

A Very Good day to friends from Whittlesea Victoria.



Today Friday we will be visited by Craig Lloyd, the CEO of Whittlesea Council in Victoria, Australia who is at present touring Europe with his family.

Maybe they will go on a 'Walk-about' in this cold weather.

Craig will be recording a "Hot Seat" interview on Fenland Youth Radio between 12 and 1.00pm which will be broadcast over the weekend.

WHITTLESEA, Australia (Reuters) - Australia's deadliest bushfire crisis eased on Monday, but the death toll kept rising with at least 108 people killed as families searched for scores of missing in the twisted, charred ruins.....

Back in 2009 (before I was a councillor, our 'namesake' in Victoria Australia suffered some terrible fires. Whittlesey Town Council – Cllr Ken Mayor organised an emergency fund and package to be sent to our twin (town//city).

I did donate and had my photo taken by the local press and it was also covered by BBC East.

WHITTLESEY: A Fenland town rallies to help Australian town that shares its name.....(Wisbech Standard 17th February 2009)

IN the dark days after World War Two Whittlesey was overwhelmed by the generosity of residents in its Australian namesake who sent food parcels.

More than 60 years later that help is being reciprocated.

An appeal has been launched in Whittlesey to help Whittlesea in Victoria, following fires which have left hundreds dead and many more homeless.

Whittlesey Town Council has already sent £1,000 to Whittlesea which has been designated as a relief centre for people from neighbouring areas.

Whittlesey mayor Councillor Steve Garratt appeared live on Australian television in a link-up with Whittlesea mayor Mary Lalios.

He was filmed in the BBC news studio in Cambridge at 9.20pm on Monday and appeared live on the Australian national morning news programme Sunrise on Channel 7 at 8.20am, Tuesday (Victoria time.)

Cllr Garratt said: "I thanked the people of Whittlesea for their help in the past and explained the history and the link between the two towns.

"It was quite a strange experience to think I was appearing on television in Australia but I was only too happy to do what I could to help the people that have been so generous to us in our time of need."

Councillor Ken Mayor, who has forged close links with Whittlesea through the Whittlesea Society said: "They helped us in our hour of need and it is nice that we can do something in return."

After watching the first television reports of the fires, Cllr Mayor said: "I was horrified because I know so much about Whittlesea. I knew I had to do something, I suggested the town council should give a donation of £1,000 on behalf of the citizens of the town and it was passed unanimously."

The connection between the two places - Whittlesea is just a few kilometres from the outer fringes of Melbourne - goes back long before the Second World War to the 1800s when two men were sent to survey the Australian township. One theory is that assistant surveyor Robert Mason was born in Whittlesey and another is that the surveyor general of Victoria Sir Andrew Clarke had a great interest in the technology used in draining the swamp at Whittlesey Mere.

Cllr Mayor has already received a thank you from Lindsay Mann of the Australian Whittlesea Historical Society.

Mr Mann said: "It is said that it is the thought that counts and it certainly is; though never more than when accompanied by an action that comes from the heart. Your warm and caring friendship in the current tragic circumstances is very much appreciated."

Anyone who wants to give a donation should send it to the town council clerk at the Town Hall, Market Street.

(RG – I was there....in Whittlesey not Australia)

