

Adelaide Fire Brigade 1947

Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Wednesday 29 January 1947, page 3

Timber Damaged In Beaumont Fire

A fire which broke out in a stack of more than 12,000 ft. of matchwood and weatherboard at the rear of the workshop of Mr. O. R. Rogers, building contractor, of Beaumont road, Hazelwood Park, at 11.30 a.m. yesterday, caused about £200 worth of damage. Encouraged by a strong north-west wind, the flames spread from the stack of timber over four acres of grassland, charring more than 7,000 ft. of flooring timber. Four houses in the vicinity were threatened. Under the direction of the officer in charge of the Norwood Fire Brigade (Mr. T. M. Davis), firemen from Norwood and headquarters prevented the fire from crossing Beaumont road and endangering 12 houses and a large area of grassland and timber country.

News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Thursday 6 February 1947, page 3

SMALL FIRE AT SHOWGROUNDS

A fire broke out in grass and timber on the western boulevard at the Wayville Showgrounds this afternoon. There was no damage to property, although the fire swept along the western wall of the fruit and flower pavilion. Appliances from the City Fire Station and Unley attended.

Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Wednesday 26 March 1947, page 13

FIRE TALK-ALARM IMPRESSES

New York Visitor Wants Idea For U.S.

Adelaide's new talk-alarm system of reporting fires was far in advance of anything in the United States, said Mr. Clement S. Crystal, of New York. He is the head of the Paramount International theatre department, which controls the company's theatres outside America. Mr. Crystal said that he was so impressed that he intended to take the idea back to America. After conferring with fire brigade authorities there he hoped eventually to have the system installed in each of the company's 1,000 theatres throughout the country. The system here was infallible, he said, and would obviously reduce the number of malicious false alarms. Mr. Crystal conferred with Chief Officer J. J. Whyte, who explained the technical side of the system and demonstrated it. Mr. Crystal was accompanied by the president of Paramount International (Mr. George Weltner), the managing director of Paramount Films in Australia (Mr. H. Hunter), and Mr. Albert Dean, who is in the censor department of the company in New York. They left Adelaide yesterday morning by plane for Melbourne.

Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Friday 2 May 1947, page 5

Bitumen Fire In Council Yard

When bitumen containing kerosene overflowed on to the firebox of a bitumen sprayer at the Tusmore depot of the Burnside Council at 9 a.m. yesterday, a fire broke out, sending dense clouds of smoke and flame shooting 20 feet into the air. Council employees played soda ash extinguishers on to blazing bitumen overflowing around the sprayer until fire brigade appliances from Adelaide and Norwood arrived a few minutes after the outbreak. Foam extinguishers brought the fire under control, and damage was confined to paintwork on an iron store shed and to overhead wires.

Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Wednesday 21 May 1947, page 6

Talk-Alarm Fire Warning System Delay

But for the metal trades dispute Adelaide's new talk-alarm fire warning system would have been completed by the end of June, the chief officer of the SA Fire Brigade (Mr. J. J. Whyte)

said yesterday with the expected reopening of foundries, delivery of castings for street and private alarms could be expected soon. Mr. Whyte said that the installation of the new system in city theatres was completed yesterday. Each theatre had been equipped with two alarms, one at the back of the stage and the other near the front entrance.

News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Saturday 21 June 1947, page 6

FIRE AT FACTORY

Fire appliances from Norwood and headquarters were called to the canning factory of William Angliss & Co., Pty., Ltd., of L'Estrange street, Knoxville, today, when fire broke out in the ceiling of a drying room. Firemen quickly controlled the outbreak, and damage was confined to the roof timbers.

Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Tuesday 22 July 1947, page 1

Arson Suspected In Southwark Factory Fire

Police believe that several fires which caused damage estimated at about £2,000 to the engineering works of Charles Richardson & Sons. Ltd., Holland street, Southwark, early yesterday, were lit deliberately. Detective-Sergeants Walters and Gill, who made enquiries, found the remains of nine fires and traces of oil and kerosene on the floor in the offices in the front of the premises. When six appliances from Thebarton and Adelaide, in the charge of Chief Officer J. J. Whyte, arrived, the fire had gained a hold in a set of offices in the north-western section of the building, which contained thousands of pounds worth of machinery, including lathes worth £3,000. Rafters above the offices were well alight, and flames were leaping through the roof. The main fire was under control 10 minutes after the raising of the alarm at 6.48 a.m. Twenty minutes later smoke was seen coming from a locked office at the south-western end of the premises. On unlocking the door, firemen found three separate fires smouldering on the floor in various parts of the room. They were extinguished with only slight damage to the floor. All the fires had been started from paper, which had been emptied from the drawers of office tables, and piled up on the floors. The fires had evidently been burning for a long time, as fittings in one of the offices were badly carbonised. The main fire destroyed an electric power switchboard. Police are puzzled how any person, other than one who knew where the key was kept could have entered the southern office. There was no sign of forced entry and the key to the locked door was kept in the main set of offices. Entry to the other offices could have been gained through a wicket at the main entrance to the premises, which was open when the brigade arrived. The City Coroner (Mr. T. E. Cleland) inspected the damaged offices. The managing director of the company (Mr H. L. Elliott) said yesterday that employees would not be out of work because of the fire. Electricians worked continuously installing a temporary switchboard to enable the men to resume work at 12.30 p.m. today. About 150 men are employed at the factory which is engaged in building railway bogies and trucks for the Indian Government.



Clearing up the premises of Charles Richardson and Sons, Southwark, after heavy damage had been done to the premises by fire yesterday morning.

Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Thursday 24 July 1947, page 5

Fire Precautions At Showgrounds

Ten of the new talking fire alarms, connected directly to the city fire brigade station in Wakefield street, had been installed at strategic points in the Royal Showgrounds, the secretary (Mr H. J. Finnis) said yesterday. Fire fighting equipment kept on the grounds included hoses, chemical extinguishers, and fire buckets at various places. Special printed instructions to be followed in the event of fire had been issued to officers on the grounds and a fireman would be always in attendance, said Mr. Finnis.

Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Tuesday 5 August 1947, page 3

Fire Brigade Tests Walkie-Talkie



Chief Fire Officer J. J. Whyte (right) and Capt. A. E. Darby, of Army Signals, using a walkie-talkie radiophone in Grenfell street, city, yesterday. They were communicating with Mr. J. H. Thyer, chief Fire Brigade electrician, who was on the ninth floor of a nearby building.

Radio May Help Fight Fires In Adelaide

Adelaide firemen working in burning buildings may soon use light "walkie-talkie." radiophones to communicate with their comrades outside. Chief Fire Officer J. J. Whyte yesterday observed successful tests in the city of "walkie-talkie" radiophone conversations between an operator on the top floor or in the basement of a number of buildings to another operator in the street. Army-type "walkie-talkie" radio phones were used in the test by Capt. A. E. Darby, of Army Signals, and Mr. J. H. Thyer, Chief Electrician of the Fire Brigade. After the test. Chief Officer Whyte said that the radiophones would be a valuable aid in speedily bringing fires under control.

Progress of a fire, as well as requirements of foam, self-contained breathing or other apparatus could be reported without delay. Somewhat similar to a telephone hand-set, the "walkie-talkie" sets tested have speaking and listening phones. There is a telescopic aerial, which extends about three feet. Each "walkie-talkie" including batteries inside weighs only about 8 lb. The "walkie-talkie" sets operate on a fixed frequency and have a range up to about a mile. Results of yesterday's test will be reported to the Fire Brigades Board, which will consider the provision of the radiophones.

Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Saturday 16 August 1947, page 13

Firemen in S.A. Brigade are busy men, well-disciplined, fighting fit, and....

Their Watchword Is Efficiency

by PAUL BRUER

FIRE! Bells ring through-out the station. The men jump from their beds, swiftly don their tunics, helmets, trousers, belts and boots. They rush out of their rooms on to the narrow balcony, make a flying leap at a shiny upright steel pole and slither down to ground level. They man the fire engines that are lined up one behind the other at the front part of the station. With sirens screaming and bells clanging, the machines move out into the street on their way to the blaze. It is only thirty seconds since the alarm was sounded! A few minutes later a call is received in the control room from the officer in charge of the first-appliance to reach the conflagration. He reports the fire as a minor one, says further appliances and equipment are not needed. The remaining men, who are in readiness, break of and return to their rooms to try for a little more sleep before the next alarm. Meanwhile, the men at the fire are carrying out their duties efficiently, systematically and without any fuss. In little less than 15 minutes the flames are quelled and the men return to the station.

To the average Adelaide citizen, life as a fireman means little more than loafing around the station until an alarm is sounded, rushing to the scene of the blaze at break-neck speed and pouring hundreds of gallons of water into the flames until the fire subsides. But life in the brigade is more than that. Rigorous training and hours of study, and important duties to be carried out in and around the station, combine to make the life of a fireman a very busy, educational and healthy one. When a prospective fireman enlists his services at the station, he is interviewed by Chief Fire Officer J. J. Whyte. Physical qualifications for entry include a height of 5 ft. 8 in. a 37 in. chest measurement. Men must be between the ages of 21 and 27 years. If the Chief Fire Officer is satisfied with his credentials, the recruit sits for an elementary examination, which includes such, things as essay writing and mathematics. After passing the test he is subjected to a strict examination by the brigade's surgeon. He is next fitted for uniforms by the brigade's tailors —one, a smart double breasted navy blue suit with shiny brass buttons for evening wear and special occasions, and the other a double-breasted tunic to be worn at fires and when on duty at the station. His work then begins. For the first three months, the recruit at-tends drill squads, and at the end of that period he is put through

a rigorous test by the drill instructor. If he passes the test he moves on from the probationary period. It is compulsory for the recruit to attend evening classes to prepare for examinations. He is taught mathematics, logarithms, algebra, hydraulics and general fire protection by the Education Officer (Mr. J. C. Golly). After 12 months' service with the brigade the recruit is put through an examination to determine whether he has absorbed all the theoretical work during the course.

If he passes he is classed as a first year fireman. When he has had three years' service he is permitted to sit for an examination to qualify for grading as a senior fireman. This examination is in five parts and takes about a year to complete. To graduate as an officer in the brigade he must pass two more tests, and another set by the Institute of Fire Engineers. London. Five examinations must be passed before he becomes a Station Officer.

There is no room in the brigade for idlers. Each day from 8 a.m. the men are occupied maintaining brigade equipment. The Wakefield street station, which is one of the most efficient in Australia, has its own carpenters, painters, black-smiths and electricians—all of them firemen. Some men work in the hose room, where all hose belonging to the brigade is repaired and prepared for use in warehouses, offices and stores throughout the city and suburbs. About 1,000 lengths of hose are serviced by these men annually. One of the jobs covered by the brigade's electricians is the building and maintaining of the many alarm systems seen in Adelaide's warehouses, offices, factories, theatres and streets. While I was in the electricians' workshop one of the men was building up a watchman's alarm, a clock which calls the brigade if not punched at regular intervals by the watch man. The new talk-alarm system, which is being installed throughout the city and metropolitan area, and which has gained international recognition as one of the most efficient systems in use, is one of the achievements of the brigade. This alarm, which enables two-way conversation between the caller and the fireman on duty in the control room at the station, was designed and built at the station by the brigade's technicians under the supervision of Chief Officer Whyte. The brigade's carpenters are kept busy making new equipment and repairing the old. Red paint predominates in the painters' room, where all equipment, such as alarms and fire engines, is kept brightly colored. Special research work is conducted in the Chief Officer's chemical laboratory, where tests are made for fire resistance on all building materials by an electric furnace. An instrument known as a pyrometer records the temperature at which the different materials disintegrate. Chemicals which are used for industrial purposes are tested here, and the best method of extinguishing a blaze that might be caused by them is speedily discovered. Other men are busily engaged in sweeping, dusting, and polishing the station. The fire engines, which are the pride of the brigade, receive special attention, and are always found brilliantly clean and in perfect mechanical condition. * Men are provided with various forms of recreation. A large, fully equipped gymnasium, billiard room and library are all available to the men when on "passive duties," after 1 p.m. The gymnasium, which would appeal to any gymnast, contains facilities for boxing, wrestling and weight-lifting, as well as trapezes, horizontal and parallel bars. Fire-men carry out their evening studies in the gymnasium. Plenty of physical training keeps the men in first-class condition for their work, which, at times, may be strenuous. They must be fighting fit, for they never know what obstacles they may meet in the course of their work. Their training contains the thrills of climbing hundred-foot ladders and jumping into a canvas sheet from a tower the height of a four-storey building. For special training men are dressed in self-contained breathing apparatus, which enables them to remain in a smoke-laden atmosphere for periods up to two hours. Dressed in the apparatus, they have to crawl through a tight fitting tunnel about 40 ft. long, climb ladders, and carry heavy dummy models of asphyxiated humans through the rafters of a large room at the station, which is filled with smoke for the purpose. A fire, which may occur at any time, could never find the station unprepared. It is staffed by the Chief Fire Officer, the Deputy Fire Officer, the Third Officer, three Station Officers and 66 men—about half of these being on duty on one shift. Continual tests are carried out so that when a fire does eventuate, men know exactly what to do.

The men live in pairs in comfortable and roomy self-contained flats. They work alternate 24-hour shifts, beginning at 8 a.m., every other day. On the morning that they complete their 24 hours of work they remove their bedding and equipment for the incoming shift. There are twelve sets of married quarters on the station, where firemen and their families live. A playground is provided for the children. Discipline in the brigade differs only slightly from that of the navy and military. Efficiency in every department of the service is the firemen's watchword.

Firemen and engines outside the SA Fire Brigade Headquarters in Wakefield street. The appliance on the right is leaving to answer an alarm that rang while the picture was being taken.

Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Friday 29 August 1947, page 3

Fire In House At Norwood

Caused by a kerosene heater exploding, a fire extensively damaged the kitchen and its contents in a house occupied by Mr. and Mrs. T. M Oyen, of Parade, Norwood, last night. The other rooms in the house, which is at the rear of Elliott's pram and wickerwork shop, were damaged by heat, water and smoke. The Norwood Fire Brigade and the appliance from the Metropolitan Brigade attended. Mr. and Mrs. Oyen, were in the sitting room when the heater burst into flames.

Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Friday 5 September 1947, page 9

"Talk-Alarms" At Wayville

Ten "talk-alarms," installed at Wayville by the military authorities during the war, have been taken over by the Show Society. To provide a safeguard in the event of a fire at the Showgrounds, the system is being connected to Fire Brigade headquarters.

Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Monday 22 September 1947, page 1

Woman's Sixth False Fire Alarm

In response to an anonymous telephone call from a woman who reported that Miller Andersons Emporium in Hindley street city was on fire, all the appliances of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade rushed to the scene last night but an inspection of the building revealed that the call was a false alarm. The Chief Officer of the brigade (Mr. J. J. Whyte) said later that it was the sixth false alarm in three months from the same woman. On the other five occasions she had reported fires in city hotels. The calls were always made on a Sunday between 6 p.m. and 10 pm. but because an automatic tele-phone was used, they could not be traced

News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Thursday 25 September 1947, page 3

FIRE WAKENS GIRL

Family's Loss

AN occupant of a house on fire at Tranmere at 12.30 a.m. today had to take the telephone into the front doorway away from the smoke to call the Fire Brigade. Damage estimated at £350 was done to a study and passage at the home of Mr. E. W. Padfield at the corner of Magill road and Emerson grove. He is manager of Padfield's Motor Works, of Pirie street, City. Cause of the fire is unknown, but there is no suspicion of arson. The property was insured.

Study Cave-In

Most of the tiled roof of the study caved in. The destroyed contents included a sewing machine, carpet, lounge suite, radio set, linen, books, and other belongings. Mrs. Padfield said today the family went to bed about 11 p.m. and left the dying embers of a fire in the

grate. Tongs were placed across the front of it. Her daughter, Fay, said that smoke entering her room, which was next to the study, awakened her at about 12.30 a.m.

Told Her Father

She told her father, who ran outside, tore away part of the wire screen, and played water from a hose into the room. When Mrs. Padfield went into the hall her hair was singed by fire while she was phoning the Fire Brigade. A youth passing on a bicycle also told the brigade. One appliance each from Norwood and the city extinguished the blaze within a few minutes. Mrs. Padfield's purse containing about £6, which had been left on the mantelpiece above the fireplace, was destroyed.

News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Thursday 25 September 1947, page 3

Tranmere Home Fire Damage



CHARRED REMAINS of a sewing machine and other furniture in the study of the home of Mr. E. W. Padfield, at the corner of Magill road and Emerson grove, Tranmere. Damage estimated at £350 was done to the study and a passage when fire broke out early today.