

**CHANGE OF VENUE FOR
RETIREE'S CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON**

Malvern Town Hall
Cnr. Glenferrie Road & High Street Malvern
11.30am. Saturday 19th November

Due to circumstances beyond the control of the UFU Social Committee the St Kilda Town Hall is unavailable for the dates required. However, notices of the change will be sent to all eligible retirees in due course.

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RFA Newsletter
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6 Wingara Ave.
East Keilor 3033

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**THE FIRE STATION WITH A DOUBLE
IDENTITY.**

By Tom Trotman.

Fire Station 11, featured in the last "Who, Where & What?" segment in February edition of "Water Off", certainly brings back many memories to me. The following is a brief history as I recall almost 50 years ago.

No.11 was at that time the Lalor Fire Station. Prior to that, it was in fact the old Mentone Fire Station No. 33, which was moved in 1957 along with a timber dwelling to Lalor. It then became No.11 Station in "B" District. The land in Vasey Ave. was provided by the Whittlesea Shire Council, when the MFB boundary was extended to Cooper St. Epping.

During renovations on its new site, the station survived a fire caused by painters removing the old paint, (they used to burn off paint in those days). The old timber building was also timber lined, making it very vulnerable. However the building survived and was opened on the last Friday in January 1958.

Station Officer Jim Mauchlin and I were the officers in charge at the time. The officers' hours had been reduced from 96 to 84 hours per week and they were required to live in quarters on and adjacent to the station. The Mauchlin family were there for a few years and then transferred to Nunawading when that station was built and opened. Jim Mauchlin's place was taken by Arthur Cowban

The Trotman family consisting of six children, three boys and three girls, lived at the station for some twelve years, and I'm sure were the envy of many of their friends.



Above: *The Old No11 Station as featured in our February article of "Who, Where & What", nearly burnt down during renovations after the transfer from Mentone in 1957.*

This photograph taken in 1988

Sadly some of the officers involved in the opening and running of the station have now passed away. I refer to Jim Mauchlin, Arthur Cowban, Jim Chambers, David Lodge and Ross Medwin, I'm sure all will agree, they went well before their time.

The appliance featured in "Who, Where & What?" also has links with the Lalor Fire Station. It was a Shelvoke & Drury appliance imported from England, where I believe, it was mainly used on the flat terrain of airfields.

The Brigade no longer occupies the little station at Lalor. It has now moved to the new, modern Fire Station 11 at Epping. The premises in Vasey St. have been taken over by the Whittlesea District Helping Hand Association.

(Continued on page 7)

“GENERAL MEETING”

**Notice is hereby given of our next General Meeting to be held at the Carlton Football Club Social Club,
(Melway 29 G12)
1030 Hours, Wednesday 18th May 2005**

AGENDA ITEMS.

**Minutes of last General meeting.
President's Report.
Secretary/Treasurer's Report.
Guest Speaker (Robyn Gray, CityLink)
General Business.**

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

Lunch and beverages available.

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

OFFICE BEARERS

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

General Committee;

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

Diary dates 2005

18th May: General Meeting
17th August: General Meeting
16th November: Annual General Meeting
19th November: Luncheon, Malvern Town Hall
26th November: UFU Picnic

VALE

Ken Kuhle (MFB)
Brian Seveson (MFB)
Bob McLoone (MFB)

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

SICK LIST

Jim Casley	Ron Kennedy
Ron Cass	John McLoone
Terry Harman	Graeme Simpson
Clarrie Hart	Kevin Sullivan

We wish these members a speedy recovery

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

FIRE SERVICE AFL LIST

The November 2003 edition of "Water Off" carried a list of firefighters who played Aussie Rules Football at senior level. Fred Kerr of the Fire Services Museum asked readers to make comment and submit any names that weren't on the list. With apologies for the delay, we at last have a very comprehensive list of AFL players compiled by Fred in conjunction with Col Hutchinson of AFL House.

Jim Adamson	Nth Melb.	1929-41	Les Johnson	Carl.	1927-28
Jack Anderson	Rich.	1932-33	Ken Jones	Fitz.	1957-61
Pat Audas	Rich.	1952-54	Jack Knight	Coll.	1934-40
F. Jack Barker	Haw.	1937-45	Gordon Lane	Ess.	1940-49
Bob Bawden	Rich.	1939-45	Stan Lawler	Sth Melb.	1930-31
George Beasley	Coll.	1924-28	Stan Lloyd	St K.	1934-42
Arnie Bench	Fitz.	1953-55	Jack MacGregor	Fitz.	1952-58
Jim Bohan	Haw.	1936-46	Mick Madden	Ess.	1903-06
Bill Box	Ess.	1958	Jim McAllester	Ess.	1980
Jeff Bray	Sth Melb	1964-66	Gerald McCarthy	Haw.	1972-77
Gerry Britt	Nth Melb	1925-27	Charlie McInnes	Carl.	1938-46
Keith Bromage	Coll.	1953-56	Harry McPherson	Carl.	1925-26
Perc Bushby	Ess.	1936: 1939-48	Hughie McPherson	Foots.	1939-40
Wally Buttsworth	Ess.	1939-49	Fred Metcalf	Nth Melb.	1925-27
Colin Campbell	Coll.	1940-41	Keith Milte	Geel.	1938
Garnet Campbell	Ess.	1923-33	Ron Moran	Nth Melb.	1946
Norm Campbell	Coll	1939-42: 1946	Bob Pattinson	Nth Melb.	1957
Doug Chapman	Rich.	1908-09	Daryl Peoples	Fitz.	1965-70
Kevin F. Clarke	Coll.	1953-54	Bert Peters	Nth Melb.	1930-31
Leo Clarke	Rich.	1949	E. "Duffy" Plummer	Ess.	1934: 1936-44
Alf Clay	Haw.	1937	Les Powell	Ess.	1937-38
Jack Cockburn	Ess.	1943-44	Addis Priestley	Haw.	1927
Cyril Collard	Haw.	1957-58	Doug Prior	Foots.	1966-67
Len Crane	Sth Melb.	1947-50	Brian Renwood	Coll.	1957
Clarrie Curyer	St K.	1935-41	David Robertson	Coll.	1988-89
John Daly	Melb.	1914	Graham Ryan	Nth Melb.	1960-62:1965
Colin Davey	Fitz.	1952-59	Ted Sanneman	St K.	1922:1925-31
Alex Doyle	Carl.	1929-31	Ron Shapter	Sth Melb.	1930-31
Brian Dunsford	Melb.	1957	Bob L. Spargo	Foots.	1958-63
Jim Edmond	Foots.	1977-85	H. "Doc" Steel	Melb.	1930-32
Bert Edwards	Rich.	1938-45	Rod Stokes	Geel.	1971-72
Ted Ellis	Nth Melb.	1933-39	George Tanner	St K.	1942
Jack T. Ferguson	Sth Melb.	1926-28	Norm Thompson	Foots.	1953-54
Tom Fitzmaurice	Ess.	1918-20: 1922-24	Hugh Torney	Ess.	1933-43
Norm B. Fletcher	Sth Melb.	1936-38	George Tory	Coll.	1922
Reg Garvin	St K.	1937-46	Ern Trickey	Fitz.	1953-55
Michael Gaudion	Nth Melb.	1957-67	Charlie Tyson	Coll.	1920-26
Gordon Geddes	St K.	1944-45	Jack Vosti	Ess.	1925-32:1935
Fred Goldsmith	Sth Melb.	1951-59	Paddy Walsh	Ess.	1927-36
Chris Gomez	Nth Melb.	1925	Carl Watson	Rich.	1927-31
Jack Graham	Sth Melb.	1935-49	Peter Webster	Carl.	1953-59
Ron Grove	Geel.	1941	Merv Wickham	Haw.	1934
George Hancock	Haw.	1956	Bobby G. Wilson	Fitz.	1955
Kevin Hilet	Sth Melb.	1950-54	Brian C. Wilson	Foots.	1978-79
Ken Hopper	Carl.	1945-46	Ron Wilson	Melb.	1934
Tony Hunt	Rich.	1972	Alby Yeo	Ess.	1958
Laurie Jarman	Fitz.	1955			

Never Forget!!!

I haven't forgotten.
The thrill of that first fire... a 'further assistance'...
brass helmets... bells ringing & lights flashing ...
the satisfaction of having made a 'good save'.

I haven't forgotten.
The return to station... wet and freezing on open
appliances... fighting grass fires with knapsacks and
beaters... lit by some kids 'playing with matches':
on Total Fire Ban Days!

I haven't forgotten.
Being lost in a smoke filled basement ...the roar of
those walls collapsing... heat scorching my ears...
and after the fire... mess room chats with shift
mates... they call it counseling now!

I haven't forgotten.
The cuts and burns... stitches and scars... limbs in
plaster... Brigade Medical Officer ... 'light duties'...
24-hour shifts that took 48 hours to recover.

I haven't forgotten.
The Bourke St. March ...for widows and orphan's
benefits ...superannuation and security that you all
now enjoy ...the 8-hour shifts... subsistence
wages...working on days off to survive.

I haven't forgotten.
Christmas Day at the Children's Hospital...
Musicians ...clowns ...gym team ...the children's
faces ...the Friday Displays...second floor jumps...
McKimm's 'Brass Band Boogie'...Pompier ladders!!

I haven't forgotten.
The feeling when after many years... I walked into
my old station ...filled with strangers who did not
know me... nor bother to look up and ask.....
'Were you ever in the job mate'.

I haven't forgotten.
I don't walk as fast... nor stand as straight as
you ...my hair may be thin and grey ...eyes and
hearing dimmed.

But, I know that I will never forget.

That we 'PAID the PRICE... 'EARNED the
RIGHT'...to proclaim FIERCELY ... PROUDLY
to all ..."I AM A RETIRED FIREFIGHTER"

Written by **Bill Bayley**, retired MFB Superintendent
and Editor of "Flame", the newsletter of the Fire
Services Museum of Victoria.

LETTERS

The Fishing's Good!!

You asked about the fishing? Well, last trip out into
the deep water was Tuesday 10th. Result was two big
jewfish, four good snapper and a swag of flathead,
most up to 2ft.. The warm currents are still with us so
fishing is pretty good.

We are both keeping very well and have no
complaints
Keep smiling
Reg Carey

WANTED

Retired male firefighters to form a "Barber Shop Quartet"

This is a genuine attempt to raise a
quartet to entertain on a volunteer
basis.

If you would like to be a part of this for
fun and entertainment please contact:

John Schintler, Ph. 9772 2305



Doctor... Doctor???

A new doctor was preparing for his first time in
theatre...his mentor told him not to panic.
Afterwards the mentor approached his young graduate
charge and said "How did the Operation go?"
To his alarm, he replied "An Operation? Oh S..t, I
thought it was an autopsy!"

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome again to our RFA Newsletter.

To those on the sick list, we wish you a
speedy recovery.

The February meeting at the Carlton Football
Social Club, home for the RFA meetings, was
very well attended. John Brown's negotiations
with the Social Club management received
approval with members staying after the meeting
and having lunch.

After receiving the news that the College would
be in use on 20th March, several alternate days
were discussed at the last meeting and it was
agreed to go ahead with the annual RFA Spit
Roast luncheon, holding it at the MFB Training
College, on Sunday 10th April in the engine
room. As usual the news of the change was
passed on through the ever-reliable grapevine
resulting in a good number attending.

Our thanks to the Training College
Administration, for allowing us the use of the
premises and Peter Gibson, for opening up and
moving the vehicles out of the engine room for
us.

The Committee thanks the Fire Services Museum
for the use of the tables and chairs and having
the Dennis 8 Pump appliance on display.

Thanks also to the Committee and members who
helped with the setting up and clean up after. It
was pleasing to hear favourable comments even
after having to change the date.

Another luncheon was organised by our Vice
President, Ian Fowler in conjunction with
Western Zone and FS44 on Sunday 17th April.
The day was well attended by RFA members,
Western Zone 20 + year service members and on
duty firefighters. The crews set up various
displays showing the latest Rescue Unit, Multi
purpose pod, Smoke Buster Bus from
Community Safety and the Ladder Platform and
BA appliances from FS38.

I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting.
In the meantime, take care and safe travelling.

Regards,
Mike



SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT

In every Organization
there is always a Sniper, who
though not involved in the
running of the organization, is
quick to utter a derogatory
remark, as an aside, when someone makes a mistake.

When John Berry resigned as Secretary/
Treasurer, I told him that he had done such a great
job, no one would be game enough to take it on, John
said "Bulldust". Two years on, he was still waiting for
someone to take his place as Secretary/Treasurer,
knowing John had a heart complaint and against the
wishes of my wife Jean, as she thought it would be
too much for me, and as no one else was willing to fill
his position, I told John I would replace him as
Secretary/Treasurer and try my best. The job entails
answering phone calls, mail, negotiating meeting
places, make up agendas, labels, Sec/Treasurer's
report and all correspondence, my wife does all the
computer work and assists in all ways. At the start of
a new year a check of the data base has to be kept
upgraded as to who is still a current member, change
of addresses and resignations, also making out
invoices to members who have forgotten to pay their
dues, then drop this information to the editor's home.

On the day of the photo copying and
assembling of the "Water Off" magazine, I have to
arrange committee members and friends to help put

the magazine together, pick up master sheets and
labels from the editor by 8.15am. My wife cuts
between 14-16 sandwiches for the helpers, supply
refreshments, also to remember to take rubber bands,
sticking tape, postal forms and cheque for mailing.
This takes up all of Sunday. The magazine is sorted
into metropolitan, country and interstate postcodes
and taken by the President, Mike McCumisky to John
Berry, who fills in the appropriate forms and posts
them.

As two of our regular members, Don and Nancy
Brennan were unavailable, Jack and Maureen
Etherton helped with the sorting and folding of the
magazine, they both also help out at the meetings.

On returning from Albury on 13.01.05, there
were over 80 letters to be opened. It took several
hours to open, write receipts, enter into Data Base and
make out pay-in sheet with name, with bank cheque
number. and amount to go in with the pay-in slip, in
which bank at the Credit Union, prior to the meeting,
over the next few days, more cheques arrived.

I have written this, because I made a mistake
and brought the August 2003, "Minutes of Last
Meeting", instead of August 2004. One of our
members was overheard in an aside, called me
"hopeless". I make a few mistakes, but I'm not

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

completely hopeless, the person who has never made a mistake in his life does not exist.

As I am 75 years of age this year and also have a heart condition, Bob McNeil who has been on the committee for ten years, is the same age and Ken McGillivray slightly older. The only young person is Mike McCumisky. We need younger people to take over, or one day the Association will cease to exist. Thank you to Mike McCumisky, who was the only one willing to take on the President's position. I am willing to continue in this position until a younger person puts his hand up.

The present Committee put in a lot of time and effort into the Association and the feed-back I get, people enjoy the "Water Off" magazine, so it would be a shame if the Association folded.

The meeting at Carlton on 16.02.05 was held in the "Bert Numa" room on the 1st Floor. This looks like a permanent room. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be on hand at the next meeting on 18th May 2005. The cost will be \$2.00 per head which will be paid by the Association. Once again, parking was a problem as the Essendon Football Team were training on the ground and we had to park on the street.

As we got through the meeting fairly quickly, we asked Brett Hume, (former ACFO, MFB, who took up the position of Assistant Fire Commissioner in the N.S.W. Fire Service), to give a talk on his experiences. Brett gave a comprehensive talk about the workings of the NSW Service and about the Emergency Services preparation for the Sydney Olympics. Brett retired on reaching 30 years in the Fire Services and then returned to Victoria.

Our guest speaker for the next meeting will be Robyn Gray from CityLink, Melbourne's Toll-way operator. Robyn is the daughter of our immediate past Secretary, John Berry. It will be an interesting insight into the workings of Melbourne's tolling system

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Funds as at 16th February 2005
Access Account \$3634.11

Term Deposit: \$4306.66

JOHN BROWN
SECRETARY/TREASURER

Reverse Mortgages?

As an older person you may own your home outright, but sometimes you may find that the pension or your other income does not stretch far enough for your needs. If you sell your home, you'd be forced to rent. And you can hardly take out an ordinary loan, because you wouldn't have enough income to pay it off.

'Reverse mortgages' (sometimes called 'home equity loans' or 'housing equity withdrawal') could be one way to meet this problem. Although there's not a lot of experience in Australia with these sort of loans, here are a few important issues to keep in mind.

How reverse mortgages work

Reverse mortgages allow older people to borrow money to live on without having to make any repayments until they leave and move into care, sell their home or until they die. Each year the fees and interest you would ordinarily pay are added to the loan.

Over time, you're charged interest on the interest, or compound interest, and that builds up the total amount that you owe. Whenever the loan ends and your home is sold, you or your estate must pay back the lender what's owing out of the sale proceeds.

Here's a basic worked example

Suppose you borrow \$100,000 (including fees and

charges) at an interest rate of 7.5% per year. Here's what you could owe at the end of various periods.

Time	What you or your estate could owe*
5 years	\$143,600
10 years	\$206,100
15 years	\$295,900
20 years	\$424,800

- rounded to nearest \$100, assuming 7.5% interest applies throughout

Interest rates may increase during the life of a variable rate loan, so you could end up owing more.

On the other hand the impact could be reduced if: your home increases in value, or the reverse mortgage allows you to draw down amounts as needed rather than taking a lump sum upfront. Check if this option exists.

Answers to Who, Where & What? from the last issue.

Sadly the response to the "Who, Where & What?" segment in the last edition of "Water Off" was a little disappointing. It appears that the questions "Who is this firefighter?" and "What is this appliance?" had everyone scratching their heads. The only member who recognised the firefighter was RFA Secretary John Brown, but he is ineligible to enter. A few people knew the Shelvoke Drury Tanker and most recognised Fire Station 11 in Lalor.

There were no winners!

The answers:

Who is this firefighter?



He is the great former Deputy Chief Fire Officer Lewis 'Banjo' Paterson, and was also an uncle of John 'Jack' Paterson who went on to become Chief Officer of the MFB in 1963 after the death of CO. Bill Aldridge. Lewis was a colorful character and was around in the days of the infamous

Fire Brigade Strike in 1950, something he greatly disapproved of..

Where is this fire station?



It is the former No. 33 Station, Mentone which was relocated to become No.11 Station in Lalor. (See related stories on other pages of this issue)

Timely Rescue!

There was this bloke who had an accident driving his car and got wedged between two houses, one owned by the Ball family and the other owned by Mr and Mrs Smith...

Fortunately for him, he was pulled out by the Smiths

What is this appliance?

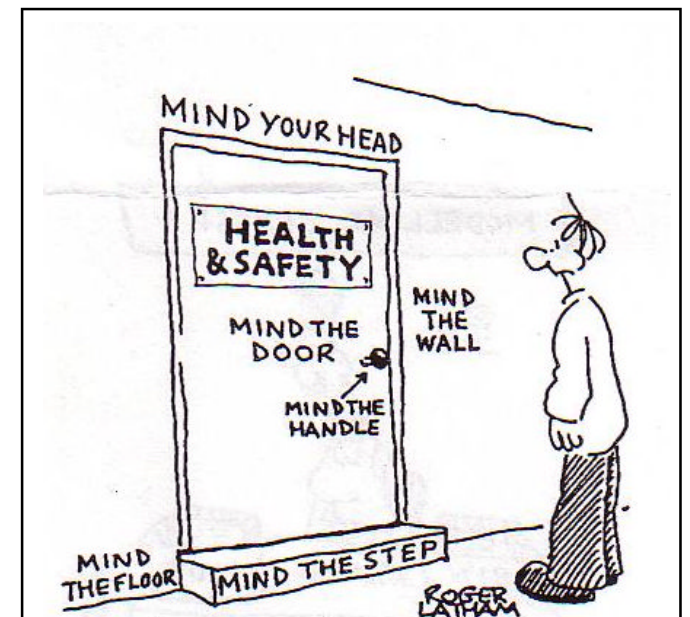


It is a Shelvoke Drury tanker, one of five that were imported from England to help combat grassfires. Although basically they were street cleaners, the MFB could see the

benefits of such a vehicle in outer suburban grassy paddocks and parklands.

The following is a quote from the Chief Officer of the time, Mr. Whitehead:

"The commissioning of five Shelvoke Drury mobile tanker units during 1951 has been a means of considerably reducing property loss in outlying areas where water pressure is bad and reticulation is distant or non existent. On several occasions very good saves have been effected when using these appliances at fires in industrial premises and congested residential areas, where the running of long lines of hose to street mains and the consequent necessity to augment pressures with pumps would have resulted in delaying the attack, with subsequent greater losses, while the expeditious extinction of grass curtailed the time otherwise usually spent."



Is the fear of litigation driving this country to the wall and turning us into a nation of wimps, making us frightened to take a risk?

WHO, WHERE & WHAT?

In this edition we have decided to do something different with "Who, Where & What?". In fairness to the RFA members from other fire services, we continue our series with three new photos that have no links to the MFB.

We won't tell you who, where or what they are until the next issue of 'Water Off'. We are asking you.

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

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

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

The 'Water Off' Editorial Committee 03 98081659

or send an email to:

firechaser@optusnet.com.au

FOR THE WINNERS.

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

Good luck!!!

What Fire Service did this appliance belong to?



**Where is this Fire Station?
(Large Victorian city)**



Who is this Firefighter?



Our Winners

Ted Osland and John Chambers are our past winners. Ted received his certificate at the last general meeting. John Chambers, a two time winner, was presented with his certificates by President Mike McCumisky at the Spit Roast Reunion on April 10th.



RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA VICTORIAN BRANCH Reg.No. A16839F

Statement of Income and Expenditure for year ended 30 June 2004

	\$	2003 \$
Income		
Opening Balance Credit Union 1 July 2003	5,335.05	5,890.84
Members' subscriptions	3,237.70	3,412.60
Sale of promotional items	74.00	44.00
Donations	-	-
Socials	474.30	960.00
Joining fees	115.00	20.00
Transfers	-	1,000.00
Interest received	197.31	220.91
	<u>9,433.36</u>	<u>11,548.35</u>
Expenditure		
Postages and telephone	881.37	851.90
Reunion Day catering	929.75	910.00
Magazine expenses	193.59	88.25
Computer upgrades	655.00	2,095.96
Affiliation fees	-	100.00
Promotional material	-	-
Donation	-	-
Stationary	-	132.75
AGM and meeting expenses	327.00	1,879.45
Sundries	125.51	103.89
Government & Credit co-op fees & charges	59.40	51.10
	<u>3,171.62</u>	<u>6,213.30</u>
Closing Balance Credit Union 30 June 2004	<u>6,261.74</u>	<u>5,335.05</u>
	<u>9,433.36</u>	<u>11,548.35</u>

Bank Reconciliation

Bank balance as at 30 June 2004

Main account	2,095.76
Term deposit	<u>4,165.98</u>
	<u>6,261.74</u>

Statement prepared from information supplied.

John Brown
John Brown
Treasurer

T A Teklenburg
T A Teklenburg
Auditor

Reunions!

Two recent reunions saw members renew old acquaintances, many a fire extinguished, plenty of food and "cups of tea" consumed.

The RFA Spit Roast

Below: The Training College saw a good crowd, enjoy good company and good food. Due to the college being wound down with the main building closed, the engine room in the lower yard again hosted the gathering. Some heavy showers on the day didn't dampen their spirits. Thanks to President Mike McCumisky for organizing the day



Above: Bruce and Nan Smith are great supporters of the RFA . Representing the UFU Social Committee Bruce and Nan attend many of our functions. By the amused look on their faces somebody must have asked Bruce if he was going to retire!

The Food Chain.

Below: SSO Peter Shanahan (due to retire soon) elbows his way to the front of the line. Pete' said, "You've got to get in first or these starving pensioners will eat everything."



The Brennans do it again.

Below: The Western District Retired and 20 year service members enjoy the hospitality of No.44 Station as Nancy Brennan accepts her prize from organizer "Chook" Fowler. Another to add to the Brennan family collection.



What's the Job Like Now Mate?

Right: Three "Old Timers," Jack Etherton, John Wallace and Ken (The Colonel) Clinkaberry discuss the "Utopian Conditions" firefighters enjoy now compared with days of old with another "Old Timer but still in the job," John Phillips.

"There appears to be a cancer cluster among the first-due companies, but it may be too early to see this convincingly."

"There appear to be elevated rates of specific cancers," the magazine said, The FDNY refused to share its survey results with firefighters. The department also declined to share the results with the Daily News.

Since 1999, the fire's death toll appears to have more than doubled, taking many men in their early 60's - though there is no official count.

Noonan, 55, has pieced together word of as many as 40 cancer cases. A member of Ladder 3, he was among the first units on the scene.

He developed leukemia at 52. Even before, he had begun a crusade to pry loose information from the FDNY and learn more about PVC.

"They stole my career from me, and now they stole my life from me," Noonan said. "It's been very tough. We've explained again and again that all 699 men who fought the phone fire suffer some form of respiratory distress.

"Virtually every firefighter who responded to the phone fire's first two alarms has cancer," he said.

Deborah Wallace, an expert in environmental health issues for Consumers Union, the publisher of Consumer Reports, said there is no doubt in her mind that PVC and the Telephone Co. fire caused a cancer cluster.

In the early 1980s, she studied ailments among phone fire men. "Already by then, we were starting to get patterns," she said.

Since the early 1990s, a New York law has assumed that any firefighter's cancer is work-related. The firefighter gets a disability pension - 75% of his pay instead of the usual 50%.

But if the cancer isn't diagnosed until after retirement, the firefighter gets nothing. That law, many firefighters believe, should be revisited.

I thought I was treated pretty good while I was still working," said John McGowan of Naples, Fla., who wheezed with bronchitis for years after fighting the 1975 fire. "After I retired," McGowan said, "it was like 'Goodbye, see you later.'"

Originally published on March 14, 2004

This article is relevant to firefighters throughout the world and in particular many who are now retired.

How many of you can remember the acrid smell and taste of burning PVC, before the days of breathing apparatus for all the first responding crews?

How good are our records of this contact?

Ed.

Darwin Awards

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

FIREFIGHTERS IGNITE!!!!

Seven firefighters from the Sequoyah Volunteer Fire Department (Tennessee), located in rural Hamilton County north of Chattanooga, decided to impress their Chief by surreptitiously setting fire to a house, then heroically extinguishing the blaze. The men apparently hatched the plan in order to help Daniel, a former firefighter, return to duty.

Unfortunately, Daniel's career plans were irreversibly snuffed when he became trapped while pouring gasoline inside the house. Surrounded by smoke and flames, he was unable to escape, and died inside the burning house on June 26.

His six accomplices are facing 87 years in prison for conspiracy, arson, and burglary.

"What makes us feel this is a genuine candidate, is



that not only did he kill himself with an act of stupidity, but he is also no longer able to protect other would-be pyromaniacs from Darwin Awards. Had he been successful in his attempt to regain his position, he may have had a ripple effect in the gene pool."

Red Star of Death!

Three decades after an infamous New York Telephone Company blaze, Cancer ravages Firefighters.
This report was published by the New York Daily News

Scattered within the archives of the FDNY lie hundreds of retiree files marked with blurry red ink. Some old-timers call it "the red star of death."

Death stalks these men. A 40-foot bronze wall of honor looms over the lobby at FDNY headquarters with 1,127 gold nameplates for those "who died in the performance of their duty."

Nowhere is there any memorial for Joseph Pfundstein, Thomas Pitarresi or Richard Schultz.

Pfundstein, 45, died of leukemia in 1983. Pitarresi, 62, died of colon cancer in 2000. Schultz, 63, died of liver cancer in 2002.

The three, dozens more who died and scores of other men suffering from cancer are among a group of 699 firefighters who battled the infamous New York Telephone Co. fire of 1975.

In January, almost 29 years after the fire, Dr. Stephen Levin, an expert in chemical toxins at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, issued a letter identifying the fire as a factor in Dan Noonan's case of leukemia. "It is my view that your exposure to the combustion products of the PVC insulated wiring present in the New York Telephone Co. building ... Made some contribution," Levin said. And therein lies the tragedy.

Cancers caused by burning polyvinylchloride take more than 20 years on average to appear."

But today, the FDNY has no clear medical history for men who fought one of the departments worst toxic fires ever - and no data to document what's happening.

The only tracking system is the red "Telephone Fire" stamp on 699 paper folders. Meanwhile, the department has rejected pleas to mail a cancer warning letter to its aging veterans of the Telephone Co. fire.

"How do you single out this fire?" asked Dr. Kerry Kelly, the FDNY's chief medical officer. "Each time a firefighter goes on a run, they are exposed. "I can't go back and change what happened," she said. "How can you monitor people when they're retired?"

Former Fire Commissioner Thomas Von Essen said the FDNY can do better. "There's no question that exposure to PVC and other horrible contaminants at the telephone fire has led to a higher level of cancers," he said. "The FDNY has a responsibility to keep in contact with these members," Von Essen said. The FDNY is far better prepared for toxic hazards now, spokesman Frank Gribbon explained. "Today, you

wouldn't think about going into a fire without your mask." he said. "Back then it happened all the time." High-tech computerized health tracking was set up for survivors of the World Trade Center attack, but the shadow of Sept.11 obscured unfinished business left by the phone fire.

It will never be forgotten by the men who fought it. On Feb. 27, 1975, the first of five alarms sounded a little after midnight. A 16-hour blaze followed in which more than 100 tons of PVC sheathing in a rat's nest of wires went up in smoke at a phone switching high-rise south of 14th St. on Second Ave.

Clouds of hydrochloric acid and fumes of cancer-causing benzene and vinyl chloride filled the air as the conflagration boiled within a sealed vault three stories below ground.

At one point, an explosion of accumulated hydrocarbon gas knocked firefighters outside to the pavement. Men inside used up their air cylinders, unable to escape in dense, black smoke without gulping the toxic air.

Pfundstein's widow, Ann Rotter, lost her husband early. She married a second Telephone Co. fire veteran, only to see him suffer bladder cancer in 2002. "A terrible wrong was caused by this product," she said, referring to PVC.

I feel like I got robbed," said Virginia Pitarresi of Staten Island, whose husband died with only three weeks' warning as he neared retirement. "We were going on a big vacation."

Schultz died of liver cancer, which is rare, but like so many veterans of the 1975 fire, he died of a form not traceable to any single cause, and lived only three weeks after doctors pinpointed his ailment. "We never imagined he could die so quickly," said Elinor Schultz, his widow.

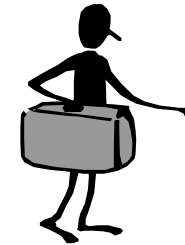
By the mid-1990's, alarming tales of cancer spread among retirees and Von Essen ordered an inquiry.

In 1997, the FDNY surveyed 239 men who reported sick after the fire and found 18 already dead, seven from cancer. Their average age was 50. Six of the seven had worked in units that first responded to the fire.

Only 121 firefighters returned a questionnaire. The only disclosure of what the FDNY learned came in the department magazine, WNYF, in early 1999:

"Cancers caused by burning polyvinylchloride take more than 20 years on average to appear."

Dr Stephen Levin: expert on chemical toxins, Mt Sinai School of Medicine



TRAVELLING WITH SILVER

Mrs. Silver and I took the opportunity a few weeks ago to travel to Echuca for a few days R&R.

We decided to go via Ballarat and have a free lunch with Bill and Jean Bayley, sorry, "Jean and Tony". We had a great day and a beautiful lunch helped along with a few "Haagen's", a top drop.

Leaving Ballarat and arriving at Echuca we decided to go over the river to Moama. Arriving at Moama, where to stay?

We remembered a caravan park right smack on the river. As far as caravan parks go it would be hard to go past this one named "Merool". It's a little "up market", about \$140 a night but really worth it.

The best units are facing the river 10 metres above it. They have been built and called various names such as "The Barber Shop", "The Bank", etc and we stayed in "The Bakery".

The units have 2 bedrooms, queen size beds, 2 bathrooms, 2 toilets, 2 split system air conditioners, a full kitchen and laundry. Boat launching facilities, store

on site and the R.S.L. 12 pots and a stagger up the road. House boats on site if you want to rent them.

Other than that, not much moving about for the Silvers.

Happy Travelling Silver

P.S. I had to purchase a new garden hose the other day and visited "Bunnings" Preston. A salesman came up to help and it's ex B.A. Officer Ron Tribolet, now how could he be of any help to anyone? From what I remembered if his brains exploded he wouldn't get a headache.

Anyway, he goes the hot sell, "This one won't kink, I use it, my two neighbours use it, it's the best". After I say I'll take it he says, "You're a bit older than me, if you pass over to the other side see if you can get the Tatts Lotto numbers for the next draw to me".

Some things never change, it made me feel like I was back on duty again.

(Continued from page 1)

THE FIRE STATION WITH A DOUBLE IDENTITY.

MORE HISTORY.

Researched by B. McCumisky.

In August 1905 the metropolitan fire district was extended by an order of the Governor in Council, by the inclusion of an additional portion of the Shire of Moorabbin, comprising Beaumaris, Cheltenham, Mentone and Mordialloc. It was the intention of the MFBB to erect and equip three fire stations within the area.

A year later on August 20, 1906 a site in Mentone Pde. was leased from the Moorabbin Shire Council for a peppercorn rent of 1/- p.a., although this was never requested and never paid.

In 1907 the new building was opened and numbered Fire Station 33. The structure cost £724 with another £750 for additional quarters. A portion of the cost of the new Mentone station was contributed by the residents.



Above: The original Mentone Fire Station 33 circa 1926. Erected in 1907 it served the area until a new station was built in 1956.

On November 16, 1956 a modern fire station was opened at the corner of Nepean Hwy. and Warrigal Rd., Mentone. Also No. 33, it replaced the station in Mentone Pde. which was subsequently removed and relocated in Lalor.

Memoir of *The Victorian Country Fire Service*

by Lt-Col. T. S. MARSHALL

Published in 1930, details the Victorian Country Fire Service during the period 1854 to 1930.



Lt-Col. T.S. Marshall was appointed Chief Officer of the Country Fire Service in 1894 and served 32 years in that position.

1877. First Geelong Demonstration.

This was not only the first demonstration that had been held in Geelong, but it was also the first combined one, Melbourne and Country, that had been held away from Melbourne. Under such favourable conditions success should have been assured, but it was not to be; everything seems to have gone wrong.

The competitions were held in the Agricultural Show Grounds, the track being very soft. The start was late, and the water pressure very poor, the 3in. service pipe being utterly inadequate to supply the contestants. To make matters worse, in the earliest stage of the running something went wrong with the works, and the water was turned off, unfortunately, when Creswick was running; but, no water being available, a great tumult arose; the ground was rushed, and firemen and spectators hissed and hooted all and sundry; it was a perfect pandemonium.

Some of the competing teams accused the local brigades of having interfered with the valves, so as to reduce the pressure, but, in the case of Creswick, the flow was stopped altogether. It was unfair to blame Geelong for the fiasco; they had nothing to do with it. The water was turned off by the foreman of the Ballarat Water Commission; who stated that he had been asked by some of his brigade mates to test the pressure. His opinion was that the pressure had not been interfered with; the trouble was the small pipes, and it was while he had turned the water off that the Creswick team ran.

The judges decided that they should have another run, but Creswick refused, and they were so annoyed with the whole proceedings that they packed up their goods and chattels and left for home, Geelong not seeing them, again for a dozen years. Newtown and Chilwell, by winning the double, "Eights," and "Fours," came out champions at this the first combined demonstration held in the country. For consistency this brigade would be hard to beat,

as they have rarely, if ever, been unplaced at the forty or more demonstrations that have been held since this one in 1877.

The establishment of the Metropolitan Association:

Adverting to 1877-85, the great increase in the number of brigades in the metropolitan area, as also the lack of organisation and discipline at fires, practices and demonstrations, led some of the leaders to consider the advisability of organising a body to supervise, control, and improve the work and discipline of the brigades. A scheme was drafted, and our efforts were rewarded at a large meeting of delegates from the private and suburban brigades held in the Temperance Hall, when a motion to form a Metropolitan Fire Brigades Association was carried unanimously.

The establishment of the Metropolitan Association was a step in the right direction. All on the executive were captains of brigades in the area comprised in the Metropolitan and Suburban district. They were imbued with an unselfish desire to work for the betterment of the service, and much was done individually and collectively by them to improve the tone and status of the brigades. As president of the Association, I visited the various brigades in turn, and had a talk with the men on matters affecting their work and discipline, especially on the latter, which in a good many cases was very lax; indeed, at certain fires discipline was only a secondary consideration to the firemen's anxiety to get the first water on.

Supt. Hoad was a good fireman and leader, and he could not be blamed for this laxity as he had no regularly recognised position as chief of the brigades as he should have had. He had, however, the loyal support of the business brigades and most of the councils, but, despite this support, his position was made very unpleasant on many occasions.

This state of affairs led to the appointment of C.O. Stein as commander of the Metropolitan

brigade. Before his appointment to Melbourne C.O. Stein had been in charge of the Margate brigade, England. He had a hard row to hoe, as from the start he had to combat opposition from certain quarters, and the discipline at several fires became almost worse than before, lurid scenes being fairly frequent, but, notwithstanding the disaffection and opposition he experienced, he overcame all these obstacles, and firmly established himself as the founder and organiser of the present Melbourne brigade, the development and advancement of which have been abnormal.

He had the satisfaction of seeing all this improvement before he died. His good work was carried on by C.O. Lee for many years, and it was even further greatly developed, especially in the electrical and workshops departments, before he retired. C.O. Wilkins, now in charge, has had long and varied experience in fire brigade work, and his natural bent for engineering, to which he served his apprenticeship, and electricity is seen in the further marked progress that has been witnessed at the head station in these branches.

To the credit of the aforementioned chief officers be it said that the Melbourne fire brigade, as regards equipment and efficiency, stands quite in the forefront of the best in the world. Supt. Hoad and C.O. Stein were English

firemen; C.O. Lee, although born in England, had all his fire brigade experience in N.S.W. and Victoria. It was the first great maritime strike that made him a fireman, as so many seamen and officers were thrown out of employment by the steamers being laid up.

C.O. Lee joined the Sydney fire brigade, and when I first knew him he was in charge, I think, at Paddington. C.O. Wilkins was born in the Avoca district, and his experience as a fireman has been gained altogether in Victoria, of which he is a worthy son. The phenomenal advancement and success of the Melbourne fire brigade will redound to the lasting credit of Stein, Lee and Wilkins, a strong triumvirate. It is a striking coincidence that C.O.'s Wilkins and Chelley are both sons of Avoca.

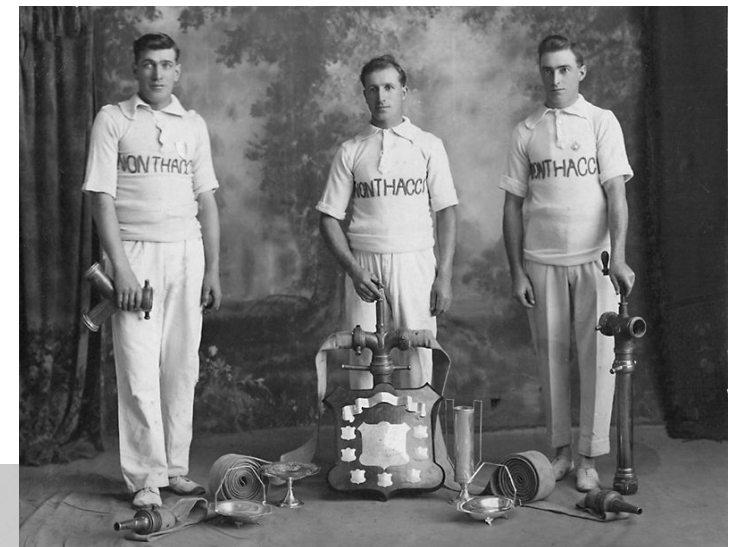
The success of the Metropolitan Association led to one being established in the country, but in order to still further strengthen the position, the two were amalgamated under the designation of:

"The National Fire Brigades Association of Victoria".

Next issue: Maintenance of the Early Brigades, the Deputation to the Chief Secretary, the Fire Brigades Act.

Right: *Wonthaggi 1920's, the members proudly display their trophies.*

The competitions formed an integral part of the Country Fire Brigade life, they were and still are fiercely fought. Photographs of the early Country Fire Service competitions are rare and what is available is in poor condition.



Left: *Geelong West 6 man team compete for the coveted trophy.*

The Geelong team of 1877 was accused of turning the water mains off during an opponents demonstration, this created animosity amongst the competitors for years. In reality the small 3 inch mains couldn't meet the demand.