

Adelaide Fire Brigade 1845

The Bank Fire Engine attended

South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Saturday 8 November 1845, page 3

LOCAL INTELLIGENCE.

On Thursday night, at about eight o'clock, a fire broke out at the residence of Joseph Johnson, Esq., at the Reed Beds. It arose from a candle having been carelessly placed beneath the thatched roof, and spread with great rapidity. Lieutenant Dashwood, who was dining with Mr Johnson, at once observing that the building could not be saved, recommended the direction of every effort to the preservation of the furniture, and it was to the promptitude of this resolution, that the removal of the greater part must be attributed ; but we are sorry to say that the house was entirely destroyed. About two o'clock this morning an alarm of fire was given in front of the Register office, and on going to the spot we found that Mr Payne's, Auction Mart Hotel was in great danger, a large body of flame being plainly perceptible in the cellar. The inmates were quickly aroused, and the children and females got out, principally through the windows, as did one or two gentlemen. The persons employed on the Register were first on the spot, and lent the first active assistance, two of them traversing every bedroom and carefully examining that no children were left behind, as it was at first not known that they had all got out. After the lapse of some minutes, two of the foot police came sauntering up, and were immediately followed by all the horse police in the barracks. By this time many neighbours had assembled, and water was thrown on the spots which could be most easily got at; but no effectual impression was made on the flames, till the arrival of the Bank fire-engine, accompanied by E. Stephens, Esq., which being quickly got into play was brought to bear with full force upon the burning timbers in the cellar, and after a little more than an hour's work, all danger might be considered at an end. A number of soldiers accompanied by Lieut. Griffiths, rendered very great and prompt assistance, and in fact the efforts of most individuals present was in a high degree praiseworthy. Had the fire remained a short time longer undiscovered, there is little doubt that the whole premises must have fallen a prey to the flames. How many more fires do we desire to see before we shall think it necessary to establish a mutual Insurance Association ! True the present calamities have fallen on men able to bear them; but to ninety-nine out of a hundred they would have brought absolute ruin.

Adelaide Observer (SA : 1843 - 1904), Saturday 8 November 1845, page 4

LOCAL INTELLIGENCE.

Two fires have occurred this week, one near the Reed Beds, at Frogmore, the residence of Mr Johnson, which we regret to say, was entirely consumed, although the greater part of the furniture was saved by the exercise of great presence of mind. The second, and a most alarming fire it was, broke out just as we were going to press this morning at Payne's Hotel, which at one time threatened, not only the destruction of the extensive premises of Mr Payne, but those of his neighbours; but through the prompt efforts, first of the civilians, and then of the police and military, with the Bank engine, services which we have not time at present to eulogise as they deserve, the fire was happily got under before any serious amount of damage had been sustained. The escape of the family and the inmates from the suffocating smoke with which the upper part of the house, as well as the lower, had become charged, was providentially effected without accident, the youngest child, an infant, having been held at arm's length out of the window, until, by the help of a cask, it was reached by a tall man. It is due to the compositors of our establishment to state that they were first on the spot, were the only persons who had courage enough to scale the wall and enter every sleeping apartment, and, previous to the arrival of the police, rendered the most efficient assistance in checking the progress of the flames, which at one time seemed to threaten the destruction of Mr Bentham Neales's auction-mart and the premises of the Messrs Lowe, chemists.

South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Wednesday 12 November 1845, page 3

FIRES AND FIRE ENGINES.

Gentlemen—Allow me to ask, through the medium of your columns, what has become of the fire-engine and its appendages, as some years ago exhibited to the colonists ?

In England, the public or parochial engines are frequently brought out and put into active operation, in order to ascertain that none of the implements have become defective from disuse, and to keep the entire apparatus, as well as the applicable human power, in good working order by frequent use. The authorities there having been convinced, by experience, that persons who are put specially in charge of a fire-engine, as well as the engine itself, require drilling and exercise as much as a company of foot or a troop of horse. It is equally true that something in the way of honorary distinction goes a good way in the requital of volunteers who habitually turn out upon calamitous occasions, and to be enrolled in, or appointed a director of, "a fire-brigade," would, in many instances, do more to procure prompt attendance than a mere pecuniary rewards for service performed. It is important to have a fire-engine constantly ready for use, and it should be always kept charged with water. Myself and my neighbours were on Thursday night in great danger of having all our premises fired, front the accumulated soot in a chimney having ignited immediately in the rear of the Register and Observer printing-offices; but fortunately the wind blew with violence from the right quarter, and carried the sparks into the open space, had the space been occupied by combustible premises or materials, a great calamity might have resulted. In London, on the bare appearance of fire out-side a chimney, the occupier is subjected to a pecuniary fine; and I am of opinion such a fine inflicted here would operate beneficially in producing greater caution among our citizens generally.

I am, &c, A Subscriber.

[In cases of fire in the town, especially at night, we would also suggest some means of giving alarm. Eds. S.A.R.]

South Australian (Adelaide, SA : 1844 - 1851), Friday 28 November 1845, page 3

TENDERS will be received at this office, until noon, on Wednesday the 10th proximo, for the supply of one set of double harness complete, required for the service of the fire-engine.

The harness must be subject to the approval of the Commissioner of Police.

Tenders to be in original, and to be inscribed outside "Tender for harness."

A. M. Mundy, Colonial Secretary.

Adelaide Observer (SA : 1843 - 1904), Saturday 27 December 1845, page 8

Sudden Extinction of Fires.

The fire annihilator is the name given to a contrivance for suddenly extinguishing fires. The inventor takes charcoal and nitre, in the same proportions as they are used to form gunpowder, and adding to them plaster of Paris, he obtains a substance which readily deflagrates and evolves immense volumes of gases. Now it is well known that combustion cannot take place in an atmosphere wholly composed of the product of combustion, and consequently the object is to envelope any burning mass with the gases evolved by the sudden combustion of the non-explosive gunpowder. The compound is a chemical invention, its application is by mechanical means. Enclosing the deflagrating compound in a strong iron retort or cylinder, it is ignited by pressing down a small piston, which brings into contact some chlorate of sulphur and a small portion of sugar, which constantly inflames, and thus a supply, large or small, according to the quantity required, is obtained of gases in which combustion is impossible. A hose connected with the retort conveys the gases at pleasure to any spot or building on fire, and immediately extinguishes the flames. The inventor, who exhibited the

effect of his contrivance at the Adelaide Gallery kindled a considerable mass of the combustibles now prepared for lighting fires, and then brought to bear on the mass a jet of gas from his deflagrating non-explosive gun-powder in a small retort, about as large as a pint pot, and the flame was instantly extinguished. The principle and application of the Fire Annihilator, are thus described by Mr Phillips, in a lecture delivered on the 25th June last. The lecturer, after observing that the present mode of extinguishing fire was partial, tardy, and confined to localities very distant from each other, and stating, that the amount of property annually destroyed by fire was about two millions sterling; passed on to the more immediate and important object of the lecture. Mr Phillips, in a lucid, entertaining, and very satisfactory manner, described the nature of fire and water, remarking, perhaps to the surprise of many of his hearers, that they were both composed of the very same elements—oxygen and hydrogen. There could be no fire, however combustible the materials, without oxygen. The application, or injection of the ærated vapour instantly annihilated this, and extinguished the fire. The fact was illustrated and confirmed by a series of ingenious experiments, to themselves, very instructive and amusing, apart from the important object they were intended to elucidate. It was evident from these illustrations, that if the entire furniture of a moderate sized room was on fire, the injection of a few pints of the ærated vapour would instantly extinguish it; but the principle is applicable to the largest warehouses, factories, public-offices; &c. An apparatus upon wheels, consisting simply of a cylinder, charged with, perhaps, a hundred gallons of ærated vapour, must be drawn to the premises on fire, and the vapour injected by hose, and the effect would be immediate and complete. The fire would be totally extinguished in two or three minutes. We consider the discovery a wonderful and equally valuable one, and capable of universal application. The time, perhaps, is not very far distant, when this method will entirely supersede the present fire-engine system. No considerate person, we think, would venture to pronounce this more improbable than the present prevalence of gas-lighting and steam transit, both by land and water, was thirty-five years ago. We hope, before the end of the century, that every ship, warehouse, factory, public office, mansion, town, and colony, may have Phillips's fire annihilating apparatus.