

# "WATER OFF"

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



May 2013 Vol 17 No 2  
Inc/No: A16839F

## R.F.A PHOTO COLLATION DAY

The next quarterly meeting on Wednesday May 15<sup>th</sup> is going to be a most important one, this is the day we want all members to bring in any photos they may have from their past career, no matter if your service was overseas, country, industry or metropolitan.

The shots you have will be scanned & documented for the Fire Services Museum data base. Whilst we are scanning them they will be exhibited onto the screen and have the member whose photo it is have their voice recorded to ensure we know just what the picture is about. Remember this is your opportunity to have this important information available for future generations.

Another important item on the day will be the running of a free raffle for a great gift. (Suitable for your grand and/or great grand-child or perhaps even you if you are so inclined).

*The photo right is typical of history we need to capture for posterity. In this snapshot are; a Chief Officer, a future Chief Officer and a future District Officer. Can you pick the child that grew up to be a Chief Fire Officer of the MFB and the one that become a District Officer.*



### Important Notice

For members who may have some old "application to join" forms to hand out.

Please alter the cost of the lapel badge from \$3 to \$5. This reflects the cost increase that has been imposed on us.

As for the posting out of Caps and/or shirts we are now being charged \$6.95 postage for each item for anywhere in Victoria, more for interstate and overseas.

It's better to purchase them when attending meetings or get someone who is attending the meetings to pick one up for you. Remember we only charge the price we pay for the items.

**John Berry**

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# “GENERAL MEETING”

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

**10.30 Hours, Wednesday 15th May 2013**

## **AGENDA ITEMS.**

**Minutes of last General meeting.  
President’s Report.  
Secretary/Treasurer’s Report.  
Guest Speaker  
General Business**

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

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

**Lunch available.  
Please join us!**

### **Non financial Members**

Members be advised if your newsletter has an expiry date of 2/1/2012 that means you have not paid your subs since 2011 therefore if no remuneration is received by the 2/1/14 your name will be automatically removed from the mailing list. If, for what ever reason any member is unable to meet this request please do not hesitate to call the secretary, (confidentiality is assured)

## **OFFICE BEARERS**

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

**General Committee;**  
Ian Geddes  
Mike McCumisky  
Alan Roberts  
John Schintler

**Auditor;**  
Theo Teklenburg

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

## **Valē**

Robert Carroll (MFB)      Des Holian (MFB)  
Don Cameron (MFB)      Noel Lang (MFB)  
Brian Foote (MFB)

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

### **SICK LIST** (\* In Nursing Home)

Stan Cameron      Jack Moore  
Huew Campbell\*      Barry Price  
Ken Clinkaberry      Jack Sexton  
Russ Daniels\*      Brian Trembath  
Ernie Goodall\*      Tom Williamson  
Clarrie Guthrie\*  
Jack Harbrow  
Clarrie Hart

We wish these members a speedy recovery

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

### **Diary Dates 2013**

May 15th;      General Meeting  
August 21st;      General Meeting, CFA Corio F/St.  
November 9th;      Annual Luncheon, Malvern T/Hall  
November 20th;      Annual General Meeting

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

On Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April, we held our second BBQ at Ozaram house in Arden Street North Melbourne. We fed approximately 180 clients a lunch of sausages and hamburgers. Members present were J Berry, H Floyd, D Nicholson, A Sheppard, I Fowler, J Cannon and D & N Brennan. A special thanks to those members on a very dull and drizzly day.



**Above:** "Chefs extraordinaire," From left, Dave Nicholson, Ian Fowler, Don Brennan, Alex Sheppard, John Cannon. Photo; MFB Media & Communications

Also in attendance DCFO D. Youseff, along with other members of the MFB, David Mann from 3AW, PR Personal from the UFU and the MFB. Thanks goes to the UFU for the lend of their trailer BBQ and the MFB for use of a gazebo which was appreciated because of the misty rain.

One of our members Kevin Hede, who usually helps out at our BBQ's was unable to attend following his donation of a Kidney to his wife Trish. At the time of writing Kevin was home, but Trish was still in hospital. I'm sure all our members wish them both a speedy recovery.

Note: this is a reminder to all how important both transplants and organ donors are.

**Don Brennan**

*For people with serious or life-threatening illnesses, an organ and/or tissue transplant could mean a second chance at life. Around 1,700 people are on Australian organ transplant waiting lists at any one time.*

*By choosing to record your donation decision on the Donor Register, you could save the lives of up to 10 people and improve the lives of dozens more.*

*Call 1800 777 203 to register on the phone or ask for a registration form to be posted to you*

*Family consent is always needed before donation can go ahead, so remember to discuss your decision with your family and those close to you.*

## **SECRETARY/ TREASURER'S REPORT**

Welcome to the second report for this calendar year, I would have to say the RFA this quarter has been a mixed bag.

Let's look at the group as a whole. We, the members at the moment, are receiving great support from the following organisations; Firefighters Credit Union, Commonwealth Government, MFB and the UFU. As Secretary, one of the things I've found over the years, is that the idea that we should be totally autonomous and not have the support of anyone has been blown to pieces. Please let me explain.

Over the years, one organisation in particular has not only assisted us as a group, but also our members and/or their families with problems of a professional kind. **Peter Marshall** (UFU National Secretary) has personally gone out of his way to assist them; in fact I had reason to speak with him regarding some of our member's problems just recently. It was blatantly obvious from the start that he is the real deal, he not only talked the talk he was walking the walk, add to this his genuine concern for the person's wellbeing, he would start arranging times & meetings for the respective person to meet with the necessary experts that were needed to help them, (Remember I am talking about our retired people).

One other item where the UFU is helping all firefighters and retirees is their continuing push, to have all states introduce the Fair Protection for Firefighters Act, similar to the Commonwealth Legislation. An example was the March 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> **Global Forum** on Occupational Cancer in Firefighters which was held at the Crown Promenade

Melbourne. Unfortunately I was not able to attend due to other pressing needs, but in my place was our Vice President, Ian Fowler. Ian reported that it was a resounding success for the union's push for acceptance by all Commonwealth States. The International and local speakers included the Australian Prime Minister, Scientists, Epidemiologist, Firefighting Experts, Chief Officers, Health & Safety Experts, and Members of Parliament, with the highlight, in his opinion, being Dr Tee. L. Guidotti, an internationally recognised Epidemiologist, whose presentation, Ian stated, was very interesting & informative. His final comment was the three Firefighting unions; Edmonton, Winnipeg and UFU are to be congratulated for facilitating this very successful forum.

On Thursday March 14<sup>th</sup> the RFA was again involved in another MFB Retirement Readiness Seminar at the Burnley Complex. We are allotted 20 minutes to explain the history, the aims & objectives and the makeup of the membership. I have been shown a small insight into the favourable critique we are receiving on the show & tell that we do. However, the one question that keeps gnawing away ... What is the benefit to the RFA? I have not read of anyone saying that this has motivated them to join our membership. I will continue doing them until the membership tells me different.

Amongst the many letters I received on behalf of the RFA, (apart from the those telling me I should bring a high chair to the meetings so the people will be able to see me over the table HA HA), was the one that I received from **Regan Lynch**. Regan turns 86 this year and has just celebrated his **62nd Wedding Anniversary**, congratulations to Betty & Regan from all at the RFA.

*(Continued on page 4)*

(Continued from page 3)

For the members that may not know Regan, amongst his many talents was the ability to look after himself in and out of the boxing ring, in fact he still punches the bag every day and walks 2000 metres on the machine twice a day. In his spare time he and another Accordionists entertain the inhabitants of eight different Nursing Homes, doing four shows a week and Old-time dances at night. He feels this will be his last year on the dances which he has been doing for 24 years.

Regan came off the land to join the MFB, if I remember correctly I did do a few rosters with him and to me he was old school, gets in and gets job done, a very good back stop when dealing with the less pleasant members of society that one comes across at the many and varied types of emergency.

The RFA have purchased 10 Blue aprons with our logo and a large pocket for use at our fund raising or community days we do, like the one we did at **Ozanam Commu-**

**nity Centre North Melbourne.** If any member would like us to order one, they are available for \$18 each, which is cheap for a good quality apron with a large embroidered logo.

I said at the start of this quarterly report it was a mixed bag and I am not kidding, we have a member going into hospital for major surgery as a donor for a life saving procedure in donating a kidney. Others have had their loved ones called to a higher place. Unfortunately in many cases we have not heard about it especially if they live in the country and it is not in the daily paper. Here's a thought, why not put this on your list of things I must do, people you would like to be notified in case of an emergency, remember your partner is also part of our family. One other point, you would be surprised at just what talent we have amongst our members that may be of assistance.

**Memory Test** What were you wearing on Saturday 27/4/13? No one but you will know the answer.

**John Berry**

## Minutes, General Meeting, 20th February 2013

New Brigade Chaplain, Graeme Scoringe (Collingwood supporter) has been with Victoria Police and C.F.A. since 2004. Past chaplain Dave Thompson moved from Brigade in late 2012. Graeme left his Baptist Church chaplaincy and is available for all denomination work/consultations. Welcome Graeme.

Don Brennan opened Meeting.

Present - 65. Apologies as per book.

New member attendees - Jim Harrington (46A), Mick Shanahan - Peter's brother - Airport Fire Services.

### Sick Report

Jack Moore is now at home. Don Cameron - ongoing problems. Gailiam West - Airport Fire Service, and Jack Shelley - knee replacement.

### Secretary's Report

U.F.U. report on Brigade members health hopefully to be discussed with the Minister of Emergency Services and the Premier.

R.F.A. Hats - Caps (\$14), Apron (\$18).

Barry Beer was commended for the incident in which he notified Police of neighbor who had not been seen for many days.

Unfortunately, Police found the Father & daughter deceased in the dwelling.

Report accepted - Harry Floyd, seconded - Noel Taylor - carried.

### Presidents Report

Grant monies (refer 21st Nov 2012) were used to purchase electronic equipment/software from Werribee Officeworks.

Ozanam House Barbeque in Autumn - agreed.

Report accepted - Alec Shepherd, seconded Brian Jackson - carried.

### General Business

Re-union at Southport Yacht Club (Qld) is last Thursday in July (25th).

Guest Speaker - Mary Todorov (Community Accounts Director) N.B.N.

The world is using technology more. We watched a D.V.D. about high speed broadband. Presently, peak useage periods put a stress on internet. N.B.N. is a wholesaler and charges suppliers (Telstra, Optus etc) for access.

- 1) Underground/overhead Fibre Optic cable to replace copper, in metropolitan areas,
- 2) Fixed wire in regional cities/towns.
- 3) Satellite transmissions in remote areas.

Standard installation is free and uses existing poles, pits, exchanges.

Governments, Councils, Departments talking about possible useages. Working from home (probably more for younger people, children)

### Questions.

Fred Kerr - after September 14th, will the Lib/Nats continue with N.B.N.?

Yes, but there may be a change in delivery methods.

Graeme Edwards - what is standard number of connections to residences?

Unlimited.

Alan Boyd - why not go Satellite to start with?

All three delivery methods are needed.

### Presentation ended 11.45

Ernie Paddon told us of the 150 year celebration of the Corps of Commissionaires. Ernie was selected to go to St.James Palace where he and his wife were introduced to H.M. The Queen and Prince Phillip.

In 2009, Ernie was invited to Government House with other Corps members, and received an Award from Governor David de Krestzer. Well done, Ernie.

Don closed the Meeting at 12.10 and we enjoyed lunch/chats. Many thanks to Andrew Brennan & Staff.

## Gone But Not Forgotten

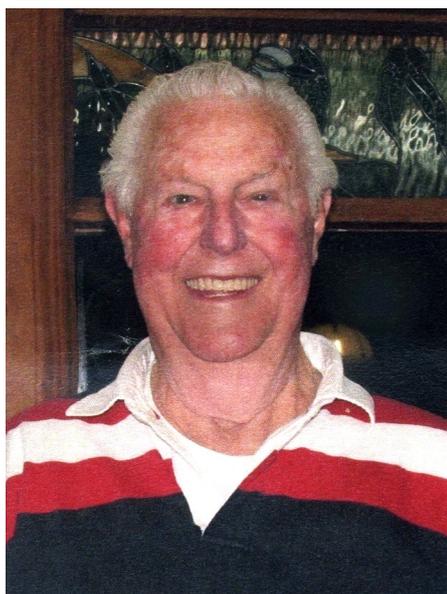
The RFA, was established to maintain fellowship for all personnel in retirement from the fire fighting fraternity. Obviously that means the members are from the more senior parts of society and it is a fact that they all have not only been exposed to the rigours of life, but also by nature of their past career. Research is now showing that it can in some cases be very detrimental to one's longevity. The committee being fully cognisant of this fact have always, in our own small way, given them the utmost respect and remembrance to those called. Since the last newsletter unfortunately more have been called to their new posting.

### Noel Lang 25/12/1934-21/2/2013

Noel served the community for twenty seven years and then took the opportunity to explore life further and left the MFB. I first met him just after he embarked on his emergency service role with the brigade at the old Eastern Hill station and if my memory is correct he was part of one of the crews involved in my yard exam (All were a big help), then again on shift. Unfortunately as I have said before, because of the nature of the job, our paths did not cross again until we had both left the job. As the norm I sought guidance from the bloke that sits at the head of our table the **RFA President Don Brennan**, he was able to enlighten me in regards to Noel's career.

Don said he was stationed with him for a number of years and stated he was a top bloke around the station and even better at the various emergencies that they had attended together. He also told me his nickname, which was given to him as he had the ability to get to the seat of the fire very quickly. There is no doubt Noel must have been a very integral part of any crew and the ones from the adjoining stations would have been very pleased to have him coming on in a big red truck. **Valda** on behalf of the members and committee of the RFA please accept our sincerest condolences on the calling of Noel. (One would imagine there are Bowling Green's up there he will love).

### Donald Sidney Cameron 1933-26/3/2013 (Silver)



If we listed all the stories one has heard about Don we could write a book and, knowing him, I'm sure he would not mind this abridged version. I have no doubt if you checked his family tree you would find there is a Court Jester amongst his forebears. There is no way that he could not have had it in his blood line, how else could

you explain his prankster traits.

I had the privilege of meeting him back in 1956, after he and another firey that I joined with, Frank Churchill,

carried out one of their pranks. I have been so fortunate to have people like them as friends. There is no doubt he had all the attributes to make a top firey, big, strong, bold, intelligent, fit, mischievous and at the same time very community minded, with a strong belief in equality for all.

Don's almost eighty years was not always a walk in the park as he made it seem, this really showed the calibre of the man? The **MFB** was made the richer by his participation and the job was a perfect fit for his personality, he often said at various functions that we attended and I quote "There are two types of people on this earth, those who are firefighters and those who want to be firefighters" unquote.

In the many discussions I had with him about retirement, I told him I was not sure if he was ready for it when he was planning to take up the option. How wrong was I!!!

He and his wife Pat blossomed in retirement, travelling the world and at the same time becoming an integral part of their community (His celebration of life service proved how highly regarded he was) Both enjoyed giving their support to the local sporting & community groups. Don had one group that he loved being involved with more than any other ..... the one that assisted the many members of the society that are often forgotten for no other reason than they are different. They loved him as he always treated them as his equal, including them in his pranks, most people forget that they love a joke just as much as any other person, Don didn't treat them any differently so this made them a perfect fit for each other.

One other point I would like to mention, it was people like Don who were instrumental in establishing the RFA. He was one of our foundation members, in other words had first use of the ball, it was people like him, with forethought, that established our unique group.

During his time in the job, he, Eddie McMullen & George McLennan travelled to America where they stayed and turned out with departments from the New York area, little did they know that many of these personnel that they had become good friends with, were to be the fire crews first on scene at the World Trade Centre on that fatal day of September 11<sup>th</sup> in 2001, he just had to get back there to help. Don not only went back he was also able to help, with his close friend Bob, at the site. I do believe he never really got over the loss of the many emergency service people; he explained to me that they had lost that many members that retired brigade members were called on to assist with the guard of honour for the fallen.

Silver, there is no doubt, when you take up your new posting and you meet up with Frank again, I hope the big bloke in charge up there will be able to handle the both of you with your pranks, I imagine Frank would have already picked out the best fall guys. Mate, on behalf of all the members & committee, it has been an honour & privilege, the only down side ... who will get me a high chair for me when I go out? **Pat** thanks for loaning him to us.

### Associated Members

During the last six months some of the members have had their life partners (Wife) called. There is no doubt we have no idea of the hardship that it would cause to you and your family, on behalf of the Members & Committee please except our Sincerest Condolences.

**John Berry**

## CITATION FOR RFA MEMBER

### Dr John Whiteoak winner of the Don & Joan Squire award of the Musicological Society of Australia

John (Adjunct Senior Research Fellow, School of Music Conservatorium, Monash University) is well known to the musicological community as the author of *Playing ad lib: Improvisatory Music in Australia 1836-1970* (Currency Press, 1998) and as general editor, with Aline Scott-Maxwell, of *The Currency Companion to Music and Dance in Australia* (2003). In addition to these publications, John is the author of over 50 articles, reviews and other works on a range of subjects including jazz, brass-bands history and music of Italian immigrants.

An aspect of John's musicological work that goes largely unnoticed is his voluntary work. Many students from Monash and Melbourne universities in particular have sought out his advice and expertise over the years, and John has developed a reputation for providing inspiration to these emerging scholars, John's generosity of spirit also extends to sharing willingly with students and scholars his extensive and private collection of rare and valuable archival material. It is no exaggeration to say that John goes well beyond the call of the duty in advancing the cause of music scholarship and research in Australia.

The Victorian chapter warmly acknowledges John's contribution to musicology over many years, and nominate him, without hesitation, as a worthy recipient of the 2010 Squire Award.

*Dr Paul Watt, President  
Victorian Chapter*

(Reprinted from the Newsletter of the Musicological Society of Australia).



*The citation gives an insight into John's travels through Music Academia and the photograph above shows the man we knew, the one that loved to spar, not only with his workmates and the emergencies he confronted, but also to entertain the community as a member of the MFB brass band.*

*The other, below; the highly intelligent and qualified Academic. I recently had the opportunity to read John's brief biography, the more I think about it the more sure I am it has the makings of a good book. It is hoped we will be able to have him attend one of our meetings to tell his journey from Deckhand to Senior Research Fellow. It is true (you can take the man out of the service, but you cannot take the service out of the man) John joined the local CFA after moving to Healesville—just in time for Ash Wednesday.*

### **ATTENTION: RETIRED MEMBERS OF THE FIREFIGHTERS' CYCLING CLUB**

ARE YOU A FORMER RACING CYCLIST?

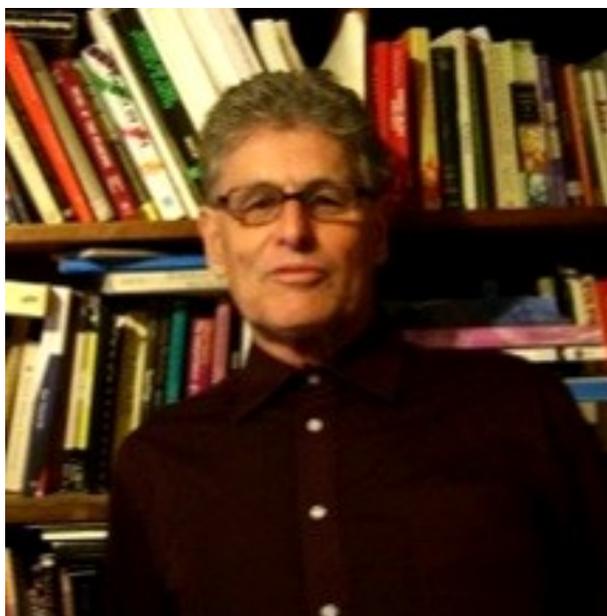
If you rode at North Essendon, or the Olympic Velodrome, or in club track events... if you competed in the Melbourne-Warrnambool road race, or the Sun Tour, or other road classics.....

I am interested in talking to you about your cycling career.

I am conducting an ambitious interview (oral history) project to recover and document our rich cycling history before it is lost forever.

If you wish to participate, please contact me at 03 5476 4492.

Regards,  
Ken Mansell, Convener  
History and Heritage Committee  
Cycling Victoria



## 9/11 Relic Reminder

A New York City fire engine, an American Airlines flight slipper and twisted steel girders are all poignant reminders of September 11.

Photographs were recently released showing relics of the attacks that killed 2973 people when planes struck the World Trade Centre more than a decade ago. Until now, the relics have been stored in a hangar at New York's JFK Airport.

Draped in American flags, they were sent to fire stations and museums across the world for display to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the tragedy.

Other relics include World Trade Centre victim's bicycles still chained to a bike post, a damaged subway rail carriage and a tattered security guard uniform bearing the World Trade Centre insignia.

The World Trade Centre steel program, which has recovered and donated portions of steel from the site, is operated by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

Authority deputy executive director Bill Baroni said: "This is a sacred mission for this agency - to not only rebuild the World Trade Centre site, but also make sure that at memorials to 9/11 all across the country, people would be able to ... see what happened that day."

**Top;** A Charred Fire Engine, **Centre;** American Airline Flight Slipper, **Bottom;** Twisted Girder from the World Trade Centre

Photos: Reuters



## RFA Vice President at Work

This photograph was taken by our Spy-Cam which shows our hard working Vice President training wild cats to play dead on command. He spends many hours each day demonstrating to these feral animals the techniques required to lull their adversaries into thinking they are dead.

The glass on the table contains a specially formulated liquid that provides the nutrients our V/P needs to maintain the high level of fitness required to carry out this arduous task.

One of the reasons we are displaying the picture is to show the RFA membership their committee members are always on the ball and continually alert to their needs.

How did we get this photo? Our tyrannical Secretary uses a very small hover-craft fitted with the Spy-Cam to keep an eye on his committee to make sure they're not slacking off!

**Believe it or not!!**

# **TURBULENT TIMES OF THE MELBOURNE FIRE BRIGADES**

## **1835 - 1970**

*Author, Les Gray, continues with his insight into the early days of Melbourne's Fire Services*

### **The early workshops:**

Since 1890, when the first board met, they realized they faced problems maintaining the old volunteer fire stations that were taken over with amalgamation of the volunteer brigades.

When plans for a new headquarters fire station were drawn up, it included a small workshop at the rear. At the same time, at South Melbourne, a new station was to be constructed to include a large workshop at rear.

One of the board's concerns at the time (amongst many others) were the shoeing of the board's 67 horses used for the brigade's transportation. The small workshop at headquarters station was situated in a double storey brick building located in the rear yard on the station boundary line and the building ran from Gisborne St across the yard and terminated onto a right-of-way which ran from Victoria Parade to Albert St.

On the ground floor facing Gisborne St. was an engine room bay, which housed the "American Ladder" the Hayes LaFrance 75ft manually operated, 3 horse drawn extension ladder.

At the rear of the engine bay were 2 horse stables with an adjoining blacksmith's shop fitted with a forge. On the South West corner of the building there was another horse stable with a doorway leading out on to the right-of-way and on the stable's adjoining side wall, north side facing into the yard, was the men's toilet block.

On the first floor at front was the carpenter's shop and then through a large open doorway was situated the painters shop. Separated by a brick wall was a hayloft and feed store. The building had at ground level, a wide ramp servicing the first floor and a stairway into the hayloft's overhanging balcony.

The building plans show a door opening at the front of the balcony which would have allowed for hay, chaff etc. to be hauled aloft. The Building had a hip and ridge timber roof covered by corrugated iron roofing sheets with a lean-to roof covering the men's toilet block. The workshop's main employment was horse shoeing and the renovation of the old volunteer stations in and around central district.

The electrical department, since 1893, had been working from out of the basement of the main building, their electricians were adapting the PMG's inadequate telephone

switchboards and other electrical items, bringing them up to date to suit the brigade's requirements. In 1905, William Stock Snr. was appointed chief electrician.

An ex country volunteer fireman, J. T. Wilkins, who had earlier gained his engineering diploma, joined the MFB in 1891 and was appointed by Chief Officer David Stein as chief engineer of the workshops. He remained as such until 1906

when he was promoted to 3rd Officer. He was succeeded by Mr. T Brims with the rank of District Superintendent and on his retirement he was succeeded by Mr H. Burmister as the General Manager and upon his retirement, Mr. R. Barker was appointed to that position.

In 1906 a new engineering workshop was constructed at South Melbourne, on vacant land near No38 Station. It replaced the original workshop that was constructed in 1893. The new workshop consisted of a

carpenters shop. stables, blacksmith shop and forges along with a yard at side for shoeing horses and a manure pit. Employed

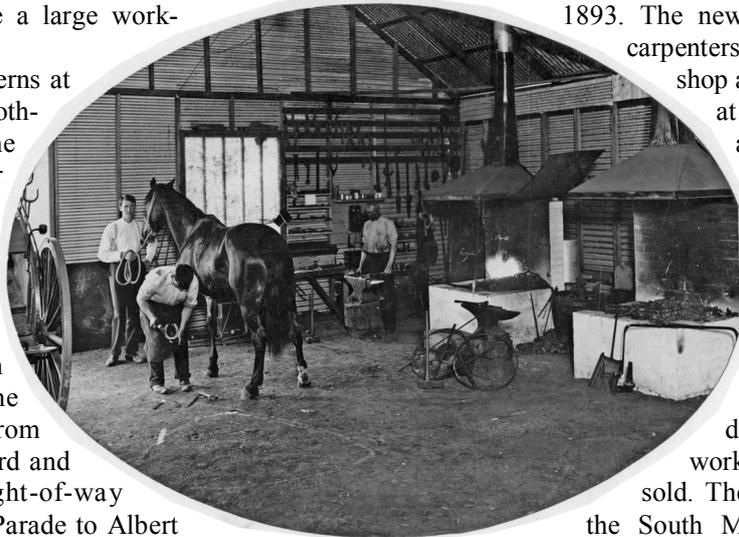
were blacksmiths, farriers, coach builders and painters. There were painters employed for painting buildings owned by the brigade along with carpenters, plasterers, plumbers, bricklayers and saddlers. One year later, the workshops were closed and sold. The reasons for the closure of the South Melbourne workshops were twofold.

1. The complaints from the men and families quartered at the station about the smell of the manure pit and urine, which had permeated the grounds around the site, also, inadequate sewerage facilities. The tradesmen, firemen and families shared the same amenities block, the sewerage system and water closets could not handle it .... the smell was unbearable.

2. The board wanted to centralise all workshop activities to the Headquarters site, particularly now that horses were going to be replaced by motorisation.

In 1907 the new General Workshops were completed at Headquarters Station and all the tradesmen were transferred from the Sth. Melbourne site.

The new workshops building was a long narrow brick and timber building, having 6 large double iron framed glass windows running along each side wall and having 2 large dome shaped windows equal distance apart in the rear wall. It's ceiling and combined flat roof was constructed with heavy 12 x 4 timber joists, having both ends supported in the brickwork. On top of the joists was laid a 2 inch thick tongue and groove timber flooring, supported at centre by 8x 4 timber bearer that ran along the entire centre length, underneath the bearers were 12 x 12 supporting posts which were supported on bluestone pitcher foundations.



**Above: Blacksmiths working at the old South Melbourne Workshops circa 1907.**

**Photo: Fire Services Museum Vic.**



**Above:** The Hayes (American Ladder) horse drawn 85ft extension ladder. Weighing over 3 tons, it was the only MFB appliance ever to have a tiller!

**Right:** The 'American Ladder' House (left) which was located at the back of the fire station off Gisborne Street. The appliance pictured is Car 53, the Garford 88ft extension ladder commissioned in 1917.

**Images; Fire Services Museum Vic.**



The floor of the workshop was constructed of "ironite", at the time it was a proprietary mix of impervious materials, the brigade used it frequently, paving station yards and walkways, applying it on top of timber floors protecting them from dampness. When set the material was softer than concrete, had flexibility and over time it went black. The timber flooring that covered the flat roof was covered by ironite and it was covered by a thick layer of clean coarse sand. The flat roof had a 4 foot high parapet wall that was flashed with sheet lead to prevent rainwater from penetrating down into the workshops.

Entry into the workshops was via a wide, long, sloping ramp, starting near the front of the men's toilet block and ran up on the east side pass the central store's side entrance doorway and terminated into the workshops. The engineering department occupied the east side of the building and the electrical the department occupied the west side of the workshops floor space.

By 1915 the board employed 36 staff in the General Workshops including 2 blacksmiths, 2 farriers, 3 saddlers, leather workers, a bicycle builder, carpenters, plasterers, painters, plumbers and coachbuilders, now classed as motor fire appliance body builders. The maintenance of all brigade stations and houses were now carried out by the General Workshops staff.

#### **Motorisation of the Brigade:**

In 1905, a Merryweather Motorised Chemical Engine was purchased and commissioned as Car 1, and by 1912 the engine room at headquarters boasted as well as the chemical engine, a 2 horse drawn hose carriage and a French made Hotchkiss motor car used as an inspection car.

By 1913, the workshops had converted several privately purchased Hotchkiss motor cars into Hose Carriages. Originally these hose carriages only carried a compliment of canvas hose and the necessary small gear to "Get to Work" from street hydrants. They didn't carry a 30 foot extension ladder but had a brass hand rung bell and carried on each side running board a brass 2 gallon soda acid hand

chemical fire extinguisher.

They were not fitted with pumps, no windscreens nor generators to charge their batteries. They had to be hand cranked and when turning out at night their batteries were on limited headlight power and were fitted with a device to cut the headlights down to a glow. More often they had to be push started and driven back to the station without headlights.

By 1914, the workshops had converted another 6 Hotchkiss motor cars into hose carriages now fitted with their own designed and manufactured rotary pumps and by the end of 1914 the brigade had 8 Hotchkiss hose carriages in commission at various stations. They now had 12 volt generators fitted to charge their batteries but still had to be hand cranked to start. They also carried a 30 foot wooden extension ladder overhead on a metal frame fixed with 4 quick action spring loaded bolts in each corner of the frame to secure the ladder in the road travelling position.

One of the original 2 horse drawn combination chemical fire engines and hose wagons were converted and mounted onto a motorised chassis and placed in commission at No9 station Nth Fitzroy. For the Dennis Gwynne Turbine Pump, which the workshops had purchased, the engineers built a chassis with all the running gear and bodywork and, like all big pumps, it was mounted onto the rear of the appliance. For the times it was a remarkable achievement and the Chief Officer, Harrie Lee, was very proud of it.

By the end of 1915, the brigade had 20 motorised appliances in commission.

**Les Gray**

## Guess Who?

This picture was sent in to us, and I will be honest, we have no idea of the names of the Officer or Fire-fighters doing the Combination ladder drill. We do know where it was taken; now the first person in with the correct answers to the following questions will receive an RFA cap. (So long as your head fits!)

1. Name as many people you can, and the year.
2. The location of the drill and the building now on the site.
3. Does the MFB still use this type of ladder?

### Answers to previous "Guess Who"

The answer to the names of the five desperadoes (pictured below) from the November 2012 newsletter looking at the picture from left to right are as follows. Trevor Reed, Ken Hopper, Harold Stirling, Peter Coulson and Alan Boyd.

The museum people advised me, they're not happy that their marble stairs are not going to be scrubbed.



The names of the blokes with their wives and twins below, from the old 29 Station in the last newsletter. Well, I have had 2 members in the picture ring me up; guess what? ...they cannot name all the blokes in the picture. Will someone please help?

**John Berry**



## My Mother the Teacher!

1. My mother taught me TO APPRECIATE A JOB WELL DONE . "If you're going to kill each other, do it outside. I just finished cleaning.
2. My mother taught me RELIGION . "You better pray that will come out of the carpet."
3. My mother taught me about TIME TRAVEL . "If you don't straighten up, I'm going to knock you into the middle of next week!"
4. My mother taught me LOGIC . "Because I said so, that's why."
5. My mother taught me MORE LOGIC. "If you fall out of that swing and break your neck, you're not going to the store with me."
6. My mother taught me FORESIGHT . "Make sure you wear clean underwear, in case you're in an accident."
7. My mother taught me IRONY . "Keep crying, and I'll give you something to cry about."
8. My mother taught me about the science of OSMOSIS . "Shut your mouth and eat your supper."
9. My mother taught me about CONTORTION-ISM . "Will you look at that dirt on the back of your neck!"
10. My mother taught me about STAMINA ... "You'll sit there until all that spinach is gone."
11. My mother taught me about WEATHER . "This room of yours looks as if a tornado went through it."
12. My mother taught me about HYPOCRISY . "If I told you once, I've told you a million times. Don't exaggerate!"

## No.1 Fargo Pump Comes Back To Melbourne!

This open appliance was built on a 1942 Fargo cab chassis. The 600gpm Gwynne pump, transfer box and multi V belt pulley drive system were built on the chassis, then it went off to have the body built.

It was placed in commission in November 1948 and was stationed at No.1 Station, Eastern Hill.

The Fire Museum has no information as to where it went after the MFB sold it, and it only came to light during 2011 as Warwick Bromham, a member of the Ballarat Vintage Car Club, was looking for a new home for a vehicle that he and friends had spent some years restoring and using for travelling away on weekends with a van attached.

With failing health Warwick was looking for some interested organisation to look after it. We eventually met with his wife Judith and offered to give the No.1 Pump a good home. She was very pleased with the arrangement. In December 2011 we called in with our transport vehicle to collect the appliance and bring it back to Melbourne.

As members of the Fire Museum, we acknowledge the great work Warwick and his friends put in to restoring the Pump, so as to preserve yet another piece of MFB's history. We are arranging for a permanent brass plaque to be fitted to the appliance acknowledging Warwick's wishes.

At the May 2012 General Meeting, the Fire Services Museum gratefully received a very generous donation of \$2,000 from the Retired Firefighters' Association to go towards the overhaul of the Fargo Pump to get it ready for the road again.

Work involved replacing a cracked head, overhaul of the brakes master cylinder, wheel cylinders, hand brake and vacuum line. Repairs included some of the wiring and adding a second windscreen wiper. After a thorough check and grease of all moving parts, apart from the pump, it was ready to go for a roadworthy check and then off to Broadmeadows for registration.



One of our Committee members has kindly donated the original registration plates that it had when in service with MFB.

It is hoped to have the No.1 Fargo Pump on display at the May General Meeting. We would like to invite the RFA members to add their stories relating to its service and where it was stationed apart from Eastern Hill.

To recognise the RFA support, a brass plaque will be fitted to the appliance acknowledging the donation.

The Fire Services Museum thanks the members of the RFA for their much appreciated support, as we continue our efforts to preserve some more of Melbourne's fire service history.

**Mike McCumisky**  
**Images; Glenn Cumming**

**Follow Your Dreams .....**

**(unless it's the one where you're running naked through the station during a fire drill!)**

## Recalling Basil Smith

Reading your item in "Water Off" (August 2012 edition) regarding Basil Smith reversing his trailer brought back vivid memories for me.

It happened when the opening year of the new training college had drawn to a close and all courses had finished. I was an assistant instructor, being a S/F at the time; working with Basil, Bill Bayley and Geoff Patman. We had returned to clear up everything and to set up for the next years intake and prior to this, Basil wanted to wire up the lights on his trailer. These had been welded on by a certain SO who would try and sell 240 v. arc welders to anyone who would listen, (he knows who he is!).

On the last day, Basil dragged his trailer to work as I promised to do the work for him. When our jobs were over, Basil dragged his rig into the lower yard and parked it in the shade of the drill tower. I recall the temperature that day was about 26 deg, probably more like 30 deg in the lower yard. I started by unscrewing the lens of the left lamp to connect an earth wire. Moving to the right hand light, I inserted the screwdriver into the screw and the light fell off onto the ground. All that was holding it on was the slag from the weld - no metal to metal contact at all, which didn't matter as I was running earth wires.

I battled on, and after wiring up the lights, I ran the wire to the front of the trailer and connected up the trailer plug. Next, we took the remaining wire and threaded it out from the boot under the bumper and I connected up the car connector and fitted it to the car. I then told Basil to turn the key on to "accessories" so that I could prove out the circuitry and proceeded to tee in to the car wiring to complete the job. After taping up all the joiners for extra security and refitting the mat in the boot, I found that the lights were on. We checked the lights were off in the car and couldn't work out where the current was coming from. Basil said, "It was alright before!" and Bill Bayley, standing in the shade of the tower with a silly smirk gave some very grave advice saying, "He's bugged your car

Basil". With sweat dripping off my nose, I determined that there must be a bridge between the hot wire and the reversing lights because they wouldn't go out. I pulled the car plug to pieces again, but all was well, so I left the trailer unplugged .... and the lights burned on!

I checked the wiring loom in the boot and under the bonnet, but found no joy. Bill was still making helpful comments like "Set it alight Basil and claim the insurance!" I said to Basil that I was beat and I would have to pull out the fuse or he'd end up with a flat battery and that an auto-elec would probably find the fault in a minute flat. We agreed that I would undo all the connections in the boot and tape up all the half joiners for safety; and the lights burned on!

Basil jumped into the car, moved the gearshift and started the engine. I caught the movement and asked him to turn off the engine. I said, "Did you have it in gear?" He said it was a classic Holden handbrake and he always parked it in reverse. I told him to park it in 1st gear and I'd wire it up again! By this time, Bill Bayley was sporting a blood red face and trying to restrain his laugh to prevent rupturing himself while I was sweating like a bull! After everything was hooked up again I ASKED Basil to put it into reverse and we'll check everything is OK." He did so and nothing lit up! Then I remembered the key had to be in the "accessories position. We fixed that up but NO LIGHTS! While I was racking my overheated brain Basil calmly said as only Basil could, "We had better put the fuse back don't you think?" I looked at Basil and said, "The B----y Fuse!"

All's well that ends well. We tied the right hand light to the trailer frame with a piece of string to save it getting damaged on the way home and Basil drove the car out of the yard with brake lights working as well!

I shall never forget Basil's trailer nor indeed the man himself. He always had my utmost respect. A wonderful mentor and a wonderful bloke. God bless his soul.

**Bernie Bishop**

## 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.*

When his .38 calibre revolver failed to fire during a hold-up in Long Beach, California, would-be robber James Elliot did something that can only inspire wonder. He peered down the barrel and tried the trigger again. This time it worked.

*(27 February 2012, North Carolina) "It was just a freak incident," said an investigator, that caused the death of 43-year-old Gary Allen Banning. Gary was at*

*a friend's apartment when he spotted a salsa jar containing a mystery fluid. Thinking that it was an alcoholic beverage, he helped himself to a sizeable swig of gasoline! Naturally enough, he immediately spat the offending liquid onto his clothes. Then, to recover from the shock, Gary lit a cigarette.*

*Firefighters responded to calls reporting a fire in the apartment, and found a badly burned man sitting on a charred carpet. The following morning, Gasoline Gary died at the UNC Burn Centre in Chapel Hill.*

*Gary's friend was a mechanic and kept the jar of gasoline near the kitchen sink to remove grease from his hands.*

## AND THEN .... IT IS WINTER!

You know. . . time has a way of moving quickly and catching you unaware of the passing years. It seems just yesterday that I was young, just married and embarking on my new life with my mate. Yet in a way, it seems like eons ago, and I wonder where all the years went. I know that I lived them all. I have glimpses of how it was back then and of all my hopes and dreams.

But, here it is... the winter of my life and it catches me by surprise...How did I get here so fast? Where did the years go and where did my youth go? I remember well seeing older people through the years and thinking that those older people were years away from me and that winter was so far off that I could not fathom it or imagine fully what it would be like.

But, here it is...my friends are retired and getting grey...they move slower and I see an older person now. Some are in better and some worse shape than me...but, I see the great change...Not like the ones that I remember who were young and vibrant...but, like me, their age is beginning to show and we are now those older folks that we used to see and never thought we'd be. Each day now, I find that just getting a shower is a real target for the day! And taking a nap is not a treat anymore... it's mandatory! Cause if I don't, on my own free will... I just fall asleep where I sit!

And so...now I enter into this new season of my life unprepared for all the aches and pains and the loss of strength and ability to go and do things that I wish I had done but never did!! But, at least I know, that though the winter has come, and I'm not sure how long it will last...this I know, that when it's over on this earth...its over. A new adventure will begin!

Yes, I have regrets. There are things I wish I hadn't done...things I should have done, but indeed, there are many things I'm happy to have done. It's all in a lifetime.

So, if you're not in your winter yet...let me remind you, that it will be here faster than you think. So, whatever you would like to accomplish in your life please do it quickly! Don't put things off too long!! Life goes by quickly. So, do what you can today, as you can never be sure whether this is your winter or not! You have no promise that you will see all the seasons of your life...so, live for today and say all the things that you want your loved ones to remember...and hope that they appreciate and love you for all the things that you have done for them in all the years past!!

"Life" is a gift to you. The way you live your life is your gift to those who come after. Make it a fantastic one.

LIVE IT WELL!  
ENJOY TODAY!  
DO SOMETHING FUN!  
BE HAPPY !  
HAVE A GREAT DAY

Remember "It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver.

LASTLY, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

TODAY IS THE OLDEST YOU'VE EVER BEEN, YET THE YOUNGEST YOU'LL EVER BE SO - ENJOY THIS DAY WHILE IT LASTS.

~Your kids are becoming you.....but your grandchildren are perfect!

~Going out is good.. Coming home is better!

~You forget names.... But it's OK because other people forgot they even knew you!!!

~You realize you're never going to be really good at anything.... especially golf.

~You sleep better on a lounge chair with the TV blaring than in bed. It's called "pre-sleep".

~You miss the days when everything worked with just an "ON" and "OFF" switch..

~You tend to use more 4 letter words ...  
"what?"..."when?"... ???

~Now that you can afford expensive jewellery, it's not safe to wear it anywhere.

~You notice everything they sell in stores is "sleeveless"?!!!

~What used to be freckles are now liver spots.

~Everybody whispers.

~You have 3 sizes of clothes in your closet.... 2 of which you will never wear.

~But Old is good in some things: Old Songs, Old movies, and best of all, OLD FRIENDS!!

Stay well, "OLD FRIEND!" Pass this on to other "Old Friends!" and let them laugh in AGREEMENT!!!

It's Not What You Gather, But What You Scatter That Tells What Kind Of Life You Have Lived.

### “Two Pints Please”

Two retired Firey's from Australia stopped into an English pub for a drink. They called the proprietor over and asked him to settle an argument.

"Are there two pints in a quart or four?" asked one.

"There be two pints in a quart," confirmed the proprietor.

They moved back along the bar and soon the barmaid asked for their order.

"Two pints please, miss, and the bartender offered to buy them for us."

The barmaid doubted that her boss would be so generous, so one of the Firey's called out to the proprietor at the other end of the bar, "You did say two pints, didn't you?"

"That's right," he called back, "two pints."

# The World Economy Explained with Two Cows

## **SOCIALISM**

You have 2 cows.  
You give one to your neighbour.

## **COMMUNISM**

You have 2 cows  
The State takes both and gives you some milk.

## **FASCISM**

You have 2 cows.  
The State takes both and sells you some milk.

## **BUREAUCRATISM**

You have 2 cows.  
The State takes both, shoots one, milks the other and then throws the milk away.

## **TRADITIONAL CAPITALISM**

You have two cows.  
You sell one and buy a bull.  
Your herd multiplies, and the economy grows.  
You sell them and retire on the income.

## **VENTURE CAPITALISM**

You have two cows.  
You sell three of them to your publicly listed company, using letters of credit opened by your brother-in-law at the bank, then execute a debt/equity swap with an associated general offer so that you get all four cows back, with a tax exemption for five cows.  
The milk rights of the six cows are transferred via an intermediary to a Cayman Island Company secretly owned by the majority shareholder who sells the rights to all seven cows back to your listed company.  
The annual report says the company owns eight cows, with an option on one more.

## **AN AMERICAN CORPORATION**

You have two cows.  
You sell one, and force the other to produce the milk of four cows.  
Later, you hire a consultant to analyse why the cow has died.

## **A FRENCH CORPORATION**

You have two cows.  
You go on strike, organize a riot, and block the roads, because you want three cows.

## **AN ITALIAN CORPORATION**

You have two cows, but you don't know where they are.  
You decide to have lunch.

## **A SWISS CORPORATION**

You have 5,000 cows. None of them belong to you.  
You charge the owners for storing them.

## **A CHINESE CORPORATION**

You have two cows.  
You have 300 people milking them.  
You claim that you have full employment and high bovine productivity.  
You arrest the newsman who reported differently.

## **AN INDIAN CORPORATION**

You have two cows.  
You worship them.

## **A BRITISH CORPORATION**

You have two cows.  
Both are mad.

## **AN IRAQI CORPORATION**

Everyone thinks you have lots of cows.  
You tell them that you have none.  
Nobody believes you, so they bomb the crap out of you and invade your country.  
You still have no cows but at least you are now a Democracy.

## **AN AUSTRALIAN CORPORATION**

You have two cows.  
Business seems pretty good.  
You close the office and go for a few beers to celebrate.

## **A NEW ZEALAND CORPORATION**

You have two cows.  
The one on the left looks very attractive.

## **A GREEK CORPORATION**

You have two cows borrowed from French and German banks.  
You eat both of them.  
The banks call to collect their milk, but you cannot deliver so you call the IMF.  
The IMF loans you two cows.  
You eat both of them.  
The banks and the IMF call to collect their cows/milk.  
You are out getting a haircut.

## **Is retirement village living the answer?**

Only about six per cent of Australians currently live in a retirement village. New developments have upped the ante with features such as golf courses, fitness centres, cafes and hobby areas. So how do you decide whether to stick with the family home, or take the plunge and buy into what seems to be an affordable, low maintenance and extremely social lifestyle?

In February 2011, research conducted by consumer advocacy group, CHOICE indicated that many residents

can become disappointed with their decision to move to a village.

Each State and Territory has (different) specific legislation which regulates the operation of retirement villages, which makes objective comparisons difficult. So we think the official Federal Government's seniors website is the most objective and reliable for an explanation of the pros and cons of moving to a village. The Department of Families, Housing, Community services and Indigenous Affairs also publishes a terrific guide to a wide range of accommodation options for older Australians ..

# BELLS BY THE BEACH

HOLIDAY HOUSE • OCEAN GROVE

24 Roditis Drive, Ocean Grove, Vic



Hello, my name is Baxter

Your hosts: Jan and Lin Bell

M: 0403 221 737 or  
P: 03 5251 5899

Bring the dog and grandkids for a  
holiday at the beach!

- Easy walking - no hills to negotiate!
- Dogs or cats welcome. Pets can stay, sleep indoors.
- Self catering holiday house, 500 metres to beach.
- Good size kitchen, gas log fire, ceiling fans, air con.
- Bathroom with spa bath, overhead shower, grab rail.  
Plus an extra toilet off the laundry!
- Comfortable beds, electric blankets - two QS, two singles. Everything provided, or BYO linen & towels.
- Warm outdoor shower for after the beach.
- Single garage parking, secure fences all round.
- Short drive to Ocean Grove Bowls Club, cafes and restaurants. Coles and Woolies close by.

**2013 seasonal rates 2 to 6 guests**

Winter \$149 per night, Spring/Autumn \$179, Summer \$199

[www.bellsbythebeach.com.au](http://www.bellsbythebeach.com.au)

email: [bellsbythebeach@bigpond.com](mailto:bellsbythebeach@bigpond.com)

Call us for a brochure.

See our ad in [www.holidayingwithdogs.com.au](http://www.holidayingwithdogs.com.au)



***Geelong Firey's Muster***  
***C.F.A. – M.F.B. – SHELL - AVALON***  
***Serving & Retired – Staff & Volunteers***

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

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

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

## UFU RETIRED MEMBERS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

**Saturday November 9th 2013**  
**11.30 AM. - 4.00 PM.**  
**Malvern Town Hall**

A reminder:

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

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

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

John's address - - [retfire@bigpond.net.au](mailto:retfire@bigpond.net.au)

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



# Queensland Reunion

Thursday July 25th, 2013  
Southport Yacht Club, Gold Coast



To all who may be travelling through or just on holidays at the Gold Coast in July this year, come join us for the annual Firey's Luncheon at the Southport Yacht Club.

Held on the last Thursday in July, lovely food panoramic views, gorgeous women and handsome men are just a few of the

things that will be part of a great day to enjoy.

Arrive around 11.00am and catch up with old mates for a yarn.

Bring your partners, all are welcome.

Oh, and you don't even have to be retired!!

**For further information contact;  
Peter Coulson - 07 5529 2632**

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