

Sunshine Advocate

Old mansion burnt down 'The Gables'

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OLD MANSION BURNT DOWN

One of Sunshine's most historic residences, the old home of H. V. McKay in Talmage St., was burnt to the ground early last Friday morning, only days after a new owner took possession.

The old house of wooden construction was known as the Gables and was on land 200 feet by 300 feet deep. The house had 16 rooms, including an immense billiards room.

In its hey-day it was laid out with a most picturesque garden maintained by the late Mr. H. V. McKay's domestic staff, but in latter years the property had slipped back.

Owner

The new owner, Mrs. Parkinson who had only just sold her old property in King Edward Ave., to set up the Gables as a reception rooms and catering centre, took possession on the Monday before the fire.

Sunshine fire brigade was called out at 4.33 am when a milkman noticed the blaze. The milkman woke the occupants and moved them out of the blazing building. No less than five fire appliances and 14 firemen were sent to the fire, but in the condition of the wind and with the fire already blazing fiercely they could save little.

The Gables, believed to be over 55 years old, was one of several properties in Talmage St. developed by the McKay family not long after the H. V. McKay works were moved from Ballarat in the earliest years of this century.

Gale

Mr. Don McKay, a cousin of the original pioneer family, lives next door to the Gables.

He told The Advocate on Friday afternoon that he was awakened at 4.40 am due to the fire. At that time the rear of the house was burning strongly and the gale-like winds were driving the flames towards the front.

Mr. Parkinson and his daughter were asleep in the front of the house and were unaware of the fire until roused by the milkman. They escaped safely but could salvage only a handful of their possessions because of choking smoke which swirled through the old house.

Mr. McKay reported that the news of the fire had distressed his family greatly through the loss of an old family centre and a landmark well-known in the district.

We understand that Mrs.

Parkinson was ill in hospital at the time of the fire. She had accepted numerous bookings for her new reception rooms and had arranged for it to be re-decorated before opening in September.

8 tenders for mental centre

Eight tenders have been received for the Sunshine Mentally Retarded Centre, which the council and Lions' Club have been promoting. One of these will probably be accepted within a few weeks.

When tenders closed last Friday it was found that the tenders ranged between £30,000 and £40,000 for the completed building with architect's fees, the total price is expected to be about £36,000 completed.

This figure is several thousand higher than the estimate, but we understand it is not likely to delay the project.

The tenders have been submitted to the Mental Hygiene Authority for their decision, and if one is accepted soon the centre could be ready for use for next school year.

Sunshine Council has donated the land on which the centre will be built, and Sunshine Lions Club has raised the money for the building (for which a four-for-one subsidy is available) and a balance towards furnishings and equipment.

TRIAL FOR DANCING

Keilor Council has decided to allow a six-week trial of a Sunday afternoon dance in St. Albans Public Hall.

Mr. V. J. Casha, of Academy Management and Promotional Service, had applied for permission to hold the dance for local teenagers.

Cr. E. Alan, opposing the dance at Keilor Council meeting last week, said that Mr. Casha in the past had run his dances well and the way they were organised was a credit to him.

He had security service men there, but that was beside the point, Cr. Alan said.

"What I am afraid of is that we will get the riff-raff from other places," he said. "This will not be a four o'clock tea dance. It will be a stomp and it will be a beauty."

Mr. Casha in his application wrote that he felt that a Sunday afternoon dance would be somewhere for teenagers to go.

Cr. R. Webb moved that the dance be given a six weeks trial.

Cr. I. McNab: "Will six weeks be long enough?"

Cr. Webb: "It will be ample."

Cr. L. A. Moon: "It may seem hard, but I can't accept the cry that teenagers have nothing to do at night or weekends."

PIGEON RACING

A race from Harcourt to Sunshine was conducted by the Sunshine District Homing Pigeon Club last Saturday and was held in rainy conditions for the full 70 air miles the birds travelled.

First place was gained by a bird owned by Perc Roberts, with a flying time of 2 hrs. 13 mins. 51 secs. and a velocity of 810.1 yds.

Sport