

Colinton Courier

Newsletter of the Colinton Rural Fire Brigade * No 80 * July 2008



Barry and Martin getting the troopie out of the gully ...

Committee 2008-2009:

Fire Captain: Graham Povey
Senior Deputy: Nick Goldie
Deputies: Bob Morison, Tony Campbell, Jeremy Mears
President: Martin Hughes
Secretary: Nick Goldie
Treasurer: Bob Morison
Special projects: Tony Campbell
Training Officer: Jeremy Mears
Equipment Officer: tba
Community Awareness: Nick Goldie
Permits: Graham Povey
NSW RFSA Delegate: Jeremy Mears

Call out:

Thursday 3 July: a pager call at 0630 alerted members to a structural fire in Bredbo. Colinton *Seven Alpha* (Jeremy, Bob, Nick) responded quickly, and were joined by Aldo at Baroona Road, while Captain Graham and Barry met at the station. By this time it was known that it was a minor fire, with the Bredbo brigade and NSW Fire Brigade in attendance. Colinton members were stood down and were home by 0730. ∞

The US Experience:

The current *National Geographic* magazine and website has a major article on wildfires in the USA. It makes for interesting comparisons with Australian fires and fire management, and many of the US observations seem to be applicable to our forests, especially the trend for people to build homes in fire-prone areas. Below are two quotes, and the URL for the article and gallery of photos.

“A study published in 2005 reflects the sort of change seen across the West. Researchers at Northern Arizona University studying two patches of Arizona forest estimated that in the late 1800s they contained about 50 trees for every 2.5 acres. After nearly a century without fire, up to 1,700 trees now crowd the same area.

“By stamping out small fires and allowing fuel to stockpile, our policies ensured that when conditions were right, fire would return—bigger, hotter, more destructive than ever. And the right conditions could become routine. Most climate models now strongly suggest that the recent drought is not just a temporary phenomenon but part of a long-term drying trend made worse by

global warming. There comes a point where no amount of money, no measure of heroism, is enough. Far from 'wholly within the control of man,' fire becomes unstoppable.

"... For three weeks last fall, fires swept the southern part of (California). Firefighters arrived in force. They fought and retreated and retreated again. There was little they could do but make sweat-drenched stands outside homes, and hope for the wind to die. More than half a million people were evacuated and over 2,000 homes were destroyed. Images of disaster saturated newspapers and television. Plumes of smoke, visible from space, arced over the Pacific. If the nation was shocked, most experts weren't. 'If anyone was surprised, it was because they were young or inexperienced,' says Jack Cohen, a federal fire researcher who lived in southern California for a decade and often returns to study the wildland-urban interface."

See:

ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/07/fire-season/shear-text



Training:

The Colinton Brigade conducts training every month on the second Saturday, at two o'clock, at the Station at Colinton. Everyone is welcome.

The Junior brigade is in action, every second Thursday night. Contact Bob Morison or Tony Campbell for details.

Training 2: Courses are held throughout the year, starting with Basic Firefighting and including such specialist skills as bush driving and chainsaw operation. Most recently, Martin and Barry took part in the two day 4WD course, which included a theory course held at Colinton, and a full day of practical activities at a bush venue near Berridale on 13 July. (This coincided

with the brigade's routine training day, so those who attended training went through an equipment inventory – always a useful exercise).

The 'practical' course included vehicle maintenance (reports Martin), vehicle recovery involving power winches and hand-operated winches ("hard yakka!"), bush driving skills in steep rough country, the potentially perilous 'stall recovery' where a vehicle is driven up a hill so steep that it stalls, and then has to be safely recovered; and the correct use of hand signals to direct a driver in a tight situation.

Training 3: On Saturday 19 July, Colinton members were joined by members from Michelago and Bredbo who had done their Basic Firefighter course (theory) and put their skills into practice with two controlled lovegrass burns near Ingelara. The 'Basics' were assessed by Captain Graham and training officer Dave Kievers of Bredbo and all passed with distinction.



Colinton Seven Alpha at the burn ...

Training 4: On Saturday 26 July, members from Monaro brigades have been invited to Colinton to attend a demonstration of emergency procedures involving hybrid cars. A Toyota Prius will be provided by Canberra Toyota for the morning. This activity starts at 1000 and will conclude with a BBQ lunch. All brigade members are welcome to attend, but please let a committee member know in advance, for catering purposes. 



'hard yakka' ...

Brigade 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: \$10.00 for residents, \$50.00 for non-residents. Donations are always welcome. If paying by mail, please provide a return address so a receipt can be mailed to you. 



night navigation in the dark ...

Hay Look Out:

The RFS website has details of many hayshed fires which have occurred in the past few seasons. Below is a paragraph from the website, and an item seen on TV.

“A number of different factors can contribute to hay fires. When hay is baled and the plant material is either too green or has excess moisture (a result of rain, dew, flood water, etc) fungi, bacteria or other biological activity increases within the bale. These micro organisms produce heat and along with higher external temperatures and humidity, quickly raise the temperature within the bale to ignition point (200-280°C)”

Traditionally, one way of investigating the internal temperature of a store of hay is to insert a crowbar into the centre. After an hour or two, the crowbar becomes very hot.

Now, seen on the ABC TV program *The New Inventors*: an ingenious and very simple system for monitoring the temperature of hay bales. The device uses a special very-low-temperature solder. When this melts, a red indicator is revealed, and warns that the bale or stack is getting dangerously hot. For details see the program website:
<http://www.abc.net.au/tv/newinventors/txt/s2297988.htm>



Controlled burn near Ingelara

Monaro triangle?

On Saturday, the Michelago brigade was called out to an MVA but the driver had disappeared. On Sunday the Michelago brigade was called out to an MVA but the MVA had disappeared. WHAT NEXT?

Items for **The Colinton Courier** to Nick Goldie at horehound@yless4u.com.au by the first Saturday each month, or to any Committee member. For production assistance we are grateful to:
*The Sharp Corporation of Australia Pty Ltd, Fyshwick,
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The Colinton Courier is also available at www.michelagoregion.org.au/bushfire/brigades.htm
Views expressed in **The Colinton Courier** are not necessarily those of the editor, the Brigade, or the RFS.

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 4131
0419 406 908