

MORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Rankin's Tailor Shop Fire

Morwell Advertiser 26th. July 1901

FIRE

A NARROW ESCAPE

It is now some considerable time since there was a big conflagration in Morwell, but another, which probably would have equalled any previous one was very narrowly averted on Friday evening last, about 9 o'clock, when Mr. S. W. Rankin's, tailor shop in Commercial road, caught fire, and had it not been for the timely presence of Messrs W. Bruton, J. Bryden, A. Green, H. McIntosh, S. Gill and a few others, who worked like Trojans, the whole block from Koury's to Haiz's would probably have been reduced to ashes.

Mr. Rankin was away at Omeo at the time, and it appears his brother was in the act of removing a kerosene lamp from the shop, when he tripped with the result that the lamp fell and exploded at the same time setting fire to a lot of paper and rubbish under the counter. Mr. Bruton's fancy goods shop is adjoining on East side and Samuel's and Bryden's tinsmiths on the West. Bruton who was in his shop at the time heard the lamp fall, and in a moment was fighting the flames which were lapping up to the ceiling. He was immediately followed by Jim Bryden, Green, McIntosh and others, whilst Mr. Gill came along with buckets of water, which were handy. For a few moments it was doubtful whether the fire would be got under or not, but the fire-fighters stuck manfully to their "guns" and although many were almost overcome with the smoke and heat and a number had their hands severely scorched, they kept up the attack until the last flame was eventually extinguished, the damage done amounting to about £ 5.

We understand that Rankin's goods were insured, but neither Bruton or Samuels and Bryden had a penny insurance on their stock.