The resilience and adaptability of the FFFFC was tested at our last meeting of the year and once again the group came through with flying colours. The club is used to convening at a range of venues under a range of circumstances and so we ventured to the Flemington RSL in Rankins Road. The club welcomed one of its sons; Steve Cameron, from far North Queensland back to the heartland and as Steve and I walked in through the front door with a box of party pies supplied by Stephen Radford we were overwhelmed by the welcoming throng. As the marketing manager, recruitment officer and social secretary; Bart needed to leave forthwith, the formal speeches were launched immediately. With enough time to catch my breath, I lead a relentless barrage where nothing and no-one escaped with all receiving a pasting – even the guest of honour received several chants of “Queenslander” in a disparaging manner. In a moment of rationality new members were appropriately welcomed and the twenty members gathered around the full sized pool table.

AND THEN the formal area was approached by a fellow who in retrospect was reminiscent of Colin “the plumber” from the Polo Club Hotel. This fellow lead the group in the singing of a song which was unfamiliar to all and was a little unnerving and awkward. A rendition of the National Anthem would have been more appropriate in that forum ...... but as it was I had no idea as to what was going on. My train of thought was a car wreck as I struggled to regain the focus on the meeting.

Sobriety and reason returned to the proceedings with Bart taking the podium and giving us a summary of future fundraising initiatives such as the Feb 14th sleep out in tents event on the FPS oval, the purchase of the AFL jerseys – no .... jumpers !!!! and the contribution to the music fund. The club currently has $510 and we will release more accurate collection targets in due course.

As seen in this photo the Queen was the most sensible individual present.

After the berated welcome to the new venue, the abbreviated sing-along and the Bart report I called on experienced members to share their experiences with the new members.
Brett Curran recalled the initial set of events that lead to the formation of gatherings of like-minded friends from a birthday party into the early days of the FFFFC culminating in the tumultuous evening of the simultaneous events of the Wimbledon Final, the AFL footy and the Ashes which apart from almost welcoming the early morning dawn, saw the formation of the FFFFC at the Polo Club Hotel. A bunch of fellows with their children at the same Primary School .... living the good life in each others company – how good must that have been (?) and so that event kept going to the present day.

Steven Cameron from northern climes recalled the attempts that he tried to make to get an FFFFC going in Queensland after he and his family moved there in 2005. Steve, a founding FFFFC member sadly said that the Queensland Chapter didn't continue – distance, disparity of opinions and so on lead to its quick demise. He went on to say that the nature and the belonging to such an organisation as the FFFFC was what he missed the most after heading North and that what we had was very special AND MUST BE MAINTAINED in one form or another.

In reflection I must say in all sincerity that it is the legacy left behind by the initial group of Flemington Fathers that has taken us to where we are today and resulted in the FFFFC – a group of dads who gather on the first Friday of the month in a place to relax, consume a range of beverages and feel a part of a group – a group that will listen, give advice if sought but more importantly just a group of non-judgemental friends who will accept you at face value. As Steve Cameron said that situation that lead to the FFFFC being formed was a magical, crazy thing that worked then but has failed in other settings – men of the FFFFC I must say – DON'T TAKE THE EXISTENCE OF THIS GROUP FOR GRANTED – while it was conceived in a veil of mystery and coincidence it could as quickly disappear to the detriment of us all.

The members then either played cricket at the dart board, snooker on the full sized table or just talked about issues like “what secondary schools can I send my child to” – a problem that all the older FFFFC members have encountered. A tour was given by Stewart of the function room upstairs which has enormous potential.
There was something not right – one of our members; one of the most important members was not with us – I had to seek him out and try to get him back to the FFFFC heartland. Striding to the great man’s house I had doubts … was I doing the right thing – but I had determination. I believe that it is self-doubt that is our greatest “internal” enemy – there are many internal voices that try to tell us to take the easy way out; don’t do it, don’t bother etc and as I strode down to Glen’s house I affirmed that I was doing the right thing – I had to believe in what I was doing and I needed to do this alone. I rattled the door knocker, I rang the bell and I heard the dog bark and saw the shadow approach through the leadlight windows on the front door. After being welcomed in and offered a Tooheys Red I said to Glen that if I hadn’t had the guts to invite him to join us at the FFFFC at the RSL at that moment I would have looked at myself in the mirror in the morning and thought – “how weak and pathetic I was” – I put myself on the line and in a way I put him on the line as well – two men coming eye to eye – it takes a lot of belief in a holistic sense to do that!!! I believed that Glen was a pivotal member of the group and when his wife asked him “what are you going to do?” he said that he had no choice – and so we walked back to the meeting. He was welcomed back without reservation – GG was back and life at the FFFFC was good again – well the Tooheys Red was a bit disappointing but you can’t win ’em all, a local state brew would have been more appropriate …?!! but we had one of our greatest brothers back and life was good – never knock the G spot otherwise you’ll finish up up on main street Disneyland and that’s straight from the old jam tart.

Speaking of missing legends – DOB – Damien O’Brien – a mover and shaker of the first FFFFC was unable to be with us – socialising at Broome – is that a place or an object(?) with friends. Well Damien as well as I can walk to get GG back to the flock from around the corner – walking to Broome – forget it my friend!!!

Sincere thanks to Phat, Bart and Stewart – the RSL rep and to Gabby the volunteer barmaid, who also warmed the pies to make our last meeting a beauty in every sense of the word.

In preparation for our meeting next year I propose that we meet at the Flemington RSL on the first Friday in February with pies and sauce and good cheer for another year in close proximity to the Feb camp out event on the FPS oval. Bart is an inspiring mover and shaker and during meetings I am afraid to leave for the toilet for any period of time!!! otherwise I’ll loose the presidency of the club as has happened in previous times; but what will be will be and I am happy to do what needs to be done.
There are places for our honour boards to find a home at the RSL and I must say that it is feeling very comfortable there; however I will take direction from the membership as to where and how we go next as a club.

President – Ian Bull

New members

Paul Martinucci
pmartinucci@hotmail.com

Justin Lucas
justin.lucas@nortonrosefulbright.com

Stephen Bocquet
sbocquet@netspace.net.au

Peter Hormann
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Phil Brierley
philb@philbrierley.com

With enough time to catch my breath a relentless barrage was initiated where nothing and no-one escaped with all receiving a pasting - even the guest of honour received several chants of "Queenslander" in a disparaging manner. Everything from the wood panelled decor to the lime green walls to the collection of "old farts" in the corner by the pool table were dealt with severely. A suggestion that such old farts be rebadged as OFFFFC's - old ...... make up your own F’s and C for the rest. I (the president) was unashamedly totally out of control ..... and loving it!!!

AND THEN the formal area was approached by a fellow who in retrospect was reminiscent of Colin "the plumber" from the Polo Club Hotel. This fellow lead the group in the singing of a song which was unfamiliar to all and was a little unnerving.

Sobriety and reason returned to the proceedings with Bart taking the podium and giving us a summary of future fundraising initiatives such as the Feb 14th sleep out in tents on the FPS oval, the purchase of the AFL jerseys - no, jumpers and the contribution to the music fund. The club currently has $510 and we will release more accurate collection targets in due course.

So that this labelling is not to be seen as discrimination then the new members can be the NFFFFC and those who can't be stuffed can make their own arrangements.
With the end of the official duties the members adjourned to the extremities of the RSL - many to the bar with Gabby providing full service, others to the dart board and a few to the full sized pool table. However; I had bigger things on my mind - to regain the presence of the GREATEST BLOKE IN THE PLACE - STRAIGHT FROM THE OLD JAM TART .... in short to return GG - Glen Gilbert to the FFFFC heartland.

Striding to the great mans house I had doubts - but I had determination. I believe that it is self-doubt that is our greatest "internal" enemy - there are many internal voices that try to tell us to take the easy way out; don't do it etc and as I strode down to Glen's house I affirmed that I was doing the right thing. I pulled the door knocker, I rang the bell and I heard the dog bark and I saw the shadow approach the front door. After being welcomed in and being offered a Tooheys Red I said to Glen that if I hadn't had the gumption to invite him to join us at the FFFFC at the RSL I would have looked at myself in the mirror in the morning and thought - "what a weak, pathetic prick that I was" and I believed that Glen was a pivotal member of the group - and so he agreed to come back to the meeting.

After the berated welcome to the new venue, the abbreviated sing-along, the Bart report I called on experienced members to share their experiences with the new members. Brett Curran recalled the initial set of events that lead to the formation of gatherings of like minded friends into the early days of the FFFFC culminating in the tumultuous evening of the simultaneous events of the Wimbledon Final, the AFL footy and the Ashes which apart from almost welcoming the early morning dawn, saw the formation of the FFFFC at the Polo Club Hotel. A bunch of fellows with their children at the same Primary School .... living the good life in each others company - how good must that have been (?) and so that event kept going to the present day. Steven Cameron from northern climes recalled the attempts that he tried to make to get an FFFFC going in Queensland after he and his family moved there in 2005. Steve, a founding member sadly said that the Queensland Chapter didn't continue - distance, disparity of opinions and so on lead to its quick demise. He went on to say that the nature and the belonging to such an organisation as the FFFFC was what he missed the most and that what we had was very special AND MUST BE MAINTAINED in one form or another.

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socialising at Broome - is that a place or an object(?) with friends. Well Damien; questions can be asked by the membership as to your non-show but I know that your intentions to snub us, your most loyal friends ..... for some other ...... friends ...???? will be better understood later.

presidency