

Colinton Courier

Newsletter of the Colinton Rural Fire Brigade * No 124* March 2012



Michael nurses a cut finger at Bredbo North

Committee 2011-2012:

Fire Captain: Graham Povey
Senior Deputy: Nick Goldie
Deputies: Bob Morison, Jeremy Mears, Barry Woolacott
President: Nick Goldie
Secretary: Sandra Lauer
Treasurer: Bob Morison
Training Officer: Jeremy Mears
Equipment Officer: Michael Burton
Community Awareness: Nick Goldie
Fundraising: Sandra Lauer
Permits: Graham Povey
NSW RFSA Delegate: Jeremy Mears

Call out:

A Triple Zero call alerted Fire Control to a car rollover, north of Bredbo, at dawn on *Thursday 16 February*. Seven Charlie (Graham, Barry) was sent to investigate, and found that there were no injuries, no threat of fire, and the car had been recovered.

Members of the Colinton brigade attending a Landcare meeting on Livingstone Road on the evening of *Sunday 19 February* saw a lightning strike far to the south, followed by a plume of smoke. "We'll be called out," they said. Minutes later there was a pager call for a structural fire on the property Bredbo North. Initially it was believed the house had been struck, but it was in fact one of the sheds. This shed was undamaged, apart from some scorched power lines, but the power surge ignited a neighbouring building (an old shearers' cottage) which was totally destroyed.

Bredbo *One* and *Seven* were quickly on scene, followed by Colinton *One* (Barry, Justin, Lynn, Jeremy), *Bravo* (Bob, Michael) and *Alpha* (Nick, Gill). Crews were able to leave the scene by seven o'clock.

* As a footnote to this fire, the comment was made that the response was timely and there were a number of units involved. However, on the negative side, not all firefighters observed basic safety precautions: the burning building produced a large cloud of possibly dangerous (asbestos) smoke, which was not given the respect it deserved. ↪

*** **For the diary:** Colinton RFB **Annual General Meeting** and election of office bearers: 1300 Saturday 12 May. ↪

Membership:

Membership: please pay by cash at training, or cheque to The Treasurer, Colinton Rural Fire Brigade, 88 Weemala Lane, Michelago NSW 2620.

Membership fees: \$15.00 for adults, \$5.00 for juniors. Donations are always welcome. Please provide a return address so a receipt can be mailed to you. 

Training:

The Colinton Brigade conducts training every month on the second Saturday, at two o'clock, at the Station at Colinton. Everyone is welcome. ***If possible, crews are asked to arrive at 1330 to check the trucks before training.***

The Junior brigade is in action, once a month on the second Thursday of the month. Contact Michael Burton (0407 003 392) for details.

Brigade training on *Saturday 10 March*, when many brigade members were busy elsewhere dealing with real flooded bridges and fallen trees, was an exercise involving ropes, ladders and knots, aerial-ferrying vital supplies across a flooded river infested with flesh-eating carp (which had come into existence between the containers and the fire shed.) Members were reminded that anyone who has done their basic training is expected to be able to handle a ladder correctly, and to tie a bowline, a round-turn-and-two-half-hitches, and a clove hitch. Which, of course, they all did with ease ...

The next **Basic Firefighter** (BF) course has been scheduled for Thursday 22 March (evening), Saturday 24 March, and Sunday 25 March. 



Nick and Sprockett discuss wiring problems at Bredbo North

Hot-House cooled:

Regrettably, plans for a 'hot-house' on the Colinton site have had to be shelved.

Originally, as was announced in the *Courier* for December 2010, the brigade received a substantial grant from the Emergency Volunteer Support Scheme, administered by the Federal and NSW Governments. The grant was specifically for the creation of a metal 'hot-house' and concrete slab, where training scenarios involving structural and vehicle fires could be safely enacted.

Unfortunately, the brigade received conflicting advice from the local planning authorities, and as a final straw a planning fee was "lost" after payment, causing several months delay, resulting in there being insufficient time to complete the project by the legally due date.

The hot-house project, and the grant funds, will therefore be removed to a site in Bombala Shire. The brigade is grateful to Langdon Gould and Mick Holton for the time they have devoted to the project as well as to brigade members who gave time and energy to the project. ↪



Surveying the damage at Bredbo North

Hazard Reduction Burns:

The planned Calabash Road HR burn has been postponed. The area is probably too wet, and probably inaccessible by truck, according to Brigade Captain Graham.

Meanwhile, there is ongoing concern about love-grass in the brigade area; with so much rain, growth has been rapid and thick. Both hot dry winds, and winter frost,

can 'cure' love-grass very quickly, meaning that there is an out-of-season threat of grass fires.

Landholders are reminded that they are responsible for the creation of a 'burn plan', which must be approved by Fire Control in Cooma, as well as an environmental plan if native vegetation is involved. Only after these have been approved is the brigade able to assist with a burn. ↪



Essential numbers

Emergency 000

Fire:

Cooma Monaro Fire Control

(24 hrs)

1 300 722 164

02-6455 0455

Fire:

Captain and Permit Officer:

Graham Povey

02-6454 4150

0419 406 908



In Emergency - Use Social Media:

Mick Holton, local L&D Officer, has written a short item for the Monaro RFS website <http://www.monarorfs.org.au> which includes a detailed 'infographic' prepared for an American audience.

"The use of the social media web services like Twitter and Facebook is being widely used to gather and disseminate information about emergencies. The use of social

media to gather additional intelligence has been referred to as 'crowd sourcing'.

Crowd sourcing provides another stream of intelligence that cannot be ignored. The infographic features a range of reasons for an (American) audience to use social media before, during and after a disaster.

Before - to help people better prepare for a disaster and understand which organisations can help.

During - communicate and share information with families, the media, emergency services and other residents.

After - can help bring the community together to discuss the event, share information and aid the recovery process."

The infographic starts with a list of disasters: hurricanes, floods, wildfires, etc, which have occurred in the USA. (It would be interesting to compile such a list for Australia.)

Next is a very practical array of suggestions for a personal or household emergency kit: food, water, torch with batteries, medications, radio, etc.

This is followed by a sort of visual essay on the use of Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube in past emergencies (Hurricane Katrina, Texas wildfires, Haiti earthquake and so on) and the US Government agencies which use them. (Interesting to note that the White House uses all of them, as well as Flickr).

The actual use of the so-called 'social media' in the Colinton community varies according to the degree of computer literacy of each individual, as well as the willingness of individuals to adopt new technologies. (Many people probably feel that their lives are quite complicated enough without the need to twitter.)

What role did the social media play during the Queensland and Victorian floods (2011), and the Texas wildfires (2011)? The social media certainly played an important role in the so-called 'Arab Spring' in Syria, Tunisia and Egypt.

What is still the subject of debate is the practical use which *emergency services* may make of the social media. The social media can play an invaluable role in maintaining social coherence, but perhaps a less important role in passing messages from emergency services to the community. A valid criticism is that there is no single network which includes all or most potential users, including the emergency services.

Fire and emergency authorities need to be up-to-speed with the technology that is used by their public. 



Items for **The Colinton Courier** to Nick Goldie at horehound@yless4u.com.au

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