

Looking back with Molly...

The sawmill fire, by Molly Smith



*Pictured from left: Jim Timms and Jack Pears.
Source M. Smith.*

One Thursday morning in October 1981 the Walpole Community woke to the news that a major part of Bunnings Walpole Sawmill (responsible for thirty five employees) had been destroyed by fire in the early hours of that fateful Thursday.

Firemen, mill workers, residents and employees from the then Forests Department worked valiantly to save the mill, but the damage was extreme and some plant and machinery was destroyed with the over all damage estimated at \$300,000.

However some mill machinery (including a large saw filing machine which had recently been purchased at a cost of \$16,000) was rescued as well as some stacked timber. The alarm was raised by a young mill employee who lived in one of the mill huts. The destruction to this major employment provider caused grave concern in the town.

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