



Buxton's Captains



Our First Captain

As with all self-reliant farming communities of the time, Buxton by necessity had its own long-established, local firefighting force already in place. It comprised individuals who relied upon their own enormous efforts coupled with their own resources. The all-encompassing bushfire organisation resulting from the post-1939 Bushfire Royal Commission was starting to take shape.

It was late 1943 when some Buxton residents met to formalise a fire brigade with the intent of joining the new bushfire brigades organisation. It was at this point that **Maurice Keppel** (below), was elected our first Captain & President, and became a stalwart of the brigade for many years.



1943 Captain Maurice Keppel (left), was the Brigade's only Captain until 1963, when he was killed in a road accident while riding his horse on Maroondah Hwy in April of that year.

1964 Capt Roly Fiske (right)

1st Lieutenant Roly Fiske acted as Captain after Maurice Keppel's unexpected demise, and was duly elected to replace him. Captain Fiske oversaw the receipt of the first firefighting vehicle, The Willys, as well as the shed in which it and our firefighting equipment would be housed, and the installation of the siren. All of this occurred before 1967, when Graham Fiske was appointed the Brigade Captain.



1967 Capt Graham Fiske, (left)

Graham acted as the Brigade's Captain for 27 years and in concert with Jack Jones, an indomitable Secretary, oversaw a great deal of change for the Brigade. There were the Yea fires of 1969, improved communications with mobile radios, an upgrade of the Willys to the Austin tanker in 1976 which was then followed by the 2WD Isuzu in 1986. Buxton Fire Brigade had the standpipe installed in 1989, and a new standardised fire station built in 1993.



1994 Capt Max Leslie (right)

Like the Captains before him – and since – Max captained the Brigade through further developments and improvements. The Town Trailer was bought in 1995, and in 1996 when the Shire wanted to remove the standpipe, Max ensured we were able to keep it. In 1997 the brigade owned fire station extension was built. The Isuzu tanker replaced the Hino tanker, the Brigade Auxiliary was formed in 1998, followed by the installation of the flagpole.



2002 Capt Stan Lerner (right)

Stan saw the Brigade through the Alpine Fires of 2003, the Great Divide fires of 2007, and then the catastrophic 2009 fires. A few of his leadership highlights are the use of cloth nametags for firefighters' overalls, another brigade owned station extension supplying kitchen and indoor toilet (2005), and purchased too, was our Land Rover slip-on (2008). The Brigade replaced the old Town Trailer that was lost on Black Saturday with a Quickfill Trailer, and in 2010, we finally had BA on Tanker 1.



2010 Capt Mark Somers (above)

Mark ensured that both appliances had defibrillators – the first CFA Brigade to do so. Mark had to contend with major grassfires, an explosion at the fish farm as well as a destructive storm that ripped through the township. A further final extension to the station was completed in 2014 to make space for the Isuzu heavy tanker.

2014 Capt Graham Eddy (above)

Graham Eddy initiated regular combined training by the Triangle Brigades and developed stronger relationship with VICSES Marysville, and was instrumental in procuring the Honour Boards to celebrate our Firefighters achievements. Graham was in declining health and resigned after a year.



2015 Capt Shanon Frith (left)

The Brigade, in conjunction with the other Triangle Brigades, installed the 000nav Turnout System. This now defunct system automatically printed route maps and preplans, which its replacement doesn't. Shanon should also be credited with being involved in starting the original Triangle Juniors.



2017 Capt Matt Carlton (left)

Under Matt's leadership, the Brigade initiated a number of improvements to the station environs and its equipment. In particular, the Slip-On was replaced with Tanker 2 under a VESEP grant, and the initial application was lodged for construction of the workshop to declutter the engine bay.



2022 Capt Paul Denham AFSM (left)

As with our Captains before him, Paul continues to bring his vast experience of 45 years with CFA to his leadership. Under his aegis, we have seen the installation of a set of three flagpoles, a gazebo area that ensures our Members have space to sit and debrief. The Juniors program which failed over the COVID years has been successfully rebooted. The workshop has been built, and the completion of a successful recruitment campaign secured a number of new recruits. He continues a great tradition, as have all our Captains, of innovative leadership.