

Where has the year gone to? We're getting into the later part of the year, Spring, daylight saving and all of that. Meetings for the months of Spring will be as follows:

**SEPTEMBER: 7.00 p.m. Thursday 5<sup>th</sup>.** There are many things we used to do as a matter of course, and things we used to say, which along the way have just disappeared. We've had programs before where members bring historical 'things' and talk about them. This time we're suggesting that you bring memories. We used to have two or three digit phone numbers. Can you remember your earliest phone number? There must be many more things of this nature that you will think of; put on your thinking cap and see what you can bring to the meeting to discuss with us all.

**OCTOBER: 7.00 p.m. Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup>.** Marion and Greg Shuttleworth will tell us about their house in Radovick Street. **Also** in October, Neil Breedin will be speaking about the early tracks into South Gippsland, this will be on 13<sup>th</sup>. October in the Leongatha Memorial Hall Meeting Room at 2.00 p.m. on 13<sup>th</sup>. October.

**NOVEMBER: 7.00 p.m. Thursday 7<sup>th</sup>.** Another program from our archivist, Doug Boston. Doug will tell us about documents that have recently been added to the collection.

We would warmly welcome visitors to join us at a meeting, or call in to a Tuesday afternoon workshop. We're there from 1.30 p.m. on Tuesdays. We're in King Street in the lower end of the library building.

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**Korumburra's Biggest Fire** Great Southern Advocate, Thurs. 3<sup>rd</sup>. January 1929  
Damage Estimated at £25,000 - Four Buildings and Contents Totally Destroyed  
Other Shops Severely Damaged

The worst fire in the history of Korumburra occurred about half-past one o'clock on Sunday morning, when three wooden shops and a brick shop were completely destroyed with their contents. To-day there is a mass of ruins from the midst of which project gaunt naked piles of brick which were once chimneys. A few days ago flourishing business houses covered the area and during the pre Christmas shopping rush happy shoppers gaily bought presents for friends and the necessaries of life.

The total damage is estimated at about £25,000. In addition there will be great inconvenience and loss of trade while the victims are obtaining and fitting out new premises. The following places were destroyed:

Mr. C.E. Brown, chemist's shop, and stock valued at £1,300, insurance £700.

Mr. A. Broughton, jeweller, stock and fittings insured for £1,000. This shop was owned by Mr. S. Weisser and was insured for £750. Mr. Broughton owned the shop at the corner occupied by Mr. Brown and this was insured for £1,180.

Williams' The Shoemen's shop was insured for £1,000 and the stock for £1,500.

Knights' wooden buildings were insured for £3,100 and the stock insured for £5,600. The half-crown store building was insured for £450 and the stock for £500.

Mr. D.M. Scott's plant and fittings were insured for about £500.

The alarm was given by Mr. J. Cormack Jnr. who was on his way home and saw the flames bursting from Knights' drapery emporium. He rushed to the fire station and with Constable Kirby rang the fire bell, which sent a thrill through Korumburra residents who were mostly roused from slumber. From all parts of the town people partly dressed came rushing to the scene. There was an immediate response by the members of the Korumburra Fire Brigade, and 16 members under Captain J.L. Parry and Lieut. D. Alp, with the full outfit of appliances rushed to the fire.

### **Firemen's Great Fight**

Meanwhile the fire fiend, fed by the inflammable nature of the stock in the fancy goods portion of Knights speedily attacked the 40 year old and seasoned wood of adjoining buildings and spread with tremendous rapidity. Undaunted and unafraid the gallant firemen tackled the seemingly impossible task. Captain Parry, like a wise general, bethought himself of the necessity for reinforcements, and early in the conflict telephoned to the sister brigade at Leongatha. The response was prompt and effective for eight men under Lieutenant Hodgkiss with fire fighting appliances rushed speedily to the call for help. Their arrival greatly heartened the Korumburra brigade, who were just about conquering the all-devouring element, but were feeling severely the strain of conflict.

The Korumburra firemen were Captain J.L. Parry, Lieut. D. Alp, Firemen Dorling (2), C. Squire, Amis, Cunningham, Wilkinson, Bromley, Longley, McFarlane, Spaul, Jolly, Harris and Paton. Messrs. L. Goudge, Cassells(2) and others also gave assistance.

The names of the Leongatha firemen who attended were Lieut. Hodgkiss (in charge), Foreman S. McPherson, Firemen R. Latta, C. Edney, G. McPherson, Reserve Firemen J. Latta and Fireman J. Barker (Heatcote Fire Brigade).

Lieut. Hodgkiss received his first call for assistance at 2.00 a.m. and immediately got in touch with his men by telephone. After procuring hose, hydrant, etc., the men were on their way by 2.13 a.m. and arrived at Korumburra at 2.25, the ten miles taking 12 minutes to cover. The two cars were in charge of Lieut. Hodgkiss and Reserve Fireman Latta.

Arrangements had also to be made for the Leongatha township to be safeguarded, and Fireman Ted Hodgkiss was left in charge of a squad of men. Fortunately their services were not required.

### **The Fire Stopped**

Five streams of water were playing on the conflagration from Commercial Street and the right-of-way alongside the Savings Bank. When it was seen that it was a hopeless task to save Messrs Williams' and Brown's the brigade concentrated upon preventing the spread of fire past Mr. D.M. Scott's and entering Mr. Lloyd's, ironmongers. Here the fact that there were brick walls was of material assistance, and a good save was made. Had the fire got past this line nothing would have saved the whole of Commercial Street from being completely consumed. After an hour's strenuous fighting, in which were many wonderful deeds of heroism, the fire was under control. Firemen were scorched and blistered and how they withstood the direct heat is known only to themselves. Fireman J. Dorling has his face blistered and burnt, and Fireman Amis was overcome by fumes twice; Fireman Squire retreated only when the flames were burning his boots; Mr. L. Cassells had his arms badly burnt while helping the firemen.

For a time fears were entertained that Mrs. Rochfort's Korumburra Hotel on the Radovick Street corner, the opposite premises, including M.K.S. Fine's furniture store, Pallot & Son's saddlery, the Great Southern Advocate office, Messrs L. McQueen, hairdresser, Olsson Bros, W.O. MacPherson's and J.L. Parry's motor garage would take fire. Anxious moments were spent by the occupiers of these places and their friends, who kept a constant patrol on the lookout for vagrant sparks. As it was the heat was so intense that in several of the buildings mentioned windows were broken and the painting blistered. The occupants of the State Savings Bank (Mr. Rabbling, manager) were greatly concerned. With the assistance of Sergeant Munro a garden hose was kept playing on the building and wooden fencing until the fire was checked.

### **Brilliant Spectacle**

On all of the hills for miles around there were watchers, and in the town many contented themselves with having a "grand-stand" view from elevated points. The fire made a wonderful and awful spectacle. At one period there was a slight explosion and brilliant electric blue flames shot high in the air. These changed with kaleidoscopic rapidity into all the colours of the rainbow and dissolved into murky smoke as the hoses got to work. Messrs Broughton and Fielding (manager of Messrs Williams) had closed their shops for the holidays and were absent from Korumburra at the time of the fire. Messrs. Brown and G. Knight had not left Korumburra and were greatly concerned to see their premises burnt down. Mr. D. Scott was on holidays at Inverloch, and came home immediately he received the disconcerting news.

Mr. A. Broughton will be one of the heaviest losers, for he had recently purchased the buildings occupied by Mr. Brown at a very substantial figure. The premises which Mr. Broughton occupied were owned by Mr. S. Weisser, a well-known business man in Korumburra. The other shops including Mr. D. Scott's were owned by members of the Knight family.

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*What a piece of history this is, taking in such a large area and involving the whole town, and in the period just after Christmas. The article is something of a listing of business people too, where they operated, the nature of the businesses etc.*

*The following article paints a picture of great activity in 1892 Korumburra. "Progress still abideth we hear", isn't that wonderful, and then the idea we get of houses being constructed; even the sounds of the activity are described for us.*

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The Great Southern Advocate, Thursday 11 February 1892.

### **KORUMBURRA (from our own correspondent)**

- Building is still the order of the day in Korumburra; corroborative testimony that progress still abideth here, despite the fact that the coal mines yield little or none of their stores of carbon wealth (owing I understand to a hitch in the guarantee arrangement.) Terraces of brick edifices are gradually assuming shape, and architectural beauty, and the clink of the hammer resounds from less elaborate structures of work. The goods shed will soon be a thing that is, and a numerous signed petition has been forwarded to the Minister of Education, praying for him to erect a suitable building to accommodate the 70 children now on the rolls. Nevertheless, in the face of this undeniable advancement, many of our moving

spirits deem that the interests of the township have not received that due share of attention which they should, from the powers that be; and consequently a meeting convened by our worthy J.P. (Henry Sanders, Esq.) was held at Radovick's Hotel on Saturday evening, to take the initiatory steps towards forming an Association to exercise to exercise vigilance over, and use every legitimate endeavour to push forward the interests of the coal capital of Victoria. Mr. Walters was elected president: Messrs. W. Johnstone, J. Yorath, Robert Scott, and J. Thomas, Vice presidents; and Messrs. Weir, Lightbody, Ditterich, Sanders, Matthews, Nash, Langham, Weickhardt, Cornall, Blake, Smith and Williamson, committee men. The meeting was then adjourned until the 20<sup>th</sup>.

- An accident of an alarming character, yet fortunately with no more serious results than a few flesh wounds and bruises, befell Mrs. H. Gardiner, of Poowong, on Saturday afternoon. It appears that a party of Poowong ladies and gentlemen were proceeding by vehicle to Coal Creek, to take part in a tennis match, and had got quite close to their destination when all the occupants alighted except Mrs. Gardiner. The crack from a bullock driver's whip caused the horse to bolt. Mrs. Gardiner was thrown out of the buggy violently, receiving painful bruises and wounds, from which the blood flowed copiously. She was at once removed to Korumburra, and attended to by Dr. Eadon. (We are pleased to hear by latest advices Mrs. Gardiner is progressing well towards recovery.)
- A cricket match, Strzelecki v. Korumburra took place on Saturday on the ground of the latter, the former winning by 7 runs on the first innings, the scores being 31 to 24 respectively.

For more information please contact secretary, Janet Wilson, (5657 2267) [janet.wilson@dcsi.net.au](mailto:janet.wilson@dcsi.net.au) or P.O. Box 329, KORUMBURRA. Vic. 3950.

President: Bob Newton   Treasurer: Alwyn Michie   Archivist: Doug Boston