



# Fire Cadets 2013

*BWD* editor Paul Cockram visits this year's Fire Cadets

**H**AD ENOUGH FIRE STORIES for one issue? Sorry, here's another one. I've been interested in the Fire Cadets since my son Tom Alder was a student at Braidwood Central School.

I remember how excited Tom was to be in the cadets. I asked him what it was that appealed to him.

"My mates and I were not much into sport and Fire Cadets was offered as an alternative. We did it one afternoon each week."

Tom and his mates, as I recall, did not fit into the routine of organised and mostly competitive sport. For them, to learn to work with others as a team, made a lasting contribution to their social development.

Tom told me, "I liked the cadets so much I did it for two years in a row which nobody else did. They said I couldn't do it again because it meant someone would miss out. But I just went along anyway."

Just the other day Tom finished his BF (Basic Fire fighter) training as a member of the Mongarlowe brigade. At the time of writing he had just his assessment to go.

I caught up with this year's cadets at 'Otolith', Frank and Jill Judge's property out of Braidwood on Little River Road. Most of the photographs were taken there. The rest were taken at

FireCom up past Braidwood Rural in the shadow of Mount Gillamatong. While at FireCom I asked Tim Carroll, District Manager for the Rural Fire Service about the program.

"For us it's important to get fire awareness out there into the community. These young people will eventually move around the countryside and they'll take that knowledge and experience with them. If they do end up living in a bushfire-prone area we hope that they might join their local bush fire brigade. But even if they don't they have a knowledge of fire protection.

"The cadets get a lot out of the course and twelve months down the track will remember us and say, "Hi, how're you going", when they see one of us in the street.

Richard Elliott is one of the volunteer instructors. He said:

"One of the satisfying things for us is to see the kids arriving on the Monday a bit nervous and unsure of what's to happen. By the end of the second day, after they've done a few drills together, the team work really gets going.

"From then on the cadets seem to be really interested and absorb knowledge more quickly than a lot of the adults we teach. It's a satisfying week for the instructors and that's why we enjoy doing it.



Danny King Braidwood Brigade Captain put in his two-bob's worth:

"It's very interesting to see in the individual students, some who are not so confident or who may have difficulties at school, a transition by the end of the week. They build confidence, understand working together as a team and best of all, leadership qualities surface. Some can come out of the course quite a different person.

"It builds confidence. We all notice the change in a week — and it happens every year.

Chris McGrath is the co-ordinator of the schools cadet program. I asked her for an overview of how it's all going.

"This program is in its seventh year. Moving it from a ten week part time to one week full time has seen the students get a lot more out of it. This year we've given each cadet a BF



CAPTAIN DANNY KING (LEFT ABOVE), INSTRUCTOR RICHARD ELLIOTT (ABOVE). EDUCATION OFFICER CHRIS QUINN AND CO-ORDINATOR CHRIS MCGRATH (BELOW)



(basic firefighter) book and the teacher here with them told me that some students who don't normally read much were sitting there reading and discussing the book.

"Peter Povey helps us out with community safety and first aid and his contribution is absolutely fantastic — both professionally with what he does and personally with the way he relates to the cadets. All the volunteers we

have from surrounding brigades who work as instructors do a wonderful job, said Chris.

"The ambulance service, the fire and rescue people, the police all help out with demonstrations of real-life situations.

She added, "The school is happy and the parents have given us very positive feedback when the kids go home and tell about what they've been doing.

