

"WATER OFF"

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



August 2014 Vol 18 No 3
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Melbourne's Fire Heritage Prior to the MFB.

There is a fascinating history of fires and fire brigades that dates back to the very early days of Melbourne, many years before the Metropolitan Fire Brigade came into existence. How many of you know that in 1891 there were 55 fire brigades in metropolitan Melbourne, and the city covered a much smaller area than it does now?

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Secretary to retire? Page 3

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be.
(Robert Browning)

Image; Illustrated Australian News

“GENERAL MEETING”

Notice is hereby given that the next General Meeting will be held at the CFA Corio Fire Station, Birdwood Ave. (Melway’s page 441 K2.)

1030 Hours, Wednesday 20th August 2014

AGENDA ITEMS.

Minutes of last General meeting
President’s Report
Secretary/Treasurer’s Report
Guest Speaker; Geoff Mays, ARFF
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

Syd Finegan (MFB) Dick Smith (MFB)
Michael O’Loughlin (MFB) Norm Thomas (MFB)
Des Penman (MFB)
John Russell (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* John Wallace
Ernie Goodall* Tom Williamson
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

August 20th General Meeting
November 19th; Annual General Meeting
November 15th Annual Christmas Luncheon
11.30 am. Malvern Town Hall

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I am penning this report from the Gold Coast where the average temperature has been 21 degrees over the last 3 weeks and no rain.

The committee have each received a letter from John Berry handing in his resignation as Secretary of the RFA. John stepped into the position 18 years ago when the previous Secretary became ill. The RFA then was in decline but John, in his inimitable style, built the membership up to the great organisation it is today. John has also forged links with a number of other organisations which have been of benefit to our members.

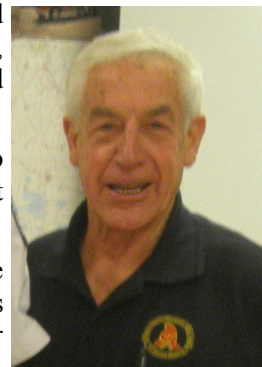
John had a brief break 2003/2007 when John Brown took on the role, but Brownie had to step down because of a life threatening illness. John Berry then resumed the position and has carried the banner since.

On behalf of all our members would like to thank John for the dedication he has given to the Victorian Branch of the RFA and is leaving a wonderful legacy for our future.

John has stated both he and Elaine would like to travel more, they have family in both W.A and Q.L.D.

Despite trying to get someone to fill the breach, so far we have not been successful.

John (pictured Right) and Elaine will not be at the next meeting as they will be visiting their daughter in Queensland.



On our way up to Queensland we called into Coffs Harbour, and telephoned Val and Tom Williamson, unfortunately Tom was taken to Hospital by Ambulance with an infection. He came home the day we left, Tom has requested that he is not up to receiving visitors, but would be happy to have a chat on the phone. We wish both Val and Tom all the best.

Don't forget our next meeting is in Geelong. Hope to see you all there.

Don Brennan

SECRETARY/ TREASURER'S REPORT

At the last meeting the members present voted to have **Phil Cleary** (RFA Member) go ahead and develop a Web Site for the association, Phil, when satisfied with the product, will present it to the committee for final acceptance, thereby enabling them to complete the necessary documentation etc required for Phil to make it part of the World Wide Web.

This is clearly another reason why you must have a Secretary/Treasurer who knows all about this new medium, me, I have trouble just switching on a computer. I will admit I am not too bad with hand-tools etc but this new innovation, forget it. I was amazed when biros came in, now we are talking about worldwide webs I know spider webs but worldwide give me a break.

A couple of our stalwarts from the Geelong area **John Wallace & John Cotter** had to be dropped from the 1st eighteen to enable them to be brought back up to speed by their wives Ola & Olive. Last quarter I reported that you should watch out for a silver headed gent running up & down the sand dunes, well rumour has it, a member of another team planted a bear trap to bring John C down, Not to be outdone Ola & Olive have restricted both of them to running machines & weights. If you have a chance give them a ring, oh I forgot to mention the weights they are lifting are almost the same as the old hessian bag full of spuds, **believe or not**, but do give them a ring.

I had a senior's moment the other week, I had this bloke come for lunch, out of the blue he thrust into my hand a

photo-copy of a number of pages from a book he had at home. For a moment I thought he was going to give me an oral reading test like we used to get from the teacher when you were studying for the Sub-Station Officers exam. My first response, "mate I just put drops in my eyes." He of course saw right through me and blurted out you Richard Cranium I do not want you to read it back to me, this is a chapter on my family's history from the book titled **Beechworth at War** I thought you may be interested in. Oh I also forgot to mention he brought a bunch of roses I thought it was a lovely gesture and said thank you, I will get a vase, and again I was wrong; he said they are not for you they are for your wife.

Being serious, this friend who had joined us for lunch, is a bloke like many others that I have had the chance to work with in the brigade and I am still fortunate that I can still call them friends. I knew that he had been a member of the Armed Services before he joined the MFB, also he had an Uncle, now deceased, who was a returned soldier who went on to become Chief Officer of the CFA.

However, I had no idea about the exploits the rest of the tribe faced during the Second World War. Whilst reading it, I kept getting this mental picture of Trevor Reed telling me how tough the boys from the bush are, well this chapter reinforces Trevor's saying. I found it very interesting, it not only identifies the many hardships families underwent during war times, things like sons being lost and other loved ones being affected by the rigors of war and needing assistance with mental health on return from active duty but also others that did not have any longevity of life on return. This was only one chapter from the book and covered only part of the family's history. There is no doubt a war places a great strain on all of the nation's inhabitants that are involved.

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

If interested the book is in the State Library, I will let you in on a little secret, I found that out after my eleven year old grandson showed me how to look it up on the World Wide Web.

Patricia Finegan rang the other day to inform me that **Sydney**, due to health reasons, has gone into a Nursing Home, for those who did not know Syd; the following is a heads-up about him. During the Second World War he was one of the famous tough as nails Commandoes who caused all sorts of havoc for the enemy, back then they were the equivalent of the SAS of today, operating behind enemy lines etc. you name it they did it. In my case the only time I came in contact with Syd was when I did the occasional stand-by at the old 38 Stn and/or fires and I always found him to be a very knowledgeable & top firefighter who knew every nook & cranny about the Port & South Melbourne areas. Unfortunately on Thursday the 10th of July I received an email informing me that **Sydney** had passed away, see "Gone But Not Forgotten".

Tom Tullett and partner both recently returned from their overseas trip which took in travel to Vietnam, Cambodia and China, wanted it known that our **El Presidente, Don Brennan's** travel advice was better than any travel agent and it most certainly made the trip all that more enjoyable. The only down side was Tom is now on bread & water as he has spent all of his money (only joking) he has had to substitute the water as it makes the bread taste crook.

Member **Ken Murphy** rang the other day to say he has

been diagnosed with a life changing health condition which will require him to undergo Oncology radiation at Wangaratta. I have his number if you require it, Ken sounded very positive especially after his recent visit to the Oncologist. Ken you may not know has MFB running through his veins, conceived & raised in the old Eastern Hill Fire Station quarters, the fact is his knowledge about the brigade bygone days is quite astounding you could say he is a living encyclopaedia. Ken keep us updated on your progress.

Another bit of information, retired members could be interested in? Let the family know; if it is ever required, the **RFA are able to borrow an MFB flag for funeral services**, I have a Brass Helmet (My own one) that I can loan also. I have no doubt the CFA & Aviation Services would loan us a flag if requested.

The final item **Jean Cameron (Stan's wife)** rang to give me an update on a change to their postal address, during the conversation Jean told me she is driving Stan on regular visits to Bendigo to have skin cancers removed, the Doctor was saying one was not too good and needed to be surgically removed. I suggested that Stan should stop sunbaking in the nude during the day and only do it at midnight. I can picture it now Police have taken into custody a naked mature- aged gentleman for sunbaking at midnight and his excuse? The RFA Secretary told me to do it. Trust me would I tell a fib?

Hang in there, remember. **Do something for the Kid in you everyday**

John Berry



Above; *Our next guest speaker, Geoff Mays, (centre) in Papua New Guinea,*

Aviation Fire Fighting – Australia and Papua New Guinea

The Australian aviation fire service has a long a proud history within this country dating back to its inception just after World War 2. The Australian ARFF service being a singular federal body is unlike any other aviation service around the world. It has evolved over time, based on improvements to vehicles and equipment, driven by changing international authority requirements brought on by the rapid development of aircraft, in size and potential risk.

As part of his time with Air Services Australia Aviation Fire Fighting Service, and in the position of Assistant Chief Fire Officer, RFA member Geoff Mays was given the task of developing the Papua New Guinea airport fire service under an AusAID program in the mid to late 90's. Geoff will present an interesting session on Aviation firefighting, and its defining procedures and activities. He will then discuss the difficulties in meeting the program outcomes he encountered in the Papua New Guinea program.

Geoff Mays

ACFO ret.

24 years with Aviation Rescue Fire Fighting 1976 -99

2 and a half years at Fiskville as Senior Instructor and then Centre Manager from Feb 1999 til July 2001. MBA, Ad Dip Fire Management, A. IFE

Minutes of Meeting on 21st May 2014 at MFB Training College.

Don Brennan-President, John Berry-Sec/Treasurer.
Ian Geddes-Minutes.

Apologies: - John Williams, Dick Smith, Barry Wells,
Graeme Duncan and Eric Daffy.

Sick List:- Bruce Fisher, Dick Smith, Jack Sexton,
John Cotter, John Wallace.

New Member attendee: - Peter Hutchinson (Southern).

Minutes from last Meeting - 19th February 2014:-

John-Minutes of February meeting

Moved: John Schintler

Seconded: Bob Thompson, - Carried

Business arising: -

Website demonstration today.

Secretary/Treasurer Report:- John Berry.

S1 - \$6,162.20

11 - \$6,438.20

Business arising

Water-Off mail out costs have increased by \$30 per
issue.

If you want a shirt posted, cost is now \$9.70 so pick
them up at meeting.

Peer Support Group - Graeme Scorringe - Pastor.

Trained crews (along the critical stress lines), including
assisting with infant mortality - Retirement Readiness
Seminars.

Moved: J Berry,

Seconded: J Chambers - carried.

Presidents Report

Ozanam House - around Oct/Nov.

Peter MacCallum House - an invitation to visit the
Research Facility has been extended, see Don.

Wives also invited, one and half to two hour program.

General Business:-

Brian Jackson - can arrange a Prostate Cancer
ambassador to be a Guest Speaker. Stan Gough - are
we to visit the new Craigieburn Training College? -
maybe we could meet at Burnley and Brigade buses to
Craigieburn.

Ian Munro - History of Sunshine Fire Stations. Contact
Ian if you have information.

Website - Don introduced Phil Cleary/John Berry.

John showed Ian Dewhurst's program (Ian at
conference in Sydney).

Photos and articles (past and present) could be
displayed.

Need to Pay for a domain name (less than \$50) and
then yearly Rental, (less than \$50).

Some part of our yearly subscription could be used.

Phil Cleary - Web site to be a 24/7 day access and any
amount of info can be included. What we put on it is up
to us. (Sickie updates, functions, family news, Brigade/
Union news), ALL under the control of R.F.A.

Phil is happy to set up for free, his donation to help the
R.F.A. To access all details of RFA you would need
login/password which would be given only if financial.

General discussion for 15-20 minutes.

Motion: John Berry -

That this meeting of the RFA do not make a decision
regarding approval until both presentations have been
displayed.

Seconded Allan Roberts -Carried

Graeme Edwards moved an amendment: Phil Cleary
be given authority to develop a web site on a twelve
month trail

Seconded: Ian Geddes.

Motion: That R.F.A. approve Phil to set up web site on
a 12 month trial -Carried

Firefighter Credit Union - David Whyte

Golden Helmet account - Minimum \$25,000 at lowest
Term Deposit rate for first 12 months, access through
NAB ATM or at Credit Union Office. No fees if
balance over \$25,000.

Travel, house, car Insurances, and General Insurance,
Financial Planning and Broker Service available.

Meeting ended 12.10 - RFA members & Peer Support
Group enjoy a combined barbecue luncheon. Andrew
Brenan & staff are to be complemented for a great
lunch.

Next Meeting - Geelong August 20th 2014

“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.

November 2014 edition deadline for copy is October 20th.

Melbourne's Fire Heritage Prior to the MFB.

By B. McCumisky.

Over the years that John Laverick and I have been producing 'Water Off', we have given you readers a lot of MFB history with accounts and photos of numerous fires and articles by Les Gray, other fires and myself.

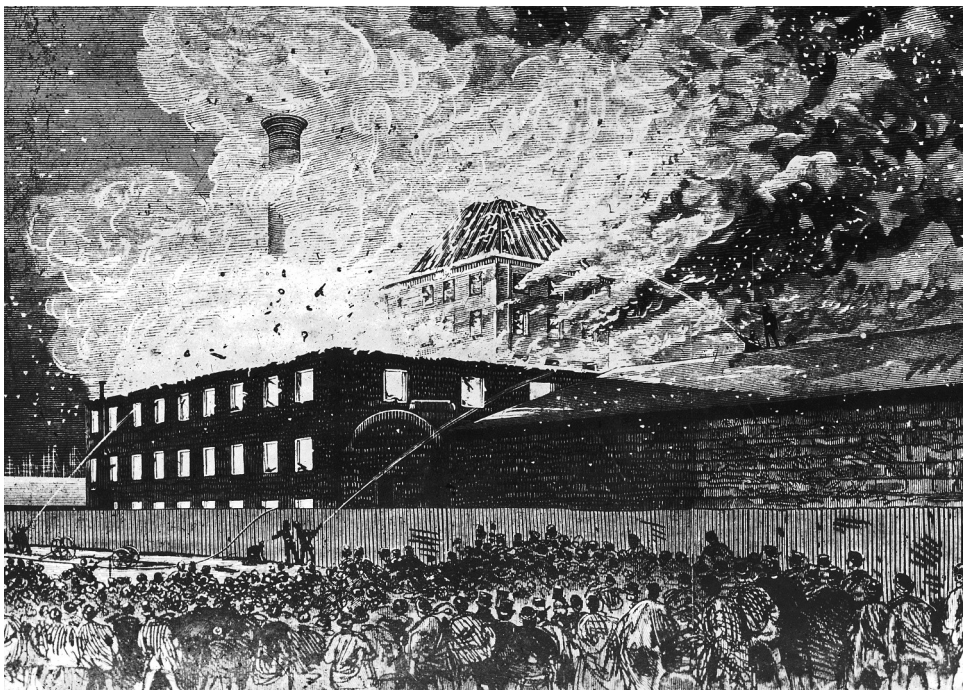
However there is a fascinating history of fires and fire brigades that dates back to the very early days of Melbourne, many years before the Metropolitan Fire Brigade came into existence. How many of you know that in 1891 there were 55 fire brigades in metropolitan Melbourne, and the city covered a much smaller area than it does now?

These next two editions of 'Water Off' will feature a couple of articles on fires that occurred prior to 1891. John and I would very much appreciate your feedback, because if you like what we are doing, we will run a series on Melbourne's Fire Heritage.

Bear in mind that the newspaper reporters of the time wrote in a different style to what they do now. Also since it was before the days of news photographers, descriptions of fire scenes etc. could sometimes be very colourful or graphic. Most available illustrations were lithographs or woodcuts produced by an artist. When you look at the detail in some of the pictures, you can marvel at the artists' ability to produce their work in such a short space of time.

FIRE AT THE VICTORIA SUGAR WORKS

The following are excerpts from 'The Argus' of a disastrous fire at the Victoria Sugar Works, Sandridge (Port Melbourne) on June 8, 1875.



These lithographs demonstrate the artists ability to give so much detail and produce their work in such a short space of time.

Image left;
The Australasian Sketcher.
Image right;
Illustrated Australian News.

An alarm was sent to the local Sandridge Fire Brigade which attended promptly. It was followed soon after by the Melbourne Brigade, the smoke having been seen from its lookout tower in Lt. Collins St. behind the Town Hall. The fire at this time had made very little show, and Supt Hoad was under

the impression it was only a chimney on fire.

On getting to work, however, he found the loaf sugar store was blazing inside, and the flames had got a good hold of the room where the men had been working and which also contained some 400 tons of sugar. He massed the various arriving Brigades with his own and directed operations. His men got a good stream going from the Yan Yean mains in Bay St. The Sandridge Brigade worked another stream at the rear of the building.

Meanwhile, when it was found the pressure was so weak, the hand-engine belonging to the Sugar Company

Situated on the corner of Bay and Beach Streets, Sandridge, the Victoria Sugar Works was a large complex comprising a number of buildings occupying almost an acre in area. Some 20 men worked at night in a large bluestone building used for boiling and drying sugar. About one o'clock these men observed smoke coming into their area from the building next door. The manager immediately directed the men to attach the hose to the water pipes running around the complex, and throw a stream of water through a hole they had made in the door of the burning building. The pressure was very weak and the water had little effect.

was brought into use. Pumping water from the Sugar Works pipe system, the pressure was much improved. The engine was worked by a gang of sailors from one of the ships in port. They had marched to the scene and offered their services.

By this time the first two Brigades had been joined by those of Emerald Hill (Sth Melbourne), Hotham (Nth Melbourne), the Carlton Brewery and Fitzroy; all of which set to work manfully and with proper regard to discipline.

The heat was very intense and the firemen were frequently driven back by suffocating volumes of smoke. The flames had now got complete mastery of the loaf sugar store, the boiling and drying room and other areas, completely gutting the building, the roof of which fell in piecemeal as the fire raged.

Mr. Hoad, realising the lower buildings could not be saved, directed the energies of the men to saving the tower which was separated by only a few feet from the burning mass. Streams of water were played vigorously on the sides of the tower, but the pressure was not sufficient to reach the roof. Every now and then enormous tongues of flame belched from the burning mass and shot as high as the roof, licking the tall structure and leaving small patches of fire on the window sills and roof.



The firemen did their best to extinguish these dangerous spots, but as the flames which seemed living and possessed of an intelligent and malignant desire to embrace the tower, shot up time after time climbing higher and higher. They began to get a hold on the structure through the windows and wooden roof, until at last the firemen, who were struggling gamely against the scorching heat and falling debris, saw that the upper part of the tower was on fire and burning fiercely. The flames at the top were almost out of reach of the water, and uniting with those below, the whole place seemed sheathed in a case of leaping fire.

At this time the scene was very grand. the premises blazing like a colossal beacon, shed a lurid glare over the whole of Sandridge and the shipping in the port, turning the waters of the bay a blood red colour. The spectacle, although grand, boded danger in more quarters than one, and it was greatly feared that some of the wooden buildings in the town might be ignited by the flying sparks and falling debris. It was also feared the fire

would communicate with the gasometer used for storing gas utilised at the sugar works. The manager had a hole knocked in the side of the gasometer through which the gas escaped.

When the fire was at its height and threatening to spread, the firemen did not lose heart. Realising the water could not reach the top of the tower, they proceeded at considerable risk from the great heat and falling debris, to erect a long ladder against the side of the tower. Up this they climbed, hose in hand, directing water in the windows as they ascended. Then by means of a fixed iron ladder, they reached the top. By sheer perseverance they finally gained partial control by 4 a.m. and managed to save the lower portion of the tower.

The firemen in their daring, did not altogether escape injury. One Hotham man was standing near the tower directing a stream through a window, when a tank of hot water in the top of the tower overturned, due to its supports being burnt away. The hot water poured directly onto the fireman, knocking him down and severely scalding his back. He was picked up and stripped. On the discovery of a large blister on his back, he was sent home. Several other firemen narrowly escaped being knocked down, or perhaps killed by the coping stones

falling off the walls of the building.

The three upper floors of the five storey tower, along with all contents were destroyed. The adjoining three storey buildings were both gutted. The bluestone building and all the valuable machinery it housed was irretrievably ruined.

At 5.30 p.m. on June 9, the firemen finally left the scene. The fire was practically out, but masses of stock and debris was still smoldering. That was left to the Sugar Works men and it took a few more days to eventually extinguish it.

The loss to the Sugar Company was estimated at £40,000, a huge amount of money in 1875. Over 200 employees were out of work. Whether or not the Sugar Works would be rebuilt, was unknown at that time.

Barbara McCumisky

The Brennans in China

Following flights of 9 hours to Hong Kong and 2 hours to Beijing we had our first taste of smog. Our first day out was to Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City.

Tiananmen Square covers about 120 acres with hoards of people. Security in uniform and civilian clothes were everywhere. Fire extinguishers were spread throughout for use if someone set themselves alight.



In front of Chairman Mao's mausoleum was where the young protester stood in front of the tank some 25 years ago, (Photo above)

The Forbidden City was our next stop. Large high walls were around the site. Buildings inside were in excess of 1000 years old, but are in mint condition. We went up to the palace where the last emperor lived. He died in 1967. There are temples everywhere.

The next day 5.30am rise – breakfast 6am then on to the Great Wall it's about 50km from Beijing. The traffic and the smog was very thick. The walls are over 1000 years old and built to keep the Mongolians out, (not the rabbits).



Above; *A tired Nancy descends the Great Wall. The prospect of walking the 6000 Klm length was too much.*

It's hard to imagine the manpower and the amount of rocks that were used as the wall is in excess of 6000km. By 11am there were up to 100 coaches small and large trying to find a car park, hence our early start. I walked part way up the wall but with 3 weeks left to go and the steps were steep and uneven, discretion was the better part of valour.

We visited the summer palace of the Empress the next morning. Hard to imagine anyone living there. Numerous buildings constructed of brick around the lake. There was the Serene Palace, Emperors Palace, Concubines Palace, and a long passage way so the Empress wouldn't get wet or sunburnt moving around. There is a marble boat built so peasants could not sink it or turn it over and drown her. She was a vicious woman who killed 2 of her nephews so her son could become the emperor, he only lasted 2 years.



Above; *The marble boat built so peasants could not sink it or turn it over and drown the Empress.*

Up at 5.15am for breakfast then on the bus to the airport for a 2 hour flight to Xian. Home of the terracotta Warriors. Here we pick up our local guide for the next 2 days. After lunch onto the Museum of the Han dynasty. Lots of pots and artefacts, up to 5000 years BC. Xian has a city wall about 13km around the old city, about 1000 years old.



Next morning out to the Terracotta Warriors (Photo above). On the way we visited a factory where they manufacture copies of the Warriors. On the site where a farmer drilling for water, found the warriors, there are 3 large buildings similar to aeroplane hangers, covering the pits where they were excavated. Most were broken but have been put back together again. These include all ranks of army personnel along with horses and chariots. There are literally 100s of these warriors.

The following morning we visited the Wild Goose Pagoda before transferring to the airport for 45 minute flight then a 5 hour bus trip to Yichang, where we boarded our boat for a 4 night Yangtze River Cruise. There are 4 large boats anchored, each carrying up to 300 passengers. Next morning we left the boat for a 3 hour Gorge walk. Up and down stairs and along board walks. Very spectacular, including another pantomime show. Hanging from outside caves high up on the side of the Gorge were wooden coffins, up to 2000 years old. Makes you wonder how they got them up there. Until now no one knows.

Next day we caught a ferry to a small village. Everywhere we go there are plenty of steps to climb. We attend another culture show in traditional costumes doing local dances. Back to the boat for lunch, then onto small boats to enter Wu Tang Gorge (about 44km long). Then onto Qa Tang Gorge which is approximately 8km long.

Sleep in next morning 7am breakfast. Only one tour today. This is one of the many locks, only 300 steps to climb up, Nancy did not go. They cut through a mountain using cheap labour (the army doing a 2 year service). Later in the afternoon we went to another Pagoda, this time 800 steps to climb. We both chickened out ¼ the way up. We spent our time at the

local market stalls etc. At night we attended the captains dinner.

The following morning we disembark at Chongqing, a City of 33 million people. The porters were carrying the cases up the steps (about 100) with a rod over their shoulders with 2 suitcases on each side. On the city tour we were shown where the water of the river floods. 180 – 200 metres above the current level.

After a 4 ½ hour bus trip we arrived at Chenghua a small city of approximately 8 million. Our hotel is opposite a 6 bay fire station (Don feeling at home) manned by Army conscripts for 2 years. The pay is uniform, food and toiletries. That night another folk presentation, with world famous masks being changed on their faces. You could not see the mask being changed. (The actors never left the stage).



Above: Which one is the real Buddha of Leshan?

The next morning we bus it to Leshan and take another boat to go out and see a Buddha, 97 feet tall (33 metres) carved into the side of the river (Photo above). Legend has it he was carved to quell the river waters as many people had drowned while trying to cross in their small boats. Back to the township for a walk around the markets. There were people pestering us to clean the wax from our ears (no takers from our group). Back to Chenghua for a dinner on a 6 story high boat, (10 courses).

Another early rise the next day, to the Panda research base, arriving at 9.30am The weather is wet which is good because the Panda's are out and they were all ages ranging from babies out of the nursery to adults putting on a display for the visitors. Back to the city by bus then to the airport.

Left at 9.15pm and arrived in Gullin at 10.45pm bus to hotel and bed at 1am. Back on bus next morning to catch another boat for a 4 ½ hour trip down the Li River. The sandstone pinnacles were similar to Howlong Bay in Vietnam. On berthing at Yang Shou we were taken by golf cart to our Hotel. At night we went down to the Li River for a water culture show, about 500 local villagers put on a magnificent performance. This show was used in the opening of the Olympic games.

Another bus trip next morning to the countryside. We had a 2½ hour walk through small farms and little villages. Rice is the main crop in the area, Orange trees and ornamental trees are

grown for sale at local markets. At night we were shown how the cormorants were used to catch fish.

Another early start, bus back to Gullin, to the Red Flute Caves, another 800 stairs we chickened out once again. Then onto the airport for a flight to Shanghai. After Dinner (10 courses again) onto bus for 2 hour trip to Suzhou. Next morning a bus trip to the old part of town for a canal boat ride through the old part of town. They call this the Venice of the east. Then onto a pearl factory and then a silk factory. Very nice but needed a bank loan to buy anything at both.



Above: The Brennans getting some ideas from the Humble Administrators Garden for their own at home.

Next day we visited the Humble Administrators Garden, with 5 acres of streams, ponds, bridges and islands, with bamboo growing and plenty of statues. In the afternoon we catch the bus back to Shanghai. Which has 23 million people, with about 4000 people per square km. and 1400 high rise buildings. This evening I have my 77th Birthday at a restaurant and Nancy buys 3 bottles of French Champagne and a cake for the group to celebrate with me.

Nine AM. next morning, off to the Chinese Museum, this was very interesting, with some exhibits dating to 1,163 years BC. They were very good tradesmen in those days for stuff to last that long. After lunch on a floating restaurant we visit the world famous Bund Financial district. Went up a high rise building of 88 floors and travelled up the lift in 80 seconds. In the afternoon we went for ride on the train to the airport and back. The train is electro magnetic and travels 40kms one way in 7 ½ minutes at 430km per hour. That evening dinner on a boat cruise to see the lights of the city. Quite spectacular. Next morning a walk around the local shops and then a bus trip around Shanghai markets. In the afternoon we went to the French Quarter, with plenty of outdoor eating and drinking. Lots of European people. That night was our last dinner for the group.

On our last day on mainland china we travelled to the airport for our flight to Hong Kong. We were supposed to leave at 2.30pm but finally got away at 4.4pm. We arrived at the hotel at 8.30pm to which we were then upgraded to a suite (got to be lucky sometime). We were on the 19th floor with bay views. The Tariff was \$500 US per night. Off next morning for a tour of Hong Kong. Visited Victoria Peak, Junk ride on the Harbour and a trip to Stanley Market. These couple of days are supposed to be R&R. The following morning a bus trip to the new Territories and look over Hong Kong from the Mountains. Hong Kong has approximately 7 million residents and is growing all the time. This is our 4th visit and we can see the difference. That night we walked past the Ant One restaurant, that J. Berry owns. Our last day we did a bit of shopping before transferring to the airport for our 9 hour overnight flight home. Once again we travelled with Wendy Wu tours, very good as long as you like Chinese meals.

Don and Nancy.

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 Remember", 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 Russell 1940-26/6/2014.

John started in the MFB on the 22/8/1961 and retired 1/8/1989. After finishing his recruit training he was stationed at the old Eastern Hill Fire Station Headquarters for a short time, then was transferred to the old Coburg Fire station just up the road from that well known landmark called "The Bluestone College".

I never had the opportunity to meet John until we both finished up in Western district, again our paths did not cross for quite a while, often due to the different shifts, but his name was often mentioned in conversation regarding his dedication to the service and his firefighting skills. The RFA Editor John Laverick was telling me he knew him before he joined the MFB, as the norm I quizzed him to gain more insight, John L stated that John R was a top Firey who passed the Officers exam and over the years relieved at most of the stations in the West.

John L also stated he was very surprised when he took up the option of early retirement, in retrospect it was the right thing for Lorraine and him as it enabled them to travel far & wide. I have often quoted, you can take them out of the Brigade, but you cannot take the Brigade out of them.

His son Jason is a Station Officer in the MFB stationed at Newport rings true with the saying an apple does not fall far from the tree as he follows in his dad's footsteps. **Lorraine**, on behalf of the RFA & community, thank you for loaning your John to us.

Sydney Finegan 1924-10/7/2014.

Syd started in the MFB on the 28/6/1951 and retired on the 8/9/1983. I identified in the secretary's report that his wife Patricia had contacted us to inform me that his well-being was such that he needed full time care, unfortunately his health deteriorated further and on the 10th of July he succumbed to his condition.

Our Syd, as I was told by Arthur Mears, was a top Firey, dedicated, daring, and skilful with an in-depth knowledge of the Port /South Melbourne areas. And as I stated previously he was one of those tough as nails Commandoes in the Second World War, when I, on the odd occasion, stood by with him at the old 38 station I saw how well he was respected by, not only the other Fireys, but also the local community, in fact amongst his notices in the Sun/Herald was one from a person, that as a child, used to visit the station.

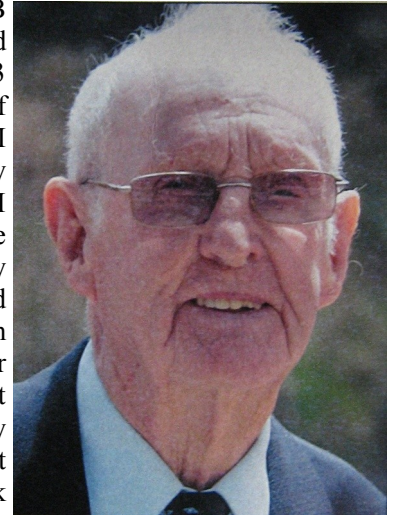
There was also another late member of the MFB & RFA, Station Officer Jim Fleming (The Count) who on many occasions would tell me the different stories about Syd, between him, Arthur and Bryan Crawford they all had many tales to tell about Syd's capabilities. I can't help but

wonder what he would have said if he had seen in the paper the so-called story about security being required at the Commission, he, being an ex-Commando, would be laughing his head off (I wonder if they get the papers at his new posting) The story would no doubt be pinned to the notice board.

Patricia on behalf of MFB, RFA and community your Sydney is a very hard act to follow and we will all miss him. Please take strength in the knowledge of the respect we all had for your Sydney.

William Stanley Smith (Dick) 1926-20/7/2014.

Dick joined the MFB on the 1/7/1949 and retired on the 9/12/83 reaching the rank of District Officer. I deemed myself very fortunate for when I joined in 1956, people like Dick and many others were returned military personnel from the Second World War and they showed what fellowship and integrity was all about, great people to call work mates. If my memory is



correct it was around the time he was going for the Sub Station Officers exam, even at that early stage of his career, he had already built up a reputation as a top firey.

However, it was not until late 1963 or early 64 that I started to have a closer working relationship with him, this occurred when I was sent relieving at his home station the old No 6 Coburg. It was there that I really got to know his capabilities; he was the genuine article great at a fire, with that get in and get the job done type of personality, he also had an intimate knowledge of his area and its risk. Later when I relieved at adjoining stations it was great to have him coming on in the big red truck to the many fires and/or incidents we attended.

Dick was also a very powerful man; I remember one night, to gain entry in a hurry, (you know, when the body becomes the battering ram) Dick virtually picked me up and we broke down the door. You can picture it, arms locked around shoulders my feet not quite touching the ground as we hit the door (I forgot to mention we did try the handle first) it was Dick's shoulder which off-course took all the weight.

As time went on because of transfers & promotions etc. our paths did not cross as often but when it did he would hang it on me which showed to me even tho he had become very a bit of a pedant to obtain promotion he most certainly had not lost his sense of humour.

His son Craig informed me that it was 10 years ago that Rae, Dick's wife passed away and I do believe if it was not for the solace he gained from his lawn bowls he may never have picked up from that loss.

To the Smith family your brother, grandfather and/or uncle was quite an icon and holds a special place in the MFB family.

John Berry



Peter MacCallum Research Laboratory Visit & Donation

Late afternoon of Thursday the 19th of June, ten members of the RFA were taken on the most amazing guided tour one could ever hope to undertake; let me explain how it happened.

Associate RFA member Angela Potter, (Nancy & Don's daughter) who amongst the many charities she assists was able to have a small number of members from the RFA taken on a guided tour of the Peter MacCallum research facility (Which the President advertised at the last meeting). At the allotted time the group assembled on the ground floor where one of the foundation members met with us and explained the protocol required for the tour. The name of the tour I felt should have been called the **Magical Mystery tour**.

On reaching the level where the tour was to start, we were met and introduced to the Head of the Department, she explained in non-technical terms the goal of this World renowned Laboratory; **"The trigger for the disease."** A simple analogy! You can have two identical twins with the same genes and identical lifestyles yet one will contract cancer and the other does not! What was the trigger?

Early in the tour, we were introduced to a young man, who, to me, looked no older than 16 years, who felt very fortunate to have gained a position there to explore his thesis; in the hope his research will gain his doctorate. The research equipment he was using to research his hypotheses was worth many millions of dollars, (please remember this is all from memory of the tour). The equipment had the ability to analyse many hundreds of cells and record the findings onto a computer to enable the researcher to view it on screen rather than look at each individual one through a microscope. The young man had a smile on his face like the **Cheshire cat from Alice in Wonderland**. One can understand why when we were informed he had already found a number of things that are beneficial in some cancer treatments. The group wished him every success in his endeavours.

Whilst on our way to the next part of the building the guide informed us that the Peter MacCallum Research Centre was recognised as one of the six most important research facilities in the world. Makes one feel good that little old Melbourne town is still keeping up with the great

Above; Peter Mac's new home, currently under construction and located at one of Melbourne's most important sites on the corner of Flemington Road and Elizabeth Street in Parkville; it is the gateway to Melbourne's health and research precinct. In 2016, they will move to this facility, a place built for cancer care, cancer research and cancer education.

RFA's donation will assist in the great work of this institution and every dollar donated plays a critical role in helping advance the search for cancer cures.

work of the past, people like Nobel Prize recipients Sir Henry & Sir Lawrence Bragg father & son, Sir Macfarlane Burnet, Dr Peter Doherty and Baron Howard Florey and you can add to that many other great people that have advanced the medical sciences.

The next section on our journey was where we met another person who again did not look much older than the previous one; in this case this person was from Spain, she also had applied to explore her thesis here. This one blew us away, the study of an eye of a (I think it was a fruit fly). Now imagine you are looking at an object no bigger than the pointy end of a pin, she was able to show us on screen the difference in its make-up and the particular sections of concern to her research.

The members of the tour including myself were gobsmacked with what we had been shown, unfortunately we had to leave these wonderful people who had given of their time trying, in simple terms, to explain results they were hoping to achieve with their research.

Our group, when reassembled on the ground floor, thanked the Foundation member and laboratory staff for allowing us the opportunity to tour their facility, the members present then took a vote to make a donation of Two Thousand dollars from the RFA in accordance with a previous meeting motion re a donation to a needy cause, in this case it is the Peter MacCallum Foundation.

The final point I would like to make on behalf of our group is; the research people who took us on the tour treated us with the upmost respect and were only too willing to enhance our knowledge on the great work they are doing for humanity, were never aware we were there to make the donation.

John Berry

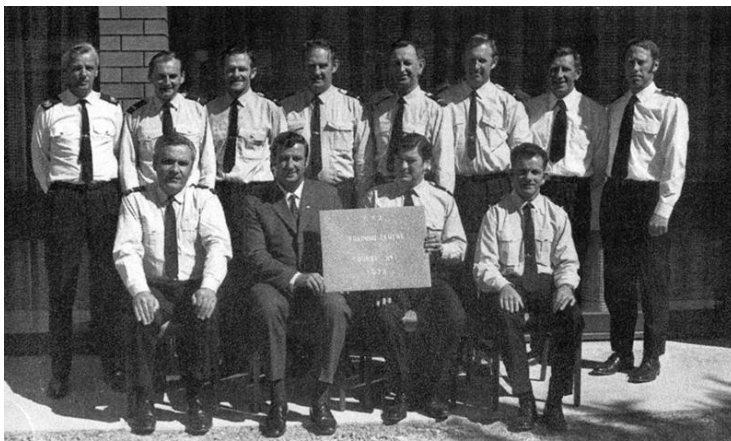
GUESS WHO?

This picture is one from the archives and it is going to test the recall memory of career firefighters of the CFA.

1. Name what the picture is celebrating?
2. Where was the picture taken and what year?
3. Name the members in the picture?

Answers are to be forwarded to the Secretary no earlier than September 25th on 03 9431 2880. First correct answer will receive one of our famous RFA aprons.

Note you will need to be at the AGM in November to collect it.

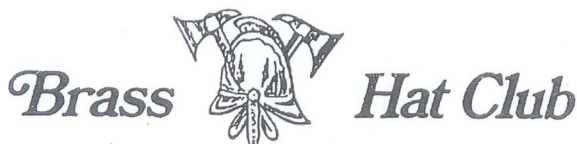


The answer to the May 2014 “Guess Who” question

The May edition Guess Who had a very sobering picture of the first “1”Course conducted just after the opening of Fiskville in 1972. The question was to name the members who had not been transferred upstairs.

I must be factual about this one, I received more phone calls on this than ever before, and obviously the human factor is more important than any fire or whatever and showed to me the respect the members had for their fellow Firies. What is the saying? You can take them out of the brigade, but you cannot take the brigade out of them. Without going through all the names of the members in the picture I will give the answer to the question asked.

The following are the names of members still with us.
1. Peter Lang, 2. Bill Walker.
Not sure about the following. Keith Johnson & Allan Cameron, the rest have been transferred.
To use a quote from Alfred Lord Tennyson all in the picture are “The grand old name of Gentleman”
John Berry.



We invite Freemasons who are members of the Fire Services, including support services, to join the Brass Hat Club.

The club has, for more than 70 years, provided fellowship for Freemasons who are members of the fire services. The club gathers quarterly at the Preston RSL for a meeting and lunch.

Contact: Secretary;
Graham Brewer, 0428 501 118
Email: jsimpson7@vtown.com.au

I didn't make it to the gym today.



That makes 5 years in a row.

EMPLOYEE SUPPORT PROGRAM Update

This is a first for what I hope to be a regular report to the RFA members. Following our recent joint luncheon at the Burnley complex it was suggested it would be an advantage to the members of the RFA to have a better understanding of our programme. We currently have 53 peers, one peer coordinator, three external psychologists and two social workers, a chaplain, and the 6 session private Employee Assistance Program.

This last group is an external company that can offer a maximum of six sessions of counselling to members and their immediate family members. There is usually a counsellor in your area that you can see. The psychologists and social workers help me out with cover on the weekend, assist with mental health training for our Firies and corporate staff and provide counselling also. Collectively they are known as our clinicians. The peers are a dedicated group of trained volunteers available to provide short term support and referral to counselling resources when necessary or requested.

What sort of training do the peers receive? They start off with a basic counselling and listening skills course that is followed up with a two day Mental Health & First Aid course which prepares them for crisis response and intervention. There are quarterly training sessions and most of the peers now take a turn on the critical incident pager, which allows for a 24 hour/day, 7 days/week service for members and their families.

Our chaplain, Graeme Scoringe has already made himself known to a number of retired Firies and their families. Graeme is available for pastoral care support

and can also assist with all your “Ceremonial” needs.....

SO Rod Egglestone was until recently our Peer Coordinator, who by the way has been recognised by the CFA for his work in training CFA Firies in dealing with Emergency Medical Response (EMR) turnouts. Rod has been an absolute credit to our program, no doubt about that, however he has felt the need to have a break and get back to a fire-fighting role. The one upside of this has been, we now have been fortunate in gaining the services of SO Sandra Hearn as his replacement; Sandra no doubt will be a great asset to the group.

Currently we have a very dedicated RFA peer in Mr John Howe. But he is the only one now, after the passing of Don Cameron. So! If you think you would like to know more about the program and maybe become a peer, I would love to hear from you. The Employee Support Program is there for you and your immediate family to use and you don't have to be an actively employed member of the Brigade. Best bit? It's free, FREE, **FREE!!!!** There are no records kept on your old file, everything is confidential. So if you're feeling a bit low or having some personal issues, here are some useful numbers for you.

Employee Assistance Coordinator: Domenica (Nic) Roperto 9665 4405 (diverts to mobile). If you call on a weekend, you will get a clinician on the same number who can help you.

Peer Coordinator: Sandra Hearn 9665 4516
Chaplain Graeme Scoringe: 0439 972 030
Mr John Howe: 0417 112 993

Private Employee Assistance Provider (6 sessions only) : 1300 366 789.

Further updates to come in the next edition of Water Off regarding other facets of the Support programme.

Domenica Roperto (Nic)

Beware – energy bill scams on the rise

SCAMwatch is warning consumers to be on the lookout for energy billing scams currently doing the rounds. A new phishing email pretending to be from reputable energy companies is currently circulating, which claims you owe money for an outstanding gas or electricity bill. The email will ask you to click on a link to view or update your account and arrange payment via money transfer. If you click on the link, you risk infecting your computer with malware and having your personal information stolen. If you pay this 'bill' via money transfer, you will never see your money again.

Beware – reports have also been received about scammers approaching consumers via phone, SMS and post. Don't let scammers raise the temperature of your winter heating bill – if you receive an email out of the blue from someone claiming that you owe their company money for an outstanding energy bill, press delete.

A Trip to the Vet

The picture right shows Tony Hynson with his family's overfed pet lizard on the trailer on his way to the Vet's.

Tony said it's been looking crook for a while now and thinks it may be suffering from “something, or someone it ate.”

Unfortunately, Tony sustained an injury to his left leg (see bandage), when the much loved pet tried to thank him for taking it to the vet.



RFA Member Relaxes with Support Act

One of our members, who's been touring the world with his dance routine in preparations for the show he is giving at our Annual General Meeting.

John stated the one thing he has found after his very strenuous dance routine with his partners (See picture) he needs to relax and untwine from them or should that be unwind and let the moment flow, the time they spend together helps him cast off the tension that the show creates leaving him in a state of euphoria.

Believe it or not

John Berry



Bureaucrats Baffle Noah

In the year 2014, the Lord came unto Noah, who was now living in Dandenong and said:

"Once again, the earth has become evil and I see the end of all flesh before me. Build another Ark and save 2 of every living thing along with a few good humans.." He gave Noah the blueprints, saying: "You have 6 months to build the Ark before I will start the unending rain for 40 days and 40 nights."

Six months later, the Lord looked down and saw Noah weeping in his yard - but no Ark. "Noah!" He roared, "I'm about to start the rain! Where is the Ark?" "Forgive me, Lord," begged Noah, "but things have changed."

"I needed a Building Permit."

"I've been arguing with the Boat Inspector about the need for a sprinkler system.."

"My neighbours claim that I've violated the Neighbourhood By-Laws by building the Ark in my back garden and exceeding the height limitations. We had to go to the Local Planning Committee for a decision."

"Then the Local Council and the Electric Company demanded a boat load of money for the future costs of moving power lines and other overhead obstructions, to clear the passage for the Ark's move to the sea. I told them that the sea would be coming to us, but they would hear nothing of it."

"Getting the wood was another problem. There's a ban on cutting local trees in order to save the Greater Spotted Barn Owl. I tried to convince the environmentalists that I needed the wood to save the owls - but no go!"

"When I started gathering the animals the RSPCA took

me to court. They insisted that I was confining wild animals against their will. They argued the accommodations were too restrictive, and it was cruel and inhumane to put so many animals in a confined space."

"Then the Environmental Protection Agency ruled that I couldn't build the Ark until they'd conducted an environmental impact study on your proposed flood."

"I'm still trying to resolve a complaint with the Human Rights Commission on how many minorities I'm supposed to hire for my building crew."

"Immigration are checking the Visa status of most of the people who want to work."

"The Trade Unions say I can't use my sons. They insist I have to hire only Union workers with ark-building experience."

"To make matters worse, the Internal Revenue Service seized all my assets, claiming I'm trying to leave the country illegally with endangered species."

"So, forgive me, Lord, but it would take at least 10 years for me to finish this Ark."

"Suddenly the skies cleared, the sun began to shine, and a rainbow stretched across the sky."

Noah looked up in wonder and asked,

"You mean you're not going to destroy the world?"

"No," said the Lord.

"The Government beat me to it."



Listen mate, there's no way I'll issue a certificate of seaworthiness for that tub you're building there!!!

Marriage

Marriage can be like a game of cards: To begin with, you need two hearts and a diamond, in the end you wish you had a club and a spade!

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@ 1130 hrs

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Members, Wives, Partners,

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Contact:

Peter Lang 5275 6039

To receive Mail out notification

Recent Retirements

Steve Short, 16th July

Pending Retirement

Jim Franklin, 27th August

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.

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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