

## Bridgewater Fire Brigade

A collection of newspaper articles and snippets from history books are included in this text to tell the story of the brigade.

1909

***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Friday 1 January 1909, page 2***

### FIRE AT BRIDGEWATER.

In the small hours of Monday morning a fire occurred at Bridgewater and destroyed a stable, storeroom, implements. &c., belonging to Mr. H. Lehman. The loss is estimated at over £20. The owner was spending the holidays at Callington, and incendiarism is suspected. The police have the matter in hand.

***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Friday 29 October 1909, page 2***

### BRIDGEWATER MILL.

#### DESTROYED BY FIRE.

On Tuesday morning that familiar old landmark, the Bridgewater Mill, was destroyed by fire. The origin of the outbreak is a mystery. The premises were left securely locked at 6 o'clock on Monday evening, and for a week previously no lights had been taken into the building. The first that was known of the fire was when, about 4.30 a.m. on Tuesday, Mr. J. Pepper, landlord of the Bridgewater Hotel, was awakened by a noise and on looking out of his window found the building in flames. The alarm was given at once, and although 40 or 50 residents were quickly on the scene nothing could be done to save the building and costly plant and a large stock of flour (150 tons), bran (10 tons), pollard (4 tons), oats (50 bags), and sacks (3000 or 4000). A stack of about 1000 bags of wheat, as well as the engine and boiler used when the water supply was not sufficient to drive the wheel, were, however, saved as a result of very hard work and the taking of great risks by the men. The iron water wheel was not seriously damaged. The loss is estimated at £5000, and the insurances, which were on the main building and plant, amount to only £1500. The mill was built in 1852 by the late Hon. John Dunn, of Mount Barker; was purchased and remodelled, by Messrs. Gill. Gellert & Co. seven years ago; and was taken over three years since by Mr. F. P. Knight, in conjunction with Mr. J. W. Walker, of Mannum, and Mr. J. Standen, of Murray Bridge. Much regret is expressed on all sides at the severe loss caused by the fire.

1912

***Observer (Adelaide, SA : 1905 - 1931), Saturday 27 January 1912, page 52***

### BRIDGEWATER PROPERTIES IN DANGER

#### CHECK FIRES SUCCESSFUL.

While a thousand railway employees were enjoying a picnic on Sunday on the recreation ground at the pretty hills township of Bridgewater the residents of the neighbourhood were making a stubborn fight with a large bush fire over the rise on the other side of the railway line not a mile away. A few of the picnickers who strolled around to view the sights were

privileged to see the fire fiend in its most awesome impressiveness making havoc of the scrub at an alarming rate. The outbreak started on Friday, having got away into the bush from where a gang of men were burning rubbish on each side of the railway line. Until Sunday afternoon it smouldered and blazed here and there, and required little attention to keep it in check. Then a strong wind sprang up, sent the flames into tall timber, and from tree to tree they spread with incredible swiftness. The noise of the fire was like that of a heavily loaded train rushing along. Residents heard it when they were taking their Sunday siestas, and, knowing its fearful import, turned out in force to check its progress. The fire ran up a wide gully with a flame front half a mile wide.

—Fighting Fire with Fire.—

The residence of Mr. E. Fuchs, carter was right in the line of devastation. Mr. Fuchs was away from home, but neighbours persuaded his wife that the safety of the dwelling could be assured only by the use of check fires in the scrub near to the house. In a trice those were lighted and sent surging through the underbush to meet the advancing terror. The precaution was taken not a moment too soon. The check fire had not travelled more than 50 yards against the wind before the other, coming on at a great speed, met it. There was a quarter of an hour's anxiety, and then the fire-fighters, satisfied that the cottage and an adjacent stack of hay were out of danger, were ready to answer a loud "coo-ee" from a little wattle-and-daub dwelling a quarter of a mile away. Meanwhile a patch of ploughed land on the Fuchs's property had done something to stay the flames, and the wind also turned a little, so that the second dwelling escaped. It was reported that the house of Mr. Gilbert, a local carpenter, was in the midst of the burnt country, and anxiety was felt for its safety, as it could not be approached from the Bridgewater side. Fears were soon set at rest by men from the other direction, who said the occupant had secured immunity from trouble by lighting an opposing fire.

—The Battle on the Ridge.—

The onrushing flames had now reached the road skirting the crown of the hill, and the company, with gumboughs, spades, and axes, spread themselves out along a mile of highway, bent on preventing it from getting into the properties on the other side of the road, where there are a number of dwellings. Several times it looked as though their efforts would be futile, for burning boughs blew over and caused new outbreaks. The fighters, in a dense smoke that made the eyes smart, and in a heat that produced intense thirst, work hard and successfully to extinguish these fresh bursts. Meanwhile the fire was renewed near to its original starting point, and considerable energy from a band of toilers, was required to stay its progress before it could reach the schoolhouse and several residences. It was finally checked in that part when less than 100 yards from the public school.

—Two-Story House in Danger.—

Among the beaters were Messrs. A. E. Davey, J. B. Hughes, F. V. Joyner, and E. K. Thomas, who have summer residences in the vicinity. While Mr. Davey was employed in watching that a lot of driftwood might not carry the fire across the road, the men further along decided that nothing but another large check could make certain that the well-known miller's two-story cottage would not be destroyed. Accordingly another acre or so of scrub was offered up as a burnt sacrifice to the advancing flames, which leaped and roared and crackled ominously. There was another period of considerable anxiety, followed by relief as

the danger passed. Another lull, and 100 yards away fire appeared in the top of a tall stringybark tree. This was the signal for the axe to be applied, or the high flames would probably undo all that had been accomplished. A couple of stalwart woodcutters made short work of the 18-in. of trunk diameter that had to be got through before a tall solitary tree that would have delighted the eye of a Corot fell with a crash, shivered into many pieces. The battle was now at an end, al-though the locality will need watching in case of fresh outbreaks.

—Premises in Danger.—

The following premises were at one time or another in immediate danger:—The public schoolhouse and the residences of Miss Steer, Misses Wigs. Mrs. Gee. and Messrs. E. Fuchs, A. E. Davey, and Gilbert. A number of ladies gave welcome service in providing water and tea to relieve the thirst of the fire fighters, and ran considerable personal risk in performing, their self-imposed task. They included Mrs. Davey and Misses Casely, Davey and Jordan.

—Previous Fires.—

Sunday's fire was the largest known in the district since four years ago another of similar dimensions threatened a homestead, much of the furniture of which was saved from destruction by being thrown down a well. More than 30 years since a large fire visited the district, having started near to Burnside, and travelled over all the intervening country. That could not happen again, owing to the large areas of cultivated land in the way. On that occasion the residence at Bridgewater of Lady Hanson, widow of the late Sir R. D. Hanson, was destroyed.

***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Friday 13 September 1912, page 2***

THUNDERBOLT AT BRIDGEWATER.

On Thursday. September 5, at about 6.35 p.m., a sensation was caused near Bridgewater during a storm. A thunder-bolt struck the corner of a dwelling owned by Mr. Juett, and occupied by an aged couple named Walsh. The lightning appears to have struck the south-west corner and to have removed about 2 or 3 cwt. of masonry from the outside of the building, while both front windows were smashed to pieces. The front door, which had been locked, was forced open and all the glass ornaments in the rooms were broken, while the wires in the fence around the house all bore traces of having come into contact with fire, while a small window in the back of the house also presented the appearance of having been struck by lightning.

1921

***Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Monday 14 February 1921, page 5***

THE MIDSUMMER MENACE.

Exciting Bush Fire at Bridgewater.

A disastrous bush fire broke out on the Bridgewater property of Mr. J. B. Hughes, of St. Peters, at about 10 o'clock on Saturday morning. Mr. Hughes has recently planted groves of English and Tasmanian trees, and was busy watering them, when he noticed smoke coming up his gully from the direction of the Deanery Reserve. Knowing his neighbours in this

direction to be thoroughly dependable men, and thinking it too early in the day for pic-nickers, he went on unsuspectingly with his work, but the smoke became so dense that he went down the gully to make sure that no accident had happened. He was shocked to find the north-west corner of his property, adjoining the Deanery Reserve, well alight. Starting at once with the aid of green boughs, He had considerable success in confining the blaze, until, at about 11.30 a.m., the wind veered round to the east, and all his former work was undone. He received splendid assistance from Messrs. Charles Hicks, Joseph Gates, and Charles Ashhurst, who had had considerable experience in fire fighting and were soon hard at work, but the intense heat and the strong, wind made human effort almost vain. Most of Mr. Hughes's country is stringy bark forest, with a few acres cleared and planted in its centre. A part only of this, and his week-end cabin and sheds were saved by strenuous effort, but the rest, which is one of the beauty spots of the hills, is now pure desolation. From the moment when the tree tops caught and roared from one to another, all hope of controlling the flames was lost. In its initial direction the fire ran through White Gum Valley, and jumped several roads, and did some damage in the properties of Capt. Balleine and Mr. Bitmead. With the change of wind it swept through the properties of Dr. Frank Hone. Mrs. Fowler Stewart, and the Misses Hill, jumped the main road near the railway station, and tore through the scrub adjoining the property of the Misses Wiar. Fortunately gardens and orchards saved these houses, but a lot of fencing has been destroyed. The men of the district, among whom Mr. A. T. Chaplin was prominent, deserve cordial commendation for the determination with which they fought the flames. About 60 fire fighters were at work when the conflagration was at its height, and it is a tribute to their energy and skill that the damage was not more extensive.

1923

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Wednesday 4 April 1923, page 8***

#### BUSH FIRE AT BRIDGEWATER.

Considerable excitement was caused at Bridgewater on Tuesday morning by a fire which broke out on Mr. T.C. Wollaston's, property. This is situated about a mile from the Bridgewater railway station. The dry grass and undergrowth were soon well alight, and the flames travelled with remarkable rapidity. After traversing Mr. Wollaston's property the fire spread to that of Mr. E. Kyffin Thomas, and it was feared that the house with its sheds and out-buildings would be destroyed. A number of residents and visitors, however, prevented damage to the buildings. The property of Mr. A. T. Chaplin was next attacked, but here again the firefighters were able to divert the course of the flames just in the nick of time. Late on Tuesday afternoon it was reported that the fire was burning among the thick bush country on Mount George, at the back of Mr. Kyffin Thomas' house. No immediate danger to property was anticipated, but a careful look-out was being kept and breaks had been burned in anticipation of any sudden change in the direction of the wind.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Saturday 14 April 1923, page 16***

#### BUSHFIRES AT BRIDGEWATER.

A correspondent writes:—The residents of Bridgewater have recently been troubled by a number of bush fires. Al-most daily they have been engaged in fighting fires, presumably lit by thought-less persons. The fiercest fire known for some time, however, broke out on Friday, and the fact that no great damage was done was largely due to a band of fire-

fighters, who worked tirelessly to avert disaster. Starting on the northern side of the railway line, the outbreak jeopardised a considerable amount of property in the vicinity of the railway station. Passing the homesteads of Messrs. Jolly, Thompson, Giles, Fielding, it swept on to the public school. The task of preventing serious damage to these properties was strenuous, and the small army of helpers under the direction of Mounted-Constable Correll, of Stirling, worked manfully. Helpers from Verdun, who had followed the track of the fire, also rendered yeo-man service. The dry state of the country helped the fire, as even native shrubs are dying for want of moisture. A fortunate factor in connection with this latest outbreak is that the flames met the path of another fire which ravaged the country 12 months ago. The fire has now gone in the direction of Carey's Gully, but fortunately most of its fury is spent.

1925

***News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Thursday 5 November 1925, page 2***

#### MOTOR LORRY DESTROYED

##### Fire Near Bridgewater

A motor lorry belonging to Mr. H. G. Broadbent, of Murray Bridge, was completely destroyed by fire last night at 10.15 o'clock at Germantown Hill, near Bridgewater. The lorry was loaded with general merchandise, and was on the way from Murray Bridge to Adelaide. When near the top of the hill it stopped and Mr. Broadbent got down to investigate. He found that the petrol was leaking. Suddenly there was a flash and the lorry was in flames. The whole of the goods were burned, and only the iron framework and wheels of the vehicle were left.

1926

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Tuesday 16 February 1926, page 18***

#### FIRE AT BRIDGEWATER AND MYLOR.

##### A GARDEN THREATENED

Much anxiety was experienced in the Bridgewater and Mylor districts on Sunday by outbreaks of fire, but the direction of the breeze from the north-east to the west materially assisted in the firefighters getting it under control. The fire started about 10 o'clock a little to the south of Bridgewater, and the flames were speedily up Cox's Creek towards Verdun, eating up dense scrub and undergrowth. The property of Mr. J. Hawthorne, a gardener, was seriously threatened, but strenuous work by the firebeaters and the burning of breaks saved it.

***Chronicle (Adelaide, SA : 1895 - 1954), Saturday 27 February 1926, page 51***

#### FIRE AT BRIDGEWATER.

A bush fire of serious dimensions on Saturday swept round the reserve and quarries and menaced the properties of Mr. T. J. Matters, Mr. Wells, Mr. Mar-riot, and Mrs. Rosenthal. Much indignation is expressed that the Prevention of Bush Fires Act is not more rigidly enforced, and that proper control is not enforced when fires are in progress.

1928

***Observer (Adelaide, SA : 1905 - 1931), Saturday 18 February 1928, page 10***

FIRE AT BRIDGEWATER.

Cottage Destroyed.

A fire, the origin of which is a mystery, completely destroyed a five-roomed week-end cottage, at Bridgewater on Sunday night. The discovery was made at about 8.30 o'clock when the fire had a good hold on the cottage. Many residents were soon at the scene of the blaze, but were un-able to do anything to control the flames. The cottage, which was situated on the hill just past The Balconies was named The Camp. It was previously owned by the late Mr. H. Burford, of Yacka, and was unoccupied at the time of the fire. From enquiries made, it is understood that the cottage is still the property of the executors of the late owner's estate.

1929

***Register News-Pictorial (Adelaide, SA : 1929 - 1931), Wednesday 17 April 1929, page 2***

Bushfire Near Bridgewater

A bushfire started in Cathedral Park, near Bridgewater, late on Monday night. It spread into the properties of Dr. F. S. Hone and Miss Florence Hill. Residents of Bridgewater fought the fire and saved the threatened residences.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Wednesday 17 April 1929, page 13***

FIRE AT BRIDGEWATER.

HOMES IN DANGER.

TOWNSHIP THREATENED.

About 11 a.m. yesterday dense volumes of smoke and the roar of flames aroused residents in the Bridgewater district. The school and homes of Mr. J. Steirs, Mrs. McIvor. and Mr. Balliene lay directly in the path of the fire. Many firefighters were soon at work, and succeeded, after a strenuous time, in saving those properties from immediate danger. While the men were resting a change of wind swept the fire on to the properties of Dr. F. S. Hone and Mrs. Fowler Stewart, and the struggle be-came very severe, the fire reaching within a few feet of Dr. Hone's residence and sheds and threatening the house of Mrs. Stewart. Men now arrived in large numbers, as the centre of the township was menaced. By their efforts, and using a road to full advantage, the fire was overcome. Dr. Hone lost numerous valuable trees and shrubs and many fence posts. Turning, the fire swept the property of Mr. Hughes and the Deanery Reserve.

***Register News-Pictorial (Adelaide, SA : 1929 - 1931), Thursday 18 April 1929, page 2***

ANOTHER BUSH FIRE AT BRIDGEWATER

Were they Deliberately Started?

The third dangerous bush fire at Bridge-water this year, broke out yesterday at the foot of Mount George in the wild uncultivated property of Mr. T. C. Wollaston. Burning against a south-westerly breeze, it approached the properties of Messrs. E. Kyffin Thomas and R.

Kennedy. Firefighters rushed to the most dangerous points, and breaks were burned to safeguard the houses. The flames roared through the under-growth and trees within a hundred yards of the houses and into the scrub of Mr. A. T. Chaplin, adjoining his orchards. Checked on all sides near houses, it was burning last night up Mount George through scrub country towards the homes of Messrs. S. Ashurst and Gray, which were in imminent danger of being wiped out in March. Yesterday a large block of country about a quarter of a mile nearer the township was burnt out by a fierce blaze, and local residents believe that the fires have been deliberately started—probably by people who wished to clear their holdings of undergrowth.

***Observer (Adelaide, SA : 1905 - 1931), Saturday 27 April 1929, page 22***

#### ANOTHER BUSH FIRE AT BRIDGEWATER

##### Were They Deliberately Started?

The third dangerous bush fire at Bridgewater this year broke out on Wednesday last week at the foot of Mount George in the wild, uncultivated property of Mr. T. C. Wollaston. Burning against a south-westerly breeze, it approached the properties of Messrs. E. Kyffin Thomas and R. Kennedy. Firefighters rushed to the most dangerous points, and breaks were burned to safeguard the houses. The flames roared through the under-growth and trees within a hundred yards of the houses and into the scrub of Mr. A. T. Chaplin, adjoining his orchards. Checked on all sides near houses, it was burning last night up Mount George through scrub country towards the homes of Messrs. S. Ashurst and Gray, which were in imminent danger of being wiped out in March. On Wednesday a large block of country about a quarter of a mile nearer the township was burnt out by a fierce blaze, and local residents believe that the fires have been deliberately started—probably by people who wished to clear their holdings of undergrowth.

1931

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Thursday 19 February 1931, page 6***

#### OUTBREAK NEAR BRIDGEWATER

On Tuesday a bushfire raged fiercely on the properties of Messrs. Martin, Fuchs, the late E. Guartern, and Ashby and Fowler. On the estate of the late Mr. Guartern a cowshed was burnt, and much fencing was destroyed. The scrub and undergrowth were thick, and the firefighters had to retire to the Bridgewater and Carey's Gully-road and burn breaks along the edge for some distance. Houses and gardens were protected by a large number of men from all parts of the district. With the aid of the wind the fire was turned towards unoccupied country eastward.

1934

***News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Saturday 10 March 1934, page 1***

#### HUGE BUSHFIRE SWEEPS GULLY NEAR BRIDGEWATER

##### THREE HOMES AND CONTENTS DESTROYED DESPERATE BATTLE TO SAVE OTHERS

##### Ambleside in Path



The bushfires, which have been smouldering for three days near Bridgewater, broke out fiercely this morning between 9 and 10 o'clock. They were fanned by a strong north-east wind and swept along the Cox's Creek Gully. About 200 men are fighting the flames. Three houses about half a mile back from the Vimy Ridge service station were completely gutted, in spite of the frantic efforts of about 50 firefighters to hold back the wall of flame. Nothing remains of the houses and their furniture save the heaps of charred timber and twisted iron. The houses were owned by Messrs Germain, Biggs, and B. White. They all faced Wattle street, a little side track leading toward Cox's Gully.

Only a few hundred yards away from the houses destroyed in Cox's Creek Gully there were several other homes used mainly at the weekend. The flames beat right up to the walls of these houses. The flames are now beating strongly up Cox's Gully in the direction of Ambleside. It is seriously feared that the force of more than 200 men who are working in front of the wall of flame, which is more than a mile wide, might not be able to check its devastating course. There are no roads or tracks crossing the path of the flame on which the fighters could burn back fire-breaks. If it gets away from them it seems that the flames may sweep right into the thickly populated town of Mount Barker.

1936

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Wednesday 1 April 1936, page 22***

#### BUSH FIRE AT BRIDGEWATER

Several Properties In Danger

BRIDGEWATER, March 31.

Several properties were in danger as a result of a bush fire which broke out north of Bridgewater today. The flames leapt round the boundary of the Bridgewater Public School, and burnt a shadehouse and a plantation of 40 kinds of wattles, which the school committee had been working for two years to establish. The fire started near Mount George, close to the Mount Lofty golf links, and then continued behind Fox Hill, the property of the late Mr. E. Kyffin Thomas, crossed the Carey's Gully road, and after passing the school was stopped near Mrs. E. M. Trenouth's property. The houses in danger included those at Fox Hill, Messrs. T. Chaplin's, C. Hicks. Dr. F. S. Hone's, and the Karkoo Nursery. Because of the organisation of the Stirling fire-fighting Association, the alarm officer at the Stirling telephone exchange quickly had every available man on the scene, and the fire was confined to an area one and a half miles long, and about 400 to 600 yards wide. The Stirling District Council also rushed a motor lorry load of men to the scene. Several chains of fencing, and a large amount of scrub were burnt. The value of organised fire-fighting was well demonstrated, remarkably good work being done with knapsack equipment. The district fire-fighting outfit had its first serious test, and proved successful. The Stirling Council employees were under the direction of Messrs. S. Mosel and T. Oliver. Mounted-Constables Mertin and Noblet directed groups at danger points, and the Mylor unit of the District Fire-fighting Association did effective work. The fire was still burning last night in a northerly direction towards Carey's Gully, but its progress was not so alarming as before.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Monday 7 December 1936, page 21***

#### REPORTS FROM RURAL CENTRES



## BRIDGEWATER

The Centenary committee has made favourable and final arrangements with the District Council of Stirling in respect to the future of the gardens and shrubberies now established. An agreement was reached whereby a local committee of management will receive from the council an annual grant of £25. The facilities afforded by Mr. W. J. Rudd's water supply, from the same source and pipe scheme, a roadside fire fighting supply of water will be made available when finance allows the Centenary committee to complete its scheme.

1938

***Chronicle (Adelaide, SA : 1895 - 1954), Thursday 17 February 1938, page 44***

### BRIDGEWATER FIRE

Houses And School In Danger

1,000 ACRES OF BUSH BURNT

Efforts by 100 volunteers saved several homes and the Bridgewater school from a bushfire which raged in a densely-timbered gully near Bridgewater on Monday. Although the flames reached the fence of one home and the hedge of another, they were prevented from spreading further by the burning of breaks. The fire fighters were also assisted when the wind dropped about 3.30 p.m.

The fire, which began at Yantaringa, near Verdun, had almost burnt itself out by 4.30 p.m., after having swept through about 1,000 acres of bush. Heavy clouds of smoke, rising to about 500 feet, could be seen from Adelaide, and the flames in the gully reached nearly to the tops of the big gum trees, many of which crashed to the ground, adding to the noise caused by the roar of the fire. Calls for assistance, which were broadcast, were answered promptly from the surrounding districts, and even when the fire was out men who had heard the radio appeals arrived from as far away as Semaphore. Serious alarm was not felt until about 2 p.m., when the fire was descending the eastern side of the gully, about half a mile or so from the Bridgewater school and the houses situated nearby on the crest of the western slope. Before the fire was checked the hedge of the home of Mr. E. M. Trenouth, near the school, was burned, as was the fence of Mr. E. W. Fielding's residence. Other homes threatened included those occupied by the Thompson, Giles, Gilbert, and Morphett families. The firefighters were helped by the fact that Mr. Fielding had burned 15-foot breaks round his property. Among those who directed the fire fighting were Mr. Shannon, M.P., Mounted Constable Parker (Stirling), and Messrs. T. Shanks (Aldgate). S. Hampton, House, A. H. Rudd, and H. R. Jarrett. Gardeners equipped with pump sprays were sent from Mount Lofty by Mrs. Dudley Turner. Many visitors have been picking blackberries in the district, and residents believe that some of these might have accidentally caused the blaze.

***Mail (Adelaide, SA : 1912 - 1954), Saturday 26 November 1938, page 2***

Fight to Quell Scrub Fire

SCRUB FIRE IN HILLS

Men Battle For Four Hours Between Vimy Ridge, Verdun

WOODED COUNTRY RAZED; SHACK BURNT DOWN

After a four hour fight by between 100 and 150 men, a scrub fire between Vimy Ridge and Verdun was quelled today. But it had razed thousands of acres of wooded country, burnt down a shack on Germantown Hill, and threatened several week-end cottages.

THOUGH its destructive force was halted by 1 p.m., the firefighters spent most of the afternoon beating flames from the smouldering trunks of trees. They stood on ladders, slapping the tree-trunks with wet bags. Meanwhile watchmen were stationed at vantage points over the front of the fire, so that an immediate warning could be given if the outbreak flared anew. The fire was smouldering in still weather about 2 a.m. today, but with the morning a strong breeze sprang up, fanning the dull glow to blazing life. It spread rapidly. From Mr. E. Grivell's paddock the fire sprang east, leaping from tree-top to tree-top, to the main Mount Barker road. Though men fought it along the road, flying sparks from the tree-tops set alight dry bush on the Vimy Ridge side of the road. As the fire spread, rabbits, their fur ablaze, squealed and died. Young saplings burned through, crashed to the ground, and bark on 50-year-old giants crackled and smouldered. Within half an hour of the outbreak a thick pall of smoke covered Bridgewater, Vimy Ridge, and Verdun. Afraid that the fire would become uncontrollable, Woodside and Bridgewater volunteer firefighters sent an S.O.S. to City Fire Headquarters. But as no water was available for the fire brigade pumps, the city firemen could not help. For two hours 30 men fought the fire on Vimy Ridge, and stemmed its advance on the weekend cottages of Mr. B. Brewster Jones, Mrs. M. A. Woods, and Mrs. W. Hesper. Fencing was burned, but doggedly the men held the flames from the house walls. Meanwhile, wives of the fighters carried gallons of tea in buckets to quench their thirst. At a cleared paddock belonging to Mr. W. King, the fire stopped, but the wind veered, blowing it back west toward Verdun.

#### Burnt Rapidly

Hastily commandeered, cars took fire fighters halfway down Germantown hill to burn a break, and the fire was driven westward toward a burned-out patch, where a previous fire had raged. For another two hours, the men fought to keep the fire in check. Trucks were used to cart water from Woodside to the blaze, and the Woodside Council's fire sprayers were used to supplement boughs of trees. The men were marvellous, said Mrs. W. Fennell, who helped to fight the fire, today. If they had not worked so hard, many homes would have been burnt to the ground. "As it is, the fire has not done very much damage, and, as it has cleared the country, it has made our minds easier for the rest of the summer."

THOUSANDS OF ACRES between Vimy Ridge and Verdun were swept today by a scrub fire which had been whipped into blazing life by a strong breeze. The fire extended over a two-mile front and at one stage between 100 and 150 men were fighting the blaze. The flooring of this shack caught alight and one of the volunteers is seen using his portable equipment to quench the flames.

***Chronicle (Adelaide, SA : 1895 - 1954), Thursday 1 December 1938, page 17***

#### SCRUB FIRE ON VIMY RIDGE

##### Volunteers Fight Blaze

Several hundred acres of scrub land and a quantity of fencing were burnt by a fire which raged on Vimy Ridge, Bridgewater from early on Saturday morning until about 2 p.m. About 70 men, directed by Mounted Constables Copeland and Mutch, of Bridgewater, fought the

blaze, which was prevented from spreading. Although little damage to property was caused, the fire crossed the Mount Barker road on Vimy Ridge and at one time menaced several unoccupied week-end shacks. Water was carted from Woodside in trucks to the firefighters, who used hand sprays and boughs of trees. Councillor J. Spear, of the Woodside Council, took his council's sprayer to the Verdun section of the fire, and headed it off into cleared country. At one stage, when the blaze appeared likely to get out of control, bushfire volunteers from Bridgewater and Woodside called Fire Brigade headquarters in Adelaide. As no water was available for the brigade's pumps, the city firemen could not help. To prevent the flames from being rekindled, volunteers later extinguished many burning trees. The area which had been swept by the fire was drenched by rain on Saturday night.

1942

***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Thursday 16 April 1942, page 3***

#### BRIDGEWATER

##### —Fire—

Lighting the copper and then going back into the house, led to the destruction of Mrs. W. Fraser's wash-house and all its contents the other morning. A spark must have ignited a near-by heap of light wood, and the resultant outbreak was first noticed by a neighbor, who called to the owner, but she was too late to save anything. Damage was estimated at about £30, other than the building. A valuable lot of tools in an adjoining shed were saved, but were badly scorched.

1947

***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Thursday 20 February 1947, page 1***

#### FIRE AT FLOUR MILL

##### Prompt Action Saves Day

A FIRE which broke out in the flour mill of the Bridgewater Milling Co. on Tuesday last caused damage estimated at several hundred pounds. It is believed to have been caused by spontaneous combustion. Some of the employees of the mill said they noticed the smell of something burning and shortly afterwards part of the dust collector burst into flames.

The workmen began fighting the blaze with meagre equipment while the Mount Barker and Woodside Fire Brigades were summoned. When the brigades arrived the fire was fairly well under control.

Mr. Jarrett, manager of the mill, said that it was impossible to ascertain the actual amount of damage done at present but some of the machines, chutes and belting were burnt although the main damage was confined to the roof of the building.

Mr. Henderson, of Adelaide, had a narrow escape from serious injury when a piece of burning timber thrown from the roof by the fire fighters struck him on the back, tearing his suit and leaving several bruises.

Mr. Jarrett was profound in his praise of the equipment and promptness of the Mount Barker Fire Brigade and members of Woodside, and expressed his appreciation of their willing aid.

***Chronicle (Adelaide, SA : 1895 - 1954), Thursday 20 February 1947, page 3***

**Bridgewater Mill Damaged By Fire**

Damage estimated at several hundred pounds was caused by a fire which occurred on the third floor of the historic 86-year-old mill of the Bridgewater Milling Co., Bridgewater, on Tuesday afternoon. The mill will be idle for some weeks because of damage done to machines, conveyors, shutes and belting. About 15 employees will be affected.

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***News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Thursday 12 February 1948, page 1***

**1 DEAD, 2 INJURED AS FIRE RAGES**

**6 Homes At Bridgewater Burnt Down**

A linesman was electrocuted and two fellow-workmen were injured while attempting repairs to a fire-damaged electric light pole outside Bridgewater Hotel today. Power lines had been brought down by a disastrous bushfire which began at 11 a.m., and which razed six Bridgewater homes, causing damage estimated at nearly £10,000. Simultaneously, another fire broke out in scrub country near Mylor. Others were reported from Long Gully and Heathfield, near Aldgate.

The victims were:— Killed. — George Whitbread, about 45, senior linesman, of Stirling, killed instantly. Injured.—Walter Searle, 42, linesman's driver, of Stirling, severe burns to body and legs; Don Erlandsen, 23, of Bridgewater, burns to right arm and shoulder. The injured men are in Stirling Hospital. One was seriously injured when he was hurled 30 ft. after touching the live wires.

The Bridgewater fire broke out near Karapook Siding— close to Bridgewater—just after a train had passed through. It had reached the outskirts of the town at 11 a.m., when firefighters first attacked it. Fanned by fairly strong northerlies, it burst through the back of the town, and while fire-fighters were being urgently summoned from nearby districts and from the city, it had engulfed six homes.

**300 Fight Flames**

The fire spread to Vimy Ridge, where the brick and stone home of Messrs. A. and C. Thompson was gutted. Others who lost their houses were Mr. F. W. C. Rieck, who has unsuccessfully stood for State Parliament, Mr. Bert Matters, and Sister L. G. Caporn. Two other holiday homes were also destroyed. Homes damaged include those of Mr. Joe Anderson, on whose property 15 tons of firewood was destroyed. A garage, shed, and balcony at the rear of the Bridgewater Hotel were flame damaged.

An emergency call was answered by metropolitan police and Inspector Bonython rushed 20 junior constables to help more than 300 firefighters from surrounding districts. Mrs. T. W. Breynard, of Main road, Aldgate, said the fire passed within 400 yards of their homestead. It moved so swiftly it nearly caught Billy Hawthorn, aged seven, who lived nearby. The

Bridgewater fire was brought under control early this afternoon. At Mylor the fire was in scrub country.

#### Power Line Alive

Erlandsen, one of the men hurt at Bridgewater, would have been more severely injured had he been strapped to the pole as Whitbread and Searle were. He was thrown from a ladder about 20 ft. to the ground Whitbread took the full shock of 33,000 volts. Searle, who was standing on the cross sign above him, slumped over the top crossbar and hung there for nearly a quarter of an hour while the power was shut off and Whitbread extricated. In Stirling Hospital later Erlandsen said all he remembered was touching the pole with his shoulder, and being thrown off the ladder. "I had just climbed the ladder to hand some tools to Whitbread when, for some unknown reason, a high tension line became alive," Erlandsen said. "We had been touching this line only a few seconds before, and it was quite dead. "It's possible the line was livened when another line came down across it away from us. I know the power had been shut off before we started work." Whitbread was a married man with three children. He had lived in Stirling for many years.

#### ***News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Friday 13 February 1948, page 12***

##### Fire Inquiry Being Held By Railways

Full inquiries are being held by the Railways Department into the causes of fires that have occurred near railway property. These include yesterday's outbreak in the Bridgewater area. Actual causes of three separate fires have not yet been established. A railways official said spark arresters used on South Australian railways had been continually improved upon in the past 20 years, particularly in conformity with latest American developments. No Leigh Creek coal was used south of Terowie in the summer, as it was considered too dangerous because of sparks in heavily grassed areas.

Police officers have been sent to the hills districts to inquire into yesterday's fires. They will report to the City Coroner (Mr. Cleland), who will decide whether an inquiry will be held. The Premier (Mr. Playford) said today the Bushfire Committee would be called together to consider cases of hardship. The committee already had at its disposal a substantial sum of money, but if this proved inadequate, further assistance would be provided by the Government to meet all hardship cases.

##### Train Sparks Blamed

Train sparks are stated by emergency fire services to have caused 22 out of 75 fires since last November, says a report by the Civil Defence Commissioner (Col. Shaw). The report, submitted to the Premier (Mr. Playford), does not include yesterday's fires. Causes of the fires are given as train sparks 22 (29.3 per cent.), tractors, lorries, and reaping machinery 17 (22.7 per cent), other causes 19 (25.3 per cent.), unknown 17 (22.7 per cent.). Four cases of children starting fires when playing with matches are reported. Col. Shaw said firebreaks should be ploughed along railway lines, and roadways should be kept clear of weeds. When the Weather Bureau notified a day of high fire risk, firebreaks along railways should be patrolled either by knap-sack spray men or small mobile fire units when trains were passing.

##### Fire Lessons Seen

The Director of Emergency Fire Services (Mr. T. J. Meaney) said today important lessons were to be learnt from yesterday's fires. On days such as yesterday when fire risk was great it was important that either the Commissioner of Civil Defence or Director of Emergency Fire Services should be notified when trailer pumps and equipment left their districts for fires in adjacent areas. Delay in calling for trailer pumps was serious. Norwood emergency fire service, with its trailer pump, if called to the Bridgewater area yesterday, could have rendered valuable aid in maintaining water supplies from the creek to trailer pump units from Woodside and Mount Barker.

People calling fire services had a tendency to leave their telephones after making the first call. They should have their telephones manned so any further information required could be got. Fire supervisors or district clerks were looked upon as means of contact, and at no time should they be out of reach. Wireless seemed to be the only complete answer to the problem of communication, he added.

***Chronicle (Adelaide, SA : 1895 - 1954), Thursday 19 February 1948, page 7***

**7 Homes Burnt, Man Killed. In Bridgewater Fire**

At least seven homes were burned, out, valuable orchards and vegetable gardens were destroyed and a linesman lost his life repairing damaged wires at Bridgewater in a disastrous bushfire last Thursday.

The area devastated extends from Bridgewater through Vimy Ridge (or Germantown Hill) to near Hahndorf, and damage estimated at many thousands of pounds was caused. Hundreds of volunteers from Adelaide and the hills fought the fire for several hours. Damage estimated at nearly £10,000 was caused.

Local residents said that the fire, fanned by an exceptionally strong wind, raced across the country at such high speed that firefighters were powerless to combat it. At times knapsack sprays were useless on the fire front. The fire is reported to have begun near Bridgewater about 10.30 a.m. The area damaged by the bushfire is considered one of the show places of the Mount Lofty Ranges Bridgewater, which has a population of about 600 people, suffered severely. Near the backdoor of a home in the township the flames reached a height estimated at 40 feet. PMG lines and electric wires were destroyed where the fire crossed the road near the Bridgewater Hotel. Among those whose homes were destroyed are Messrs. A. Thompson), Claude McNicol, Percy J. Neice (all of Vimy Ridge), J. N. Bald, and Frank Rieck. Mrs. B. Matters, and Sister L. G. Caporn (Bridgewater).

**Jumps Road**

The fire jumped the Mount Barker road to envelope Mr. Rieck's home. His wife and seven children escaped with only the clothes they were wearing. Everything else was burnt. Mr. Rieck was absent at the time. Mr. Rieck stood at the last Federal and State elections. Four men rushed to Mr. Thompson's home and carried him out when a woman neighbor gave the alarm that he was ill in bed. Mr. Thompson was wearing pyjamas and a pair of slippers, one of which caught fire from a falling piece of burning timber. While Mr. Neill was trying to save a neighbor's house, his own home and all his belongings were burned. Mrs. C. Kreihn, who keeps house for her father, Mr. F. R. Schumacher, 78, of Bridge-water, was badly burnt about the arms and face.

Appeal Committee Formed

SA Country Fire Service Promotions Unit  
www.fire-brigade.asn.au  
27 August 2025

An appeal to aid victims of last week's fire at Bridgewater was launched at a public meeting in the Bridgewater Institute on Monday night. The meeting appointed a committee of 14 local residents to co-operate with the Hills Bush-fire Relief Fund Committee and decided that all business premises in the town, the Stirling District Council office, and the homes of Mrs. M. Olson and Mr. D. P. Lees be made depots for the receipt of clothing. It was reported that a "marvellous response" had already been made with clothing and bedding and that all victims had been accommodated temporarily. Before the meeting ended, more than £130 had been given or promised.

#### Money-Raising Plans

At the suggestion of Mr. A. R. Downer, the meeting decided to allocate two-thirds of the proceeds of the Bridgewater Improvement Committee's annual fete in Mr. Downer's garden on February 28 to the fund. The proceeds normally would have gone to the Bridgewater Improvement Committee. Promises of concerts, picture nights and other forms of entertainment to raise money for the fund were accepted by the meeting. The committee appointed was:— Messrs. Shannon MP, D. P. Lees, F. L. Smerdon, F. A. Halliday, W Nicholls, M. Vincent, E. Fielding, A. R. Downer, and R. S. Thomas, Mesdames M. Olson (secretary), N. Jarrett, Warren, T. Duane and Kelly. Those wishing to subscribe to the fund may send contributions to the committee, care of the Minister of Agriculture's office, Flinders street. Adelaide. A meeting of the Hills Bush-fire Relief Committee will be held tonight to consider help for all recent fire victims.

***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Thursday 19 February 1948, page 1***

#### FUND OPENED FOR RELIEF OF DISTRESSED FAMILIES AT BRIDGEWATER

##### Contributions May be Sent to "Courier" Office

CONTRIBUTIONS ARE ALREADY COMING IN STEADILY FOR RELIEF OF FAMILIES RENDERED HOMELESS BY THE DISASTROUS FIRE WHICH OCCURRED LAST THURSDAY. GIFTS OF MONEY OR CLOTHING SENT TO THIS OFFICE WILL BE ACKNOWLEDGED THROUGH THESE COLUMNS AND FORWARDED TO THE BRIDGEWATER COMMITTEE IN CHARGE OF THE FUND.

BESIDES Mount Barker and Woodside Brigades hundreds of residents throughout the Hills districts were rushed to the scene from factories and shops by trucks, cars and taxi to help quell the fire which could easily have razed the complete Hills districts.

The Adelaide road and the Onkaparinga river were the vantage points of fire-fighters once the fire had passed over Vimy Ridge, and although the fire jumped the river in places the fighters were able to keep it in control.

Work of the ladies in the district was magnificent. At Mount Barker the fire station was the receiving depot for hundreds of gallons of tea sent in by private housewives and members of the C.W.A. who were out in full force. Sandwiches were also sent and the brigade tenders its special thanks for the utmost co-operation received, without which it is probable the fire would not have been brought under control so speedily.

A crowded meeting was held in the Bridgewater institute on Monday evening last to consider what steps could be taken to relieve the distress caused by the recent disastrous



bushfire that swept through Bridgewater area on the previous Thursday, when so many families lost everything except what they were wearing.

Details were given at the meeting of the work that had been done up to that time. Right from the commencement a depot had been opened at the home of Mr. D. P. Lees and clothing of all descriptions began to pour in; in fact Mr. Lees stated that he was considering having a cooling system placed on his telephone, so great were the calls and promises of the public have been wonderful. There is still a long way to go however before the objective is reached and any household effects of all kinds will be fully appreciated and put to good use.

On Sunday all goods received up to that time were taken out and distributed all the children being fitted out with clothes for the time being. The winter is just around the corner, however, and warmer clothes will be required.

A strong committee was appointed and the next meeting was held on Wednesday evening. The ladies of the committee have formed themselves into an entertainment committee and one of the first events will be a Leap Year Ball.

At the meeting it was disclosed that over £268 had been raised whilst a collection taken at the door realised £13/0/1. Subscriptions to the fund can be forwarded to Mr. D. P. Lees (treasurer) or Mrs. M. Olson (secretary) at Bridgewater. At present it is difficult to acknowledge gifts to the fund but wherever possible this will be done. Mr. Moss Vincent handed in a donation of £10/ 10/- whilst another person forwarded £5.

Members of the Mt. Barker Volunteer Fire Brigade wish to make known their appreciation to industries of Mt. Barker and the general public for the co-operation and assistance received last Thursday and especially to the ladies who supplied refreshments for the firefighters. Messrs. Gilberts Motors have taken care of billies, tea containers etc. and owners are advised that early collection would be appreciated.

***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Thursday 26 February 1948, page 1***

#### BRIDGEWATER BUSHFIRE RELIEF FUND GROWS

Now Over £300

Response to the appeal for sufferers in the recent bushfire losses at Bridgewater has been wonderful. Clothing is being received from all directions and all victims have been provided for the time being. One country lady forwarded her mother's clothes who had recently passed away in the hope that they would be of service.

A sewing committee has been formed under leadership of Mrs. E. W. Fielding and clothes are being re-made to fit the children; the committee is now well in operation. A central depot by the Bridgewater oval was taken over last Monday and all household goods as they are received will be stored, reconditioned and got ready for the time when the houses are rebuilt.

The Hills Fire Relief Fund committee which was formed some years ago in connection with the Meadows disastrous bushfires has again been brought into operation and through the local committee forms for assistance have been sent out so that all sufferers can forward

their claims which will be investigated by the local committee and recommendations made to the government committee.

Concert parties under Mr. Chas. Millar and a ladies' committee are being organised, the first is to take place at the Bridgewater institute on Saturday night next. On Saturday also Mr. Downer's "Arbury Park" will be opened for a public garden party in the afternoon when all residents of surrounding district are invited. On Tuesday, March 2, a leap year ball will be held in the Bridgewater institute and a good night's entertainment is assured.

The committee offer their special thanks to all who assisted on the day of the fire, the ladies with tea and food, the Mt. Barker and Woodside fire squads and others. Special thanks to "Old Bill" for £5 donation and to "Digger" for his contribution, also a lady anonymous giver of £20.

On Thursday evening last a large meeting was held at Shepherdson's Garage, Vimy Ridge, to form a fire fighting squad, about 86 attending. Dr. H. T. S. Edwards was appointed as chairman and a team of 18 men were selected to form the squad with J. Shepherdson captain, Mr. Moss Vincent deputy captain. A second reserve team was also formed to act in conjunction. It was agreed that application should be made through the Stirling District Council to the Govt. for full fire fighting equipment and an instructor to train the teams. Some of this equipment has already been secured and installed. It was also agreed to erect a siren on Vimy Ridge garage for alarm purposes.

#### THE "COURIER" ACKNOWLEDGES

Ten shillings were handed in by Mr. W. H. Thompson for the relief fund.

#### DESTITUTE FAMILIES TO BE CARED FOR

At the meeting held at Bridgewater on Tuesday night the committee decided to take in the family of Mr. Whitbread who was killed, also the family of Mr. Searle who will be apparently permanently injured. They will do all that is possible to provide for them in every way.

#### DANCE BUSES

For the dance to be held on Tuesday night—the Leap Year ball—Choats bus will leave Crafers at 7.45 and a 1/6 return fare charged. Carr's bus will leave Mount Barker at 8 p.m. and a return fare of 2/- charged. The bus proprietors have intimated that the fare returns will be donated to the distress fund—a very generous offer.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Tuesday 18 May 1948, page 5***

#### BRIDGEWATER FIRE INQUEST

##### Open Finding By Coroner

An open finding on the cause of the bushfire in the Bridgewater district on February 12 was given by the Coroner (Mr. J. W. Corner) in the Stirling West Coroner's Court yesterday. The fire razed four houses, two shacks, fencing and sheds, causing carnage estimated at £20,000. Mr. Corner said that he was satisfied that about 10.30 am. on February 12 a fire started near the Carripook railway siding on the property of Mrs. Mary Chaplin, of Bridgewater. A passenger train from Adelaide to Bridgewater passed that spot about that time, but evidence before him was not sufficient to satisfy him as to how the fire started. Evidence

was given by Ellen Lily May Hasse, home duties, of Bridgewater; Mary Chaplin, home duties, of Bridgewater; Cecelia Emilie Marie Kreihn home duties, of Bridgewater; John Andrew August Francis, engine man, of Bridgewater; Herbert Edgar Cowey, porter, of Bridgewater; and Frank Stanley Wilkinson, loco superintendent, of Newbon street, Nailsworth. Inspector E. L. Bonython, for the Commissioner of Police; Detective-Inspector H. G. Henderson, for the SA Railways commissioner.

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***News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Friday 3 March 1950, page 3***

#### Fire System's "weak links"

Damage amounting to hundreds of thousands of pounds would have been caused by the Adelaide Hills fires of a few days ago if they had not been checked by organised firefighters, the Emergency Fire Services Director (Mr. F. L. Kerr) said today.

He said the days of fighting bushfires with a branch of a tree, or a wet bag, were out. However, there were still weak links in the State's fire-fighting chain. Crafers, Bridgewater, and Aldgate were three of them. It was unfair for people of these areas to expect organised assistance from others, if they were not in a position to give organised assistance to themselves and others.

Mr. Kerr said the residents of Mount Lofty Summit had already acted independently of the Stirling district. One of the Mount Lofty leaders in the move to organise resistance against bushfires was Mr. Basil Harford. He had asked Police Commissioner (Mr. Johns) for a trailer pump, and it was likely to be available within a month. Blackwood had been issued with a trailer pump, and a start had been made with the training of the crews.

***News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Thursday 9 March 1950, page 8***

#### Fire chief on 'weak links'

Reference to some bushfire-fighting units as "weak links" in the State's bushfire chain was not meant to reflect on the firefighters, Emergency Fire Service Director (Mr. F. L. Kerr) said today.

"Individual effort is not weak, but certain districts are poorly equipped compared with others," he said. Mr. Kerr was replying to a letter in "The News" from Mr. J. Shepherdson, District Fire Control Officer, Vimy Ridge Unit, Bridgewater. Mr. Shepherdson said Vimy Ridge, which Mr. Kerr had called a "weak link", had attended the recent fires with equipment supplied to it—a 200-gallon tank and knapsacks—plus privately owned knapsacks and vehicles. Mr. Kerr said today that, although knapsack sprays were an integral part of bushfire equipment, they were hopelessly inadequate for fighting larger fires—in buildings, dwellings, or heavy scrub. Comparison made "The value of power pumps, tankers, radio, jeeps, and first aid units is recognised everywhere," Mr. Kerr said. "Many towns, some of them immediate neighbors of Bridgewater, have these appliances, and trained men to operate them. "Mount Barker has a modern fire station with two up-to-date power tankers, with trained crews on call 24 hours daily. The district has five other power pumps, and three radio transceivers." Mr. Kerr said that at a fire fighting display at Naracoorte recently the small South-East town of Kybybolite fielded 14 fully manned motor appliances, including a radio car. "The equipment was privately owned," he said. "The owners co-operated by

registering the vehicles through the local firefighting association. "Crew members gave up week-day time to attend voluntary practices." Mr. Kerr said that, although the Vimy Ridge Unit had not sought registration, it would be invited to do so. "Members can be assured of our full support," he said. "They share our common interest—fire prevention and protection."

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Tuesday 3 October 1950, page 9***

#### Fire Fighting In Hills Districts

BRIDGEWATER. Sept. 30.

An important step in the development of bushfire protection in the Adelaide hills will be taken on Tuesday night, when there will be a public meeting in the Bridgewater Institute to discuss participation in the Stirling Council area fire service. Speakers from the executive of the service will attend to explain what has been done and to seek donations for the fund to buy additional equipment.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Thursday 5 October 1950, page 12***

#### Hills Fire Services Commended

Warm approval of the development of a bushfire fighting service in the Stirling Council area was expressed yesterday by the director of Emergency Fire Services (Mr. F. L. Kerr). There were already efficient organisations at Hahndorf, Gumeracha and Mount Barker, he added, and when the Stirling organisation completed its plans for a body of trained firefighters with heavy and light equipment at strategic points, these important sections of the Mount Lofty Ranges should be safeguarded.

Mr. Kerr inspected a new motor tank pumper on Tuesday, which will be stationed at Stirling, and a Government trailer pump and hose will be stationed at Mount Lofty Summit within the next few days. The Stirling organisation was linked with the EFS, said Mr. Kerr, and the central organisation would help with training and technical advice. "The existence of a heavy unit and trained crew in the Crafers area will be specially valuable," added Mr. Kerr, "because of its nearness to Waterfall Gully. The gully is a prolific source of fires, and scarcely a summer goes by without a serious outbreak there." The prompt turnout of the Crafers unit would be of great assistance in confining fires to the gully. Bridgewater and Mylor residents would enjoy greater protection from fires like those which had devastated their districts in recent years. About 120 Bridgewater residents attended a meeting in Bridgewater Institute on Tuesday night and decided to form a local committee within the district organisation and to receive gifts for transmission to the executive. Dr. J. Edwards presided, and the district plans were explained by Messrs. G. E. H. Bleby (vice-chairman), J. H. Badge (treasurer), R. W. Gregory and A. Bailey, of the executive of the service. Messrs. F. Halliday and McNichol strongly supported the project.

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***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Thursday 26 July 1951, page 7***

#### Bridgewater Fire Unit

Objects of the recently formed Bridgewater & Districts Fire Unit have been stated by the committee as the raising of funds for the purchase of a motor lorry and any other equipment necessary to maintain an efficient fire-fighting service. The unit is a sub-unit of the Stirling Council Area Fire Service and plans to assist that body in fire-fighting activities in Bridgewater and surrounding districts.

At a meeting of the management committee held on Thursday last plans were drawn up for the following functions:—A house to house collection of empty bottles and scrap metals on Sunday morning 12th Aug; a trading table on a date to be fixed for the sale of daffodils and other cut flowers; a bush-fire week in early November during which there is to be various functions. It is hoped that these activities together with donations which may be paid to the treasurer, Mr. A. L. Vincent, will raise the necessary funds.

***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Thursday 11 October 1951, page 1***

#### Bridgewater and District Fire Unit Activities

In an effort to raise funds to pay for the new fire unit the Bridgewater and districts unit of the Stirling Council area Fire Services are initiating two drives. First is a "Name the Truck" contest which is open to any who care to forward a suggestion for the naming of the truck. Details of this are to be found in the advertising columns of this issue together with a list of the valuable prizes which will be awarded.

The second scheme is one which the committee is hopeful will draw the interest and support of everyone in the Hills districts. This is the announcement of the date of an auction sale to be conducted on the Bridgewater oval. For this residents from any townships are invited to donate, if they wish, any item to be auctioned for the benefit of the unit. Besides this any resident may wish to dispose of an article of furniture, washing machine, refrigerator, wireless; etc. etc.—articles of a valuable nature. A price may be placed on these which the owner may wish to receive and agree that anything over that amount may go to the unit fund. Alternatively the owner may agree to an article being auctioned on a percentage basis. Anyone may dispose of anything they wish here and in subsequent issues this paper will publish some of the items to be offered and bargain seekers may gain a valuable article at a very reasonable price at the sale of which details are also advertised in this issue.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Friday 26 October 1951, page 14***

#### Auction To Aid Hills Fire Service

An auction sale on the Bridgewater Oval at 11 a.m. tomorrow week will help to raise funds for trucks and equipment for the Bridge-water Districts Fire Service. Anyone with goods they want sold at the auction should contact Mr. A. L. Vincent or Mr. J. F. Marchant at Bridgewater. A water-tank truck already bought for the fire service will be on display. Farm requisites and household furniture will be among items for auction.

***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Thursday 1 November 1951, page 1***

Lady Norrie to Crown 'Queen' at Bridgewater

The Queen contest sponsored by the Bridgewater and Districts Fire Unit will culminate at the Jubilee Bushfire ball to be held in the Bridgewater institute on Friday, 23rd November. The Governor and Lady Norrie, who will crown the winning Queen, will be present and the Premier, Mr. Playford and Mrs. Playford will also attend. A strong and energetic committee is planning the function and it can confidently be predicted that many idea of a novel and interesting nature will be incorporated in the plans The four competing Queens are all well known. Miss Myra Carver, representing Aldgate is sponsored by the Aldgate Vigilance Committee and is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Carver. Recently she won the Queen competition conducted by the Aldgate Memorial Fund Committee. She is a keen member of the Aldgate Variety Company and of the Mount Lofty Choral Society and works at Carver's store. Miss Pam Freer who is the younger daughter of Mr. and Mrs. R. R. Freer, of Bridgewater, is sponsored by the Railway's Social Club. She is a telephonist in the employ of Colton, Palmer and Preston Ltd and her hobbies are dancing and needlework. Representing the Stirling Country Women's Association is Miss Brenda Halliday, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Halliday of Stirling West. Miss Halliday, who works in the city as a tailoress, is a particularly keen needleworker and is noted for her smocking; other hobbies are dancing and basket-ball. Miss Valmai Purdie works at the Bridgewater Post Office and is the elder daughter of Mr. and Mrs. G. C. Purdie of Bridgewater. She is sponsored by the local Basketball Club and during the recent season won the trophy for the best trier. Miss Purdie is also interested in singing and amateur theatricals. Half the money raised by each Queen will be returned to the organisation sponsoring her. The following are assisting members of the Fire Unit with the organisation of the ball: Mr. and Mrs. Duane, Mesdames J. C. Hannam. — Jarrett, M. Olsen, C. W. Rosewarne, H. H. Shannon, A. L. Vincent and K. H. Warren.

***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Thursday 8 November 1951, page 8***

#### RAILWAYS HELP FIRE UNIT

In their efforts to be ready for the coming fire season the Bridgewater and Districts Fire Unit has been greatly assisted by the South Australian Railways which has made a site available in the Bridgewater Railway yards for the erection of a shed. In addition, an ample water supply will be made available and the warning siren will be continuously manned by the Railway's staff. Cards showing the siren calls and other necessary information will shortly be issued to all residents. The shed, which will house the fire truck and equipment, is to be erected by voluntary labour.

***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Thursday 22 November 1951, page 8***

#### Packed House at Bridgewater Concert

On Friday another successful function was held for the Bridge-water and Districts Fire Unit. Mr. Chas. Miller, well known to all Bridgewater residents, promoted and directed a concert featuring Aileen Barnes' Night Owls Revue Company. A packed house enjoyed all the items. One, of particular interest, featured a small boy standing on the head of his father who climbed up one side of a steel stepladder, balanced on the top then climbed down the other side. The concert also concluded the local Queen competition for the right to represent Bridgewater in the Hills District Bushfire Queen contest. It was closed fifteen minutes after the commencement of the interval and during this time the competing queens and their

sup-porters worked hard to gain last minute votes. There was an air of suspense until, later in the evening, Mrs. A. L. Vincent announced that Miss Pam Freer, sponsored by the Railways Social Club was the winner. Miss Val Purdie, sponsored by the Basketball Club was runner-up The Queens were presented with posies and boxes of chocolates by Helen Jeffrey and this marked the end of an exciting contest. Although the financial result will not be announced until the Bushfire ball on Friday next it is understood that the funds of the Fire Unit will benefit considerably. Miss Bridgewater will now compete with Miss Aldgate and Miss Stirling, and the winner will be crowned at the Bushfire ball by Lady Norrie.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Monday 26 November 1951, page 12***

**Bridgewater Fire Unit's Ball**

The Governor. Sir Willoughby Norrie, and the Premier (Mr. Playford), attended a ball at Bridgewater on Friday night to raise money for the local unit of the Firefighting Service. The worthy object was to raise funds to buy fire-fighting equipment. "The Chronicle" photographer was present at the ball, and a page of pictures taken by him will appear in the next issue. Those who wish to obtain copies of this issue of "The Chronicle" should order without delay

***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Thursday 29 November 1951, page 2***

**Governor at Bridgewater Ball**

On Friday evening last, history was made at Bridgewater when Sir Willoughby Norrie attended the Bushfire ball, for it was the first time a Governor of South Australia had visited the township. The function was given a festive air by strings of colored lights outside the Institute and by novel decorations inside. A fire motif dominated the decorations which consisted of a frieze of flames and a rustic fence around the walls and to this was added sprays of gum leaves and other foliage. The supper room was decorated with masses of flowers, the whole being a tribute to the local branch of the C.W.A. In the official party were the Governor and Lady Norrie, Major and Mrs. Britton, the Premier and Mrs. Playford, the vice president of the Bridgewater and Districts Fire Unit, Mr. J. F. Marchant and Mrs. Marchant, Mr. and Mrs. A. R. Downer, Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Newson, Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Shannon, and Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Vincent. Mr. Ron Sullivan, of 5AD, was M.C. and a capacity house danced to the music by Mrs. Quinn's orchestra. At 9.30 p.m. Miss Pam Freer, representing Bridgewater, was announced Queen of the Hills Bushfire queen contest and was crowned by Lady Norrie in an effective and beautiful ceremony Four queens—Misses Pam Freer, Brenda Halliday, Myra Carver and Valmai Purdie, each attended by a train-bearer, were on the stage, and below on the floor of the hall were the maids of honor. Each queen wore white, the maids wearing matching pastel shades. The ceremony was directed by Mrs. B. T. Duane and concluded with the circular waltz. Supper was convened by Mrs. M. Olsen and during the first sitting members of the fire unit and ball commit-tee were introduced to the Governor. During the evening the vice president, Mr. Marchant, announced that the queen contest and the ball had resulted in over £300 being added to the fund for the purchase of a motor lorry and other fire-fighting equipment. He added that the target of £700 was likely to be exceeded by some £200, all of which would be used to the best advantage in giving the town an efficient fire-fighting service At 1 a.m. a memorable night concluded with Auld Lang Syne.



***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Thursday 13 December 1951, page 1***

Fire Truck Tested

After a comprehensive refit and overhaul the ex-naval water truck recently purchased by the Bridgewater & Districts Fire Unit will be ready for service in a few days. The results of the maiden tests held on Friday evening last were most satisfactory and crews are now being formed under the captaincy of Mr. C. W. Rosewarne. Where possible training will consist of burning breaks around danger spots.

1952

***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Thursday 17 January 1952, page 1***

FIRE AT ALDGATE VALLEY

The small fire which broke out on Sunday afternoon last was extinguished by the Bridgewater and Districts Fire unit under the captaincy of Mr. C. W. Rosewarne. The newly equipped unit is functioning well and the training of crews is proceeding.

***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Thursday 7 February 1952, page 1***

BRIDGEWATER HOME GUTTED BY FIRE !

A wood and iron home at Vimy Ridge was destroyed by fire on Saturday afternoon last. The occupant, Miss L. Wellsby, 65, suffered second degree burns when she re-entered her blazing home to collect valuables and was overcome by smoke. She was rescued by two special constables who were passing by and is now in the Adelaide Hospital where she is progressing satisfactorily. The fire was burning fiercely when the Bridgewater and Districts Fire Unit arrived, and, although brought under control in a short time, during which 2,500 gallons of water were used, the house and contents, were unfortunately a total loss. A lean-to storage shed was, however, saved. The fire is thought to have been caused by a mishap with a kerosene stove.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Saturday 29 March 1952, page 12***

NEWS IN BRIEF

SCRUB FIRE

A scrub fire which broke out yesterday 500 yards from the Bridgewater butcher shop, was brought under control by members of the Bridgewater Emergency Fire Control unit after about four acres of scrub between the railway line and the road were burnt.

***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Thursday 3 April 1952, page 1***

Good Save by Fire Unit

Two Bridgewater homes were threatened by a fire which broke out on Friday afternoon last in thick scrub in a gully between Weatherald's butcher shop and the railway line. The local fire unit was quickly on the job and, although conditions, were difficult, the fire was put out

in about two hours. That the job was done thoroughly is proved by the fact that there was no fresh outbreak when a strong wind sprang up a few hours later. Both houses were saved and the incident proved once again that a fire unit is a most useful asset.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Saturday 30 August 1952, page 5***

#### Bushfire At Bridgewater

A bushfire burned nearly four acres of scrub about two miles north of Bridgewater yesterday afternoon. The local volunteer fire unit under Capt. C. W. Rosewarne got the blaze under control in about an hour. It is believed that the fire began when burning-off operations got out of control.

***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Thursday 18 September 1952, page 5***

#### COMMUNITY MOVES AT BRIDGEWATER

On Thursday evening, 11th September, the Bridgewater & Districts Fire Unit sponsored a meeting at the institute between representatives of the Institute committee, Improvement committee and Fire Unit with the object of discussing a plan whereby the three organisations could combine and work on a community basis. Mr. G. S. Fowler acted as chairman for the meeting and the following were present:— Mrs. M. Olsen, Messrs. F. Schumacher and R. T. Bryan (representing the Institute committee), Mr. G. Jeffrey (Improvement), with Mr. Fowler and Messrs. E. Hodgetts, J. C. Hannam and O. C. Lee for the Fire Unit.

Mr. Hannam, who outlined the plan to the meeting, said that although only three organisations were concerned in the preliminary moves, he hoped the time would come when all the organisations in the town-ship would become an integral part of it. Briefly it was proposed that the three bodies represented should merge into one representative organisation which would handle all finance and which would consist of and be run by, representatives from the bodies absorbed. He pointed out that there was a tremendous amount of work to be done in and around Bridgewater and that it was only by a large-scale community effort that worthwhile results could be achieved. If suitable amenities could be provided, and the natural beauties preserved, then Bridgewater would become one of the most attractive place in the Hills and a source of pride and pleasure to the residents.

In the discussion which followed, it was agreed that the oval was a project which required urgent attention so that the young people could have sporting facilities and visitors suitable amenities, it was also agreed that much could be done to the roadside gardens and that various improvements could be made to the Institute. Other plans and projects were discussed and it was evident that much could be accomplished if done on a community basis.

A resolution agreeing to the proposed amalgamation was carried unanimously and it was resolved to call a public meeting at the Institute at 8 p.m. on Thursday, 2nd October, to put the matter before all residents.

1953

***News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Thursday 12 February 1953, page 3***

#### FINED OVER STUBBLE FIRE

A man who threw a cigarette in stubble and started a fire on his own property was fined on two charges in Stirling West Police Court today. Kevin Oliver Little, 21, porter, of Bridgewater, was fined £2/10/, with 10/ cost's by Mr. Walters, SM, for having smoked within 20 yards of stubble during a prohibited period, and was fined £7 for having burnt stubble. Sgt. W. H. Williams, who prosecuted, said Little was walking through his paddock when he threw a cigarette down. It started a fire, which Little kept going to burn off the stubble. Albert Harold Elston, 62, clerk, of Aldgate, was fined £8, With 10/ costs, for having burnt stubble during a prohibited period.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Friday 24 July 1953, page 5***

#### Trophy For Hills Firefighters



Miss Valmai Purdie, of Bridgewater, displaying the shield to be competed for tomorrow afternoon by Hills Districts emergency fire-fighting units. In the background is the new Bridgewater pumping unit and the new fire station to be opened shortly.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Saturday 25 July 1953, page 2***

#### Personal

The Chief Secretary (Mr. McEwin) will open a new fire station at Bridgewater at 2 p.m. today.

***The Advertiser, Monday 27th July 1953 page 12***

#### Minister Opens Fire Station

Establishment of fire services throughout SA had saved life and property, the Chief Secretary (Mr. McEwin) said on Saturday when opening the new fire station at Bridgewater. Last year

about 500 fires were attended to by Emergency Fire Service teams and the saving made by their efforts could not be estimated. An efficient fire service was the most practical form of insurance Bridgewater could have. Mr. McEwin said tourists attracted to the Hills districts were not always fire conscious. During the day the fourth round of the Emergency Fire Service State-wide pump and hose championship was held on the Bridgewater Oval. Belair won the A grade event in 89 sec. Finals will be held at Wayville during the Adelaide Royal Show.

***[http://www.firebreak.com.au/paix-oz\\_burnovers.html](http://www.firebreak.com.au/paix-oz_burnovers.html)***

22 Feb 1980 "Ash Wednesday 1 Fire" LONGWOOD South Australia

The Bridgewater Tanker , a 1967 Bedford 4x2 petrol (with high sides, charged lines and fixed sprinklers, but no crew haven or window screens) with 6 crew was reversing down the road to escape a grass fire crossing in front in extreme fire weather . It ran partly off road into a burning tree and stopped. A tree branch struck the pump throttle, disabling the sprinkler system. One of the crew ran to a nearby building where he sheltered without injury, the other 5 crowded into the cabin as the truck was burned over then were forced out by heat and smoke. All 5 suffered moderate burns to the hands contacting hot metal exiting the truck. The truck was destroyed .

***The Mail, Saturday 25th July 1953 page 50***

#### PROGRESS BY FIRE UNITS

Since the war, definite progress had been made in SA in methods of fighting bushfires, the Chief Secretary (Mr. McEwen) said today. He was opening a new fire station at Bridgewater. During the day the fourth round of the EFS State-wide pump and hose championships was held on Bridgewater Oval. A Grade winners were Belair. in 89 secs Other units competing were Mount Barker. Headquarters, and Blackwood. B Grade Winners: Salisbury No. 2. Other units competing were Eden Hills, Bridgewater, Headquarters, Mount Barker, Salisbury No. 1, Salisbury No. 3. Finals will be held at Wayville during the Royal Adelaide Show.

***Chronicle (Adelaide, SA : 1895 - 1954), Thursday 30 July 1953, page 8***

#### FIREFIGHTING SHIELD



Miss Valmai Purdie, of Bridgewater, displaying the shield competed for by Hills Districts emergency fire-fighting units. In the background is the new Bridgewater pumping unit and the new fire station to be opened shortly.

***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Wednesday 25 November 1953, page 12***

#### HOUSE TOTAL LOSS IN STIRLING FIRE

A STIRLING East house was totally destroyed by fire on Friday morning. Origin of the blaze is not known. The Bridgewater Volunteer Fire Brigade attended in full force to answer a call sounded in the small hours of Friday morning. They were summoned to Mr. Arthur Heaysman's home at Stirling East and upon arrival found the place entirely ablaze. The brigade saved a considerable amount of furniture but the house which was fortunately covered by insurance was a total loss. Nearby residents rallied to assist and neighbours have given the women and children affected, hospitality. There were no injuries but full praise was accorded to the Bridgewater unit for their full and prompt attendance. Cause of the fire is unknown but Constable Moore of Stirling West, is preparing a report for the Coroner.

1954

***News (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Tuesday 12 January 1954, page 1***

#### GRASSFIRE AT BRIDGEWATER

A big area of grass and scrub was burnt at Bridgewater early this afternoon in a fire which started near the reserve. No serious damage was done, however, and the fire was brought under control after an hour by the Bridgewater Emergency Fire Unit, led by the captain, Mr. C. W. Rosewarne.

***Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Thursday 14 January 1954, page 1***

New Warning On Water; Fire Risk

Adelaide sweltered yesterday when the temperature soared into the nineties. Grass fires were started in the Adelaide Hills and the Weather Bureau warned of a high fire risk throughout the State today. Another warning was given by the Deputy Engineer-in-Chief (Mr. W. M. Anderson) on the water position. Mr. Anderson appealed to householders to reduce their use of water during the present emergency. He said that the continued hot weather had seriously depleted water storages in the metropolitan area. Service storages most affected were at Wattle Park, Glenburnie, Springfield, Blackwood and Belair. Mr. Anderson said that if water were used sparingly all consumers would receive a fair share and severe regulations would be avoided. During the past 10 days water consumption had averaged nearly 77m. gallons daily — a record. Consumption on Tuesday was 82m. gallons and on Monday 77m. Water pressure graphs showed that many people were 'sneaking' water by using the hose before 7.30 pm. Hoses are banned from 5 till 7.30 p.m. Still Hot High temperatures and slightly increased humidity were forecast last night by the Weather Bureau, which also warned of a high fire risk throughout the State. The maximum temperature in the city yesterday was 93.7 at 3 pm. Kyancutta was the hottest town, in SA with a maximum of 105. Three grass fires broke out in the Adelaide Hills and one in the metropolitan area during yesterday's heat. An acre of grass was burnt at National Park before the fire was halted by Belair and Eden Hills Emergency Fire Services. Bridgewater Emergency Fire Service, which extinguished the outbreak also attended a grass fire in the main street at Bridgewater. Fire crews from the city extinguished a grass fire which burnt an acre of grass at Penfield.

***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Wednesday 12 May 1954, page 1***

#### FIRE CALL IN RAIN

Bridgewater Fire Unit had an early morning call at 3 a.m. on Saturday. Several members of the crew answered the call in drizzling rain and the unit was ready to leave when the "All Clear" was sounded. One wall of a house in Stirling East had caught alight where the flue from a stove came through the wall, but the owner and neighbours were able to put out the fire and five minutes after calling the unit, were able to ring and say that help was not required. Needless to say the crew were not sorry and they quickly returned home to bed.

***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Wednesday 25 August 1954, page 1***

#### Scrub Fire at Stirling

An indication of the fire hazard of quickly drying under growth this year was noted at Stirling on Saturday. The Bridgewater Unit Emergency Fire Service, was called to attend a fire in Cheadle's property below Mabel Street, Stirling, on Saturday morning. About five acres of scrub and grass was burnt. Some of the flora in the district has become very inflammable following the period of dry weather, aggravated by strong winds. Cause of the outbreak is believed to have been smouldering cinders from a steam engine.

***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Wednesday 25 August 1954, page 1***

#### BUSHFIRE SEASON OPENS FOR BRIDGEWATER BRIGADE

THE Bushfire season opened early for the Bridgewater Unit last week when they attended two fires. The first occurred early on Thursday morning. As a Newspaper delivery man was travelling through the district he noticed an unattended fire burning on the property of Dr. Edwards at Vimy Ridge. He reported it to the Hahndorf telephone operator who in turn contacted Stirling exchange. From there the message was sent to the Bridgewater Railway Station. As the extent of the fire was not known, Mr. Reg. Freer, vice captain of the Bridgewater Unit, who was on duty at the Station contacted Mr. Moss Vincent who investigated. It was found necessary to call out the Unit at about 5-15 a.m. and a crew left the station at 5-19 a.m. A strong wind had sprung up and as the fire was burning in pine trees it was feared that sparks would cross the bitumen road into King's paddock, however after an hour's work by members of the crew the fire was brought under control. On Saturday morning Stirling Police requested assistance from the Bridgewater Unit to quell a blaze in Mabel Avenue, Stirling. The unit left the Station promptly with a dozen crew members aboard. About ten acres of scrub were burned, before the fire was brought under control. These fires should serve as warnings to householders and others to clear away rubbish and scrub before the burning season closes, as present weather conditions indicate a very dry and consequently dangerous summer.

***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Wednesday 25 August 1954, page 1***

#### Theft of Bicycle

Whilst he attended a fire in Stirling on Saturday morning one of the young members of the Bridgewater Fire Unit, left his bicycle near the Fire Station. On his return he discovered that some person had disconnected and removed the rear light and let the air out of the tyres.

#### TAMPERED WITH MILL PLANT

On the same day machinery and plant on the property of the Bridgewater Flour Mill was interfered with. It is thought possible that the same person or persons were responsible for both acts.

***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Wednesday 1 September 1954, page 10***

#### BRIDGEWATER FIRE BRIGADE ANNUAL MEETING

BRIDGEWATER Emergency Fire Service held its Annual Meeting in the Fire Station. A fair number of people attended and heard the secretary's report of the Unit's activities over the past year. About eighteen fires were attended during the season and the unit acquitted itself very well on all occasions. Promptness and efficiency of members has gained them respect from all sections of the community. During the year St. John's Ambulance classes have been held under the instruction of Mr. Wally Fraser and it is pleasing to note that several members of the unit have gained their First Aid certificates. Recently a set of weights was acquired so that through the winter months there would be something to hold the interest of the crew members who have had quite a lot of amusement out of testing their skill at weight lifting. There are a number of young members of the unit who are showing great promise. It would be difficult to find young lads anywhere with more enthusiasm than they have and they have proved of immense value at actual fire fighting. They are training hard for competition work and had quite a measure of success at the recent competitions.



The financial position has shown improvement. So far house to house collections have netted £134. Stirling District Council has made a grant of £50 every six months, which is of great assistance in maintaining the unit. Cost of running the truck and pump, plus equipment and extra hoses etc was about £170. The Unit now has a most efficient means of fire fighting and when it is realised the value of property saved over just this one summer it is easy to see that it is public money very well spent.

#### NEW SIREN NEEDED

It is felt that a more powerful siren is urgently needed and it is hoped that financial help will be forthcoming in that direction. Assistance from the public is greatly appreciated as it proves to the crew members that the time and effort they spend in providing this service to the community is not unrecognised. Mr. John Marchant was elected as Chairman. Mr. Ray Bryan and Mr. Geo. Fowler continue as Secretary and Treasurer respectively and Mr. Charlie Rosewarne is to carry on as Officer in Charge with Vice Captains, Messrs Reg Freer and Bob Wiese. It is understood that a similar body may be formed in Stirling in the near future and Bridgewater Unit looks forward to being able to give co-operation and also help to provide an improved combined service to the District.

***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Wednesday 3 November 1954, page 1***

#### SCRUB FIRE AT HEATHFIELD

Bridgewater Fire Unit is already having a busy time and getting plenty of practice for the forthcoming season. A fire broke out near the Heathfield oval and the Unit, with a full crew, attended and controlled the fire which burned about three acres of scrub.

During the past week a new Siren has been tested with a view to installation in conjunction with the old one which is regarded as not powerful enough for the job, particularly when a North Wind is blowing. It is believed that some residents were confused and alarmed at the Siren tests. If these people are not in possession of Siren Call Cards a few are still available from the Fire Unit.

Fireman Brian Duane recently attended the School conducted by the S. A. Emergency Fire Service. He received his certificate for knowledge gained at the School and is very enthusiastic about the new methods and ideas explained to those attending.

He is already busy teaching his fellow crew members what he has learned. This will all make for increased efficiency for the unit.

***Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (SA : 1880 - 1954), Wednesday 1 December 1954, page 1***

#### Busy Time for Bridgewater Fire Brigade

The recent burst of hot weather brought a busy time for the Bridgewater Fire brigade. On Thursday afternoon it was summoned to Aldgate and whilst the unit was attending to this blaze a fire broke out in Railway Ave., Bridgewater. The auxiliary unit and knap-sacks were used there, and it was not long before the main unit also arrived from Aldgate, where about five acres of scrub had been, burnt.

On Saturday afternoon a fire occurred in Cave Ave., Aldgate, and the Fire Unit extinguished the blaze.

The young members of the crew had the good fortune to win an event at the competitions on Norwood Oval and are very proud of their trophies.

It is hoped that soon the new siren will be erected on a tower. The Bridgewater Combined Committee has donated the value of the Siren to the Unit, a gesture which is greatly appreciated.