

£5,000 Blaze Sheffield Bone Mill Guttled Firemen's Difficult Task A Curious Origin

The Attercliffe district of Sheffield was the scene of an extensive fire early this morning. Part of the premises of Messrs. Meggitt, Ltd., bone crushers and button manufacturers, were destroyed, and the loss involved will represent between £4,000 and £5,000. But for the excellent work of the Fire Brigade there is little doubt that the damage would have been much greater.

The works are situated in Effingham Road, and consist of a series of ranges extending rearwards, and separated from each other by open courts of rather restricted dimensions. Fronting the street are the offices, a two-storey brick building, behind that, extending in a parallel line, are the bone mill and button factory, divided by an arch and a brick partition, but under the same roof, and in rear of that again, other structures of various heights, are devoted to different uses.

Alarm in the District

It was in the bone-grinding mill, a three-storey brick erection that the fire originated. In this section was some costly machinery and much valuable material. Operations proceeded yesterday as usual and work was suspended at the customary hour, when, so far as could be seen, everything was in its normal state. At eight o'clock the caretaker made an inspection of the premises, which were found to be safe.

About four o'clock this morning a police-constable patrolling the district observed a flare in the sky, and, hurrying to Effingham Road, discovered that the mills were ablaze. He apprised the watchman, and the Fire Station was communicated with. So alarming was the appearance of the fire that other persons in the neighbourhood had their attention attracted to it, and telephone messages poured into the Rockingham Street station.

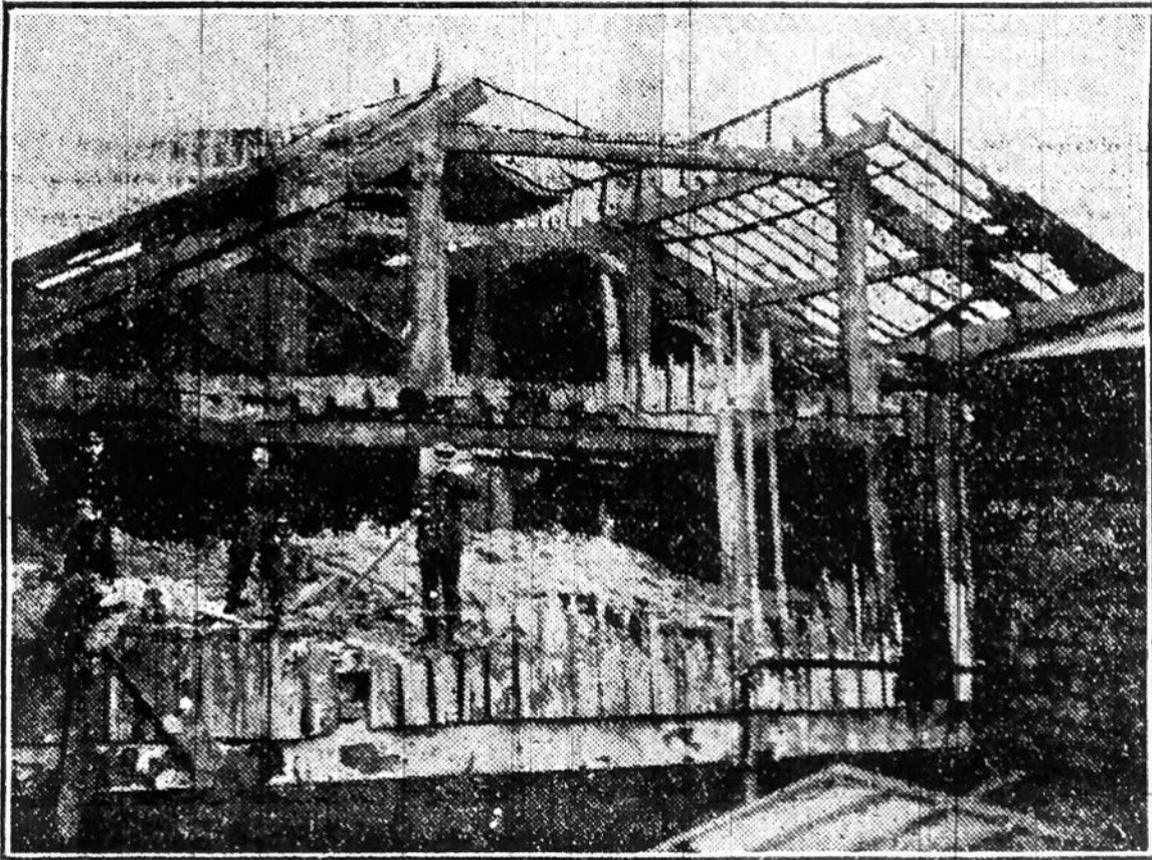
Chief-officer Frost immediately set off with the motor tender and her crew, two steamers following with all despatch. When the firemen arrived the grinding mill was completely enveloped in flames, which shot in fierce columns through the roof and also leapt from every window. The fire had also caught a wooden structure where the preparatory processes are carried on, and which connects the grinding mill with the warehouse and office. This was now blazing fiercely and all the indications favoured the view that the front range would be engulfed.

A Veritable Furnace

Close to the premises runs the canal, from which an abundant supply of water was available, a most fortunate circumstance; for in this part of the city the pressure from the mains is not so powerful as it might be. Chief Officer Frost., pending the arrival or the other engines, ran out two lines of hose which were connected with the ordinary street hydrants and served to check the progress of the flames. The steamers, immediately they arrived, were set to work from the canal, and within a brief space seven jets were pouring en the burning structure. Cramped as they were, the Brigade did magnificent work. The wooden building which adjoined the offices received special attention, and here the men effected a most wonderful stop, cutting off the flames just as they ware about to take the contents of the warehouse. As it was, they caught, but no more. The vigilance of the firemen saved them.

The grinding mill, as leas been explained, adjoined, adjoined and was under the same roof as the button factory. Communication between them was established by door spaces and passages. Yet, though the mill was a veritable furnace, the firemen succeeded in preventing the flames from involving the button department.

The Effingham Fire



[Photo and Block: Leng, Ltd.]

View of preparing department destroyed in to-day's fire at the premises of Messrs. Meggitt, Ltd., bone millers, Sheffield. This was a wooden structure which connected the bone mill with the offices, and it was here that the Brigade effected a remarkable stop.

How it Began

The Brigade closed in upon the fire from all sides, and very soon the effect of the water became patent. Little by little the flames died down, and at five o'clock some of the jets were turned off. By 5.30 the fire was subdued, but it is still-being closely watched by members of the staff.

Apart from building over 100 tons of material, valued at nearly £800, and several machines, one of which alone cost about £1,000, have been destroyed. It is estimated that the total damage, will exceed £4,000.

As to the origin of the fire, an interesting theory is advanced. It appears that among the bones placed in the grinder, metal is often found, and the machine has a special attachment for separating it. A horse shoe, for example has been known to emerge changed to the form of a bullet, at white heat. It is supposed that some such body had been emitted and had ignited the material in the mill which probably smouldered unnoticed and finally burst into flame.