

"WATER OFF"

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



May 2024 Vol 29 No 2
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RFA General Meeting
NOTE
Burnley Complex
Burnley
Wed 22nd May 2024
at 10:30am

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William James Thompson (Jim) and his brother Frank played in the MFB Band.

“GENERAL MEETING”

**Burnley Complex, Burnley
Wed 22nd May, 2024 at 10:30am.**

Volunteers Required
The Fire Services Museum needs past fire service members to assist on an occasional basis at the Museum
Please contact
Bryan Robertson
0418 129 252

All Correspondence to:
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RFAV Secretary
PO Box 93
Numurkah 3636
Phone 0419 778 161
or email at rfavic1@gmail.com

Non financial Members

Members be advised if your newsletter has an expiry date of 2/1/2020 that means you have not paid your subs since 2019 therefore if no remuneration is received by the 2/1/22 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: Alex Shepherd
Vice President: Sam Capes
Sec./Treasurer: Phil Cleary

General Committee:

Col Harris
Len Manning
Mike McCumisky
Ian Geddes
Kevin Hede

**“Water Off”
Editorial Staff**
Colin Harris
James Harris

Valē

William James Thompson,
Ralph Weitering,
Ian Love,
Kevin Dern,
Michael Hughes,
Phillip Paterson,
Clive Pelacarno,
Andrew Hare.

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

Sick List * In Care Facility

Stan Cameron,
Geoff Cuzac,
Jack Etherington,
Ian Hookey,
*Gary Spicer,
John Williams,
Len Lette.

Note: If you know of any member who may be ill please notify a committee member.

Diary Dates

“GENERAL MEETING”
Burnley Complex, Burnley
Wed 22nd May 2024 at
10:30am.

***Guest Speaker Police Airwing Pilot.**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



It's now Autumn. The fifth month of the year and again I look back and wonder where has the last 3 months have gone. It doesn't matter though because like it or not it's in the past and we can only look forward and hope that we can still be able to enjoy what life's got in store for us. I don't like social media! We seem to be slaves to the way it dictates our lives. Too many people try to influence our way of thinking, whether we know it, like it or not. It may be me, however it seems like nobody likes to talk to anybody anymore except through the dial pads of their telephone or computer, and don't get me started on the cashless society "the banks again want more of our money". I love this time of the year! The colours of the leaves turning orange and red, sunshine in the afternoon, a bit soup and toast for lunch. Anyway, best wishes to all, and I hope all's well with you, your family and friends. See you soon.

Alex Shepherd
President

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT



Hi all,
Well, summer is over and winter is coming. I hope you all have your "long-johns" handy. At least they will keep you warm. (You can't rely on Victoria's power supply to keep you warm - Ha!). My report this quarter is essentially about the A.G.M. in August this and the state of my health.
As you all know, at the A.G.M., all positions on the committee, including President, Secretary/Treasurer become vacant and are open to all members for election to fill all positions.

I'm hoping that some of the newly retired personnel from FRV will come along to our meeting and put their hands up and become involved in the running of the Retired Firefighter's Association. My health is not so good these days. I would still like to be involved and be part of the committee, helping Col Harris with "Water Off" and running the website. If anyone out there in FRV land, recently retired and are interested in the Secretary/Treasurer's position and what it involves, please give me a call.
Regards,

Phil Cleary.

Peer support is available to Retired Firefighters and Associated Members

FRV

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NOTICE

For all future RFA membership payments, electronic transfers, internet banking etc RFA new banking details are as follows:

**GOULBURN MURRAY
Credit Union
BSB 803 078 - Account No 37460**

Any queries, contact:
Phil Cleary - Secretary

Any enquiries call the Secretary:
Mob. 0419 778 161 Email: rfavic1@gmail.com

World War II - The Anzacs in Crete

I enjoy Anzac day! It's a holiday, it's also a time to remember those brave men and women who all helped to fight off the enemy, both on our shores, in Europe and the Mediterranean. Of course we can't forget the big AFL match between Collingwood and Essendon, which is now is a much watched duel between these two football team foes.

I've been reading a book about the "The Anzacs" by Peter Monteath called "Battle on 42nd Street". It's about the defence of Crete by the Australians, New Zealanders, British and the Greek/Cretan armies and the local resistance who all put up a brave and determined effort to resist the German army and paratroopers for many weeks, until eventually they capitulated by the might and heavy armaments of the German army and Luftwaffe (air-force). The Germans needed to take Crete to ensure they and their Axis partners had dominance over the eastern Mediterranean to shore up supply routes to Rommel and his Afrika Korps in 1942.

(Maori proverb)

"When the gates of war have been flung open,
Man no longer takes notice of light and reason"

(A passage of words by a young Australian soldier from C Company in the battle for Crete)

We had a bayonet charge on the enemy – these crack German troops on the run like stuck pigs so that, you know, heightened your morale. That's where I probably knowingly killed my first man. I deliberately shot him, you know. I lined him up and I knew I could kill him because I was a very good rifle shot. He was the first one that I'd ever seen in a position where I could kill him, and I killed him. When I got there, I was terribly sorry about it. I looked at him and he was a blond, blue-eyed bloke because his eyes were open – blood was still running out of him – out of his mouth – because I shot him through the....he was down and I shot him through the – went into his back. Probably went through the length of his body, you know. Awful experience and I rolled him over to have a look at him and I thought, "Jesus you're about the same age as me". I wish I could say "Come on fellow, get up and let's get on with the bloody game", you know – thinking football.

The war in Crete took its toll on the locals, the allied forces and the Germans. The crack German paratroopers (Fallschirmtruppe), their mountain troops and regular soldiers lost 4,463 lives. The greatest losses for the allies, was in the seas around Crete. The lives of 1828 Royal Navy and soldiers were lost, and Anzac & British forces on Crete the toll was 1751 dead. Sadly, Cretan soldiers and civilian losses were unaccounted. Reprisals by the Germans – many!

"War! What is it good for? Absolutely Nothing!"



Leading Firefighter Manuel Thomson



SO Reg Scott (FS55), Cmdr Jason Deason and Cmdr David Mounier

Anzac Day – Collingwood Vs Essendon 2024

The crowd today was ninety plus (25/04/24)
 I was told, the hot dogs were cold – what's this irrelevant fuss?
 The Bombers today, were on song
 A bit like the N.Z. lady who sang her national anthem
 And a lovely anthem it was, with a lovely voice to behold
 The story of the Anzacs was today re-told
 The Aussies and the Kiwis are bonded, tough & bold
 The Turks had their measure – the Anzacs eventually had to fold
 They crept way in the middle of the night
 And when the Turks awoke, the Anzacs were gone in the bright dawn light
 This match today was also bold, a story to the end would unfold
 The Bombers were bigger, the Pies were small, yet, tougher and fitter
 It was even-stevens for most of the game
 Albeit, the Bombers creamed the Pies in the first quarter
 They were confident, a grin – there could be slaughter, maybe a win?
 Second quarter came, it was now a different game
 Fly the coach, always had belief
 Our supporters sought more goals. We needed more relief
 And win this game after almost two hours
 Of tough, rough, fast and exciting AFL football
 The Pies came into the last quarter with a one point advantage
 I wondered about WW1 heroes in their trenches, deaths, the fray
 They left Gallipoli and went to the Western Front to fight another day?
 Thousands killed, yet they finally won WW1. And today, this match was fought
 Result was a draw. A fitting end to Anzac Day. Let's hope there's no more war!



Next R.F.A. Meeting we have guest speaker, Mr David Key

David Key was a pilot with the Victoria Police Air Wing. He was involved in a variety of rescues, including the Sydney to Hobart Yacht race in 1998, where 6 competitors lost their lives when there was a terrible storm, strong winds and mountainous waves down the coast-line from Sydney and sailors and crew required rescuing.

Come along to our next R.F.A. meeting, at the Burnley Complex and David will have you on the edge of your chair, with his stories and daring car and fugitive chases from the comfort of his helicopter seat.

Phil Cleary – Secretary/Treasurer



RIP Ralph Weitering **Ex No. 35 Station.**

Champion Ralph A whistling fireman from Windsor has just won a most unusual world title. Ralph Weitering took out the world whistling title in Carson City, Nevada, on Sunday, beating competitors from 60 other countries. Ralph took out first place in the contemporary section with Advance Australia Fair and second place in both the novelty and classical categories whistling The Trish Trash Polka and The Blue Danube. Ralph said while he whistled Advance Australia Fair 'my wife and three daughters stood at my side waving Australian Sags.

Gobron Brillé 40/60 HP Fire Engine - 1907



This 40/60hp Gobron-Brillié began life as a seven-seater touring car and was operated on chauffeur-driven charter trips between London and Paris by Westminster Bridge Garage. Around 1910 it was sold and converted for use as an estate fire engine and was fitted with a Merryweather Valiant steam pump. The engine was a 7.600 cc 4 Cylinder. The increased weight of the fire fighting equipment led to the vehicle being fitted with stronger lorry wheels and solid tyres.

Founded by Gustav Gobron and Eugene Brillié in 1898, Gobron-Brillié was one of the best known early French car manufacturers. They were famous for the opposed piston engines which were designed by Brillié. Although he left the firm in 1903, his engines continued to be used until the early 1920s by which time the company was known as Automobiles Gobron. The last Gobron cars were built in 1930.

WANTED

Occasionally "Water Off" receives photographs that are of such poor quality that it is impossible to reproduce. The story the photo is meant to compliment, is then, to a certain extent spoiled.

Then again, we at times receive a great photo but a weak story This is where the photo comes into it's own and is able to lift the story.

This photograph was sent to us without any accompanying information. We think it may have been taken some time in the late fifties but have no clues as to the names of the firefighters and the location of where it was taken.

If anybody can provide information



Australians don't know enough about dementia, and that's a problem

By Jan Fisher

24 April 2024¹

We all know about dementia as a concept, but do we really know that much about dementia in reality?

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) has recently conducted a Dementia Awareness Survey, the largest national community survey of its kind in Australia, and the results show we have a lot to learn about this unfortunately common condition.

And we do need to know more because dementia is not going away anytime soon. In 2023 it was estimated about 411,100 Australians were living with dementia. This is equivalent to 15 people with dementia per 1000 Australians, which increases to 84 people with dementia per 1000 Australians aged 65 and over. Nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) of Australians with dementia are women.

With an ageing and growing population, it is predicted that the number of Australians with dementia will more than double by 2058 to 849,300.

We need to know more

The AIHW study found Australians were unsure about what they know about dementia and what can be done to reduce the risk of developing dementia.

That's probably best summed up by the sad reality that one in five Australians still believes the misconception that aluminium cookware increases the risk of developing dementia.

And we need to know more because the study found more informed people improved their risk factors.

Dementia is more common with age, but it is not a normal part of ageing and as such there are behaviours and risk factors that can be modified to decrease the risk of dementia.

What are the risks?

The good news is that while the survey found that Australians generally were unsure about their knowledge of dementia, more than 70 per cent knew some ways to reduce the risk of developing dementia, including keeping moving, learning new things, being socially active and cutting down on drinking.

However, only about 50 per cent did not know about less-known preventative factors including avoiding polluted air and eating a Mediterranean diet.

According to the study, about 40 per cent of the risk of developing dementia can be reduced by avoiding certain behaviours including cutting back on tobacco and alcohol abuse, avoiding sports that may include head injuries, improving cholesterol levels, maintaining a healthy weight and managing depression.

In some ways, Australians are already decreasing their risk. The survey found most Australians (99.6 per cent) were engaged in one or more behaviours that would reduce their risk of developing dementia, but generally as a side effect for other health reasons. For example, keeping your blood pressure down or being socially active are also practices that reduce your risk of dementia.

About the survey

In 2023, more than 5,400 people aged 18 and over completed the Dementia Awareness Survey to understand general knowledge of dementia and dementia risk factors and community attitudes towards dementia and people living with dementia in Australia.

Survey results will be used to inform policy decisions, improve community attitudes towards people living with dementia and support research into delaying dementia onset and slowing down its progression.

Do you know about the risk factors for dementia? Has that knowledge changed your behaviour? Why not share your experience in the comments section below?

Geoff Cusak

Name: Geoff Cusak - MFB No:1354

Spouse/Partner's name: Margaret (deceased)

Had 4 (3 girls and 1 boy) children. 1 One of the children had a heart and liver transplant but died several years later.

Where were you born? Ararat Victoria

Where did you grow up? Then went Maffra until I was 9 then to Preston at the age of 13

First Occupation: Sheet metal making hospital equipment from Stainless Steel.

When did you join the fire service? Approx 1961

How old when you joined the fire service? Around 26

Stations/Departments worked at? 1, 4, 6, 12, 13, and 19 stations.

Last station/Department you worked in was No: 21 (Surrey Hills), then retired

When did you retire or leave the fire service: 24/6/82

Any other information which you may want to share (hobbies/ interests/travel?)

Love rabbiting

Brewing home brew.

Caravaning when Margaret my wife was alive we went around Oz twice. Then every year for 26 years we went and stayed at Tweed Heads NSW for several months.

WORST FIRE:

Without a doubt it would have to be Coode Island. The Bowater – doing night time fire duties.

The Woolen mills at Flemington.

Note: Currently Geoff is not doing too good as he is on oxygen 24/7. He uses a battery operated cart to get to the shops. His daughter Michelle is his carer (0407 542 930). Patrick his son still lives with Geoff and has taken over the cooking. The old fart still washes up.

Phrase Histories

Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, and they still smelled pretty good by June. Since they were starting to smell, however, brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odour. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women, and finally the children. Last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it ... hence the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the Bath water!"

Houses had thatched roofs-thick straw-piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof, resulting in the idiom, "It's raining cats and dogs."

There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house. This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could mess up your nice clean bed, therefore, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. That's how canopy beds came into existence. The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt, leading folks to coin the phrase "dirt poor."

The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they added more thresh until, when you opened the door, it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entrance-way, subsequently creating a "thresh hold."

In those old days, they cooked in the kitchen with a big kettle that always hung over the fire.. Every day they lit the fire and added things to the pot. They ate mostly vegetables and did not get much meat. They would eat the stew for dinner, leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight and then start over the next day. Sometimes stew had food in it that had been there for quite a while, and thus the rhyme, "Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold, peas porridge in the pot nine days old."

Sometimes they could obtain pork, which made them feel quite special. When visitors came over, they would hang up their bacon to show off. It was a sign of wealth that a man could, "bring home the bacon." They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around and "chew the fat."

Those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with high acid content caused some of the lead to leach onto the food, causing lead poisoning death. This happened most often with tomatoes, so for the next 400 years or so, tomatoes were considered poisonous.

Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or the "upper crust."

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whisky. The combination would sometimes knock the imbibers out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial.. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up, creating the custom of holding a wake.

They used to use urine to tan animal skins, so families used to all pee in a pot & then once a day it was taken & sold to the tannery. If you had to do this to survive you were "piss poor."

But worse than that were the really poor folk who couldn't even afford to buy a pot; they "didn't have a pot to piss in" & were the lowest of the low.

The next time you are washing your hands & complain because the water temperature isn't just how you like it, think about how things used to be. Here are some facts about the 1500s.

England is old and small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people. So they would dig up coffins and would take the bones to a bone-house, and reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realized they had been burying people alive, so they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, lead it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the graveyard shift.) to listen for the bell; thus, someone could be, saved by the bell or was considered a dead ringer.

And that's the truth. Now, whoever said History was boring?

28TH JULY 2022

CSI CLUB SOUTHPORT

154 SCARBOROUGH STREET

SOUTHPORT

(07 5532 - 9944)



Please arrive between 10.30am - 11.00am

**COME AND MEET UP WITH 'OLD' MATES
AND 'OLD' WORK COLLEAGUES.**

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