

# Colinton Courier

Newsletter of the Colinton Rural Fire Brigade \* No 172 \* March 2016



*Jeremy on the railway bridge at Glenroy*

## **Committee 2015-2016:**

**Fire Captain:** Graham Povey  
**Senior Deputy:** Nick Goldie  
**Deputies:** Bob Morison, Jeremy Mears, Michael Burton, Barry Woolacott  
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**Secretary:** Sandra Lauer  
**Treasurer:** Bob Morison  
**Training Officer:** Jeremy Mears  
**Equipment Officers:** Michael Burton, Karl Higgins  
**Community Awareness:** Nick Goldie, Eliška Donaldson  
**Fundraising:** Gill Robinson  
**Permits:** Graham Povey  
**NSW RFSA Delegate:** Jeremy Mears

## **Call out:**

While Shannons Flat firefighters were dealing with the Stewartfield Road fire on the morning of *Thursday 25 February*, a second fire broke out near the Cooma waste water treatment plant on Glen Road, off Mittagang Road. This is an area of light forest and scrub, with a number of houses threatened.

A Remote Area Firefighting Team (RAFT) was first on the scene, and by lunch time there was a call for back-up, specifically Cat Sevens, small trucks capable of dealing with the rough terrain and bulldozed tracks.

Cooma Brigade was joined by Bredbo and Numeralla, with Colinton sending *Seven Bravo* (Graham, Kym, Daniel) and *Alpha* (Tony R, Sandra, Nick). The work was mainly mopping up, extinguishing smouldering logs and piles of leaf litter, while waiting for the evening wind shift.

Crews were home in time for the evening meal.

Shortly after lunch time on *Thursday 3 March* Captain Graham was called directly by Fire Control – a lightning strike had reportedly ignited a paddock at the foot of Poveys Road. In fact the fire was in grassland to the west of the railway embankment, close to the entrance to the property Glenroy.

*Seven Alpha* (Sandra, Jeremy, Nick) joined *Bravo* (Graham) and members of the Bredbo Brigade. The small fire was soon extinguished, the only problem being an old railway bridge which was burning inside its timber structure.

Colinton trucks returned to the Station to refill with water, and while this was happening, they were called to a second fire, also caused by a lightning strike, on the property Costa Lunga south of Bredbo. *Bravo* and *Alpha* hurried down the Highway to join local land holders. The fire was in a rocky paddock of love grass, and was quickly extinguished.

Michelago and Bredbo Brigades were also called out during an evening of severe electrical storms. ↪



*Up close and personal with a burning bridge*

### **Training:**

The Colinton Brigade conducts training every month on the second Saturday, at 2.00 pm at the Station at Colinton. Everyone is welcome.

***If possible, crews are asked to arrive at 1330 (1.30 pm) to check the trucks before training.*** ↪

### **Fire-proof housing:**

SBS-TV *Insight* in mid-February looked at the issue of “fire-proof” housing. One of the invited guests was CSIRO’s Justin Leonard, a research leader in the field of urban design. At about the same time, he wrote an article for *The Conversation* on the same topic.

Homes can be replaced, writes Justin, but people cannot – so evacuation is still an important strategy in extreme conditions.

However Justin quotes Victor Steffenson, an “indigenous fire practitioner”, with approval. We should, he says, accept that fire is a natural part of the Australian landscape, and learn: *“how you can burn where fire behaves like water and trickles through the country and it doesn’t burn everything.”*

In other words, plan our dwellings and our lives around the concept of “cool burns”, and adapt our building methods and regulations accordingly.

See:

<https://theconversation.com/adapting-to-bushfires-a-new-idea-of-fire-proof-homes-54656> ↪

### **Fire-Proof Housing (2):**

*Following a discussion about fires in houses, Colinton member Jo sent us this account of her own experience:*

“Last November we had a fire in our garage which is attached to the house.

“The garage wall is a common wall with the main bedroom. We were not home at the time though our daughter, Ruth, and her partner David and his brother Richard were there.

“David was charging the battery of his model plane in the garage on top of a freezer which was next to a wall and the

gas pipe. While he was making pancakes for breakfast on this fine Saturday morning he decided to go and check on his battery. He smelled smoke as he went out and found a fire in the garage where the freezer was located.

“Quickly, using a chemical fire extinguisher that we had there, he and his brother worked to put out the fire. They had to try and stay below the smoke line which was painstaking work.

“Fortunately the garage door was closed, limiting oxygen. Richard’s wife called 000 and Michelago Rural Fire brigade promptly arrived followed by Queanbeyan brigade and an ambulance. The smoke was thick and both men needed oxygen and their prompt work contained the fire.

“I write this to highlight the importance of a fire wall between the house and any attached garage or shed. We did not have one and would have lost everything had the quick action of David and Richard not contained the fire. When we rebuild we will certainly put in a fire wall this time.

“Our insurer sent out a forensic expert to determine the cause of the fire. He meticulously reconstructed the scene, sifting through all the burnt materials to do so. I helped him as I found this work fascinating.

“What he found was that the fire started at the bottom of the upright, drawer freezer in the engine compartment. He said he had experience of other cheap Chinese built freezers combusting and he thought the connections were probably poorly crimped. We confirmed this through a brief web search.”

**Rotarians to dinner:**  
(from Michael B)

On Wednesday 16 March 2016 the Colinton Brigade hosted the Cooma and Tuggeranong Rotary Clubs at the Michelago Hall.

A fine 2-course meal, organised by Gill, was prepared, carved and served on the night to the delight of the Rotarians, with comments received such as “*This is the best meal, you can’t beat country cooking*” and “*You can’t find a decent sticky date pudding anywhere in Canberra, this is beautiful*” and “*This is the best meal I’ve had in Michelago*”.

After the Rotarians had been fed, the washing up commenced and was nearly completed when the guest of honour, Chris Kimball, CEO of Snowy Hydro South Care Rescue Helicopter Trust, gave a moving speech about his time with the ABC, hosting the ACT 7.30 Stateline.

In his talk he told us of his battle with cancer and how he was given a second chance at life, which flowed into how he jumped at the opportunity to be the CEO of Snowy Hydro South Care.

Chris spoke about how the Snowy Hydro helicopter crew sees people at their absolute worst.

He explained that the helicopter is virtually a hospital in the air. He gave two examples of how the Snowy Hydro Care Flight has provided a second chance to two young people.

The first was of a young woman, newly engaged, in western NSW who was out mustering with her father and fell off her motorbike. She bounced between two trees like a pinball. She suffered severe injuries with many broken bones, including breaking her neck.

She was concerned that she would not be able to walk down the aisle. However, she recovered from the injuries and did walk down the aisle and later visited the Hume base to thank the crew for their wonderful work.

The second person Chris told us about was Scott Reardon who, as a young boy

in Temora got his shoelace caught in the tractor's PTO and suffered horrendous injuries.

This young active lad played local football and wanted to play football for Australia but after the accident his dreams were crushed.

Chris told the audience that this young man overcame his injuries and became the Australian amputee water ski champion and will be representing Australia in the Para Olympics in Rio this year in the 100metre sprint.

A wonderful evening was had by all and we raised a good amount of money for the brigade.

A big thank you to all who assisted. ❧



*Rotary's Neil Brown presents a Certificate of Appreciation to Chris Kimball*



Items for **The Colinton Courier** to Nick Goldie at  
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**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**

