

Colinton Courier

Newsletter of the Colinton Rural Fire Brigade * No 90* May 2009



Tinderry HR burn

Committee 2008-2009:

Fire Captain: Graham Povey

Senior Deputy: Nick Goldie

Deputies: Bob Morison, Jeremy Mears

President: Martin Hughes

Secretary: Nick Goldie

Treasurer: Bob Morison

Training Officer: Jeremy Mears

Equipment Officers: Graham Povey, Nick Goldie

Community Awareness: Nick Goldie

Permits: Graham Povey

NSW RFSA Delegate: Jeremy Mears

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

All members are urged to attend the Annual General Meeting and Election of Office Bearers 2009-2010, at the Colinton Fire Station at 1900 on Wednesday 27 May.

Call out:

On *Wednesday 6 May* Colinton members (Graham, Martin, Tony C) in *Seven Bravo* joined crews from Peak View, Jerangle, Cooma and Bredbo burning the perimeter of a large area of bush near Peak View, which will be later burned by helicopters dropping incendiaries.

On *Friday 8 and Saturday 9 May*, Colinton members (Graham, Barrie, Jacqui, Tony R, Gill, Noreen, Ray, Jeremy, Nick) in *Seven Alpha, Bravo and Nine* joined crews from Michelago, Bredbo, Anembo and Smiths Road, conducting an HR burn on 120 ha of very steep country on either side of the Tinderry Road.

Alpha and Bravo were also out the next day, at the Michelago Mayfair, being part of an impressive demonstration by Colinton and Michelago junior members, Bob, Tony C and Aldo in charge; while Nick staffed the RFS Community Education trailer. ↪

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):

A course for RFS instructors was held in Cooma on 1,2,3 May, for members of brigades across the southern region. Graham, Jeremy and Nick attended from Colinton, and Aldo from Michelago along

with members from brigades from Tallong to Albury, Burra to Bredbo. 

When a Fire comes to Your House:

(written by Michael Lonergan in 2003 "for the ladies on Smiths Road" – slightly shortened, and reproduced with his permission.)

It's been hot and dry for a fair while now. Everywhere you walk (except for the most pampered bit of lawn) the grass crunches underfoot. The smell of smoke over the last week or so has been very strong - but it hasn't yet got that *really sharp* smell that indicates a fire closer to us.

Yet another hot summer day - shorts and thongs seem the best way of dealing with the heat - and a light breeze is already moving the plants in the garden. By midday the breeze is a really hot wind, and you stay inside. Must remember to water the plants later - it would be a waste of time in this heat.

Where is that bush fire action plan?

Then that really sharp, choking smell - fresh smoke? The men are all gone on the fire trucks and it's now up to you!

The smoke gets thicker - you can't see Joanne's or Louise's or Jenny's houses at all. You can't hear anything much either, because the wind is so strong. Where is the fire? You have no idea (- nobody does, but that's no consolation).

What to do:

So you must move deliberately now. You're on a mission. Lose the shorts and thongs. Change into jeans and long sleeved cotton or wool shirt and heavy socks and boots. Goggles might help against that smoke, which you can now smell strongly inside the house. Forget the phone, it's just an interruption.

Shut all the windows and doors. Draw all the curtains and blinds. Keep the children busy inside the house.

Fill buckets with water - as many as you can, putting them around the inside and outside of the house - put one bucket in each room. Fill all sinks and the bath - everything - with water. Toss some towels and small blankets in the bath. Move a hose or two inside so they won't burn.

The smoke is now really thick and choking – all you want to do is drive out of this! But stick to the plan! Back to work! NOW!

Now if you go outside the smoke makes you cough and your eyes water - like getting too close to the barbecue!

But you **MUST** keep looking through the curtains into that thick smoke outside to know when the sparks start - now you can see them, and now flame!

Really noisy now, look, the lawn is burning - and that shrub! Two minutes or so, and it is all burnt and smouldering and **REALLY HOT** out there. The main flames are over in the paddock now and going away. Some garden plants are on fire – unless they are near the house, forget them!

Time to go outside:

Get a wet towel and goggles and walk around the outside of the house slowly - put up with the heat and smoke. Anything burning or smoking on the house - any part of the house - you must **PUT OUT**. Take your time and look carefully. Use that hose and the buckets.

Back inside - check for anything burning or smoking, especially near **WINDOWS** - **PUT IT OUT**. Keep checking for half an hour or more - **INSIDE AND OUT** - until you feel that nothing out there can set the house alight. But stay around and watch.

If the house does catch fire and you can't put it out, DON'T RUN AWAY. Just move around the house from room to room and finally outside on to some burnt ground (it can't burn again) and stay around until someone comes.

Whatever you do, DON'T DRIVE AWAY if a fire comes - YOUR HOUSE IS THE SAFEST PLACE FOR YOU. And it will take a fair while to burn down!

If you think you can do all this - it's very unpleasant but pretty easy - resist calls from the police or firemen to leave early. If there's no one at your house, the odds are that you will LOSE it.

Most important:

- Never evacuate – especially if police arrive and tell you to.
- Resist any such order unless someone you trust gives it.
- Call for help if necessary.

Read this every fire season! 



Tinderry burn – steep country

Phoenix:

Colinton brigade member John Schneider, of Geoscience Australia, brought our attention to project *Phoenix*. This is a computer modelling system devised by Kevin Tolhurst of the Bushfire CRC.

John says: “At GA we are working with Tolhurst to put Phoenix into a full-blown risk model so we can answer all the tough mitigation questions (some day).”

Phoenix, which can be carried in a laptop, allows fire managers to ask ‘*what if?*’ questions using all the available information about terrain, wind and weather, and vegetation. It can predict spotting behaviour and the progress of spot fires up to 30km ahead of the main fire front. The Warren Centre newsletter says: *Assessments include evaluating what may happen if the fire jumps a control line - how far it might go, what are the best containment options etc. Identifying the most*



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

02 6235 9190

by the first Saturday each month, or to any Committee member. For production assistance we are grateful to:

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The Colinton Courier is also available at

www.michelagoregion.org.au/bushfire/brigades.htm

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dangerous spots means aircraft and other critical resources can be directed to the most strategically important points.

Phoenix can run a 30,000ha fire on a laptop in about two minutes. But as yet it is not available as a management tool. ↪

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. Please provide a return address so a receipt can be mailed to you. ↪



Mayfair – junior stretcher bearers



Tinderry burn – Jeremy and Tony R



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**

