

Public Appeal for Homeless Families

PATHETIC POSITION OF NEWLY MARRIED

Timber Yard Reduced to Charcoal

SHOPS AND COTTAGES DESTROYED

It is estimated that the damage created by the memorable fire which broke in Winslow High Street on Wednesday morning, amounted to at least \$5,000. It was the most disastrous of three fires which Winslow have experienced this week, and it is stated that the fire originated in a storage at the rear of business premises and cottages in High Street and the damage was as follows:

TOTAL DESTRUCTION to the home, premises, of Mr. LEONARD PAGE hairdresser.

TOTAL DESTRUCTION of the home and the greater part of the property of Mr. TUCKER, a groom, Mrs. Tucker and their four children.

WRECKAGE OF THE HOME and destruction of furniture of Mr. WELSH, a chiseler and sweep and of Mrs. Welsh.

LOSS OF HOME, many hundreds of pounds worth of TIMBER, PAINT and house and office furniture on the premises of Mr. W. R. J. GIBBARD, builder and decorator, etc., and Mrs. Gibbard.

Damage to the rear of the premises, loss of goods, and damage of front shop belonging to Messrs. "CANTRELL'S STORES," of Buckingham and Winslow.

Some rear damage to the premises of Mr. E. HYPFORD, COIN MERCHANT and Mr. FRENCH, fancy goods dealer.

BORROWED HOSE PIPES.

The fire was discovered at about 6 a.m., and Mr. French and Mr. Austin gave the alarm. The Winslow Fire Brigade have rarely, it was made a quicker "response." Mr. G. Bennett, the Winslow Bank Manager, said that he saw Chief Officer Illing of the Brigade, out on the square almost simultaneously, it seemed, with the sounding of the call. They had probably reached the scene of the fire well within five minutes. The Winslow Fire Brigade also later communicated with the Buckingham and Aylesbury Brigades.

CHAINS OF SUCKETS.

It was decided to obtain a supply of water from the sewers and the Chief of the Winslow Fire Brigade, Mr. W. E. WOOD, Captain London, of Redditch, Winslow, who sent from his home, on a rainy morning, four hose pipes to his private possession, sufficient to make a connection with the water at the sewers. The timber, the pump and the premises were being severely, aided by a strong wind.

WATER PROBLEM.

The water supply available was not sufficient to deal with the main problem, but the Winslow men worked hard. Fortunately, the Buckingham Brigade (under Chief Officer F. Saxe) and the Aylesbury Brigade (under Chief Officer Ixhite) arrived in good time, in spite of the difficulty of travelling on roads, sections of which were covered with ice. The Buckingham Brigade arrived first, and the water supply problem had been solved before their arrival and it was decided to use a supply at the Great Horwood Brook. This is over a mile from the scene of the fire and the brigades connected their hoses over the whole of this distance to bring water to the scene. Buckingham went to Great Horwood Brook and pumped to the Aylesbury men, who pumped to the fire. Winslow continuing their equally valuable work, which by their promptness at the start, undoubtedly helped to stay off some consequences from the other end. After about half an hour, a rod in the Aylesbury machine broke down and Wastow pump also suffered a minor mishap, which was quickly rectified. The Buckingham pump continued to work without mishap and with marvellous power.

In the meantime residents of Winslow helped for some time to fight the flames with chains of buckets of water drawn from domestic pumps. The water from the buckets was poured across the rear wall connecting with the burning yard, of Mr. Hyford's corn store. Women were among the eager workers. One of them was Mr. Page's hairdresser and his wife, whose two months' old baby girl was carried out of the burning building. Mr. and Mrs. Page were married less than two years ago and they have four children.

BABY GIRL'S PRAM.

The occupants of the affected premises had gone out of their houses before any very critical danger to life was threatened. One of them was Mr. Page, hairdresser and his wife, whose two months' old baby girl was carried out of the burning building. Mr. and Mrs. Page were married less than two years ago and they have four children. The hairdresser's shop and living premises were destroyed, together with the hairdressing implements. A representative of the assessors, Messrs. L. H. Davis and Co., Ltd., told the "Buckingham Advertiser" that they had lost practically everything apart from a little remaining shop stock, which was saved. All their clothing in the house perished, and the babe was left with little else but her night clothes. Mr. and Mrs. Page said that they partially dressed and walked down the stairs, and out through the front door, realising that it was hopeless to think of attempting to save their property. The child's pram was the only article of the babe's which was saved. The hairdresser's establishment is being carried on at premises facing the bank in the Market Square.

Some of the residents of the smaller properties were uninsured and they have lost practically everything.

CELLAR PAINTS SAVED.

Two tons of paint in Messrs. Gibbard's cellar were saved from the onslaught of the flames; but practically everything else was destroyed, including the office furniture, the tools in the workshop and the great stacks of timber which were reduced to nothing but smouldering charcoal. "It is not so serious in a very few moments" said Mr. Gibbard. Mr. G. Gibbard, Mr. Tucker and Mr. Welsh, saved a small part of their domestic belongings. Mr. Turner's premises were also involved.

Undoubtedly, the consequences of the fire would have been vastly more serious had it not been for the swift response and skillful work of the Winslow Brigade, under the efficient lead-

ership of Chief Officer Illing, the timely arrival of the neighbouring Brigades, the work of the Pelton under Super. Bryant and Super. Callaway, and last, but by no means least, the painstaking efforts of the volunteers. These helped not only to save a portion of the property of the affected houses; but they also assisted in bringing, to a place of safety, the valuable goods and furniture of business premises in the vicinity. Furniture was shifted out of top windows and a personator was got through a door which the owners had never succeeded before in passing it through.

CHRISTMAS STOCK IN ROAD.

Messrs. Cantrell's goods included Christmas stock, crackers and other evidence of festivity making a sorry picture as they lay in the road awaiting removal. The damage to Messrs. Cantrell's Stores was chiefly in the rear premises, although the front shop was also damaged. The Royal Memorial Hall and other buildings were filled to their utmost capacity with the goods and furniture from affected and threatened premises. Of necessity, many of these premises suffered through damage by water or heavy removal.

LORD ADDINGTON'S OFFER.

Fortunately the majority of the homeless people, who were turned out on a bitterly cold morning, had relatives living in Winslow who were able to provide them with a roof over their heads; but Lord Addington, Mayor of Buckingham, who was one of those who on the morning of Wednesday offered to give £100 to those who had lost their homes, did not see fit to do so. The Rev. St. J. H. Bennett, the Assistant Curate (the Rev. F. T. S. Powell) and others extended similar invitations.

A SUFFICIENT TREE.

By it was a scene of appalling devastation was presented in the yard of ruined timber and wrecked cottages. At the side of the yard, stood a motor cycle reduced to scrap iron. It was the property of Mr. Gibbard, Ltd. A tall tree, blackened by flames, stood in the middle like a brooding scold. In the High Street, a large crowd still remained watching the scenes at the conclusion of their labours. A number of chimneys were pulled down in the interest of safety.

BUCKINGHAM COUNCILLOR'S EYE.

Second Officer Gibbard, of the Winslow Brigade, who was later to be seen playing water on his own and other premises was still locally at work. Canon, C. W. Cantrell of Buckingham was observed outside his house, wearing a shade over his eye and the rumour got abroad that he had received injury from flames. Actually, however, he was suffering from a severe cold in the eye and had wisely put on a shade for safety. Mr. Riehm, who was outside his baker's shop on the side of the road opposite to the scene of the fire, said he was the last on the shop windows while the ravage was in progress was such as to make it impossible to touch them. Those who had travelled in the train from Buckingham to distant villages declared that they had seen the vivid glare from long distances away.

All along the main road and down the Horwood turn the mile-long line of hose sported exuberantly at passers by. On Thursday afternoon the lengths belonging to the Winslow Brigade were filled with solid blocks of ice. For a large part of the afternoon, the bus routes to and from the Winslow Square, together with general traffic, was diverted.

A PRIZE-WINNING BRIGADE.

Winslow had cause to be thankful—despite the water shortage, which the Rural District Council has been attempting to remedy for some time past—for the possession of a Fire Brigade of such aptitude, of unusually smart and up-to-date character. This Brigade has won in competition against some of the foremost brigades of the country. Three men of the Winslow Brigade had been left on duty at the scene of the fire throughout the night. Scarcely, it seemed, had they got to bed, before there was another call to action.

IRONMONGER'S STORE.

At about midnight members of the Brigade were summoned by the premises in the square, of Mr. Midgley and the Brigade ironmonger. Boarding in a living room over the cellar had caught fire and the Brigade's work involved them in the task of sawing in half an old 12in. x 12in. beam. They were engaged at this task for over two hours and saved the spread of the fire. Had they not done so, the consequences would have been very serious; for gas pipes, and electric cable were situated near to the flames and the inflammable goods of an ironmonger's store might easily have been involved. A large portion of flooring was damaged; but there was comparatively little else spoilt.

THE THIRTEENTH DAY.

On the previous Sunday, also, the Winslow Brigade had been called to a fire at Mr. Gasey's private house in Sheep Street. Mr. Gasey was lunching at the time of the outbreak and somebody smelt smoke. It was found that casing to some tanks had ignited. The Brigade quickly dealt with the outbreak and the damage was not very serious.

PREVIOUS WINSLOW FIRES.

There have therefore been three fires in Winslow during the past week, the worst of them, was caused on the thirteenth day of the month. There have been six fires in Winslow this year, a record number down to 1926, as the following table shows: 1925, six fires; 1924, five; 1923, three; 1922, one; 1921, six; 1920, six; 1919, one; 1918, one; 1917, six; 1916, one; 1915, one.

(Continued in Next Column.)

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Relief Fund Appeal

To the Editor of "Buckingham Advertiser."

Dear Sir,—May I beg you kindly to publish an appeal for help, on behalf of the victims of the High Street, Winslow, on Wednesday morning last?

Four families are homeless, others are being subjected to serious inconvenience and loss and all have to face Christmas under most unhappy circumstances. In some cases the loss is not covered by insurance, and in any event there must be very considerable loss which at the best may only be partially recovered.

As Chairman of the Parish Council, I am, therefore, opening a relief fund and appeal for help, to enable us at least to alleviate in some degree, the aid and blow which has fallen upon some of our fellow townsmen just in front of Christmas.

Steps are being taken to form a representative committee to organise and administer the fund, and in the meantime subscriptions will be gratefully received by Mr. Geo. Bennett, Llandovery Bank, Winslow, or by—

Yours truly,

A. J. ILLING,

Chairman of Winslow Parish Council.

COMMITTEE FORMED.

We understand that at a meeting on Thursday evening, convened by the chairman of the Parish Council, a committee was formed to organise the relief fund, comprising Messrs. G. T. Bennett (chairman and treasurer), A. J. Illing, J. Goff, W. G. Chowles, G. Goss, Miss Lambton, Mrs. Goss, Mr. D. G. Smith (hon. secretary).

A house to house collection will be made in Winslow during the early part of next week. Christmas Carols will be sung in aid of the fund by Miss Wright's carol party.

"The Buckingham Advertiser" has signified its willingness to give all possible publicity to the above scheme, and to publish the subscription list each week, and have informed Mr. Bennett, the treasurer, of its intention to open the list with a subscription of £5 0s.

SUBSCRIPTION LIST.

"The Buckingham Advertiser." £ 5 0

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