



Brigade Newsletter

BRIGADE INTRODUCES JUNIOR MEMBERS

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Mt Wilson-Mt Irvine RFS has recognised the importance of the next generation of firefighters to ensure the future of the Brigade. Early in 2004 a cadet program was instituted to ensure that membership is being continually renewed by the younger members of the community.

Sons and daughters of existing Brigade members provide a logical source of junior members. Not only do the children learn alongside their parents, but also it provides additional incentive for the parents to remain active in the Brigade.

The most experienced and senior members of our Brigade today were once junior members although not formally recognised or trained as they are today. During times of bushfire emergencies, the local children were taken out of school to help fight fires where they gained vital skills and experience. By working alongside these experienced firefighters, today's junior members can similarly gain valuable knowledge.

Once children turn 12, they are eligible to join the Brigade. After completing Basic Training they are able to take part in training days and help around the fire shed during bushfire emergencies. Junior members are not permitted to

take part in actual fire fighting until they are 18.

Our brigade currently boasts two junior members, Alasdair Donaldson and Jack Wood. More younger members of the community are set to join up when they turn 12. As numbers grow, more structured training activities will be put in place.

Alasdair Donaldson became a junior member when he was 12 at the suggestion of his father, Stuart Donaldson. Alasdair's mother, Alex and brother Lachlan are also in the Brigade. The idea of joining up appealed to him as "a bit of fun" and he could also see that it would provide many years of useful training before he was able to become a fully-fledged member at 18. So far Alasdair has attended several training days and says that his favourite part is working with pumps and on the trucks. When he is not helping out at the fire shed, Alasdair is in Year 7 at Newington College where tennis and rugby are among his interests.

Jack Wood of Dargan also joined up when he turned 12 and joins his father, Doug and brother Scott Laing in the brigade.



Left: The Hon. Bob Debus, Minister for the Environment and Member for Blue Mountains, Barry Freeman and Tom Harding assist Alasdair Donaldson in raising the Brigade's new NSW flag.

Right: Jack Wood raises the Brigade's new Australian flag presented by The Hon. Kerry Bartlett, MP watched by a group of fellow Brigade members



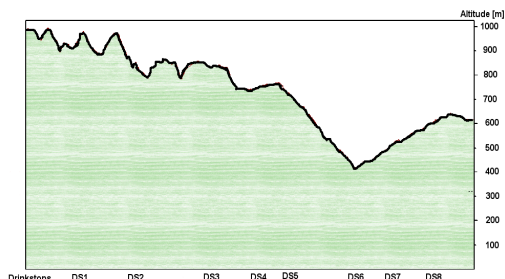
In preparation for the coming Fire Season, an insert to this newsletter details a preparation task list that we all should be reviewing (and implementing) now!

Why not place it in a prominent position (such as on the fridge) to act as a constant reminder?

'Willy to Billy' Bush Run

Saturday 21st August saw the ninth running of the annual Mt Wilson to Bilpin Bush Run. The event is jointly organised by the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine and Bilpin Brigades. Proceeds raised by the event are split between the two brigades. It is anticipated that over \$2,000 will be forwarded to our brigade.

This year 189 runners (143 male, 46 female) took part. Remarkably, only six were unable to complete the gruelling 35km run. The course profile is shown below:



Local volunteers manned the Catering Van on Silva Plana (pictured above right) and the five drink stations along the route to the west of Bowen's Creek. Further assistance included locating and redirecting lost runners in the 'Urunga' paddocks.

The overall winner of the event was Glenn Guzzo in a new race record time of 2 hours, 7 minutes, 31 seconds. The first female runner, and 17th overall, was Judi Barton who completed the course in 2.49.38.

For the age-disadvantaged amongst us, it may be heartening to note that the first over-50 year old entrant completed the race seven minutes before the first over-40. Feeling tired? ... the oldest entrant was 71 years old and finished in 4.37.00.

Local favourite, Alan Heap, finished a very creditable 46th with a time of 3.10.24

Congratulations to all who ran, and to the many Villagers whose efforts made the event such a success.

RFS Service Awards

The RFS Honours and Awards System were instigated through "The Rural Fires Regulation 1997" and all members of the Service became eligible for nomination, effective from 1 February 1999.

The Service is committed to acknowledging the valour, bravery, service and dedication exemplified by its members. The establishment of the internal awards structure has created an environment where recognition, respect and praise are sought and encouraged, contributing to a culture of excellence.

At the Awards Ceremony held in the Blackheath Memorial Hall on Saturday 23rd October 2004, a number of our members were recognised for their Service to the RFS and to the Local Brigade in particular.

The awards were presented by the RFS Commissioner, Phil Koperburg and assisted by The Hon. Kerry Bartlett, MP, The Hon. Bob Debus, Minister for the Environment and Member for Blue Mountains, and Ms. Terry Hamilton, BMCC Councillor. Commissioner Koperburg presented the following members with awards:

- Bill Scrivener, Jim Bailey, Alan Gunn, Richard Knight-Brown, Paul Naylor, Bruce Gailey (35 years)
- Ray Harrington, Geoff Naylor (25 years)
- Mark Austin, Stewart Gunn (15 years)

The highest award on the day went to Alan Gunn. Not only did Alan receive his 35 years Service award, but Commissioner Phil Koperburg presented Alan with a National Medal in recognition of his contribution to the RFS and 3 bars signifying his years of Service.

Amanda Reynolds accepted the award for Richard Knight-Brown who was overseas at the time. For those others who were unable to attend, their awards were accepted by Brigade Captain Barry Freeman.

Commissioner Koperburg presents a 35 year award to Jim Bailey as Bob Debus looks on.



President's Report

Water Tanks:

At last we have received approval from the National Parks and Wildlife Service to locate a new tank on Trig Hill, off Dane's Way in Mt Irvine. The tank will feed a hydrant near the Mt Irvine cemetery, on Dane's Way. This completes the approval process for the planned five tanks and they should be installed by this summer. It's been a long process, but one we hope will be worthwhile.

Community Education:

This initiative is moving forward, with Emergency Coordinators appointed for all the areas around both villages. They are:

| Area | Emergency Coordinators | Telephone Numbers |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Wynnes Rocks Road | Ron Green | 4756-2162 |
| Queens and Wyndham Avenues | Tania and Richard Marquard | 4756-2112 |
| Church Lane and Waterfall Road | Mary Reynolds | 4756-2006 |
| East Mt Wilson – east of Wynstay | George Mayne | 4756-2035 |
| | Florence Smart | 4756-2063 |
| Farrer Road | Wendy Holland | 4756-2094 |
| | Judy Tribe | 4756-2096 |
| Mt Irvine | Ray Harrington | 4756-2075 |
| | Roger Howard-Smith | 4756-2101 |

The prime role of the Emergency Coordinators is to be a focus of communication for both villages during a severe fire event. They will be contacting you in the next month or so, to introduce themselves and to explain their role. The purpose of the role is to ensure that every household receives accurate and up to date information, whilst lessening the pressure of personnel at the shed. In a fire they will have all the information you will need, as they will get daily updates from the fire shed.

On a more personal note, I would like to thank all those people from the villages who have sent good wishes after my recent stroke. I am happy to report that I am making good progress and plan to go back to work starting in December.

David Howell, President

Deputy Captain's Report

Static Water Supplies:

We have been working to increase our supplies of water. We started this many years ago by fixing up our old water supplies, and tapping into existing private tanks and dams. The last couple of years we have worked on filling the gaps by putting tanks into spots where there is limited water supply. We now have permission for these to go ahead. Thank you to all those who contributed.

There is still plenty of work to do laying pipes and setting up hydrants for these tanks, as well as a couple of additional private tanks we have been given access to. Doug Wood has done a great job getting Cathedral Reserve and Kirks Corner tanks set up.

If any one else would like to contribute practically or financially, it would be much appreciated!

Have you got a tank or dam that you do not use? A roof that you do not catch the water off? A tank that is often overflowing and could be up graded to a bigger tank? Think about what improvements you and/or the Brigade can implement to make this water available for fire fighting or ask us about it.

Firetrails:

The Mt. Wilson / Mt. Irvine Rural Fire Brigade has been working with Blue Mountains Council and National Parks on a program for upgrading the firetrails in our area. The Brigade has been fortunate in receiving some very generous donations from local residents. Council and Parks also have a small amount budgeted for this work this year.

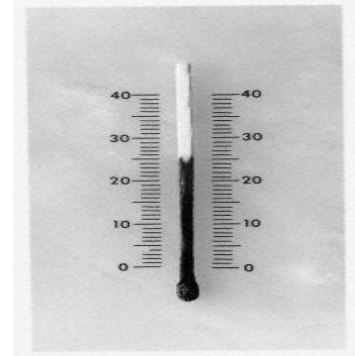
The firetrails are vital to the defence of the two villages. Unfortunately they criss-cross between Parks, Council and private land. This year the Brigade and Parks are engaging a contractor to clear back the vegetation on the sides of three of our trails (where they are on Park and private land).

We hope to follow this up next year with drainage and surface work on the Bogey Holes / Sunday Walk Spur firetrail (Ryan's Cutting to Du Faurs Rocks), the Northern firetrails (Du Faurs Rocks to Old Saw Mill) and Boronia Point firetrail (Farrar Road West to Wollongambe River).

Council will use their own crews to do vegetation management on some of the trails on council land.

It is important for the safety of our firefighters, and to help protect your property that we maintain the trails. We are aiming to get the tracks up to the new standard for firetrails (minimum weight, passing bays etc.) I will be contacting private landowners who have trails crossing their properties prior to the work starting.

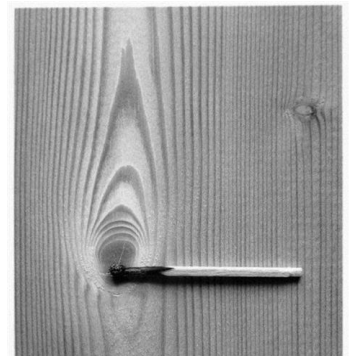
Peter Raines, Senior Deputy Captain



Fridge Wanted!!

The refrigerator used for storing drinks at the Mt Wilson shed has sadly seen the last of its useful life.

Has anyone got a fridge surplus to requirements that they would like to give to a new owner?



Shed Improvements

In preparation for the coming bushfire season, much work has been undertaken to tidy up, repair and restock both fire sheds and all trucks.

Owen Haviland has almost single-handedly completed the installation of 40 square metres of flooring above the office area in the Mt Wilson shed. His efforts on this project are greatly appreciated!

This area will allow for the safer and more efficient storage of bulky items, including the 30 new lockers now available to members for storage of their PPE.

New notice boards and tool racks have been installed, and a separate, secured office area created in the old radio storage room.

At Mt Irvine, a general tidy up has been undertaken, with a new fax machine and First Aid kit set up.

Much new equipment has either been installed or replaced in all the fire trucks, as well as re-organising and re-labelling the truck lockers. Many thanks to Beth Raines in particular, and all those who have assisted in truck maintenance over the winter.

As detailed in the last newsletter, we have now received a slasher and back-pack blower from our successful application for a Commonwealth Government Small Equipment Grant. The sourcing of a stretcher that can be used from a helicopter winch is also being finalised.

Spot the Safety Concern!



Owning Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and actually wearing it, as this picture demonstrates, are two different things!

(Ordering PPE, and actually receiving it from Firecom, are also two different things, but we are trying to expedite all back orders as fast as possible!)

Keys and Locks...

All the fire stations across the Blue Mountains have had a lock upgrade. Each key has an individual number and is recorded to whom it has been issued. In our Brigade, there are 3 levels of keys - (Master, A and B)

- All keys open the front door of both the Mt. Wilson and Mt. Irvine stations to allow access to the trucks.
- Master and A keys will open the front office (Captain's Office), the storeroom and radio cabinet. Deputies and Equipment officers have this key.
- Master keys will also allow access to the Secretary's Office. The Captain, President, Secretary, Treasurer and Senior Deputy have this key.

Additionally, we have two categories of locks on fire trails on the mountains: BF3 and BF4.

The BF4 is a registered locking system and is only on the Boronia Point, Mill Road and Red Hill firetrails, whilst BF3 locks are fitted to all other fire trails and some private property.

We have been working on a program to number these and ensure that they are all fitted. If you would like to buy a BF3 lock for your property, it can be arranged. You will not be issued with a key for this lock - it would go into the locking chain next to your lock.

For your Diary ...

- **AFT for Drivers - Sat 20th - Sun 21st November**
- **First Aid Training - Sat 27th - Sun 28th November, Mt Wilson Fire Shed**
- **Combined Pig and Horn/Mt Wilson Progress Association/Mt Irvine Progress Association Christmas Party—Sat 4th December, Mt Wilson Village Hall**
- **Brigade Training - Sun 5th December, Mt Wilson Fire Shed**

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Comments or suggestions welcome!