

"WATER OFF"

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



November 2014 Vol 18 No 4
Inc/No: A16839F

Valê Paul Riley

Paul Riley, 2 weeks before his death, spent several days away at Jamieson with some old Brigade friends. Dressed in his Brigade formal dress uniform, Paul produced a special bottle of wine to share with the friends. The wine, called "Strange Hermitage Bin 34", we were told, had a story in itself!
(Short tribute to Paul Riley page 7)

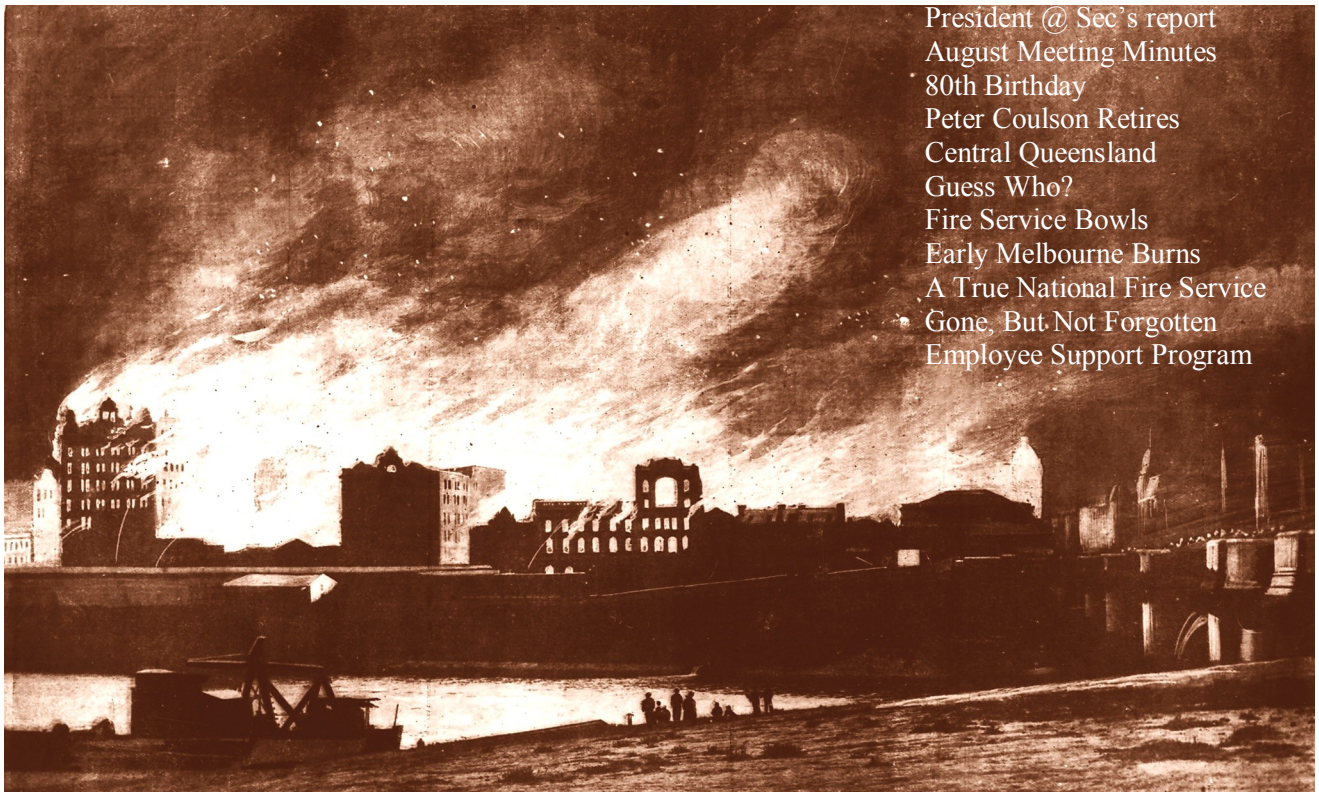
Photo; courtesy Wayne Bradborne



"Melbourne's Fire Heritage"

The Mutual Store and the Great Fire of Melbourne

Image; Fire Services Museum Victoria



Inside:

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“ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING”

Notice is hereby given that the next General Meeting will be held at the MFB Training College,
450 Burnley Street Richmond.

1030 Hours, Wednesday 19th November 2014

AGENDA ITEMS.

**Minutes of last Annual General meeting
President’s Report
Secretary/Treasurer’s Report
Election of Office Bearers
Guest Speaker;
General Business**

**JOHN BERRY
SECRETARY/TREASURER
Please Note;
Address all correspondence to:
The Secretary,
24 Lincoln Drive Lower Plenty 3093
Ph. 9431 2880**

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 available at a venue nearby, (at your own expense)
Please join us!**

Non financial Members

Members be advised if your newsletter has an expiry date of 2/1/2013 that means you have not paid your subs since 2012 therefore if no remuneration is received by the 2/1/15 your name will be automatically removed from the mailing list. If, for whatever reason any member is unable to meet this request please do not hesitate to call the secretary, (confidentiality is assured)

OFFICE BEARERS

**President, Don Brennan
Vice President, Ian Fowler
Sec./Treasurer, John Berry**

General Committee;

Arthur (Sam) Capes
Mike McCumisky
Alan Roberts
John Schintler

Auditor;

Theo Teklenburg

**“Water Off”
Editorial Staff
John Laverick
Barbara McCumisky**

Valē

Brian Collins (MFB) Paul Riley (MFB)
Ray Turner (MFB)
John Wallace (CFA)
Don Wilson (MFB)

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

SICK LIST (* In Nursing Home)

Stan Cameron Brian Trembath
Huew Campbell* Tom Williamson
Ernie Goodall*
Clarrie Guthrie*
Clarrie Hart
Jack Sexton

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.

Diary Dates 2014

November 19th; Annual General Meeting
**November 15th Annual Christmas Luncheon
11.30 am. Malvern Town Hall**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This is my final report for this year. Once again we have had a good year with our BBQ at Bunning's at Hoppers Crossing. With our last one on Saturday 11th October 2014 we cleared \$1685.45 which we will donate to charity. I would like to thank the following members who assisted on the day – Alan Robert, John Berry, Sam Capes, Kevin Heade, Alex Sheppard, Ian Munroe and Ian Fowler. Well done chaps.

We will also be doing a BBQ at Ozram House for approximately 200 homeless, on the 10th November.

At our last meeting in Geelong, numbers were down. But our guest speaker Geoff Mays spoke on Airport Aviation of the years which was an excellent presentation.

I have spoken by telephone to Val and Tom

Williamson, and at this stage both are going along very quietly.

Our next meeting is our AGM, and all positions on the committee are vacant. So if you can see your way clear to nominate please do so.

As mentioned previously – John Berry has stood down as Secretary/Treasurer, and on behalf of all members, I once again thank him for all the work he has done over the years. Alan Roberts who stood in at the last meeting is nominating for Secretary/ Treasurer.

I will be nominating for president once again to assist our new secretary in his job. The meeting will be as usual at the Burnley Training college on Wednesday the 19th November. Come along and enjoy a get together with old workmates and a sausage sizzle after.

Looking forward to seeing you there.

Don Brennan

SECRETARY/ TREASURER'S REPORT

This is that time of year when we will present to the AGM, reports on the past financial year for your acceptance. There is one part of the yearly report that Corporate Affairs do not require but the committee and I feel it is the most important of all, the number of members who have been transferred upstairs since the last Annual General Meeting totals twelve; 2 life / foundation members, 3 foundation members and 7 members. The RFA members and committee sincerely hope the families of the members that have been called, take strength in the knowledge their loved ones are highly regarded not only for their commitment to the protection of others, but also their help in the development of the RFA.

Now all things being equal this should be my last report in this role. I know most will be saying this bloke has had more retirements than Dame Nellie Melba has had encores, yes it may seem like that and the only excuse I can give is, The Devil made me do it. I have now got that out of the way so let's get back to the business at hand.

As this is the last report before the Festive Season there are certain groups/individuals we must mention for their assistance, they are as follows in alphabetical order. **Australian ARFF, CFA Corio Fire Station crew & Geelong Regional Office staff, Firefighters Credit Cooperative Staff, MFB Board, Media, Burnley Complex staff & Operations and The**

United Firefighters Union Office Staff. The RFA members and Committee give a great big thank you for your continuing support and wish you and your families a **Safe & Joyous Festive Season and a Wonderful New Year.**

There is also one person however I must single out, that person is the United Firefighters Union National Secretary **Peter Marshall**; most RFA members have no idea of the assistance he has given to our members personally over the years because of the need for confidentiality. Peter, on behalf of those members and families, thank you for your continuing support, they and all of us hope you have a great Christmas and New Year and a chance to step back and take some me time.

Web Site, The last report that I received from **Phil Cleary** was that he has completed the development stage and was still waiting for the registration of said name to be finalised. By the time of the AGM this may have been accomplished. This report was forwarded to the editor 2/10/14.

The others that I would like to thank are the RFA committee including John Laverick the editor, thank you for allowing me the freedom you have given me in my role as Secretary/Treasurer, without your support I am not sure where we would have been. Yes I know I am a pain in the you know where, so suck it up, the next person will more than likely be very understanding and pleasant however, just you wait and see you will miss the hysterics I showed when you hid my high chair.

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

There are a number of our members who must be grateful that the football season is over; this will enable them to get the necessary medical treatment and their rehab completed before the first game. They are **Bill Bayley (Tony), Don Edwards, Ken Hopper, Jim Hunter and Trevor Reed, Pauline Laverick & Mrs D Edwards**. All are in the hands of the Medical staff at present.

We have a **battle royal developing** between **El Presidente and wife Nancy, with Tom Tulett and Wendy** about the number of different continents each have visited, it looks to me like it may be Tom winning, he has just purchased tickets to Mexico & South America. **Robbo and wife Lorraine** are late starters, having now entered into the battle with their latest holiday booking. On hearing about all this travel the boss and I felt like we were being left behind so we jumped on the next available train and went to Williamstown to see the Ball Tower. How many know where it is? Old Sailing ship Skippers set their time by it.

Here is one for Eastern district retirees, most would remember that Tom Tulett was always a most thoughtful and generous man so will not be surprised on reading about his offer to me! On reading in the last newsletter that the boss and I will be visiting

Queensland he rang and made a very generous offer for me to consider! If I let him know the dates, he may give his servants holidays (without pay) and the wife and I can take on their roles and stay in their quarters for free. As exciting as it sounds I am not sure if I could handle washing his personal diapers each morning in the local stream. At the moment it still looks like the wife and I will be using the second hand tandem bicycle I purchased to get to Queensland.

The one down side we have at the moment is the second-hand haversack I purchased for her to carry our sleeping bags etc, is a bit heavy at 45 kilos. She feels it may be too hard for her to handle however, I do believe with the weight training regime I have her on she will be able to manage, here's hoping. **And if you believe that you may be interested in the new process I have of turning gold into lead? Give me your gold and I will return more than the weight of gold to you in lead and it will not cost you a cent. Trust me.**

As you all know I like to finish with a little quote here is one from the **Maxine's character**.

Life is like a roll of Toilet Paper: the closer it gets to the end the faster it goes.

So have fun, think good thoughts only, learn to laugh at yourself.

And count your blessings!!!

John Berry

Surprise Retirement

On Tuesday the 14th of October 2014, I received an email from our **Honorary Auditor and Life Member Theo Teklenburg** that this annual financial auditing would be his last.

Theo wants to make it a trifecta of retirements with Peter Coulson, Theo Teklenburg and John Berry all Life Members. I know some members will say that it is no big deal with Theo retiring but I can assure you it is this person, by his guidance, has turned us from being a financial basket-case to one that is financially stable and making donations to many charities.

I can remember my first visit to have the books checked, his first comment to me was, remember this is not your

money that is being audited it is the members and it better be correct.

It's funny I will miss him checking the books, he had this way of making sure the members have approved the expenditure by checking the minutes to see if it had been approved, if you could not, he would go through the receipt and cheque butts and give you the third degree until he was satisfied, leaving you in a cold sweat, then while you were having a cup of tea, boast "I had you going then".

Theo on behalf of the members of the RFA thank you for the care, time and guidance that you have afforded us, mate if ever in town on a meeting day we all would be delighted to have you attend the day.

John Berry

“Water Off” Deadline To Submit Copy for Publication

Due to the possibility of Australia Post going to a 3 day week delivery and other factors, we find that we have to set closing dates for acceptance of copy for Water Off.

The members need at least 2 weeks notice prior to both annual and general meetings and the editor requires time to edit copy and set photographs then send off to printers who require at least a week to print.

February 2015 edition deadline for copy is January 23rd.

Minutes, Meeting on 20th August 2014 at Corio Fire Station - 10.30hrs.

Don Brennan (President). Allan Roberts (Acting Secretary), Ian Geddes (Minutes).

Apologies: - J. Berry, H. Floyd, J. Moore, A. Mears, T.F. Reed.

J. Howe, N. Pinnell, J & O. Cotter, J & O. Wallace, G. Duncan, E. Churchill.

Sick List:-

Attendance - 29

New Member attendee: - Col Harris (Western/Southern).

Don spoke and thanked John & Elaine Berry for the dedicated work, mentoring, and care for our members over a LONG time - a big job very well done.

Motion: Don Brennan - Seconded Mike McCumisky. Thanks to John and Elaine for the fabulous work for and on behalf of R.F.A. Members. - Vocally Carried.

Allan read Minutes from last Meeting - 21 May 2014. Moved - Ian Munro, - Seconded, John Chambers - Accepted.

Matters arising - The R.F.A. Website is still to be fully implemented, due to various valid reasons. Let's hope for November Meeting or update in November Water Off.

Allan Roberts - New Website is www.rfav.com.au - put in your email address, secret password and cross your fingers.

Secretary/Treasurer Report:- Allan and Don.

Accounts - S1 S , 11 - S

Queensland reunion (29 attendees).

Motion: Don Brennan Seconded - Ian Fowler
A letter of appreciation be sent to Peter Coulson for his arranging the lunches - the first one was in 1988 - 26 years of fun. - Carried.

Peter is stepping down, and Ian Fagerness and Gail will take on the role.

Peter Shanahan, Mike McCumisky and the rest of us, support Ian and Gail with their next get-together.

Business arising: -

Visit to Craigieburn Training College

Options - a date in Nov/Dec or February General Meeting and visit combined. Don to check with Craigieburn.

Barbeque at Bunning's, Ozanam House 10th Nov - see Don.

Margaret Cusack (Geoff's wife) passed away.
Mike McCumisky - Emergency Services vehicle display

at Newport Workshops Sat 25th October. Mike and Barb had just returned from a special event on Cocos Island.

Peter Driscoll - Wyndham Council awarded him a Certificate of Achievement for Community work, as was Angela B.

Sammy Capes went to Open Day at Craigieburn Training College.- R.F.A. was not on the Invitation List.

John Chambers - apart from the Fallen Firefighters Memorial at Burnley Training College, there is no other memorial in Melbourne, such as the Police Memorial.

Matters arising - Nil.

Correspondence:

Letter of appreciation for support at Dick Smith's funeral.
Letter of appreciation from Ozanam House thanking R.F.A. for \$2,000 donation.

Sammy Capes, Ian Munro - accepted.

Guest Speaker: - Geoff Mays. Aviation Rescue Fire Services (retired).

A.R.F.S. was formed out of W.W.2. using ex-R.A.A.F. equipment.

First flight was the Wright Brother (1903 - 120 feet - 4 seconds). First specially designed Appliances were in 1952-59 and by 1981/82 they were looking/operating like real Appliances (Austral Tridents), and by Coode Island (1991), they were very good. Category 9 Airports (Melb/Syd/Cairns) under Chicago (I.C.A.C.) Agreement. First Appliance must be on scene within 3 minutes of "bells on" - Why? - the impinging flames will degenerate the fuselage in 4 minutes! and that means only 60 second to put the "wet stuff on the red stuff". Tullamarine has the main station and a satellite station, nearer to the Terminus. It also has 4 large Appliances with 24,000 litres of water, 450 kg of Dry Powder, 450kg of Halon gas, and 1,600 litres of foam compound. These 30 tonne vehicles have a top speed of 135km/hr, discharge 150 litres per second, use 12 tonnes of fuel per hour, and throw a jet from the moving Appliance about 100 metres - and all this by 90 shift personnel. Main job is to control the fire in critical areas (fuselage) and create rescue/evacuation paths. Water is critical, hence the M.F.B. support.

Airport Fire Services are controlled by Federal Government and wages are charged from aircraft landings (about \$7,000 per plane).

Geoff also told us of his time looking into the Papua New Guinea Airports - although P.N.G. is a great place to visit, it MAYS not be the most confidence building place to fly into and around. A fun presentation. Personally, I was rapt by the presentation and by the applause so were we all - apologies if all the details ain't exact, it was like listening to an old drill on Ships Stability by another Instructor Geoff at M.F.B. T/C 1970s/80s.

Don presented Geoff a gift - Meeting ended 12.15 hrs. Went to Gateway Hotel for the \$15 smorgasbord, and chats.

MEMBERS FAMILY ORGANISES A GREAT 80TH BIRTHDAY

Our roving reporter has been able to gain a picture (see below) of a foundation member **Trevor Reed** and his wife **Betty** just as Trevor was about to cut the cake.

The cake as you can see is a reproduction of a MFB pumper, which was made and decorated by his very adept cook and cake decorating eldest daughter Sheridan. Trevor and Betty's two girls, their husbands and grand-children arranged the family night of celebration for Trevor reaching his 80 years young birthday.

Both their daughters, Sheridan a highly qualified Triage Nurse and Trisha a highly qualified Teacher, made sure everyone present enjoyed themselves, in fact our roving reporter was threatened to be hit with buckets of water if he made any disparaging remarks during Trevor's speech. Note, we have heard the two son-in-laws would have hanged him from the hose tower if he caused any trouble.

The only downside is we are now looking for a new Roving Reporter.

Trevor on behalf of all our Members we hope that you had a great birthday, now that have reached that 80 years young age there will be no stopping you.



The members would also like to thank you. It's people like you and the other foundation members, who had the foresight to see the need for an association like the RFA, your endeavours have enabled it to grow to the success it is today.

On behalf of the group Trevor, let's take a journey back to 1934.

The Monarchy of the time George the V;
Governor-General, Isaac Isaac;
Prime Minister, Joseph Lyons;
Population, 6, 6777.361;
Elections that year were held, Federally & Tasmania;
The Anzac War Memorial in Sydney was built;
The Premier of Victoria was, Sir Stanley Argyle;
Not a good year for Qantas;
Ford produced its first Ute in Geelong;
The film Strike Me Lucky starring Roy Rene was released;
Victoria won the Sheffield Shield;
Australia defeated England 2-1 series held in England.

And last but not least little

Trevor was born on the 27th of August 1934 to Ethel & Billy Reed.

John Berry.

RFA LIFE MEMBER PETER COULSON RETIRES AS PRESIDENT OF OUR QUEENSLAND GROUP

The Fires meeting at the Southport Yacht Club Queensland on the last Thursday in July, which has been organised by **Peter & June Coulson** since 1987, is to have new organisers Gail & Ian Fagernes were elected to replace June & Peter. The following is the report on the meeting from June, dated 10th of August 2014.

It is a long time since I have written a report about the **Retired Firefighters Lunch at the Southport Yacht Club**, which is held on the last Thursday in July.

There was a good crowd as usual, the men all like meeting up with their old Firie Mates, "Putting out the Fires" again. The luncheon has been going on for over a quarter of a century now and the Yacht Club have been very good to us, (Peter & I are both members)

Over the years we have noticed a change in the attendees at the day, many of the originals have passed away, or

now not able to make the trip, we miss them, but it is good to see the new retirees coming to keep the day going. They are in their sixties like we once were; only now with us in our eighties it is time to pass the task of running the day to the new breed. I think it only seems fitting that Peter is retiring from President of the Queensland Reunion day however, like John Berry, I think they will be a hard act to follow.

This year unfortunately Ken Hopper was not able to make the day, we were advised some of his old Hawthorn football injuries are holding him back, we all hope to see him next year; I think this is the first time he has missed the day. The meeting also wished John & Elaine happy travelling.

One final point, Peter and I, wish Gail & Ian every success with running the day if they get the same joy that we got from it they will gain many great memories. **June Coulson**

June and Peter, on behalf of all the members & committee of the RFA we thank you for the generosity of spirit and joy that you have given us. We look forward to next year.

Valê Paul Riley

ACFO Paul Riley was not an RFA member as he was still an active member of the MFB at the time of his death, but I am sure there are not many of our members who did not know him. Paul was a larger than life character, a mentor to those that worked with him and a passionate supporter of all MFB employees.

Paul started his firefighting career with the London Fire Brigade where he served for 18 months before emigrating to Melbourne in 1969. After working various jobs he joined the MFB on 6 July 1973 and served the Brigade and community for the last 41 years.



Image; MFESB

I had the privilege of being on shift with Paul for a short time in the mid seventies at the old 52 Station. He soon fitted in with his laid back sense of humour along with his firefighting skills, undoubtedly from his London Fire Service experience.

Paul had a way of finding a positive out of a difficult situation and coming out with a comment that would have us all laughing at the situation we were in.

As Paul rose through the officer ranks we were to cross paths numerous times but his character never changed with his infectious smile and enquiry into your welfare. I feel he will be sadly missed by all that knew him.

John Laverick

Queensland Reunion 2014

A lovely group of 30 retired firies and friends attended on Thursday 31st July at the Southport Yacht Club for the annual RFA luncheon.

After all had arrived, with drinks in hand and a little mingling, we then proceeded into the dining area and ordered meals from the extensive menu provided. Discounts are provided for the group of firies and partners.

Peter Coulson welcomed all in attendance and one minute silence was held.

Peter then spoke about the initial reunion that has been going for the last 26 years, starting with 6 people attending, now there is a gathering of at least 30-40 each year which is wonderful to see.

Peter then informed the crew that he was stepping down from his position and asked for 'nominations' to take on the President's position and would wait for 30 minutes for nominations to be given. He then went on to explain that John Berry had resigned also from the Secretary/Treasurer position that he currently held.

Peter also produced a lovely framed poem that Bill Bailey had given him. He advised that all proceeds from the purchase of this poem would go to the MFB Museum, (he made a killing!!!) The beautiful poem was about an old 'firey' looking back on his life so there were not many left over at the end of the day. Thank you to all that purchased for a great cause.

Whilst lunch was served the stories of old days commenced with laughter surrounding the room. Fires I am sure are getting bigger, trucks going faster and rescues being more treacherous but a lot of fun as usual and great memories.

The 30 minute nomination time was up and Peter once again stood and advised that no 'nominations'



Attendees	
Peter & Nancy Coulson	Ken & Wendy Bouchaud
Brian & Gayle Millstead	Bob Burrows
Alan & Judy Boyd	Stan & Jan Gough
John 'Jack' Hookey	Allan Thompson
Laurie Lavelle & Partner	Neville Dennis
Trevor Reed	Bob Templeton
Tony Hynson	Rob Chester
Bob Wheildon	Ian (Chook) Fowler
Barry & Hannah Stevens	Colin & Lillian Briely
Ian & Gail Fagernes	Don & Nancy Brennan
<u>Apologies</u>	
Geoff & Margaret Cusack - had to head back to Melbourne earlier than they thought.	

had been given so he elected Gail Fagernes to be the new President. What a lad you are Pete!!!

So folks you have to put up with me. Gail Fagernes - fagernes@bigpond.com or 07 5522 4321 Mobile: 0431 485 141. Should you wish to have a group photograph of who attended at our luncheon please contact Ian (Fags) or myself as we would be only too happy to send or email you a copy.

Hopefully we can get some of the younger retired or not yet retired to this function in the future to ensure that after all the work that Peter and June have put in to keep it going will not be lost.

Gail Fagernes

CENTRAL QUEENSLAND

In our last newsletter it was mentioned that the boss and I would be visiting our eldest daughter and son-in-law in Queensland. They have moved to Gladstone where our son-in-law has taken up a two-year appointment, a place that in all our travels around this great continent is one we have never visited.

Before we started the trip I thought perhaps I should have a look on the internet to get some idea about it; I found the information, whilst informative, still leaves you feeling is this factual or not; how wrong was I. Elaine and I came away knowing we had only scratched the surface on what we had seen and there is so much more as you will see from the following.

Let's start with the people, everywhere we visited we were met with smiling faces, take for example the Gladstone Information Centre (we visited there for cruise tickets & information) what a winner, on both days they could not do enough for us. The clubs, restaurants, shopping centres & CBC staff and general community were great, we big city folk could learn a lot from them.

Yes I know someone will bring up the problem with the bund wall failure claims and the boat harbour is no longer the same; however the people who live there are not sitting on their rear ends and doing nothing, the local paper called The Observer keeps you factually up to date on all the latest (better than the big city tabloids).

The Queensland Government call Gladstone the power house of the state, after doing the Curtis Ferry Coffee cruise I think you could just about say of Australia; I can remember when Victoria was going through the industrial revolution after the Second World War I thought that was unbelievable. Well, as they say in the classics "you ain't seen nothing." Get up to Gladstone and take the cruise and you will understand just what I am talking about.



This picture above shows one of the modules of a processing plant being unloaded from a specially built

ship, which had already unloaded two others; all had been constructed in Singapore and then shipped out to Curtis Island Gladstone. The way they unload them is similar to the way they move the Space shuttle from its silo when setting it up to be launched. We were informed that 1% of Curtis Island is taken up by industry; I can believe that as it is a big island.

The following list is from the Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Ltd list of the major industries in the area. **The Gladstone Port, Queensland Alumina Ltd, Rio Tinto Alcan Yarwun, Boyne Smelters Ltd, Cement Australia Gladstone, Orica Australia, NRG Gladstone Power Station, The Gladstone Area Water Board, Queensland Energy Resources, Anglo Coal Aust Callide Mine, Peabody Energy's Baralaba Mine, Queensland Nitrates Pty Ltd, The Cracow Mining Joint Venture, CS Energy owns & operates the Callide Power Station and Sunwater Queensland's largest bulk water developer & manager.**



The photo above is another of the modules off the ship



Above; One of the already installed plants on Curtis Island,

I could fill the newsletter with pictures that I've taken of the many plants and ships coming and going from the harbour. I will admit I did not see any container ships it was mostly those loading coal and/or LNG, ferry services, resort vessels, yachts, fishing ships etc. I forgot to mention I also have many pictures of the scenery & beaches but I thought you may be more interested on the many projects going on up there.

Dining in the yacht club is a great way to relax, you can see the new marina that is being built and the ships coming and going. I was told the old township has changed considerably; the main street apart from its entertainment centre, restaurants, hotels and some shops has been taken over by the big companies who have set up their offices, like cities everywhere the new shopping centres are complexes built out in the suburbs.

My daughter and her husband are renting a property out on Boyne Island, it and the adjoining Tannum Sands have not only good shopping centres they also have some great beaches and wonderful walking paths and sport grounds. I am going to go out on a limb here

and upset some of our members who moved to the Gold Coast etc when they retired, to me I liked the way Gladstone made you feel, I think it was the people who have not lost their human touch, you know what you saw is what you got and they have that generosity of spirit about them. The boss (Elaine) and I will be going back next year for a visit.

The final point I would like to make is we were in one shop being served and I struck up a conversation with the women attending to us, I raised the point about what brought her to Gladstone, she stated the education; she and her husband moved there forty years ago and all of her children have done very well and the education in the town is still great. She invited me go have a good look at the schools so I could see just what she was talking about. This was a first for me; I cannot remember anybody saying that to me before, this was not about private versus public schools, to her proper education was the philosophy of the town to all students no matter whom.

John Berry

GUESS WHO?

The answer to the August 2014 edition "Guess Who" question

Unfortunately this one stumped you all, Peter Lang came very close but was unable to name all in the picture.

I thought we would have been inundated from the Geelong boys on this one, perhaps all were devastated that the cats never made the Grand Final or you are not able to make the AGM. No worries I have cancelled the Dancing Girls maybe next time.



Fire Services Bowls.

The AGM of the Fire Services Bowls Club Victoria was held at the Broadmeadows Bowls Club on the 19th.Sept. and was attended by retired, still serving and country members.

Elections were held and the following positions were filled

President .John Garvin

Secretary John Budge.

Treasurer. Alan Drury.

Other positions were also filled.

After some discussion the treasurers report was accepted showing a healthy balance.

The programme for 2014/15 was presented as follows.

Nov.20th.Thurs.12 30 Broadmeadows BC. Mixed

Dec.4th Thurs. 12 30.Epping RSL. mixed lunch can be purchased.

Jan.11th Sun.12.30 Sunbury mixed.

Feb. 1st.Sun. 9.30 Public Services Tournament Keilor mixed. Whites & FSB shirt.

So all you bowlers out there from MFB, CFA, and other like services, come and join us and renew friendships with present and former members of the fire services.

Joining fees per season Male \$15 Females \$5. (associates)

Ring John Budge on 0438543334 for more information.

Happy bowling.

John Chambers.

TWO FIRES AT THE MUTUAL STORE AND THE IMPACT THE FIRST HAD ON THE SECOND.

The year 1891 was a very significant. It was during this year, on April 30 that the 55 fire brigades in suburban Melbourne were disbanded. On May 1 the Metropolitan Fire Brigade came into existence. Supt, David Stein, previously in charge of the Insurance Companies Brigade, was appointed its first Chief Officer.

However for the first four months of 1891, the Insurance Co.'s Brigade and all the volunteer brigades still shared the responsibility of protecting the city and suburbs. Together they were to battle one last major city fire before their demise. This fire was to have major repercussions which were again to surface some six years later, when 'Melbourne's Great Fire' was to devastate almost an entire city block.

The Mutual Store was a Melbourne city landmark situated on Flinders Street, midway between Swanston and Elizabeth Streets, opposite the Flinders Street Railway Station. In 1891 it was one of Melbourne's leading department stores with a staff of approximately 350 people.

On New Year's Eve 1890, the last of the staff locked all doors of the store after first checking all floors were secure. The keys were taken to the City Watch House where they were kept in case of emergency.

Just before 4 a.m. on New Year's morning 1891, a man walking along Flinders Street noticed smoke issuing from a window in the east wall of the store, facing a right-of-way. He immediately set off to raise the alarm.

By the time the first appliance arrived on the scene, the flames were bursting out of the rear ground floor windows. The first attempt by the firemen to gain entry was thwarted by the heavy burglar proof doors. As the keys were still at the watch house, the firemen proceeded to break in using tomahawks and brute force. Once entry was gained, they were again hampered by the smoke logged ground floor.

All this delay sealed the fate of the building, as by this time it was fully involved in fire. Supt. Stein then concentrated the efforts of the firemen to halting the spread of fire to the surrounding lofty buildings. To enable them to attack the fire from above, the 'Italian Ladder' was erected. It measured 70 ft. in height, but was an antiquated and cumbersome piece of apparatus, and 15 minutes elapsed before it was in position and could be used.

The firemen then discovered they could only work from about half way up the ladder due to the fierce flames and radiant heat.

At the height of the fire, around 5 a.m. the Mutual Store's roof fell in with a mighty crash, taking the top floor with it. From that point on, the danger of the fire spreading ceased to exist, so Supt. Stein directed all the efforts back to the burning mass. The building with its splendid façade was almost entirely gutted.

Several firemen were injured, and one was trapped under debris when the floor above collapsed. Fortunately he was rescued with little delay. All were taken to the Melbourne Hospital where they were treated for minor injuries.

Damage to the building and stock was almost complete, with the loss estimated in excess of £82,000, a lot of money back then.

About 12 months prior to the fire, Supt. Stein had occasion to inspect the building, and after examining the premises, he made the following report.

"The Mutual Store could not have been better constructed for the purpose of a fire, if the object was that once it caught alight, it should spread through the building, without the possibility of a check. There are lifts and staircases all in the usual style, ready to act as flues and create a strong draught, which will carry the flames from the bottom to the top of the building and spread them around in such a way, that no brigade could cope with them. Then of course, there is the nature of the business and display of goods which give the flames every chance. In fact there is no place in the city better adapted for burning."

During an interview following the Mutual Store fire, Supt. Stein had this to say:

"..... the whole of that block (bounded by Swanston, Flinders, Elizabeth Streets and Flinders Lane) is one the insurance companies are very careful about, because the stocks are so enormous and valuable and the risk of fire is so great. There is scarcely what we call a proper fire break in the whole block, that is a wall built up and finished in a parapet without any windows or openings in it. A fire breaking out in Craig, Williamson & Thomas in Elizabeth Street, might, if a strong westerly wind was blowing, sweep the whole block through to Swanston Street."

Asked about what improvements could be made to the Mutual Store if it was rebuilt, Supt. Stein answered:

"The lifts should all be enclosed in brickwork and they should be carried right through the roofs, so they could act as flues and carry the flames right out if they reached them. The walls on either side should be carried up into a parapet. The store displays should be arranged so there is one clear passage for the firemen to get through the building. The floors should be fireproof and should be closed off with fireproof doors between each like the hatch on a ship. Above all there should be no well-hole such is found in many business places running from the bottom to the top. Finally every new building should be provided with what are known as 'sprinklers'. These have plugs which melt at a certain temperature and deluge the vicinity with water. The cost is not great and they are very effective."

The Mutual Store was rebuilt and under his guidance, every one of Supt. Stein's recommendations was incorporated into the handsome new building.

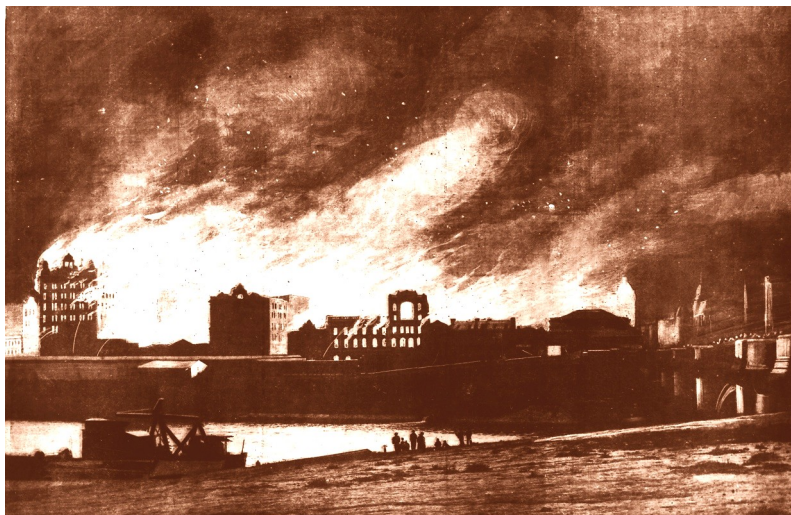
Six years later Supt. Stein (by then Chief Officer of the MFB) was to realise his worst 'nightmare'. In the early hours of November 21, 1897 his dreaded prediction became a reality. Fire broke out in the Craig, Williamson & Thomas building. By the end of that day, driven by a fierce wind, the flames had consumed most of the city

block bounded by Swanston, Flinders, Elizabeth Streets and Flinders Lane.

So confident of the Mutual Store's ability to withstand the flames, CO Stein was hoping to stop the advance of the raging fire with this impenetrable stronghold. He positioned his firefighters for a concentrated attack, but to his horror a sudden change of wind direction outsmarted him and the fire roared on past his last line of defence.

The next day surrounded by what had been some of Melbourne's finest buildings and were now just piles of smoking debris, one building still stood tall. The Mutual Store survived the city's biggest structure fire to date, virtually unscathed apart from minor scorching to its outside walls.

Barbara McCumisky



Viewed from the south side of the Yarra, a whole city block burns. As the inferno rages around it, the Mutual Store (centre left) stands defiantly, virtually unscathed.

Image; Courtesy Fire Services Museum Victoria.

THE ONLY TRUE NATIONAL FIRE FIGHTING SERVICE

I'm hoping the heading may grab your attention by being a bit controversial, the service I am referring to could almost be called the hidden one, however the facts are Air Services Australia Aviation Fire Fighting Service are most certainly, apart from the Military, the only one.

Please let me take you on a journey of discovery that I have had the opportunity to take during the last six months. Early in April I contacted by mail Superintendent Quinn in charge of the service at Melbourne Airport Tullamarine to see if we would be able, because of the number aviation retirees as members, have one of their appliance's and a guest speaker attend our April meeting.



Officers Greg Flynn, Paul Gray and Dave Leavold attended the day and gave us a great description and visual instruction of their appliance then joined us for lunch. I, like most of our members the only times we had contact with their crews etc, was at joint exercises and/or a very occasional fire that they had been called on to assist with their great equipment.

The next occasion was in discussion with RFA member **Retired ACFO of the Aviation Service Geoff Mays** who I invited to address the August meeting at Corio. I was unable to attend but the feedback I have received said his lecture and power point presentation was brilliant (For people to say that it must have been good) in fact it has been suggested we should try and tie him down to do one in Melbourne in the new year.

Most will be reading this and thinking the Ant has lost it saying they are the true national service. The reason I have made that statement really came home to me when I was given the opportunity by the **SFC Greg Hunt** in charge at the new **Gladstone Airport Aviation Fire Fighting Station** (My son-in-law Paul is one of the Commanders) to visit and inspect it.

You may have thought it was difficult & big time when we opened a new station in the Mets, let me tell you it pales into insignificance when you consider what they have to go through. The various crews have come from different parts of the Commonwealth and are all trained to the minute with the same equipment & operational training which must meet international standards.

Imagine you are opening a new station and your crews are drawn from various parts

of Australia and are operational as soon as they put their foot in the place and must know their role. Back up if it hits the fan is nothing like the metropolitan or country area in this case you are it, this is not a put-down of the local brigades, it is just the cold hard facts of your Emergency Management Planning.

I can remember when I was in the brigade to get blokes for big drill and/or later at Abbotsford how difficult it was, imagine organising blokes for instance to go to say Mildura for revalidation to meet CASA's requirements. This is the norm for them as they must go to Brisbane to meet that requirement. There is no doubt the retired aviation members joining our group has added a new dimension to the RFA family.

John Berry

Gone, But Not Forgotten

I believe the quote by Christina Rossetti, 1830-1894 "Remember me when I am gone away, Gone far away into the silent land", explains perfectly what this part of our newsletter is all about, giving respect to members who have been transferred to a new home station. To the late member's families, on behalf of the broader community, we thank you for allowing your loved one to take on the onerous task of our protection.

John David Wallace 1931-28/8/2014.

John was one of the Authority's volunteers who



transferred over to the permanents in the Geelong district. I did not meet him during his firefighting career it was not until he became an integral part of our association that I came in contact with him. I deem myself very fortunate to be part of a committee that had him as their Proper Officer which was at that time required by law for Incorporated Associations.

The more time I spent with him and his wife Ola the more I realised how fortune our society is to have such quality people who care for their community the way that they did, the only unfortunate part was I could only imagine how good it would have been to have been stationed and turning out to jobs with him. He had that presence about him that reminded me of the many senior firefighters in the MFB that we young bucks relied on for guidance.

There is no doubt my assessment of John and his family was 100% correct when you saw the turn-out at his Celebration of his life Mass at St Mary of the Angels Basilica Geelong and Burial service at The Eastern Cemetery. John would have been so proud of his family I can picture him, probably standing by the big bloke in charge up there and suggesting how he could set up an association for Firefighters that have already been transferred up there.

Ola on behalf of the RFA and the Firefighting community we thank you for allowing us to have the opportunity to have your John as part of the team.

Raymond Vernon Turner 1941-12/9/2014.

Ray started in the MFB 23/2/1962 and took up early optional retirement on the 13/3/88 to explore other options.

My first contact with Ray was through the brigade's gym team where he had the nick name of "Muscles". Prior to joining the job Ray worked at the Castlemaine slaughter yards, which I have no doubt was true with the way he could throw us around like we were a carcass when practising. Below is a pictured we ran in a previous edition of the newsletter in the Guess Who section, it shows Ray holding up two other men in a three man pyramid.

Yes, Ray was not only very strong but as the other Firies used to say he was great to have backing you up at a job, his only down side was in his push to get to the seat of the fire, if you were the one on the branch and were not fast enough he would lift you as well as the hose to let you know to get your rear end into gear and start moving forward.

Ray's son Paul has followed in his father's footsteps and is now a Station Officer in the Western District. Factually I was shocked to hear the sad news on return from interstate as it was not that long ago we had been reminiscing on the phone about the gym team and other funny items about the past.

Jennifer your Ray, as you would well know, was very highly regarded by his peers not only for firefighting ability, but also as a top bloke to be on shift with, will be sadly missed by his fellow retirees.

John Berry



Above; Ray Turner (at bottom of pyramid) shows his strength during a Gym Team display.

How are you feeling today?

On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 is low = this is the worst I have ever felt; 10 is high = the best feeling I have ever had) rate your general sense of wellbeing – how you are feeling about life in general.

A score of 8 or above is considered within the healthy range! If you score 7 or below this is for you...

Wellbeing Checks

Contact Employee Support to book a Wellbeing Check

Employee Support Coordinator
Nic Roperto: 9665 4405
0407 665 174

Peer Coordinator
Sandy Hearn: 0417 538 289

Employee Support Clinicians
Sally Collett: 0416 135 320
Anne-Marie Hyde: 0409 020 120
Mayio Konidaris: 0410 127 363

Employee Support is offering Wellbeing Checks to all staff

What is a Wellbeing Check?

One of our professional employee support staff will ask a range of questions to assess your wellbeing and will identify any areas of concern. The counsellor may ask you to complete some psychometric tests to screen for depression, anxiety or trauma symptoms. These are simple pencil and paper tests which only take a few minutes to complete but give a quick way of assessing your wellbeing.

Benefit of attending a Wellbeing Check?

You and the counsellor will work out ways for you to deal with any identified stressors and plan ways for you to establish healthy habits to ensure your stress levels remain under control.

Wellbeing checks are completely confidential and can be conducted at a time that is convenient to you.

Where are Wellbeing Checks held?

Wellbeing Checks will be conducted at either Burnley or Eastern Hill, unless you can get a group from the one location then a counsellor can make a station or office visit.

EMPLOYEE SUPPORT PROGRAM

Update

Over the past year we have increased the time we are spending teaching our newer MFB members about mental health. The Brigade has put a lot of resources into keeping Firies physically fit, and every station and site has a well-equipped gymnasium. The Health and Fitness team as part of the Work Health and Safety Department have put a lot of good work into developing the Active for Life (AFL) program, where fire-fighters are given an education on how physical fitness can help guard against illnesses like diabetes and heart problems. AFL also includes a section on protecting psychological health.

We know that the Brigade Medical service offers Health Monitoring... You can go in, get your physical, and know that if all the boxes are ticked then you're okay! Employee Support offers the same sort of thing for your head. Wellbeing checks involve one of our clinicians sitting down with you, going through some questionnaires on issues like anxiety and depression, and then recommending whether you might need some extra help if any areas are causing you loss of sleep or maybe anxiety. If you're interested in this service and you're ex-MFB, please don't hesitate to contact one of the clinicians listed on the above flyer and we can take it from there. All the best, from Nic Roperto, Employee Support Coordinator. 9665 4405.

BELLS BY THE BEACH

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Recent Retirements

- Peter Wallace, October 30th
- Ken Edwards, September 17th
- Leon Greenfield
- David Hastilow
- Martin McNeill
- Manual Tsivoglou
- Steve Warren



Geelong Firey's Muster

*C.F.A. – M.F.B. – SHELL - AVALON
Serving & Retired – Staff & Volunteers*

*Smorgasbord Lunch
On the 4th Tuesday of March & November
@ 1130 hrs*

*GATEWAY HOTEL
218-230 Princess Highway – CORIO
Members, Wives, Partners,
Family & Friends*

*Contact:
Peter Lang 5275 6039
To receive Mail out notification*

MEMBERS INTERESTED IN RECEIVING THEIR "WATER OFF" VIA EMAIL.

To those members with easy access to email and would like to have their copy sent by this system, please send your email address to our editor John Laverick. "Water Off" will be sent out in a PDF format.

John's address - retfire@bigpond.net.au

Before you send your email, click on 'tools' at top and click on 'request receipt'. This will reply to you and verify both email addresses are working correctly.

Annual General Meeting – Wednesday 19th November 2014
Nomination For Positions on The Committee.

Nominations are called for the following positions on the Committee of the Retired Firefighters Association of Australia, Victorian Branch Inc.: -

- President
- Vice-President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Ordinary Member of Committee, Six (6) Positions

Each position will serve for a term of one (1) year.

Please note that according to the Rules of the Retired Firefighters Association of Australia, Victorian Branch Inc, only financial members may nominate for any of the above positions and any member nominating must have been a member for at least one (1) year.

Nominations must be in writing on the form below, signed by the Proposer and the Seconder and accepted by the Nominee. Completed nomination forms must be returned to the Secretary at the address shown below **no later than 17:00 hours (5.00pm) on Friday 14th November 2014.**

Retired Firefighters Association of Australia, Victorian Branch, Inc.

We, the undersigned, being financial members of the Retired Firefighters Association of Australia, Victorian Branch Inc. hereby nominate:

Nominee's Name

For the position of:

Proposed by (signature) (Print name)

Seconded by (signature) (Print name)

Nominee Acceptance (signature) (Print name)

Date

JOHN BERRY
24 Lincoln Drive
Lower Plenty
Vic. 3093
Ph: 03 9431 2880

Return by Friday November 14, 2014, to:
 The Secretary
 Retired Firefighters Association of Australia
 Victorian Branch Incorporated.
24 Lincoln Drive Lower Plenty 3093

UFU RETIRED MEMBERS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Saturday November 15th 2014

11.30 AM. - 4.00 PM.

Malvern Town Hall

A reminder:

If you have accepted the invitation to the luncheon and through illness, or some other circumstance, find you are unable to attend, please notify the Union Office A.S.A.P.

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