

Colinton Courier

*Newsletter of the Colinton Rural Fire Brigade * No 98 * January 2010*



*Tony de Luca on the Tinderry Road
(pic by Noreen Clark)*

Committee 2009-2010:

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: Jeremy Mears
Community Awareness: Nick Goldie
Permits: Graham Povey
NSW RFSA Delegate: Jeremy Mears

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**All the best to our members and friends
for 2010!**
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Call out:

Early afternoon on *Thursday 17 December*, there was a smoke sighting on the Burra Road, with a grass-fire heading SE towards properties on Tinderry Road and Coffeys Road. Michelago and Anembo crews were quickly in action, with Colinton *Seven Alpha*, (Jeremy, Ray, Nick), *Seven Bravo*, *Seven Charlie*, and *One*. Colinton members included Bob, Graham, Noreen, Michelle, Michael, Ben, Tony R., Justin, Sandra, Martin, Max, Kim, Tony C, Joel, Nick R., Michelle.

Through the next few days units came from Bredbo, Jerangle, Peak View, Smiths Road, Lake George, Burra, Bungendore, Numeralla, Wollondilly, Jerrabomberra, Cooma, Snowy, Shannons Flat, Brothers, Kalkite, Dalgety, Dry Plans, and the ACT, with Remote Area Fire Teams (RAFT) from Goulburn-Mulwaree and Gungahlin, and a large administrative team. And, not to be forgotten, bulldozers, graders and excavators, working tirelessly to create containment lines and remove dangerous trees, as helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft worked the skies.

While *Alpha* was busy with property protection on the flat country, the other Colinton trucks were having dramatic times along the Tinderry Road and the Calabash Road high in the hills where the fire was fierce, and there was at least one 'burn-over' resulting in the loss of a Bredbo brigade vehicle (and serious burns to Will Goggin).

By the end of the following week, there were outbreaks of fire in the steep country east of Michelago, and further south-east in the area of Little Tinderry, while the in-flight infra-red system (FLIR) was still picking up hot-spots on 9 January.

And – to complicate matters – there was a call-out on the afternoon of *Sunday 20 December*, with a fire in grassland to the south of Bredbo. Jeremy, who was having a well-earned day off, organized a crew (Barry, Spence, Sandra) for Colinton One, which was also having a day off, and they were quickly on scene, protecting the communication towers on the hill opposite the Bredbo Transfer Station. They were joined by two Bredbo trucks, but the most effective fire-fighting (said Jeremy) was done by helicopters which dropped *PHOS-CHeK* (their spelling) fire retardant.



*Benny in action on the Tinderry Road
(pic by Noreen Clark)*

Below, part of a personal account, sent as an email to spouse, overseas, enjoying the snows of Denmark:

"It's the middle of the night, I'm black with soot, and having a beer, and another beer, before having a shower -

"The Tinderries are ablaze, from end to end - we had a pager call at one thirty on Thursday, just as I had eaten a little salad - a smoke sighting on the Burra Road. I gathered Ray and Jeremy, and we headed off in Alpha towards a huge smoke plume. Graham collected Tony R and Noreen.

"As soon as we got on to the Tinderry Road, just out of the village, we could see the grasslands blazing, and the fire racing to the south-east. We were told that the fire was unstoppable (howling hot wind), just do property protection, so we went to a house on Coffeys Road, just ahead of the flames, and rolled out our hoses - the flames arrived with a whoomph, out of the grass into the pine trees along the drive. Ray was the nozzleman so he got it first – it singed his beard - but we saved the house, which was surrounded by flames. Then we spent an hour or two saving a stockyard and some sheds, all blazing merrily every time we turned our backs. At one point Jeremy had a very singed chook under his arm, and he hosed her gently with water. She looked surprised, but I think pleased.

"We left when all was secure. Immediately we were told by radio of another house, Westy's Place 'about to burn and needs protection NOW!' 'Where is Westy's Place?' we asked. 'At the end of the road!' 'What is it called?' 'I don't effing know what it's called! Westy's Place!'

"Well, we found Westy's Place which is called on the map something quite different. The house was saved, but not the garden.

"At 2000 we were hosing (carefully) a burning power pole in a paddock. There was a sitrep on the radio: 8000 ha have been burned, the fire is spotting on to Sandy Flats just north of Jerangle, and a State of Emergency has been declared for Cooma-Monaro. Three people have been taken away by ambulance. And three houses and many sheds are gone.

"We were relieved at 2200 by a whole lot of members, fresh from their Basic Firefighter course, in very clean uniforms."



Don't use soap: (from Tony Robinson)

While following Benny around in his excavator after the recent Tea Tree Creek Fire I had time to inspect my yellows. They were covered with black stuff and although it was a sign that I had attended a fire and I could now hoodwink the general public into believing I was an experienced firefighter, I felt a trip to the laundry would probably be needed.

I asked my colleagues how my yellows could be washed. I was given a range of

advice none of which was convincing although it was suggested I look at the label on the jacket which would tell me all I needed to know. The label stated that they were washable but I was not to use soap, soap powder or bleach but could use most laundry detergents.

I could understand that bleach might be bad but why soap? After an initially frustrating web search through the various Proban sites I found the answer. Soap, also known as sodium stearate, will turn into calcium stearate if the water that is used is "hard" water e.g. most bore water. Calcium stearate gets stuck on the fabric and, when dry, is flammable, negating the fire retardant properties of Proban. Laundry detergents don't do this and so can be safely used. **DON'T USE SOAP.**



TOBAN:

A *Total Fire Ban* was declared for Thursday 17 December and Thursday 24 December, and Tuesday 12 January.



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.

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



Fire station at Zikhron

Fire Trucks in Zikhron:

(from Tony Robinson)

On a recent visit to Israel to visit my daughter, I discovered that my son-in-law's brother, Schmolik, was a fireman.

Following Jeremy's lead of visiting overseas fire stations I visited Schmolik at his fire station in Zikhron. They had three trucks in the station at the time plus a run-about vehicle used for PR purposes. One of the trucks was no longer in use but the other two were fully operational. The larger of the two, a Mercedes, was I suppose equivalent to our CAT 1. The other vehicle, a Ford, was a smaller rapid response vehicle donated by a US foundation. A visit to the back-end of both revealed a fairly standard set up of pumps, inlets, outlets and switches. I believe most people in the Australian RFS even without a knowledge of Hebrew would recognise the lay-out and, at a pinch, be able to use it. Instructions on the radio as to where to go though would be a challenge. Both vehicles had some very up-to-date equipment for extracting people from bent cars. MVAs seemed to be most of their call-outs.



Festive watch:

Please let us know (Graham, Jeremy, Nick, Bob) if you are going to be out of area during the summer holiday period. We need to know who is available, and we can also keep an eye on empty property. ✍



Items for **The Colinton Courier** to Nick Goldie at
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02 6235 9190

by the first Saturday each month, or to any
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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.



Crackers:

From a Christmas cracker (really):

Q: What did the fireman's wife get for
Christmas?

A: A ladder in her stocking. ✍

Training (2):

A Basic Firefighter course will be held at
Nimmitabel on Thursday evening 18
February, and all day Saturday and
Sunday 20 and 21 February. Please let
Nick, Graham or Jeremy know if you plan
to attend, or register on-line at
www.monarorfs.org.au. ✍



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



*Editorial privilege ... a quiet moment at
Jedwotra*