

## Adelaide Fire Brigade 1890

### **Locations of Fire Reels**

FIRE BRIGADES BOARD.  
(Under Acts No. 273 of 1882 and No. 288 of 1883)  
Office, No 71 King William street.  
Hon Wentworth Cavenagh, J.P. (Chairman);  
E. M. Ashwin; F. Wilton Gardiner;  
Theo Hack, J.P.; Christian L. Meyer,  
J.P.; Alderman Solomon, M.P.; Sidney  
Malin, J.P.; W. S. Sketheway.  
Secretary, Arthur Bristowe  
Superintendent, Geo A. Booker  
FIRE STATIONS.  
Head, Flinders street, Geo A. Booker and  
11 permanent firemen  
O'Connell st, North Adelaide, permanent  
fireman

*Sands and McDougall 1890*

NORWOOD AND ST. PETERS  
VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADE.  
No. 1 Station, Parade, Norwood  
Horse Reel and Hand Reel.  
Captain—T. S. Warman  
1st Lieutenant—R. E. Kippist  
Branchman—J. E. Gooden  
Firemen—E. Davy, W. Tuxford, W. Dixon,  
F. A. Gray, — Thorpe, — Fay, F. R.  
Steed, J. Quilty, — Burmeister, —  
Verrell, — Blundell, and three reserve  
men.  
KENT TOWN AND ST. PETERS.  
No. 2 Hand Reel, Maid and Magpie,  
Stepney  
1st Lieutenant—W. Currell  
Branchman—R. Rosenberg  
Firemen—A. Burford, — Mashmidt, and  
three reserve men  
Hon sec, R. E. Kippist, Edward st, Norwood

*Sands and McDougall 1890*

***Evening Journal (Adelaide, SA : 1869 - 1912), Monday 20 January 1890, page 2***

Fires.

SMALL FIRES.—At half-past 2 on Sunday morning a fire was discovered by Constable Northbridge in the backyard of Mr. Oscar Esselbach's restaurant premises near the General Post-Office in King William-street, which burnt a rubbish box containing a quantity of old paper. Adjoining was a heap of firewood, and considerable damage would have ensued had it not been noticed in time. A fire reel was soon on the spot, but its use was unnecessary. Another small fire occurred in an iron shed belonging to Mr. John Mills, storekeeper, of Union-street, Goodwood Park. The shed—a poor structure —was not insured, and the damage was trifling. It is supposed that the fire originated from the pipe of a smoker. A third

fire took place in a bedroom in Mr. George Roberts's house on Sunday and burnt a deal of the furniture. At the time of its discovery there was no one in the place, Mr. Roberts having gone out about an hour previous, leaving no light of any kind, and the origin is at present a mystery.

***Express and Telegraph (Adelaide, SA : 1867 - 1922), Thursday 30 January 1890, page 3***

Fire.

A fire broke out at Miss M. Morcom's general store on the Magill-road late on Wednesday night. The flames first appeared in the front shop and quickly spread till they had got a good hold of an adjoining room, In the meantime St. Peter's firereel came on the scene, but as there were only two men with it the hose was practically useless. Later on a reel arrived from the head station, and after considerable difficulty managed to put out the fire. The whole of the contents of the shop were consumed with a portion of the goods in the next room. Superintendent Booker informs us that it is necessary that the local brigades should be connected with the head station, as it is evident that there must have been some delay with the first message about this fire. Had he received the information earlier the amount of damage would have been much lighter.

***South Australian Chronicle (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1895), Saturday 8 February 1890, page 8***

THE FIRE AT STEPNEY.

An enquiry into the cause of the fire which lately occurred on the premises of Miss M. A. Morcom, at Stepney, was held by the city coroner (Dr. Whittell) at the Alma Hotel, Norwood, on Friday, Jan. 31, Mr. Thomas appeared for the New Zealand Insurance Company. Lavinia Levy, sister of Miss Morcom, said she was dressing the shop window with drapery and millinery at about 8.30 p.m, on the 29th inst. She had some muslin in her hand and was standing on steps when these gave a slight lurch and she was thrown for-ward. Then noticed that the muslin in the window was in flames. Was attempting to put out the fire when her sister came and pulled her out. Went into the street and asked a man to run for the firereel. He refused to go, but asked her if there was anyone inside. Witness said "No; let the building go." Mary Ann Morcom, the occupier of the shop, said she had been carrying on business for about two years, and had been satisfied with the results. Last February at stocktaking the stock was found to be worth a little over £500, and it had been increased since then. The stock was insured for £400. Did not make any attempt to stop the fire to which her attention was called by her sister be-cause she saw it was no use. John William Cossey, connected with the St. Peters fire brigade, said he received a call from a man named Hyland at about 10.45 p.m. on the evening in question, and about 10 minutes afterwards was at the scene. The fire was fairly under in about half an hour, the hose being in good order. Reels from Adelaide and Norwood arrived when the water had been turned off Jane Morcom, who managed her sister's business, stated that the stock-sheets had been kept in the shop. P.C. Richmond, who was present, said the flames were subdued in from about eight to ten minutes after the arrival of the St. Peters reel. The hose was in good order, and the firemen appeared to do their duty properly. The jury returned a verdict to the effect that the fire was purely accidental, and added a rider commending the action of the St. Peters fire brigade.

***Evening Journal (Adelaide, SA : 1869 - 1912), Wednesday 19 February 1890, page 3***

The Norwood Fire Brigade.

NORWOOD FIRE BRIGADE BOARD.— A meeting of the Fire Brigade Board for the town of Kensington and Norwood was held in the Council Chamber on Friday, February 14. There were present—His Worship the Mayor (Mr. Thomas Gepp. Chairman), Messrs. R. K. Threlfall and W. H. Craigie. The meeting was held to enquire into the charge made by Superintendent Booker, of the City Fire Brigade, that two members of the Norwood and St. Peters Volunteer Fire Brigade were under the influence of drink at the fire on Miss Morcom's premises, Magill-road, St Peters, on January 29. The communication conveying the charge was received by the Secretary to the Board (Mr. George Gooden) from the Secretary of the Fire Brigade Board, taken as an extract from Superintendent Booker's report on the fire. Superintendent Booker and Captain Warman (of the local brigade) were present, and all the members of the brigade who attended and extinguished the fire. Four local firemen, two civilians (Messrs. D. H. Weir and T. Veitch), one member of the City Brigade, and two police constables who were at the fire gave evidence. All the witnesses (with the exception of the fireman from the city) positively declared that all the local firemen were perfectly sober before, after, and during the time of the fire. The fireman from the City Brigade admitted that he thought the the men were the worse for liquor, because they were rolling about when the fire was out and the premises were dark, and from their conversation. He could not identify any of the men as having been under the influence of drink. The Board gave Superintendent Booker every opportunity of asking the witnesses questions, but he failed to elicit any evidence to support the charge. The Board unanimously agreed that the charge made by Superintendent Booker was unfounded, and suggested to the City Board that before a charge should be made against any of the local firemen the truth should be established.

***Express and Telegraph (Adelaide, SA : 1867 - 1922), Monday 3 March 1890, page 2***

Fire in Pulteney-street.

On Saturday evening at 11.3 p.m. an alarm of fire was given at the fire brigade station, Flinders-street, The fire was found to be on the premises occupied by Mr. W. Rawling, Pulteney-street, and belonging to the City Permanent Building Society. Mr. Rawling carries on a fancy goods business, and the fire is supposed to have been caused by a light being thrown down and setting fire to some of the light goods, The shop and contents were severely damaged by fire, heat, and water. The stock was insured for £200 and the furniture for £200 in the North British Insurance Society. The city coroner will hold an inquest to-day at the Somerset Hotel.

***Express and Telegraph (Adelaide, SA : 1867 - 1922), Thursday 17 April 1890, page 2***

Fire at Norwood.

The inhabitants of West Norwood were startled on Wednesday evening by seeing a mass of flame issuing from a large house in William-street, and close to Charles-street. On examination it was found to be the residence of Mr. J. Colliver. The fire at the beginning was confined to the back portion of the house, which was built of wood. Those first on the spot discovered a hose, with which good work in the way of quenching the fire could have been done, but unfortunately all endeavors to find a water tap proved fruitless, and the only alternative was to throw a few buckets of water obtained from a tank on the flames. The City Permanent Fire Brigade and the Norwood, and St. Peter's Volunteer Fire Brigades, after the lapse of about 20 minutes, appeared on the scene, and a good supply of water being

available from the main a well directed stream speedily put out the fire, which was just spreading to the main portion of the house. A number of willing workers removed a quantity of valuable furniture to places of safety, and although it is impossible to say at present the amount of damage done, it should not be very great. The house was insured in the Phoenix Fire Insurance Company for £300 and the furniture for £100. The origin of the fire appears somewhat mysterious. Mr. and Mrs. Colliver and their son locked up the house about 6 o'clock for the purpose of attending the annual tea and public meetings at the Kent Town Wesleyan Church, and everything was then safe. An inquest will be held this afternoon at the Vintage Shades Hotel, Norwood.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Friday 3 October 1890, page 6***

#### ADELAIDE FIRE BRIGADE.

#### TRIAL OF APPLIANCES.

There is a measure now before the Legislature and in charge of the Government which is intended to put the Fire Brigade of Adelaide upon a proper footing and improve its efficiency. This Bill, which is now awaiting the passage of its second reading, will enable new premises to be acquired, and the force of firemen to be strengthened. The need of a proper fire station must be glaringly apparent to any visitor to the shed in Flinders-street, in which the brigade is at present housed. Considering the difficulties under which they labor in such a place, Superintendent Booker and his men deserve every praise for the excellent manner in which the machines and appliances are kept, and for the arrangements made to ensure the quick turning-out of the men when the dread necessity arises.

On Thursday morning a party of gentlemen, including several members of Parliament, had an opportunity of seeing for themselves the inadequacy of the present accommodation for the fire brigade and, at the same time, observing the ready and excellent conditions in which the appliances are kept, and the capabilities of the fire-quenching apparatus. Mr. Theodore Scherk, M.P., headed the party, which consisted of the Hon. A. R. Addison, M.L.C., Sir Edwin Smith, Messrs. J. Cock, H. Lamshed, R. Caldwell, J. Hague, L. O'Loughlin, and J. G. Jenkins. Aldermen Ellery and Marshall, Messrs. H. B. Fuller and Meyer, members of the board, and Messrs. H. D. Gell, Bocker, Karlbaum, Longbottom, and Hughes. Superintendent Booker, who was in charge of his full force of 12 men, received the visitors and conducted them over the premises, explaining all the arrangements and clever contrivances for the immediate arousing of the men and harnessing of the horses to the machines on the alarm of fire. These operations were practically demonstrated by the dropping of a shutter on the electrical communication board in the watchroom. Instantly the alarm rang out through the station, and within 4 sec the horse-reel, which is always kept in readiness, was clear of the premises and on its way to the scene of the supposed conflagration. Meanwhile the horses were being put into the manual, and 12 1/5 sec after the alarm was given that engine also with six men was clear of the station. The next interesting operation was the extension of the telescope escape ladder, which was run up to its full height of 60 ft in 13 1/2 sec ; and at an acute angle of about 40 degrees it stood as firm as a rock even while a man was playing a strong stream of water pumped by the steamer through a 2 1/2 inch hose. This really remarkable triumph of mechanism has not yet seen actual service, but in the case of tall buildings on fire it should prove invaluable, not only as facilitating the operations of the brigade, but also in saving life. The steam engine was drawn out and fired up and the power was demonstrated by the streams of water which were thrown sufficient to quench any

ordinary conflagration in a very short period if taken in time. The water was thrown high into the air and descended in a shower, which compelled the onlookers to seek shelter.

The horses, of which there are only three attached to the station, were inspected in their stalls, where they are found to be made as comfortable as circumstances will permit; but one influential gentleman present strongly expressed his opinion that it was nothing less than downright cruelty to animals to keep the poor brutes standing in readiness night and day in the stalls, and the opinion was generally expressed that there should be two sets of horses, so that they would all in turn have their periods of relief, particularly to their legs, in loose boxes or the yard. The superintendent's own pony has certainly the best time of it at the station, as that little animal is not required to do any of the stern work connected with fire quelling. It was noticed with interest that considerable progress has been made with the manual, which is being built at the station, entirely by members of the brigade and under the direction of Superintendent Booker, and this machine when finished will be credit-able evidence of the handiness of the men, who, as is usual with firemen, are all quondam sailors. The crushed and battered helmets of the two members of the brigade—Gardner and Clark—who were killed at the disastrous fire at the Academy of Music nearly four years ago, which are on view under a glass case in the watchroom, told a silent tale of heroic death at the call of duty and in the face of a deadly foe, and tacitly reminded the visitors of the terrible risks which environ the life of a fireman in the pursuit of the calling.

***Express and Telegraph (Adelaide, SA : 1867 - 1922), Tuesday 14 October 1890, page 3***

#### The Fire Brigade.

On Monday afternoon a number of leading citizens paid a visit of inspection to the Central Fire Brigade Station, where they were received and escorted round the premises by Superintendent Booker. The party included the Chief Secretary (Sir John Bray), the Commissioner of Crown Lands (Hon. Wm. Copley), the Mayor of Adelaide (Mr. L. Cohen, M.P.), members of the City Council, and Messrs. W. B. Wilkinson and Wm. Sketheway (members of the Fire Brigade Board). Mr. Booker having explained the uses of the various appliances, both mechanical and electrical, drew the attention of the visitors to the new four-horse reel which had been constructed in the workshop attached to the yard by members of the brigade. All of these are old sailors, and had with that readiness of adaptation to circumstances so characteristic of the "old salt" turned their hands to this species of work, the result being the turning out of a most creditable "job." The men were then put through their drill and various evolutions, answering to the "alarm" with great celerity. The steam fire engine was next brought out, drill therewith proceeded with and steam raised, a pressure of 100 lb. being registered in a few minutes, this being increased to 125 lb. within 7½ minutes. The first stream of water was then thrown horizontally for a distance of at least 170 ft. from a hose bearing a 1 1/8 in. nozzle, the stream passing through at the rate of 350 gallons per minute. Two lines of hose were then run out, with two ¾-in. jets attached, the water being thrown to a great altitude. Subsequently an adjournment was made to the watch and telephone alarm room, where light refreshments were introduced over which Sir John Bray proposed "Success to the Adelaide Fire Brigades Board coupled with the name of Superintendent Booker," in felicitous terms. This having been duly honored, Mr. Booker suitably responded. Other toasts were also submitted. The visitors expressed themselves as greatly pleased at the evidences of the thorough state of efficiency of the brigade though it was evident that the present station and strength of the force at the

disposal of Mr. Booker were inadequate for the full protection of the city and suburbs in the event of a large conflagration, This has been repeatedly pointed out by the superintendent in the course of his reports on the subject.