Don’t worry about your spelling or grammar, none of us are Rhodes Scholars, we can tidy it up on the computer. If you have a photograph to go with the story, we can scan it and send it back straight away.

SICK LIST

Kevin McCoach, Mystery illness of leg.
Jim Nevins, we wish Jim a speedy recovery.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Our Annual Reunion day was held at the Fire Museum at Eastern Hill on Sunday 19th of April. There were 165 members, their partners and guests in attendance. The weather was perfect along with the food (spit roast lunch). My thanks goes to our Secretary John Berry and to Fred Kerr, who, along with his fellow workers, organised a great day. Thanks also to Keith Tisbury and his crew for their displays and for giving rides on the aerial appliances.

On Wednesday 24th March a Social meeting was held at the Corio Fire Station. Senior Officer Barry Foss welcomed those in

attendance. After the meeting we were shown over the Fire Station before going on to the Shell Social Club for lunch. Further meetings are to be arranged at Ballarat and Bendigo.

Do not forget, if you are in Queensland on Thursday 29th July a Reunion Luncheon will be held at the Southport Yacht Club. For catering purposes please contact Peter Coulson on 07 5570 2912

Don Brennan
President



SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

I would like to start this report off with a quote from John Donne 1571-1631, 'No man is an Island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main' - end of quote. This quote helps reinforce the significance of industry associations of retired personnel such as the R.F.A and the opportunities we have. It is important that we remember how lucky we are to have a circle of friends from our years together in our respective services. These friendships have been forged out of the need for teamwork to protect us from the emergencies we have encountered. The -"help one another, we are family"- philosophy is just as important today as it was to our times in the services. As a member it is important to remember not only to help one another but also other less fortunate members of our society. I admit you will not get the old adrenaline surge, however, it makes sleeping at night better. An example of this can be seen in one of our members, who is in his mid sixties and has just taken on working with the physically impaired and in some cases mentally impaired persons. This bloke was and still is a practical joker and larrikin and to hear and see the personal reward he receives for this work certainly has filled the void left by his retirement from the service.

Union Picnic

The Committee and some of their wives again

acted as barbecue chefs and servers for the Union members at their Annual Picnic on Sunday 28th February (see photo page 5). The weather and venue were perfect and the many fires and their families that attended had a great day. This is our way of returning the hospitality afforded the many members of the R.F.A. who attend the annual Union luncheon for retired Union members. The other reason for this gesture is to maintain open lines of communication between the present and past members of the respective services. "WELL DONE TO ALL THOSE INVOLVED"

Communication

In the previous item I identified the need to keep open lines of communication, well the Association has approached one of the emergency services to help develop a better transfer of information. The request was forwarded over a month ago and to date we have not had a reply. This of course reinforces the point we are making, one can only hope this problem will be rectified.

Report from the Combined Council

The Councils Executive (of which we have a representative) and members have been over the last eight weeks working vigorously in an attempt to gain a better understanding of the State Governments Bill on the State Governments Superannuation changes and their impact to the 50,000 people it represents.

(Cont. over)

(cont.from prev. page)

In fact Mr. Graham Glass, the Director of Superannuation of the State of Victoria was invited to address a meeting of the Council on the 12th April, 1999. It was an enlightening talk and he is to be congratulated on his knowledge of the new act and the answers to questions raised. There are however, many questions that still need further clarification. One question and answer I believe is very relevant to the R.F.A. members is as follows:

Question: Although I am only repeating hearsay, there has been a threat to the Super of the Emergency Services. Is that right or wrong?

Answer: At the moment there are only two administrators in Victoria in the public sector. There is the Victorian Superannuation Board, and the Emergency Services Superannuation Board. The Emergency Services runs a scheme for 15,000 emergency services employees and we are not doing anything about that one. They can manage that scheme. The Victorian Superannuation Board runs two schemes for 300,000 people. We are splitting that into two.

NOTE: (QUESTION AND ANSWER HAVE BEEN CLARIFIED BY MR GLASS)

Medals of Service

In the President's report he made mention of the meeting at Corio, during this meeting one of the members present made mention of the E M E R G E N C Y S E R V I C E S COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL, available through Medals of Service. On investigation it has been found these medals are available from Medals of Service N.S.W., which is a private company. The Government does not issue them. If one is purchased, Government protocol must be followed, i.e. the medal cannot be worn on the same side as service medals.

General Meeting Venue

The result of the vote for location of the quarterly meeting is as follows, in order on ballot paper.

Fitzroy Bowling Club	38
Fire Service Museum	21
North Melbourne Football Club	71

The North Melbourne Football Club is the winner.
J. Berry, Secretary

Note: Wives/Partners are invited to attend and enjoy the facilities of this venue. **We also have Paul Clitheroe, the well known TV presenter on financial matters, as our guest speaker.** See notice of meeting Page 2 for address Items of interest from quarterly meeting 17/2/99

Business Arising
Item .1. Secretary/Treasurer reported to meeting on the progress of the memorial for deceased Fire Service personnel (Investigation has revealed a memorial book is most suitable). The R.F.A. have written and addressed a meeting of the Museum Board regarding a concept to meet the needs of all Fire Services (Country, Industry & Urban). The Fire Service Museum is currently carrying out a study to see if the concept is feasible. Final decision is still to be made.

Item .2. Financial Report
S.1 \$951 I.1 \$4,086.15

Item .3. Request from the Queensland Fire Service Retired members for information regarding the R.F.A. (Vic Branch). A motion was moved F. Churchill and Seconded G. Payne that this meeting of R.F.A. give permission to the Secretary/Treasurer to enter into dialogue with the Secretary of the aforementioned. Motion carried.

Item .4. Secretary reported on a request from F.R.G. Financial Resources Group to give a presentation at one of our meetings. A motion was moved T. Trotman Seconded J. Schintler that this meeting of the R.F.A. approve said request and the Secretary arrange same. Motion carried.

Item .5. Member P.Lang, Treasurer/ Membership Officer Retired State Employees (Vic) Inc. gave a report to the meeting on the Superannuants activities, including reports from memberships they have with various other groups.

Item .6. Secretary J. Berry gave a report on the activities of the Combined Council of Associations of State Retirees of (Vic) Inc. Meeting closed 11.55

TRUSTING THIS NEWSLETTER FINDS YOU ALL FIT AND WELL. I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ALL WITH YOUR WIVES/PARTNERS AT OUR NEXT MEETING 19th May, 1999 AT THE NORTH



RFA Committee Members demonstrating their skills from left to right - John Berry, Don Brennan, Ian Fowler, John Laverick and Bob McNeil. Not shown,- Don Cameron who was handing out boiled lollies to the kids and chatting up

YOUR COMMITTEE AT WORK!

The U.F.U. picnic once again was the venue for the practice of the ancient art of barbecuing. And none are more adept at this than your RFA Committee. For the last three years, members of the RFA have made themselves available to act as chefs and servers. This is a small way of saying thank you to the U.F.U. Members who provide a wonderful reunion luncheon every year to all retired firefighters.

By us assisting in this way gives the hard working U.F.U. Social Committee members a chance to relax and enjoy the day with their families and friends.

The picnic was again held at the

WARTIME A.F.S. INFORMATION REQUIRED!

*Who can remember the A.F.S. and the people who served in this organisation during WW2?
If you have any information to give, Ian Munro would like to hear from you.*

During a project to research some of the history of M.F.B. Fire Station 42 - Newport, I have come across reference to the Wartime Auxiliary Fire Service Volunteers, which were attached to Newport, and many other M.F.B. Stations, between 1940 and 1945.

When most people hear mention of the A.F.S., if they know what the letters stand for, they usually think of those men and women who fought alongside, and assisted, the London Fire Brigade during the "Blitz" of 1940/41, and later became part of the National Fire Service, in the U.K. It appears that the exact same organisation existed here, but has been largely forgotten about, due possibly to the fact that there was no enemy action to publicise their activities. A similar, and complementary, organisation of volunteers, who operated alongside the A.F.S., were the Air Raid Precautions Wardens, (A.R.P. Wardens.) These people were more "visible" in the community, in that they enforced blackout regulations, and supervised the "slit trenches", and "Air Raid Shelters", that were apparently a feature of the war years, and are therefore better remembered. In the course of following up some information on the A.F.S., I have

discovered that the organisation also operated in country Victoria as well. The people that made up the A.F.S. were mostly men, who were either too old for military service, or were in reserved occupations (boilermakers, welders, electricians, doctors, etc.) In some areas, due to shortages of available men, (as was the case in the war materiel production factories,) women were enrolled in the ranks of both the A.F.S. and A.R.P.

This is a personal research project into this little known aspect of Fire Service History, and which when eventually written up, will hopefully lead to some belated recognition of those who trained to serve, but were never called on to use their training in action. If any person, or member of a Brigade, serving or retired, has any knowledge of the existence of the A.F.S. at their Station, or in their locality, I would be pleased to hear from them.

I can be contacted on 03 5275 3720,
mobile 017 944 241

imunro@mfb.vic.gov.au;
or munro@netlink.com.au

Ian.A.MUNRO
Senior Station Officer

INVESTMENT TRAPS

Over 100.000 Australians lost their money in fraudulent and illegal investments in the last ten years. Here is a review of the latest investment news from the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) and some tips on how to avoid investment pitfalls. For further information call the ASIC infoline on 1300 300 630.

Money doesn't grow on trees

An investment scheme aimed at creating tax benefits and marketed with the slogan "Money Does Grow on Trees" has been placed into liquidation.

AUSTIMBER PTY LTD offered more than 100 investors a share in a project to grow Tasmanian blue gum trees that would ultimately be sold as firewood. Ads and promotional material promised investors tax advantages.

ASIC found no trees had been planted and that false and incorrect receipts had been provided to investors to enable them to claim tax deductions.

Want to reduce your tax bill?

Towards the end of each financial year investment schemes promising to reduce your tax bill are heavily promoted. Tea tree oil, cattle embryo farming, macadamia nuts and Australian films are part of the long and occasionally weird list of tax-driven investment schemes. Many of them not only promise to reduce your tax bill but also offer high returns. Some schemes are illegally promoted door-to-door without a prospectus.

The tax benefits promised are sometimes dubious. The Income Tax Assessment Act disallows tax deductions if a scheme is set up purely to generate tax reduction rather than a long-term return. If the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) decides your scheme falls under this provision, you'll have to pay all your unpaid tax, plus maybe a penalty of up to 50% of the tax you owe.

To give investors more certainty, the ATO issues rulings that state whether specific investment schemes are tax-deductible. You can ring the ATO (see below for the number) to find out about the scheme you're considering. However, it only honours these rulings if the promoters implement the scheme in the way they've described it to the ATO. Even then, you may not get the promised returns. Most tax-driven schemes are high-risk - many will fail and you may lose your money.

Be advised

- Be especially wary of investment schemes that have tax advantages as their main angle. Your investment decision should always be based on the merits of the scheme itself, rather than just on tax benefits.
- Ask for a prospectus and get an independent adviser to explain the risks involved. This is particularly important if you plan to invest in an industry you're not familiar with.
- Contact the ATO on 13 28 61 or through its website (www.ato.gov.au) to find out whether there's a ruling on the scheme, and get your financial adviser to check whether the scheme was set up in the way outlined in the ruling.
- Alternatively - and especially if an ATO ruling doesn't exist - get an accountant to check the tax advantages.
- With changes proposed to the present taxation system, it may not be the best time to make tax-based investment

PERFUME - NOT SMELLING SO SWEET

If you bought your nearest and dearest a bottle of perfume for Mothers Day, did you wonder why it was so expensive?

France's Choice Magazine "*Que Choisir*" worked out where your money goes when you buy perfume.

The perfume itself was valued at about 2% of the retail price, 30% goes on marketing, 10% on

ENJOY YOUR BREAKFAST CEREAL!

Some breakfast manufacturer hit upon the simple notion of emptying out the leavings of carthorse nosebags, adding a few other things like unconsumed portions of chicken layer's mash and the sweepings of racing stables, packing the mixture in little bags and selling them in health food shops.

Frank Muir

Firemen saved woman in fire



Fireman 1st class Frank Churchill (left) and Sub-Station Officer Lloyd Hughes fought and won a ten minute battle yesterday to save the life of a young woman found unconscious in a blazing smoke-filled room in Lee St. Flemington. They smashed a window to get into the house and found the woman sprawled on the floor. In the opposite corner of the room, a kerosene heater had set fire to the wall which was blazing fiercely. They used mouth to mouth resuscitation for ten minutes after dragging the woman to a back porch, before she started to breathe.

This faded photograph and story from the Sun News Pictorial, circa 1963, was handed to us after it was found under some carpet in a house being renovated recently. It depicts a young Lloyd Hughes and an even younger Frank Churchill following their heroic effort in saving the life of a woman after pulling her out of a burning house. I bet there is a lot of history lying under old carpet and lino in homes throughout Australia, as it was the custom to use newspapers as underlay in the old days. We are told (from a reliable source) that Frank still follows this custom but uses \$100 notes instead of newspapers.



RACING TIPS From My Mate's Cousin

Our man has once again fallen upon hard times. After one of his tips was pipped at the post at a country meeting recently, he's taken up tree felling to make ends meet.

He got the job after spotting an ad for tree fellers in the window of a cake shop and thought it was going to be a cushy job as a jam spreader on the Swiss Roll assembly line with two other blokes. He found a couple of punters who backed the same horse and the three of them applied for the job. But when they were told that they only wanted somebody to cut down some trees on the bosses property the other two bolted leaving our hapless (and broke) hero standing there without so much as his tram fare home.

Never the one for missing an opportunity, he has been seen outside the local TAB selling bags of firewood off the back of his pushbike in order to

improve his financial status.

So far he has enough to buy a form guide and is now able to give us some tips:

Perforate;

The owner of this neddy had a job punching holes in lifesavers and loved the job so much named his first horse after his occupation. He then handed it over to a trainer named "Cerchi" who's out to make holes in the bookie's pockets.

Zaheem;

Called after someone of Middle Eastern origin and the trainer of Irish ancestry, John Meagher, (could he be related to a Doctor we used to know?). However, with a combination like that he can't miss.

Immigrant;

I don't know where he's migrated from but trainer, John Hawks, has given him a good feed, shown him which direction to run and now looks promising for his next start.

I have mentioned **Cheeky Trent** before but watch his form. If he gets a start with a distance of 1500 to 1800 metres - put your shirt on it! Trained by "Bart" Kelly.

Windsor Station, the store was spurting fire from all its back windows.

(Continued page 8)

The firefighters raced in through the back doors, dragging their hoses along Macquarie Street, a narrow lane at the rear of the town hall, running parallel with Chapel Street. The wind drove the flames right at the gallant men, but they battled on, the walls tottering above them, cracking with loud reports, as the cool jets of water hit the red hot bricks.

Crowds of people fought for front rank positions along the little street, and the district police did not have the numbers to hold Chapel Street and all its approaches and deal with the struggling crowd, which fell over the hoses and generally impeded the work of the firefighters. A strong force of constables was summoned from Russell Street headquarters and in a very short time, with the aid of some mounted police from the barracks, they had the crowd under control and had stopped the traffic in Chapel Street.

A few minutes later the headquarters contingent of the Fire Brigade arrived in charge of DCO. Wilkins. One glance at the men working in Macquarie Street showed him that they were in extreme danger. They had no hope of holding the flames inside the building. Two men had already been carried out unconscious from the smoke. Also the rear wall was in imminent danger of failing.

Mr. Wilkins ordered the men out immediately and had them play their hoses from the outside, in through the windows. The wall quivered and tottered, the firefighters just scrambling out of danger, when down it came. Tons of brickwork with a noise like thunder and a huge cloud of dust and cinders. The wreck lay right across the street and crushed the fences of the little weatherboard houses on the other side, the paint of which was blistering under the immense radiation of that great 'furnace'.

An old fire brigade tower stood over the flames, and at the top, through the thick smoke, was a figure directing a thin stream of water into the inferno.

Suddenly the wind veered around, and after a couple of uncertain puffs, blew strongly from the south. The flames rolled like a carpet down on the rear of the town hall. They swept aing the floors of the Colosseum, all the front windows now spurting fire and embers into Chapel Street. With a deafening crash part of the top floor wall and the verandah fell. The heat was incredible and the firefighters' uniforms started to smoke as they continued to man the hoses. Other firefighters turned their hoses on them to prevent them catching fire.

The telephone wires were very much in the way, and Mr. Wilkins ordered they be cut. The electric wires were similarly treated, thus reducing the risk of electrocution to the firefighters. The draught of the fire lifted up pieces of burning debris and

carried them some distance, igniting small fires at the Union Bank 200 yards away, and the roofs of surrounding buildings, which kept the firefighters busy.

The Brigade was pumping thousands of gallons of water per minute from the steamers onto a sea of flames, waves of which lapped the town hall. Then the north wall fell on the adjoining shops and that was the end of them. Edment's shop caught at the back, and at the same time, the roof of the town hall caught in a dozen places at once. The firefighters could not reach it properly and soon it was ablaze from end to end, the flaming pieces dropping on the ballroom floor. Something worse however, was to fall on the floor. Eaten by the flames, the whole roof collapsed, carrying with it a great V shaped mass of bricks from the east wall which plunged into the hall.

Long lines of hose vanished into the smoky passages of the town hall, the firefighters now concentrating their efforts on stopping the fire spreading further through the building or up the clock tower. It had already been stopped at Edment's shop, but only after the shop was destroyed. By a great effort, the next shop, Miss Macintosh's mercery store, was saved.

The firefighters from every quarter, sent streams of water into the patches of ruin where flames still threatened further trouble, and the water ran out of the town hall in little rivers, as the big roaring steamers forced the 100 ft. jets from the nozzles of the hoses. The library and picture gallery were saved and the old hall was not touched. Red hot bricks rained down on the adjacent police court and watch house.

One curious effect of the intense heat on the Chapel Street roadway --- or maybe it was the heat and water combined --- was that in front of the burning buildings, the blocks on the road expanded, driving in the cable tram slots, and closing them up as if a huge vice had been applied. The work of opening them up again, occupied the attention of the tramways men for hours.

At about 2.45 p.m. DCO. Wilkins considered he had the fire well under control. It was still burning fiercely in patches, but the outer areas were all extinguished, and the danger of it spreading had been eliminated. The streams of water sputtered and hissed against heated brick walls, and in the piles of dress materials, which had been the glories of the sale which had opened the previous week.

The remaining Colosseum walls hung at all angles. The south wall twisted and bent, leaned out over the roof of the Telegraph Club Hotel next door, hesitating as to whether it would drop 50 tons of bricks. In view of this, Mr. Wilkins ordered everybody to evacuate the hotel as it was in such a precarious position.

The only major casualty was a firefighter named Andrew, who while working in the ruins of the smaller shops, was badly cut by glass from a



TRAVELLING WITH SILVER

Not a very long distance away for this break and the prices couldn't be better.

Although the both islands of New Zealand are a must see in everyone's lifetime, the South Island is one of the most beautiful places on earth. The hub of the South Island is Queenstown where the locals are on a natural high. Dosed up on fresh air scenery such as Lake Wakatipu (you can make what you like out of that name), the peaks ringing the town and the lake. The locals pity you if you come from a big city.

The first thing you should do is board the red funneled early 1900's steamer "Earnshaw", which departs Queenstown Steamer Wharf for the lake crossing to Walter Peak High Country Farm.

On arrival you are ambushed by farm cooks who stuff you with hot scones topped with strawberries and cream, then off to the sheep dog demonstration. To the Aussie's this is pretty ho-hum, but to the Yanks it is great. The Aussie's can amuse themselves trying to pick the difference between the sheep and the Kiwis.

The last time I was there I saw the dogs being trained and when the whistle sounded the trained sheep ran into formation and left the dogs fighting. The slow talking Kiwi running the show said, "As a matter of fact, scientific studies have revealed that without any doubt the New Zealand sheep has a brain significantly larger than that of the average Australian. By the way, any Aussie's here? No, what a pity".

This trip only whets the palate for more and few travellers can resist a trip to Fiordland, to the west of Queenstown. They say there is plenty of Great White Shark here but I would have thought it to cold.

There are over a dozen fiords here and among them such names as Dusky Sound, Doubtful Sound and Breaksea Sound. But the best known and most accessible is Milford Sound. Milford is very hard to describe and I'm not easily stuck for words. One moment still and peaceful, a half hour later, wild winds and unbelievable deluges of rain. Sheer cliffs rising from the water and amongst the peaks there are glaciers and hanging valleys.

The most impressive peak is Mitre Peak, 1700 metres high. Everywhere rainforest fed by an annual rainfall of 7 metres. It is virtually uninhabited. That's enough water to wash the fibs out of Jack Neville's and Alan Boyd's mouths for good.

The Fiord is 22Klm long and to see it at its best you need to take a cruise on it. You will be joined by dolphins and seals on this cruise. There is a walking track from Te Anau to Milford Sound, it takes four days and is 55 Klm and you have to carry your own gear. My sister did it, but I wouldn't carry a tattoo that far.

On return to Queenstown there is still much to do. The Skyline Gondola up to the complex on Bobs Peak, the Shotover Jetboat, (I nearly fell out standing up trying to get a picture) and the invention from Vanuatu "Bungy Jumping". The most recent thrill combo is called the Awesome Foursome, a one day thrill package consisting of a Bungy Jump and a choice of three other adventure rides. One Kiwi couple who had done it said it was better than sex. Well for them it probably was. Baa!

Happy Travelling Silver

P.S. The other day I ran into Ian Sutherland down from Moama way. He looks pretty fit and said to say hello to both his friends. I also stoged him for

A STORY FROM THE BOROUGH OF CLUNES

Some years ago, the late great T.K.Johnson and his wife Barbara, invited some firies to his holiday house in CLUNES , a mid 1850's gold mining town .

A BBQ and cricket was to follow. Some of the people attending were CFO L. Lavelle, SO Don Cameron, SO T. K. Johnson SF Ken Bouchaud, FM Ron McDonald and their families.

Earlier, SO Don Cameron had visited the town and spoken to the lads at the local fire Stn.

About 1pm, with CFO Lavelle cooking the

chops and sausages and the girls attending the salads, a gentleman entered the yard and with a loud voice yelled " Where's this bloke who can get us all this hose." It was Alan Featherstone, Captain of the Clunes Fire Brigade. Everyone looked for a bit of grass to hide under.

CFO Lavelle took the Captain by the elbow and led him to the rear of the yard. I'm sure a deal was made.

Cricket was a screaming success.

Capt. Featherstone lost his fight with cancer Aug. 1988.

Anonymous.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

FIRE & EXPLOSION - STATE OFFICES - HORSHAM - 17 July 1971

At about 1030 hours on Saturday 17 July 1971, two Government employees went to the State Offices Building in Horsham, to remove an obstruction from the heating ducts in the plant room on the ground floor.

The Plant Room contained the circulating fan, oil fired boiler and water heating coils. All the equipment was shut down at the time. In the Plant Room an inspection plate located between the water heater coils and the fire isolating damper in the horizontal duct supplying the Second Floor was removed. Although the obstruction could be seen from this inspection hole it was not possible to reach it.

With oxyacetylene, a hole some nine inches by four inches, was cut in the top of the duct between the fire damper and the vertical section of duct. When the hole was cut, the obstruction, which was a piece of cane-ite, was broken up and removed. A section of iron was cut then bolted and riveted over this hole. During the oxyacetylene cutting, carbon dioxide (CO2) extinguishers were used to cool the ducting. At this stage there was no sign of fire.

The circulating fan was operated and smoke became apparent. The inspection plate in the duct was removed and flames could be seen in the duct, an attempt using CO2 extinguishers proved futile, the fan was shut down and the Horsham Fire Brigade were notified of "a small fire in the ducts, could somebody come around and have a look".

One of the workers went to the second floor to obtain the hose reel positioned there, when he opened the door into the second floor he was confronted with smoke, he turned on the light switch, which immediately triggered an explosion, hurling him down the flight of stairs. On evacuating the building the two workmen were showered by falling glass from a second explosion on the Second floor.



A heavy explosion has just shattered the State Offices top floor. Fire Brigade apparatus officer Les Martin (right), hoses the burning debris from the bucket of a State Electricity Commission travel tower. With him is SEC plant

On arrival the Fire brigade were confronted with an encapsulated fire within the ducts supplying each of the floors of the five storey building.

As the fire progressed vertically up the ducts, there were explosions within each floor of the building, gathering intensity as the fire travelled. This resulted from the products of incomplete combustion (carbon monoxide - CO) and combustible wood vapours driven off the internal cane-ite lining of the ducts, filling the office areas of each floor.

Thus the explosion on the third floor was of greater intensity than that on the second floor with the explosions on the fourth and fifth floor blowing out the glass walls and hurling office furniture, desks, filing cabinets etc, up to one hundred and fifty yards (150) from the building.

After the final explosion on the fifth floor the Fire Brigade were able to enter the building and extinguish the fire that had been contained within the ducts, there was some -fire damage within the

Kevin Stein is retiring

after more than 36 years of service to the CFA

- Date:** Friday 23rd July, 1999, 6.30pm
- Venue:** The Ivy Room, Waurn Ponds Hotel, Princes Highway Waurn Ponds.
- Cost:** \$25.00 Per person.
- R.S.V.P.:** Friday 25th June, 1999.
- Enquiries:** Peter lowe 03 5250 2945, Amanda Middleton 03 5250 3740, Melinda Stein 03 5241 3693, Mark Glover 03 5221 2755

ACTION'S CHARACTER COLUMN

Jimmy Edwards aptly named "The Reverend," how many of us over the years had heard the droning tone of 'Dearly beloved we are gathered here today' through the building and realised the Rev had arrived.

Normally stationed at old No 9 station, the Rev, like many others of the cloth, loved a nip here and there, in fact more here than there.

This can sometimes cause problems and in particular one commonly called gout that decided to inhabit one of the Revs feet. Not being much use at No 9 station in his condition our Dr Meagher thought the Rev might be more suitable for light duties at No.1 station. The Rev duly arrived and for many days mustered beside Car 94, the Leyland, with slipper on foot after which he was then banished to mess room duties.

After a number of days the shift became curious as to what this complaint looked like and why it involved so much pain. One afternoon shift, during the evening, we convinced the Rev to remove his slipper and sock so we could observe this problem. Well, here we were, most of the shift spread around in a circle with the Rev on a chair in the

middle of the mess, all looking at what I would have called the indescribable, a lump of meat, beetroot red in colour, twice the size of normal and you could see the foot actually pulsating and throbbing, one could only imagine the pain.

Now in those days, the then C.F.O. Jack Patterson's pride and joy was the speed that his boys could get that old Commer Commercial out the door. Of course to do that, the driver needed to be there first. Alas, for the Reverend at that particular time, on went the bells and there was the usual mad race to hit the pole well, including one S/f K.C. who, whilst good on a bike, was bloody hopeless on his feet. While passing the Rev, S/f K. C. managed to give the affected foot about the best drop kick ever seen with about a size 11 top boot.

A short time later when the shift returned, here, still sitting on a chair all alone, was a grown man crying with the tears still running down his cheeks using words that were not normally found coming from the lips of a "Reverend."

That night, gout or no gout, it sure took a lot of medicinal liquid to dull the pain.

RETIRE ED and Community Safety News

Visitors from Queensland

The Retire Ed Lecturers and the Community Safety Department played host to four Queensland visitors during the week of April 19. The purpose of their visit was to gather information about forming a Retired Firefighters Association in Queensland and establishing a RETIRE ED Program.

Ken Otto and Vic Horne, two Queensland Fire Service retired fire officers, visited with Noel Harbottle and Debbie Taylor from the Public Safety Unit of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority. They attended a RETIRE ED lecture delivered by Barry Puddy and a meeting with the RETIRE ED officers.

They were, very impressed with the quality of Barry Puddy's lecture and his ability to maintain the interest of the audience while delivering potentially life saving fire safety messages. The meeting with the RETIRE ED officers was a particularly lively one with our retirees sharing information on why they joined the program, what they enjoy about lecturing to their peers and how they pitched their talks to different audiences. The Queenslanders left with a feeling of confidence in their own ability to establish and deliver and similar program in their own

communities,

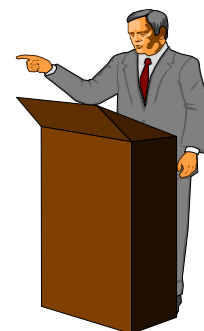
The Winter Fire Safety Campaign

June 1 marks the start of the annual Winter Fire Safety Campaign. The theme of this year's campaign is *"Stop the Home Fires Burning! Be Aware ... Be Alarmed...Be Prepared!"*

This year's campaign will be run jointly between the MFB and CFA, There, will be a number of components to the campaign including a TV commercial, several radio commercials and articles in the print media.

As well, the campaign will feature a *Great Escape Day*, one day during the campaign where all families in Victoria will be encouraged to put into practice their Home Fire Escape Plan. With smoke alarms now compulsory in all residential accommodation in Victoria, we are going one step further to promote the necessity of a carefully formulated and practised home escape plan in the event that fire strikes.

Watch for further information about the *Great Escape Day* in the media.



We were accustomed to mishaps and injuries on the job. Some were the result of carelessness or overconfidence but sometimes it was just bad luck by being in the wrong place at the wrong time. This story tells of an incident that occurred a few years ago where the firefighter concerned suddenly found himself -

ASLEEP ON THE JOB?



The above photograph shows a young Fireman Cyril Collard prostrate, after a delivery hose burst at the female coupling. The separated hose then flew through the air knocking Cyril's brass helmet off and striking him on the head, causing him to lose consciousness.

Cyril was on No35 Station's (Prahran's) Hose Carriage which had turned out for further assistance to aid No32 Station (Brighton) and No36 Station (Sandringham) at a second hand timber yard fire in Nepean Highway Brighton, early 1963. Bending over Cyril is District Officer Laurie Brown, the branchman is Tom Hyland, assisting the branchman is Tom Wilson, all from Prahran Fire Station.

The original Herald/Sun photo went on the wire service to different parts of the world. It was then "picked up" by "Fire" a Journal of the British Fire Services and circulated throughout Great Britain and the Commonwealth.

Cyril was a great athlete in the M.F.B., he played league football with Hawthorn Football Club, was a finalist in the Stawell Gift plus other athletic events. He was very good with the bat and ball at cricket and played a mean game of golf.

He suffered no ill-effects from the incident and continued his service with the M.F.B. until retirement.

It's the way we have in the Fire Brigade!

We all know that firefighters are made of the right stuff, but not many of them go on to win a VC. Here is one ex Melbourne fireman who enlisted and served in Gallipoli and France where he was wounded. After recovering from his wounds, he returned to the front and was mentioned in dispatches and won the Military Medal for displaying conspicuous bravery in action. Then came the action that won him the highest military award.

BORELLA, Lieutenant Albert Chalmers - VC

**26th Australian Infantry Battalion, A.I.F.
17th-18th July 1918 at Villers-Bretonneux:**

Citation: *For most conspicuous bravery in attack. Whilst leading his platoon with the first wave Lieutenant Borella marked an enemy machine-gun firing through our barrage. He ran out ahead of his men into the barrage, shot two German machine-guns with his revolver and captured the gun. He then led his party, now reduced to ten men and two Lewis guns, against a very strongly held trench, using his revolver, and later a rifle, with great effect, causing many enemy casualties. His leading and splendid example resulted in the garrison being quickly shot or captured. Two large dug-outs were also bombed and thirty prisoners taken. Subsequently, the enemy twice counter-attacked in strong force, on the second occasion outnumbering Lieutenant Borella's platoon by ten to one, but his cool determination inspired his men to resist heroically, and the enemy were repulsed with heavy losses. (London Gazette: 16th September 1918)*

These events - which are described with unusual conciseness for a citation covering a series of incidents - took place during an attack by the 25th and 26th Battalions. The 26th Battalion (says the Official History) had no less than 500 yards to go from its starting line ... to the first German trench, on which the barrage was consequently kept for the first six minutes. Here too, the curtain of shells was noticeably thin, and when Capt. Murphy's company reached the western end of the mound, a German machine-gun there continued firing through the barrage.

Borella dealt with this obstacle, passed over his real objective (a road over the railway) without recognising it (owing to damage by shell-fire)

then came to a trench full of Germans. This was actually Jaffa Trench, some 200 yards beyond the road. A sharp fight ensued, with bombs and Lewis gun bullets being showered down among the surprised occupants. Thirty Germans emerged from two dug-outs and were taken prisoner.

Towards dawn, more enemy reinforcements occupied Jaffa Trench, Borella called down artillery. This fire fell also on his party, as a result of their being ahead of their planned objective. They remained in position, however, and poured rifle and Lewis gun fire into the assembling enemy. This broke the attack for the time being, but at 9pm some 500 enemy began advancing under artillery fire. The official account concludes:

Three machine-guns firing tracer bullets concentrated on Borella's position forcing his men to keep low. The moment they eased, his party was up shooting and Borella fired the SOS, this time taking the precaution of ordering his men back to the true line of his objective. The artillery answered at almost the same moment. The Australian rifles and machine-guns again opened, at point blank range and in good light.... The counter-attack faded out like the first, and plainly with heavier loss.

Albert Borella was born at Borung (Victoria) on 7th August 1881. He was taught at Borung and Wychitella State Schools, and became a farmer in the district. He also served in the local company of the Victorian Rangers. In 1910 he went to Melbourne and joined the **Metropolitan Fire Brigade**. After three years service in the brigade, he forsook the city for the Northern

This story was tracked down by our intrepid newshound from the Peninsula, better known as the Black Prince.

QUOTE

The world is divided into people who think they are right.

(Author not known)

BROWN'S BITS

From the roving correspondent of the north-west of our fair city.

Mainly in Northern and Western Districts, we had a character who is larger than life. He has many nicknames, but we will call him the "Moth" because he had a habit of calling in for a beer if he saw your light on.

Now when in Western District, at his station he had a very nervous little fellow he liked to tease, from wakening him with a kiss to all sorts of tricks. He even let him on a motorbike where he promptly ran into the hose tower knocking himself out. During hose drill and trying to please the "Moth" he took off in a hurry and ran straight into the hose tower, again ironing himself out.

Our hero was not one to play a joke on. A standby officer, knowing of the "Moth's" phobia of spiders, brought in a red back spider in a little glass jar. When the "Moth" came in for the night shift the standby asked him how he could sleep in the flat as he caught three spiders. When our hero said he had never seen a spider the standby produced the jar exclaiming "two must have escaped." Not game to sleep in the flat he joined the firies for the night.

When told of the ruse the next morning, he promptly rang a garden supplier to deliver a metre of screenings to the standby's home and to drop them in the driveway.

A firefighter's wife who played a joke was inundated with phone calls as our hero passed the word around that she was a "Hot drop." Another friend who should have known better

was repaid by an ad with Billy Joel tickets for sale.

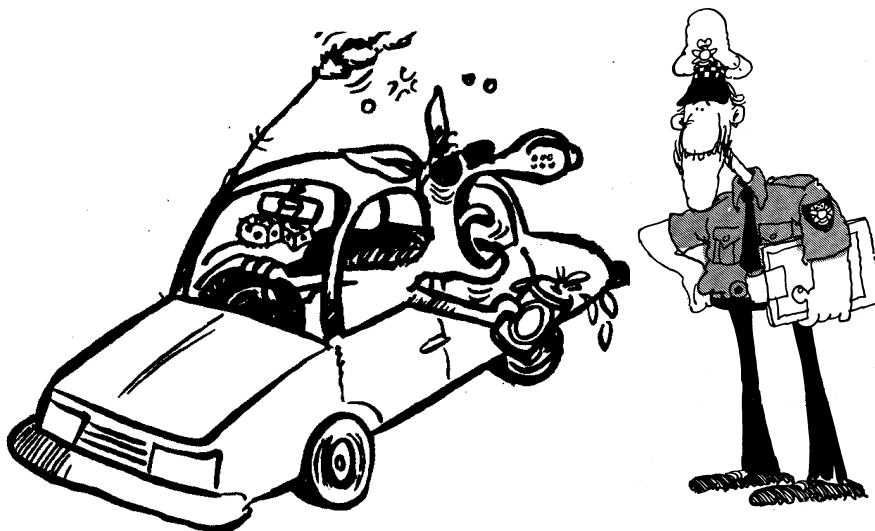
One of his favourite tricks was handing out Laxettes to unsuspecting Lodge Brothers during a lights out part of the ceremony.

He was caught out a few times. While washing his car at work and only wearing swimming trunks, a visiting Executive Officer arrived. Giving him a lecture about setting examples to the men, the Exec. left. A few weeks later, the same Exec. again called in, you guessed it, the same "attire."

They had a Police Officer who regularly called in to the station for a coffee and would then use the driveway to catch speedsters. On spotting one, his comment would be, "He's Ratshit", then take off after the offender.

He and another copper called in one day and on inquiring where the "Moth" was, they were informed that he had gone to the shopping centre to buy some lunch. One of the men on shift we'll call "007", said to "Ratshit", he'll be coming up the road at 100 KMH, why not give him a fright. So, "Ratshit" sent his mate down the road to hide in a side street and then follow him.

Along came the "Moth", doing his usual 100K's, and the copper followed him. As he turned into the driveway of the station the copper put the siren on. They tell me the "Moth" spoke ten to the dozen, mumbling something about a sticking accelerator pedal, trying desperately to



"But officer, I only went to get my lunch and on the way back the accelerator stuck and I couldn't see the speedo because the sun was in my eyes and!!!"

LETTERS

Re McT

A mate of mine suffered a similar greeting as McT.

A retired policeman, he returned to Glasgow for a holiday. On arrival at customs, he found a black man who said, "welcome to my country". The only thing that saved the black man was my mate's wife. Like McT, he has a very short fuse.

J. Holmes

Re Daffy Duck

Daffy was at 45stn on "B" Platoon where he earned a reputation as a mechanic by repairing old and worn out motor mowers. He had no formal training, but had a talent for all things mechanical.

George Tinkler had a VW ute which had seen better days, the engine losing power, stalling and running roughly. He asked Daffy for his opinion. Daffy listened to the motor for about 30 seconds and gave his verdict - burnt out valve and cracked head.

The VW went for repairs and when the motor was pulled down the causes of the problems were revealed - a burnt out valve and a cracked head.

Phil Dunn

Received a note from Cy Ammon, an old friend and colleague recently. Cy thanked the RFA for a beaut day out at the reunion lunch held at the old No1Stn, (now the Fire Services Museum). He also passed on some stories about a long past CFO which we hope to

BURNING OFF

The time was the wee-small hours of the morning, the place, an area of unfenced land and the object of attention was a rather large rubbish fire which could be seen from some distance.

Two Hose Carriages arrive, one from District Station and the other from an out station. As there were no water mains in the area and because of the size of the fire, the only means of extinguishment involved several round trips to the nearest hydrant to refill the mobile appliances.

The O.I.C. from District Station assessed the situation and informed the out station officer

"we will leave you with it". He then departed with his crew. This particular officer was well known for this type of action.

The officer from the out station, who was never short of a few words, did not appreciate being "left with it", and was not impressed with his fellow officer. He offered several comments alleging irregularities in his ancestry, personal habits and downright incompetence in the way he discharged his duties. After some reflection he informed his crew, "if that '.....' can go home so can we", and they departed.

The fire continued to blaze away - and, it can only be assumed, extinguished when the fuel supply was exhausted.



PHOTO MYSTERY SOLVED

The photograph depicting an unknown crew outside an equally unknown fire station, published in our last issue has been identified - and by the actual photographer himself no less.

We would like to thank all who responded, in particular, Allan Dingey.

Being the photographer, he was able to identify not only all the characters, their location and the year it was taken, but also who lived in the house behind the crew in the background.

The location, outside No.42 Station Newport, the year 1958. the crew as identified by Allan were:-

Back row, left to right, Tom Driscoll, Joe Barnes, John Dyble, John Wright.

Front row, Jock Campbell, Don

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