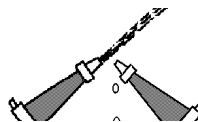




Inc/No:A16839F



# “WATER OFF!”

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

November 1999

VOL. 2 No

## GOVERNMENT GRANT IS OURS!

Liberal Member for Eltham, Wayne Phillips, presents the \$1,000 cheque to RFA Secretary, John



In the August 1999 edition of the “Water Off” newsletter, I made mention in my report that we had not received any word back by the 30th June, on our application to the Community Support fund for a grant which, I thought, meant we had not been successful. **I was wrong!** As you can see from the photograph above, the Member for Eltham, Mr Wayne Phillips M.P., made the presentation of the \$1000.00 grant on behalf of the Hon J. Kennett in September. The funding programme was an initiative of the Premier, through the Community Support Fund and the

Department of Human Services in acknowledgement of the International Year of Older Persons. The grant will enable us to purchase a printer and a disc drive for our computer, thereby ensuring our main source of information will meet the current and future needs of the Association. On behalf of the Committee and Members I would like to thank the Hon. J. Kennett for his initiative and the aforementioned departments and the Member for Eltham Mr Wayne Phillips M.P. for bringing this to fruition.

 **victoria ON THE MOVE**

# “ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING”

**Notice is hereby given of our next Annual General Meeting to be held at the North Melbourne Football Club Social Club, Fogarty Street North Melbourne (Melway 43 B4) 1030 Hours, Wednesday November 17, 1999**

## AGENDA ITEMS.

- **Minutes of last Annual General meeting.**
- **President's Report.**
- **Secretary/Treasurer's Report.**
- **Election of Office Bearers**
- **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 will be provided as usual. @ \$3 per head.  
Drinks at bar prices.

**JOHN BERRY**  
**SECRETARY/TREASURER**  
Ph: 03 9431 2880

## OFFICE BEARERS

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

### **General Committee;**

John Laverick  
Bob McNeil  
Ross Medwin  
Ern Tamme  
John Wallace

**Auditor;** Theo Teklenburg

## SICK LIST

**Ron Cass** is experiencing a debilitating condition at the moment. If you are going down Rosebud way give his wife Loris a ring and arrange a day to visit Ron.

**Lisle Cox** - Lisle is having difficulties at the moment and we hope to see him back on his feet soon.

**Len Hubbard** - rumour has it he has become an expert in chemicals. I am sure it was not the way he planned.

**Jim Nevins** - Jim has had further setbacks with his legs and is still undergoing operations.

**Ern Trickey** - if you are up Echuca way give him a ring and say hi. He would appreciate the opportunity to tell you about the fish that got away.

To Ern, Jim, Len, Lisle, Ron and any other

## VALĒ

**Faye Loveless,** (Wife of Don Loveless)

Our condolences to all members of the Loveless family.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Our second meeting held at North Melbourne Football Club again proved a great success with an excess of 60 members and their partners in attendance.

I followed up a request to contact and meet the C. E.O. of the M.F.E.S.B. Mr. Bob Solly to sort out our non replies to correspondence sent to them. Through Keith Adamson taken it on board to have better communication with the RFA. Mr. Solly has also agreed to give us a page on their web site. Also the incoming committee will receive the

fortnightly newsletter sent to them. Hopefully this will restore our contact with the current establishment.

Do not forget, our next meeting is the AGM and our Secretary, John Berry, has announced his intention not to seek re-election. Please consider your availability for this position.

Hope to see you all at the North Melbourne Football Club and please bring your partners.



### SECRETARY / TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 98/99

This is the last report for the current 98/99 year of office for the R.F.A., which means

we will be conducting an election again to fill all vacant positions of the Committee. The current Committee with the exception of myself have offered themselves for nomination. This on the surface shows their strong interest in the Association and its members. However, without new blood it can create apathy in its operations if rivalry is not forthcoming. Experience shows for an organisation to remain viable and robust, its Committee's should be eagerly contested. Show us your enthusiasm by nominating. The form is on the back page ("I challenge you").

The Association's activities over the preceding year have been very rewarding thanks to the members of the Committee and their partners, including many other stalwarts that support us. I would seriously doubt the R.F.A's existence without their sustenance. Not in any order of priority, they are as follows: Metropolitan Fire & Emergency Service Board, Nina McPherson, Jo Todd, Lee-Anne Potgieter of the M.F.E.S.B. Library, Barbara McCumisky for her historical series, United Firefighters Union Victorian Branch's Office staff and Social Committee, Firefighters Credit Co-operative staff, Fire Services Museum staff and the North Melbourne Football Club Social Club staff. We also must thank Peter Coulson for organising the Queensland Reunion Day and look forward to his continuing support in the new year.

The activities of the R.F.A. this year have covered many firsts. They are as follows: Annual General Meeting at a new location, also our Reunion Day at a different venue, change of venue for quarterly

meetings, well-known T.V. star Paul Clitheroe spoke at quarterly meeting and application for a Government Grant. A very busy year.

#### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

This year through good fiscal management by your Committee we have been able to maintain our membership subscription at the same level as 1988. I am sure that most Clubs and Associations cannot boast this achievement. No we have not curtailed our activities nor have we downsized or outsourced our operations to achieve this goal. The shareholders (i.e. members) will be pleased with the results. What am I saying? I have been reading too many financial results in the daily tabloids. We have in fact been able to cut cost due to the Committee and their partners volunteering time and resources at no cost to the Association. They deserve every members thanks.

I present to the Annual General Meeting the financial report for your acceptance.

#### **ITEMS OF INTEREST SINCE THE LAST NEWSLETTER**

The editor John Laverick has taken delivery of our new printer, super drive and discs. The items will be a great help to the Association. Many thanks to the Hon. Jeff Kennett for this initiative, see article re presentation of grant.

#### **INJURY TO OFF DUTY FIREFIGHTER DAVE LAWRENCE**

Dave who many of our members have worked with during their time in the service may not be aware that he is in the Austin Hospital "A Ward" 9TH Floor recovering from an injury to this neck currently in traction. If you can visit him and help break the monotony of looking at the ceiling.

**(Cont. over)**

**(Cont. from page 3)**  
**REPORT OF MEETING 18/8/99**

**Item 1** The President welcomed members and their partners to the meeting.

**Item 2** The Agenda as identified in the newsletter was covered.

**Item 3** Financial Report  
S. 1 \$1,464.04      1.1 \$4,188.09

**Item 4** J. Laverick addressed the meeting regarding his foreshadowed motion re change to the constitution to prevent the President and Secretary vacating their Office in the same year. The motion was seconded and debated after considerable discussion the motion was withdrawn on the understanding the Committee would investigate other alternatives.

**Item 5** A display plaque was exhibited to the meeting with a view to purchase some with the R.F.A. logo. A motion was moved. J. Casely seconded I. Fowler that the Committee placed an order for the minimum amount allowed. Carried

**Item 6** A motion was moved and seconded G. Payne & F. Churchill and carried. The Committee investigate the current R.F.A. logo and wording, as this one does not give easy identification of a Retired Emergency Service Association, then report back with examples. Previous motion is put on hold until the decision on logo is made.

**Item 7** Guest speaker was unable to attend due to unforeseen problem.

Meeting closed 11.45AM

Trusting this newsletter finds you all fit and well. Come join us at the Annual General Meeting and bring your partner. We will have a number of interesting guests there to meet.

**The Committee of the RFA wish all members and your families a happy, prosperous festive season. May we all look to the new millenium with hope, love and understanding for all mankind!**

**J. Berry**  
**Secretary/Treasurer**

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<b>U.F.U. SOCIAL COMMITTEE</b>
<b>IMPORTANT</b>
<b>RETIRED U.FU. MEMBERS ANNUAL XMAS LUNCHEON</b>
<b>ST KILDA TOWN HALL</b>
<b>SATURDAY, THE 27<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 1999</b>
<b>11.30AM TO 4.00PM</b>
Please sell your raffle tickets and return the stubbs to the Social Secretary A.S.A.P.

**PATRON FOR THE RFA**

**The RFA have been successful in gaining the operational head of the M.F.E.S.B. Deputy Chief Fire Officer Alan Richards as patron.**

This is indeed a coup and an honour for the Association and will help forge closer links with this Emergency Service.



**Deputy Chief Fire Officer,  
Alan V Richards  
AFSM, FIFireE, GradBCC(UK)**



## ARE YOU THINKING Y2K?

**There is much commotion about the impending Y2K bug. Despite the hype, most of us are still left thinking Y2K what?**

**A** common misconception is that the Y2K bug is only of interest to people who own computers. This is not so.

Computers influence every aspect of our modern day lives, from banking transactions to sanitation removal to

water treatment and traffic control. Even everyday devices found in your home contain tiny microprocessors that regulate the basic functions of the equipment and are potential victims to the Y2K bug.

Problems with the Y2K bug were first discovered in 1970 when mortgage companies tried to calculate 30-year loans. This occurred because computers were programmed only to recognise years starting with 19 so they interpreted the year 2000 as 1900. More problems have occurred as the years have progressed, but the year 2000 changeover will be the peak of the problems rather than the beginning, and experts predict they will continue through 2000, 2001 and beyond.

### **THE RESPONSIBILITY TO BUG-PROOF YOUR HOME LIES WITH THE INDIVIDUAL**

The good news, however, is that Australia is among the world leaders in becoming Y2K complaint. The government is closely monitoring financial institutions and essential service providers to ensure they are Y2K compliant and have contingency plans set up to combat any unforeseen problems that might arise when the clock ticks over into the new millennium. However, the responsibility to bug-proof your home remains the responsibility of the individual.

Save yourself post-millennium heartache by ensuring that your possessions are Y2K compliant in advance. The best way to approach this is to

treat your home like a business and do an audit of your appliances.

List the types and models of the equipment in detail and then check back with the manufactures to ensure that the product is Y2K compliant. If it is not, the manufacturer can then advise whether or not the product can be updated.

The type of products you need to check include air conditioning systems, alarm systems, security surveillance systems, vehicle ignition systems, fax machines, video recorders, electronic calculators, personal electronic organisers, electronic locks, microwaves, clocks, toasters, mobile phones, answering machines and most importantly, any medical equipment on which you might be reliant.

The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs is also warning citizens to be prepared if they are planning to travel overseas during the new year period. While planes will not fall out of the sky, there could be flight delays. There is also no guarantee during and the new year period that credit cards, automatic teller machines and international banking transactions will work reliably in foreign countries.

Some essential services like power and water may be temporarily affected so it's sensible to prepare yourself for potential short-term problems. Keep a supply of bottled water and alternative lighting in case of blackouts. It also pays to keep a hard copy of any financial transactions or investments, so that you can rectify any glitches with greater ease.

A small investment of your time in preparing for the year 2000 means that, you and your possessions will sail unscathed into the new millennium and the only things exploding around you will be

## INVITATION

**Any members interested in attending at;  
The Shell Club,  
Bacchus Marsh Rd. Corio,  
(Melway 224 B6)  
11.30am, Monday December  
6th.**



**Cost: \$9.50 per head.**

**To help with the catering.  
R.S.V.P. Friday Nov. 26  
Please advise;  
Bill Icke, 03 5244 1822**

## Why do so many people fail to achieve their lifestyle

**M**ost investors shy away from investments that fluctuate in value. Unfortunately this tends to mean that many people just leave their money sitting in cash or capital guaranteed investments that generate insufficient returns to fund their future lifestyle.

Most Investors with a medium to long term time horizon would do far better to focus on the return required to achieve their long term lifestyle goals rather than on the short term volatility of various investments.

The risk to investors is not short to medium term fluctuations in returns – the real risk is not achieving the required return over time to meet their desired lifestyle.

Take the example of John Smith, retired at 58 with \$350,00. John has expressed his objectives as follows:

- Requires \$30,000 per annum indexed to inflation in retirement.
- To ensure the income is to be sustained throughout retirement.

By modelling John's position, his adviser identifies that John needs to achieve a return of 7% above inflation to provide \$30,000 per annum indexed until age 83. To achieve such a return, John's portfolio will require a very substantial weighting to shares and property.

But let's say John is uncomfortable with having a substantial part of his portfolio in shares and property.

The alternative is to adopt a more conservative strategy, with more in cash and fixed interest. However, if that asset mix only provides a return of say 2% above inflation, John's retirement capital will only last until age 72.

The best solution could be to modify each of the variables. For example:

Slightly reducing his expenditure expectations and hence reduce his expected lifestyle in retirement;  
Increasing the return objectives of his portfolio and therefore increasing the level of risk he is prepared to accept.

**It is never too Late!!!!**

To secure your preferred future lifestyle you will need patience, planning and above all the right process for achieving your goal. If you follow a systematic process of managing your finances, you will greatly increase your chances of accumulating sufficient wealth to enable you to enjoy your preferred lifestyle in the future.

In our experience there are three parts to any sound financial planning process:

- The right advice;
- A systematic investment approach;
- A reliable reporting system

The critical role an adviser plays in this process is to provide you with a plan that sets quantifiable financial goals and targets – designed to reliably deliver your preferred future lifestyle.

This task starts working out how much you need to earn from your savings in order to fund your ideal lifestyle. The starting point here is "lifestyle". How grand or modest your preferred lifestyle will determine the rate of return that you need to achieve to pay for it.

The lifestyle you want drives the return you need to generate and this in turn determines that asset exposure you need to adopt. If you believe that the risks are too high, your adviser will help you find an acceptable trade-off between your lifestyle plan and an investment strategy that lets you sleep at night. This is a continuous process that requires a close, on-going, working relationship between you and your adviser.

### **CHRIS SCHWEEN**

Senior Consultant

***Financial Resources Group Pty Ltd***

*\*In May this year FRG arranged for Paul Clitheroe – Presenter "Money" on Channel 9 to attend our Quarterly Luncheon Meeting as Guest Speaker.*

If we can be of assistance please use the complimentary Voucher enclosed in this newsletter.

Contact Financial Resources Group for more information, or to arrange a confidential cost and obligation free consultation. Please ring on Freecall No. 1800 623 433 or e-mail [frg@frg.net.au](mailto:frg@frg.net.au).

## SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS - IS IT PART OF YOUR FINANCIAL STRATEGY?

The Australian Consumers Association researched various income streams for retirees and found it a minefield if you don't do your homework. Choice Magazine's October 1999 edition has some interesting information for you to consider if you are newly retired or thinking about

### The age pension

Of the Choice Magazine readers who contributed to the research with their own experiences, several mentioned the fact that their financial strategy, while it may not hinge on the age pension, certainly includes some or all of this social security benefit. It's worthwhile considering whether you'll be eligible, but don't unduly compromise your financial game plan simply for the sake of receiving the age pension.

The single age pension is set at 25% of total average weekly earnings for a man and 40% of average income for a couple. At the time of writing, this equates to \$361.40 per fortnight for one person, or \$301.60 each, per fortnight, for a couple (not including the pharmaceutical allowance).

The age pension is available to men aged 65 or older. For women, the entitlement age was 60, but is gradually being raised to 65 - availability will depend on when you were born. Check with Centrelink on 13 23 00 for more information.

To be eligible for the age pension, you must be a resident of Australia, have lived here for 10 years (though there are exceptions to this) and you must fit within the assets and income tests. Even if you exceed the income and asset thresholds you may still be eligible for a partial age pension. If you're blind you're exempt from these tests altogether,

So what's an asset and what counts towards your income, and what are the actual thresholds? It's a complicated subject that has all the stability of a shifting sand dune. Check with Centrelink to answer these questions in detail.

At present, the account balance of an allocated pension or an allocated annuity will count as an asset, but certain immediate annuities and superannuation pensions - with specific characteristics - are exempt from the assets test. So any capital you put in one of those income streams won't count towards the assets test, though some of the income may count under the income test.

### Not the be-all and end-all

Don't let the fact that some products are exempt from the assets test cloud your judgment when it comes to setting out a plan for retirement.

Gerard Thomas, of the Australian Pensioners' and

Superannuants' Federation, warns that the age pension shouldn't become the be-all and end-all of your financial strategy if it means making inappropriate decisions. "Many financial planners will help you rearrange your finances to qualify for the age pension, but for some this may be a questionable strategy if it means offloading well-performing investments," he said.

"The real issue is maximising your overall income in retirement, not simply just how much of the government pension you can receive."

Still, the age pension - or a partial age pension - may be an important and attainable asset. "Older people would be well advised to occasionally check with Centrelink to see if they've become eligible for the age pension," Gerard said. "You may not have qualified yesterday, but you may today, either because you've been spending down your assets or the government has made changes to the means-testing rules."

### Help! Information and resources

The **National Information Centre on Retirement Investments (NICRI)** is a free and independent information service funded by the Commonwealth Government. It's at the disposal of any member of the public, not just retirees, to provide information about financial planning and specific investment products, including income streams.

You can contact NICRI by calling 1800 020 110 or (02) 6281 5744, by writing to PO Box 893, Woden 2606, or by emailing [NICRI@nicri.org.au](mailto:NICRI@nicri.org.au).

The **Financial Information Service (FIS)** is provided free by Centrelink. FIS will help you with questions you may have about financial planning, investment options and any social security or veterans' affairs entitlements.

You can contact a FIS officer by ringing Centrelink on 13 23 00.

*Source;*

*Choice - Retirement Income - October 1999 edition.*



## TRAVELLING WITH SILVER

Most of us Aussies seem to be racing in blinkers when it comes to the southernmost of the 50 United States - no not Texas or Florida, but Hawaii.

The International Airport at Honolulu and the good holiday specials on offer from here tend to keep us close to Waikiki and it's huge tourist industry.

The "Fly Me" deals usually put us down on the famous strip, give us a bed then take us back or onward.

Nothing against Waikiki, except Eddy McMullin's jocks hanging on the bulls horns at Moose McGillicudies bar. Come on Eddy, they are starting to get a bit ripe.

Waikiki is only the start of the island of Oahu, just the tip of the iceberg. More the tip of the mountain really. All of the eight major islands are the tips of giant mountains rising from the ocean floor, around 5Klm or so down from the sea level. As land masses go these islands are very young - a few million years or so.

The further east you go the bigger the islands, the newer and the higher. It culminates in the island that gives the state it's name with over half the state's land mass of over 10,000 square Klm and the two tallest mountains at approximately 4200 metres each.

The distance between the islands is small enough so that on an Aloha Airlines jet you have to swallow your "Mai Tai" quickly.

These are all classic South Sea islands in which the windward side (northeast) are green and lush and get lots of rain. Leeward sides tend to be more popular for tourism with lots of wind and rain.

For instance, one mountainous area with thick forests on the island of Kauai has the worlds heaviest rainfall averaging 12,500 mm. a year whilst the desert area of Puako on the big island of Hawaii has an average of 250mm. a year.

Four of the islands are important touristically, (how's that) another is still developing, the sixth is a huge pineapple plantation with one tiny guest house. Niihau, the most westerly, is called the Forbidden Island. It has about 200 residents and is privately owned. The last is Kahoolawe and the only one uninhabited. Nobody is allowed on the island, nor do you want to go, it's a naval bombing range.

The west - east line goes:- Niihau - Kauai - Oahu - Molokai - Lanai - Maui - Kahoolawe and Hawaii.

The biggest tourist islands in order of visitors is Oahu (Honolulu) - Maui - Hawaii - Kauai - Molokai and talking of hundreds only Lanai.

All the islands are volcanic and only on Hawaii are they still active. Hawaii is still growing as the occasional eruptions of Mauna Loa send lava flows



*Silver picks coconuts while Mrs Silver (in front) dances the Hula to raise their fare home.*

down to cool in the sea and extend the land mass.

The climate is roughly the same as the Whitsunday's with some variations, you can ski on Mauna - Kea most winters, but at sea level temperatures vary only 3 or 4 degrees between winter (average 22 degrees) and summer (average 25 degrees)

Mrs Silver and I, on returning from the mainland one trip, decided on a week there to rest up. Rest up we did, it never stopped raining the whole week. Flying time from Eastern Australia to Honolulu is about 9 hours non stop, from Honolulu to the U.S. west coast about 4-5 hours.

Inter island jets take 20 - 45 minutes with small aircraft landing at smaller airstrips taking longer. Oahu has about 750,000 residents with all of the other islands hard put to make up the million mark in total population.

There is something like 110,000 visitors at any one time. There is also about 100,000 military types and their families, mainly around Honolulu, but they are not particularly visible.

I have a very good friend who lives there, he is Japanese - American and he says he is a scientist with the navy but won't elaborate further. His wife is a school principal and their two sons are doctors on the mainland. Whatever he does the pay must be good, his house would rival Lindsay Fox's on the island - yes, he is there too.

More than a quarter of the population are of mixed race, pure Polynesians are rare these days with the intermarriages that have been going on for a couple of hundred years. Another quarter are white (mostly Yanks) and left over Portuguese, of the rest, the largest number are Japanese, part Hawaiian, Filipinos, Chinese, Korean, Black and Somoan.

The Polynesians began arriving over 1000 years ago then the Tahitians, followed much later by Captain Cook.

Captain Cook arrived in 1769, they thought he was great the first time, but on the second trip they



## RETIRE ED TAKES OUT A VICSAFE COMMUNITY SAFETY AWARD

The MFB's RETIRE ED Program was the recipient of a 1999 VICSAFE Community Safety and Crime Prevention Award in the category of Projects that Focus on Older People.

The Award was presented by The Hon. Bill McGrath, Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Corrections at an Award Dinner held at Leonda during Community Safety Week. The dinner was attended by over four hundred people, from a variety of organisations including police, local councils, and numerous other community organisations.

The competition was fierce, especially in the category related to older people, as this is the International Year of Older Persons. RETIRE ED was judged on its impact on improving community safety, capacity for raising community awareness, community involvement and potential for application and development elsewhere.

The award was accepted on behalf of the RETIRE ED officers by Sharon Landers, Public Education Officer in the Community Education Department.

The officers and their wives were treated to a celebratory lunch by the MFB's CEO, Mr. Bob Solly. He was joined by Acting Director of Fire Safety, Dave Nicholson.

The Vicsafe Award was particularly significant for the RETIRE ED program. Six years after the establishment of the program, the winning of this Award attests to the robustness of the program and the enormous value of the continued support and commitment of the retired officers to the aims and objectives of the program. The retired officers add this Vicsafe Award to their trophy cabinet that already contains numerous Fire Awareness Week

Awards, a Chief Fire Officer's Commendation, a Confident Living Award, an International Association of Fire Chiefs Award for Excellence and the U.F.U. Victorian Branch "Fire Awareness Award".

**Sharon Landers**

### IT'S REWARDS

**W**hat have you done since you retired from the service of M.F.B.? Part-time work, golf, bowls, trips round Australia or overseas, all these are great times in your life as a retiree.

When first we did our training and then went onto shift work it was always our first and main concern about safety to ourselves and to the public we served. There is still in our service, a group of retired fireman still doing such caring work, on a volunteer basis, with senior citizens, it is called "RETIRE ED". Our aim is to educate our retired community about FIRE SAFETY.

I have only been with this program a short time, but I must say the pleasure you get from the people you meet is very rewarding and they are really interested about safety in their homes. There is always variety with the audience questions and their experiences.

I was speaking to a lovely interested group, and at the conclusion of my talk I asked, "are there any questions"? After answering a few questions a lady asked if I could help her with a query she had, she had asked other people before today but had got no result. I thought, "here we go". She said, "When a person is burnt at the stake do they die of smoke inhalation or are they burnt to death???"

Well, I have never been to a burning at the stake, and neither had any of the audience so there was dead silence. Finally I said, "I will try to find the answer and let you know. After making many inquiries I found that ladies were most probably strangled before burning, but who knows?"

Everyone who has retired still has information about FIRE SAFETY, we are in need of more members to assist with this program. The elderly are at times forgotten, and this is "THE YEAR OF THE OLDER PERSON" and the M.F.B. with this program will continue to assist the community now and in the future. If you have retired, and would like to retain your links with the M.F.B., think a lot about this program and contact Sharon Landers, Community Safety on 96654464, we do need your help, and I can assure you, you will enjoy it.



*John Cannon receives his Vicsafe Award from Bob Solly during the luncheon for the Retire Ed Officers in the Boardroom at the M.F.E.S.B.*

## REMEMBER "THE BROOK" OR "THE EAGLE"?

How many times have we turned out on No1 Station's Pump for a further assistance and been amazed at this man's composure, almost nonchalance, at a big job going "s..t hot". It is said that the old fires coined a phrase about Bill Seabrook - **"CONCERNED WE MIGHT BE, WORRIED? NEVER!"**

This story was written for the "MFB News Review" February 1973 edition by the late "Doc Steel"

To write an article to do credit to Mr Bill Seabrook's 40 years of service in the Brigade and cover all his ramifications and activities within that time would test any professional writer. So when one of his fireman colleagues attempts the task on this remarkable personality it is a project indeed.

The said William Henry as all know is indeed a personality having been part and parcel of anything that was on in the brigade, with the sport and shenanigans of his fireman and early officer days to being a member of the committee of the former Officers' Association, including several terms as President and its ex-officio duties as a leader of deputations to the Board on one hand, and now on the other being the Board's representative on the firemen's, special service firemen's and officers' wages boards.

In addition to this, he has been the drill instructor and has served on every examination panel since 1945 plus being a council member of the Institute of Fire Engineers since the early sixties, and with all these official responsibilities is still a confidant of and on the best of terms with all junior and senior in the Brigade.

But a little of his early life. The "Brook" was born at Northcote and had his early education at the Brighton State School followed by six years at Wesley College. Between school and 1930, when he headed for the bush, he was in insurance followed by freelance selling of motor cars, insolvent stock such as guns, machinery, etc., but he says the buyers in those days were almost insolvent themselves.

And so he got a job at Coomealla, about 12 miles from Wentworth, NSW, in the construction of a fruit packing shed and also in its operation. In the off season he did all sorts of jobs in the shearing sheds, fencing, driving a truck to Sydney and Broken Hill, etc.

One job was a trip to Melbourne for a new fangled talking machine for the Wentworth Picture Theatre. This job took five days. The incessant rain caused them to be bogged a number of times. The theatre manager wanted the machine for Saturday night so he organised a search party and found the truck bogged at Ouyen. That was the last time they had



to dig the truck out and the machine arrived much to the delight of the patrons.

After two years in the bush it was back to Melbourne. Dad, who was a member of the MFB Board, as well as President for some years, suggested to his son that he make the Brigade his career. He did just that, joining in May, 1932.

Other than seven years at No. 37 Station, he has been at Headquarters for all of his service. For those who remember the time during the war years when he was the Station Officer at No. 1, what with

wharf duties and ship duties, the ARP drills, together with the shortage of manpower, it was often said he was the one man in the Brigade that was capable of holding the job down and not going around the bend.

On the sporting side he played with Wesley in their football teams and after school with the Old Wesley Collegians in the amateurs; was interstate four times, best and fairest in the competition one year, and won four club championship cups.

Melbourne and Hawthorn invited him to train but he says he was happy with the amateurs and didn't try the big League.

In the summer with East Melbourne Harriers he competed in track and field events, particularly hurdles and the high jump. We still must add that he swam in the various carnivals around town and also played water polo. The Brigade were still playing in the Wednesday League when he joined and, he had two seasons with the side before the Brigade withdrew from the competition.

He reflects with pleasure that he started the Coomealla Football Club in the Sunraysia League during the years he was jackerooing. The Club is still going strong today.

Of the fires he has attended and the situations he has been in, he says they are too numerous to mention but he has enjoyed every minute of his service and all know that he has taken everything in his stride. In July, 1959, he received a letter of commendation from the Board for the part he played in the rescue of a man from a 104 ft. high chimney stack at Bacchus Marsh.

Other things were happening during all this time and no doubt the most important was that in 1933 he married Kitty Pinnuck from Strathmerton. They



## WORLD FIREFIGHTERS GAMES

Are there any retired fireies out there who are interested in a great holiday to Paris and/or Europe and who also might like to play golf or another sport with fellow firefighters from around the world?



About 20 Victorian firefighters and friends (including several from Aviation and Rescue Fire Fighting Services) have indicated they will be part of the Australian team at the 6th World Firefighters Games in France next July. All are keen to participate in the most important fire fighting sporting and social event of the Millennium Year.

However, if you're still thinking of joining the team, the Victorian Committee would like to hear from you now. The official travel agent for the 6th World Firefighters Games, Global Travel Services, has negotiated a good deal on air fares to Paris and hotel accommodation has been booked.

It makes good sense to join up with the Victorian team - you really won't have to worry about a thing. Just hop on a Games shuttle bus, head off to your favourite sporting event and enjoy all that France has to offer. Getting to and from sporting venues is

not a problem as bus transportation to the Games Village and sporting venues is available from designated areas in Paris as well as from hotels in the Mantes district.

On the home front, teams are being sought for a number of sporting events. Whether its golf, tennis, canoeing, or a friendly game of darts or horse shoes, there's someone in Victoria who would like to make up a team.

Fund raising is under way with a Firefighters 2000 Calendar \$7.00 (plus \$2 postage and handling), a unique koala lapel badge (\$5.99) or both for \$12.00 (plus \$2 postage and handling).

For general enquiries about the Firefighters Games or for a Registration Book, contact Secretary Lin Bell (ex-MFB) on (03) 9727 3179 or President



## A FISHERMAN'S TALE

This is the story about the one that got away.

Our friend, Frank Churchill, was out fishing recently and had no luck for the first 5 or 6 hours, but then his luck changed.

His reel made the usual scream when a fish took his bait. When he grabbed his rod his line bird-nested off the reel. Luckily, Frank found a glove in the bottom of the boat and started to hand-line it into the boat. He then grabbed his net and broke the handle but continued to land a nice 20 pound snapper.

A little later he landed another 5 pounder on his whiting line.

*Frank Churchill Photographed with the catch of the day.*

*We have it from independent witnesses that Frank was actually scraping the piles of the pier for mussels when the snapper bit him on the thumb and refused to let go.*

*Judging by the expression of pain on Franks face he has either got a hernia*





## A MOTOR PUMP ACCIDENT

A few weeks ago we watched in amazement, the television footage of the horrific traffic accident in Hawthorn, involving a crew from Fire Station 10. The Mk.4 pumper was en route to what turned out to be a false alarm, when it collided with a car, rolled and then slid into the front of a shop, trapping the driver in the mangled wreck for over two hours. Fortunately traffic accidents are not a common occurrence, but because fire appliances travel at such high speeds when responding to calls, when a mishap does occur, the consequences are nearly always disastrous.

Such was the case back on the Monday night of August 12, 1907 when Brigade appliances were involved in two serious accidents, both connected to the same call, which incidently, also turned out to be a false alarm. The end result left one fire horse dead, the horse chemical engine wrecked and four firefighters injured in the first crash and the motor pump badly damaged and five firefighters bruised and shaken in the second incident. Because of space limitations, only a report on the motor pump crash appears in this edition of 'Water Off'.

At 8.28 p.m. on August 12, a street fire alarm was broken at the corner of Russell Street and Flinders Lane. Because of its location, Deputy Chief Officer Lee turned out a number of appliances which included the Merryweather motor pump, the Merryweather motor chemical engine, the horse chemical engine, a ladder carriage and a salvage van. DCO. Lee left Eastern Hill first in the motor chemical engine and was first on scene. He was unaware that the horse chemical engine had come to grief at the corner of Spring and Collins Streets. Finding no sign of fire in the vicinity of Russell Street and Flinders Lane, Mr. Lee sent the motor pump down Flinders Lane to further investigate the area. As it approached Elizabeth Street, it passed

the office of J. Pickles & Sons which was in the course of construction. Lying right in the middle of the road were a number of bluestone blocks which the pump hit. The collision caused the pump to veer to the left, run up the footpath and through the front window of Lister & Co's wine and spirit store. The driver, F/f. Robert Bell put on the brakes as soon as the pump struck the stones and F/f. MacKay applied the handbrake, but there was still sufficient momentum to propel it through the shop window where it smashed a number of bottles of brandy. Bell was pitched head first into the store, but was fortunately saved from serious injury by his helmet. The other four firefighters were shaken but uninjured.

The pump was firmly wedged in the window and was quite unworkable. It remained there for several hours surrounded by a curious crowd of people who floated all kinds of rumours about the firefighters having been killed and injured. Much later that night, in a badly damaged condition, the pump was pulled clear of the store by some heavy fire horses despatched for the purpose. They then hauled it back to Eastern Hill. It was subsequently repaired in the Brigade Workshops, which at that time were located behind the South Melbourne fire station.

The next issue of "Water Off" will feature the report on "The Terrible Fate of Fire Horse Negro."

**Barbara McCumisky**

*This photograph of the Motor Pump was taken some time before it met it's demise in the front window of the Flinders Lane liquor store.*





# BROWN'S BITS

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

## CONTINUING THE "SAGA OF BUSHY"

### Chapter 5.

When "Bushy" left the city he went to an out station.

One day, when on leave, he was heading for the shopping centre when he noticed a fire in the next street. We already had a line run out the back on a bus that was alight at the rear of the bus depot.

The fire had got into the rear of the building and the back-up station had run out a line to attack from the front of the office section

"Bushy" arrives and gets out of his car, then runs over to the fire holding the branch waiting for the water to come on. Grabbing the branch off the fire he made a charge at the office, not realising that a plate glass door was in front of him. Result - one badly cut up off duty fireman. We had to call on the District Station to send a car to take him to a doctor to be stitched up.

### Chapter 6.

"Bushy" and crew were turned out for further assistance at an Automotive Spares Warehouse in the northern suburbs late one afternoon shift. "Bushy" and crew were manning lines inside the building when "Bushy" decided to climb to the top of a stack of cardboard boxes to extinguish some spot fires. The stack of boxes were about 3 metres high and being wet they wouldn't hold "Bushy's" weight. The result was that "Bushy" disappeared, but the crew could hear his progress downwards as he smashed the car headlamps that were contained in the boxes. The crew dug a badly lacerated "Bushy" out and carried him to a waiting Ambulance team for patching up.



Since our last issue our man has improved his standing in the racing fraternity.

He now has a phone account with the TAB and after opening it with the minimum amount, quickly found it had built up to a tidy sum.

But success has its down side.

With his new found wealth he was able to put super in the tank of the trusty Vespa, aiming to increase its speed and performance to get around the traps.

But to his dismay, it wasn't long before he found a speeding ticket in the mail after being snapped by a speed camera doing 67 K's in a 60 zone.

He contacted a member of the constabulary he knew for advice. The constable, (who had backed a couple of slow runners tipped by our man during a losing streak) told him to shut up and pay the fine or they may take it further and book him for using a hollowed out pumpkin for a helmet.

## RACING TIPS

*From My Mate's Cousin*

Our man was quite hurt by this threat, since he claims he wasn't wearing a helmet when photographed.

In spite of this set-back he has been determined to give our readers value for money and recommends the following for the forthcoming cup season; -

**Chandru** - A Sydney horse with an Indian name trained by Bart Cummings. Will give all challengers plenty of curry.

**Shogun Lodge** - Sounds like a Japanese residence for Samurai Warriors but this is a definite goer for the Derby at Flemington.

**Kayf Tara** - An English steed brought out for the cup. Apparently named by a dyslexic nobleman down on his luck who wanted to call it - Fake Tiara. It's got to be good to bring this far.

**Il.Don** - Named after a man called Don who wasn't feeling too well. But Peter Hayes has

## “YORKY AGAIN”

It is great to receive “Water Off” so it does help to keep us who have “migrated” up with the news etc. “Water Off” has developed into a good magazine and really takes us back into the years that, along with firefighting, there was quite a lot of fun.

Reading your “Memo’s From Yorky” reminded me of a little happening at No2 Station, Batman Street, where the firemen were always complaining about the the heat in the messroom during summer.

Alan Richards, then only a fireman, tipped some hot water into the sugar bowl and stirred till the sugar melted. Into the messroom came George Lacey - “sure is hot today George, look even the sugar has melted”!!!

George immediately contacted the Union. Bill W. (Union Sec.), who officially notified the C.F.O., who in turn asked D.O. Shaw to investigate. He, in turn said to me, “OK, find out what’s happening”.

Checking with the C.S.I.R.O. I found that the melting point of sugar was something like 300 or 400 degrees F. So then “Yorky” composed his report to the Chief who then relayed same to Bill W. As you can imagine, Bill W. was not impressed with poor old George or even No2 Station.

We all knew how “Yorky” could swear. One day, two gents on the 1st tee at Latrobe Golf Club invited “Yorky” to join them as he was on his own, he agreed and they hit off.

It was one day that “Yorky” could not hit a ball or even putt. He threatened to throw his clubs into the Yarra, all accompanied by vocal outbursts. Returning past the Pro shop, the Pro, who knew “Yorky”, called him in and told him that he’d come out to warn him but was too late. “Yorky” had played with two Priests from the local church!

**Reg Carey**

## “ALL KNOWING”

I know that once you spend time in the fire service it gets in your blood but this has to be the limit.

I left the M.F.B. in 1973 or was it '74 and went to Qld. joining the South Coast Fire Brigade for some 4 years. Returning to Melb. (the wife missed her family) I started my present business in 1979.

My business is the manufacture and fitting of steel security doors for the government and the public.

Two years ago I received a call from a government contractor to measure make and install 12 security doors to a property in St Kilda Rd.

Asking the address I was informed 201 Brighton Rd. The builder then said he would send a plan as there were three buildings involved.

You can imagine his surprise when I described where every door was needed, the design of the buildings and even which way to hinge them.

His comment was something like "bugger me, how do you know that in such detail, have you got plans?"

With a somewhat smug reply that those who are all knowing, I said “no, its an old fire station that was the St Kilda Fire Brigade Station numbered No37.”

As our business is situated in Dandenong he was taken aback until I came clean. I had served 12 years there.

Measuring the doors, memories flooded back, names surfaced of the guys I served with such as

Ron Cass, (I hope your feeling better Ron), Des Pelcaro, Jim Blackburn, Ron Silvey, Dexter Downs, 'Mat' Dillon, Bob 'Throber' Wayland (vale) and many many others.

This refreshed my memories, and with a grandson of some 17 years old I decided to take him into the museum, I began by showing him over the current stations equipment.

"Have you used that?" he asked.

"Well no, but I know what it does I replied"

"What about that?"

"Well no but"

"Yeah, I know, you know what it does"

"OK, lets go to the museum, (mutter mutter smart @\*>#).

Going along the items on display, I made the comments such as "used that, trained on that, used that etc until we came upon the 'PROTO' "trained on that say I"

Now the Proto being leather and not have been oiled or serviced for many years looked very old indeed.

"Hmmm", says 17 years.'

"Where is the case that is over 2 metres high by about ½ a metre deep and ½ a metre wide" asked this smart Alec.

"What case I ask"

Too late I realise this is a loaded question.

"The one to put you in of course"

Ned Kelly said it best. 'Ah well such is life'

## Antibacterial what?!

Antibacterial cleaners, garbage bags, pens, cheques, pillows... we thought we'd heard it all. But then along came antibacterial underwear! And as if this isn't mind-boggling enough, France's 60 millions de consommateurs put them to the test.

Of course it was all done under strictly controlled

laboratory conditions: the appropriate bacteria were applied to the items of underwear, which were then incubated at 37°C. The results were very disappointing: only three items (all socks) worked - the underpants, t-shirts and remaining socks had no antibacterial effect. Their conclusion? Nothing can replace good hygiene to remove natural

**RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA  
VICTORIAN BRANCH INCORPORATED**

**NOMINATION FORM.**

For election of Office Bearers of the Association and ordinary members of the committee.

**We hereby nominate;**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **For the position of;** \_\_\_\_\_

**Proposer's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Post Code** \_\_\_\_\_

**Secunder's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Post Code** \_\_\_\_\_

**I hereby accept the above nomination; Signature of Nominee;** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date;** \_\_\_\_\_

Return by Friday November 12, 1999, to:-  
The Secretary  
Retired Firefighters Association of Australia  
Victorian Branch Incorporated.  
24 Lincoln Drive Lower Plenty 3093

## **MAGIRUS - HIT AT HEYFIELD**

**Ted Osland**

**A**ugust 99, and the field day at Heyfield Gippsland this year attracted the Magirus Ladder.

Since the Magirus had done but few kilometres in it's span of MFB duty, (most of these kilometres done around Melbourne) the long run did it the world of good.

The CFA at Heyfield donated the use of the fire station for us and the locals, as usual, were the tops in generosity.

The ladder attracted a lot of interest with Fred Kerr handing out leaflets and elevating and extending the appliance for effect.

Tractor pulls, wood chopping, steam engines, old lawn mowers, whip making and cracking were just some of the draw cards.

Among the relics, we discovered George Hancock and wife up from the seaside for a visit. No matter where you go old fires come out of the woodwork.

All plaudits to Fred for the time and effort he puts in to this event and the Museum in general.

*The Magirus below, photographed outside the old workshops in Albert Street not long after the Brigade took delivery in 1963*



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