


# Sunshine Advocate

## Big Deer Park fire sweeps 750 acres

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**at Big Deer Park Fire Sweeps 750 Acres**



This picture shows the flames as they leapt towards the fence at No. 5 factory, being brought to a halt by the ploughed safety belt and firefighters who guarded the area, ready with sprays to quell any further advance.

**Explosives Factory Escapes**

A sudden stiff breeze on Saturday afternoon fan a fire already well established could have caused serious damage at Deer Park and would probably have destroyed the No. 5 (Albion) explosives factory.

This despite a 15 to 20 yards break which had been made outside the factory fence.

Sixty to 70 firemen and volunteers fought the 750-acre fire which burnt out Mr. Clarrie Govan's grazing paddock and other properties, but otherwise did little damage except to fence posts and two electric light poles.

The fire was under way opposite Fitzgerald Road about 2 p.m. in grass knee-high and tall. Firefighters concentrated on one side in which the blaze was gaining, but a sudden change took it up to and over Furlong's Road, where it was quelled before getting a chance to widen its front.

Then it swept in the long grass towards the explosives plant. With only the lightest breeze to fan it the fire made an amazing progress but fighters stood their ground, pouring water from sprays on the safety strip and nearby grass, until the danger had passed.

**CATTLE SAVED**

A number of cattle belonging to Mr. Clarrie Govan were driven through a pall of smoke. In this instance also a strong wind would have made the difference between saving and losing them.

Members of the Deer Park volunteer fire brigade and the Deer Park Rural Fire Brigade turned out in force. Among them were Basil Townsend, Mal Hyman, Ron Wallis, Alan McNatt, Jack Robb and Andy Ross and many other residents including a strong contingent of New Australians who worked enthusiastically and showed eagerness to learn the finer points of fire fighting from more experienced neighbours.

**MANY CALLS**

The following list of calls answered by Sunshine Fire Brigade gives some idea of the fire menace at present:

Thursday, 7 a.m.: D. M. Glenora's service station and wreckers, 296 Ballarat Road, Bray-

brook, 4-acre of grass and three tip truck trays severely damaged.

Thursday, 12.15 p.m.: Sussex Street, near Duke Street, two acres of grass and rubbish.

Thursday, 1.45 p.m.: Cornes Mitchell and Harry Streets, Maidstone, 1-acre grass and rubbish.

Thursday, 4 p.m.: At Nettlefolds, fire on floor of heat treatment plant, caused by a spark from a welding plant. This was extinguished by an appliance from the factory.

Thursday, 6.40 p.m.: Prince Street, near St. Albans Road, St. Albans, 1-acre of grass.

Friday, 10.50 a.m.: Andrea Street, near McKechnie Street, St. Albans, one acre grass.

Friday, 1.30 p.m.: Sunshine Road near Sredna Street, Tottenham, on roadway, 1-acre of grass.

Friday, 3 p.m.: Sunshine Road, near Sredna Street, 1-acre grass.

Friday, 5.50 p.m.: Taylor's Road near Arthur Street, St. Albans, one acre grass.

Saturday, 12.40 p.m.: J1 Ballarat Road, Maidstone, 1-acre of grass at rear of dwelling.

Saturday, 7 p.m.: 3 Buech Street, Sunshine, two panels of fencing and 1-acre grass at rear of house occupied by A. Thiele.

Saturday, 9.30 p.m.: Churchill Avenue, near Dobson Crescent, Braybrook, two acres grass and rubbish.

Saturday, 10.55 p.m.: Darcley Street, near Myalla Street, Braybrook, 1-acre grass.

Sunday, 1.5 a.m.: 2 Dedrick Grove, Sunshine, portion of detached shed and pile of fencing on premises occupied by F. J. McNamara.

Sunday, 1.30 a.m.: Myalla Street near Myamayn Street, Sunshine, 1-acre grass.

Sunday, 1.30 p.m.: St. Albans Road near Green Gully Bridge, 1-acre grass and large quantity rubbish.

Sunday, 6.30 p.m.: Ena Street near McKechnie Street, St. Albans, 1-acre grass.

**Who Lights the Fires?**

The sight of a grass fire in East Sunshine on Saturday night raised a pertinent query in the mind of an "Advocate" representative: How could a fire start at such a time?

Checking with the fire brigade on Monday it was found that not one, but two fires had occurred in the same area within an hour or so and within a stone's throw of each other that night.

Firemen said that fires do not just start at that time. If the day is very hot, combustion may ignite material under glass in the open but there is no such danger when the sun goes down. There is also little danger at that time of day from carelessly thrown cigarettes or matches.

Two instances were given to suggest the origin of some night fires:

On a recent fire duty the brigade members were packing up to return to the station, having thoroughly quelled the fire. As they were about to board the engine a 15-year-old youth came up and asked: "How long will it take to get back to the station?"

"Why?" said the fireman.

"I'll give you five minutes," replied the youth.

In less than a quarter of an hour the brigade was back fighting another fire nearby.

**IN A ROW**

On another occasion firemen were called to fight a grass fire and arrived before it had obtained much progress.

They found not one but three separate fires, about 30 yards apart, burning parallel to one another with the starting points in line.

These stories are perfectly true. They may be of interest to parents.

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