

## Experts Probe City Death Blaze



*FIREMEN battled with the blaze for four-hours, and traffic in Langsett Road was held up because of water hoses. Here two Firemen are seen attacking the flames from the top of a wall*



*MRS. KERRY*

### Brigade fought flames as turpentine exploded

HOME OFFICE scientists and fire and police officers are investigating the cause of a Sheffield fire in which three died.

The warehouse; in Burgoyne Road Sheffield contained bottles of turpentine substitute.

Men of Sheffield Fire Brigade were still standing by today 16 hours after the blaze.

Killed were Mr. George Kirk aged 47, whose dry salting-firm owned the warehouse; his wife Nora, aged 47; and one of their workers, Mrs. Doris Kerry aged 56, of Somerville Terrace Walkley

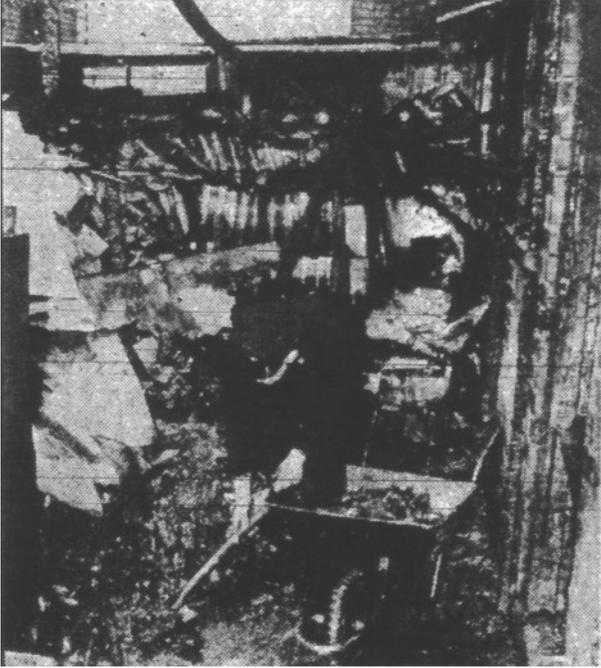
Mr. and Mrs. Kirk lived at Far View Road, Sheffield Lane Top.

At the height of the blaze flames leapt 150 feet into the air and bottles of turpentine exploded. So great was the danger and so intense the heat that firemen had to attack the flames in relays.

They battled with the fire with foam and water for four hours, traffic on Langsett Road was held up because of their hoses, Burgoyne Road was sealed off.

Mr. Kirk and Mrs. Kerry died when they tried to extinguish the fire.

## Like Eruption



*The scene of devastation after the blaze, with a fireman investigating among the pile of debris, scorched and shrivelled by the intense heat*

He was outside loading a lorry when Mrs. Kerry rushed out shouting "Fire."

Both of them ran with a tarpaulin into the warehouse full of bottles of turpentine substitute, hoping to smother the flames. Then the whole building seemed to erupt.

Mr. John Tomlinson, chief of the works fire brigade of Easterbrook Allcard and Co., Ltd., who lives nearby heard the sound of the exploding bottles but "thought they were moving oil drums about."

But after glancing through the window and seeing the blaze he dashed 200 yards to telephone the brigade.

## Boy Surprises inquest - "I saw the turps blaze begin"

A 14-YEAR-OLD boy gave dramatic surprise evidence at the Sheffield inquest today on the three victims of the city warehouse blaze when substitute turpentine caught fire.

After it had been stated there was no theory as to how the fire began; the boy revealed how he had seen it start in the filling room.

The evidence was brought out by Mr. Robert Kerry, bus driver; whose wife was one of the two women who died in the fire.

### "Confused"

The boy Alan Digby of Normandale Road, Sheffield was asked by Sheffield District Coroner Mr. A. P. Lockwood why he had not given the evidence in the first place, replied "I was confused."

Then Mr, Kerry interjected: He was afraid of getting my wife into trouble."

The Coroner; who re-took the boy's evidence, told him: "I am going to take a lenient view of this and- -forget what you did tell me. You may have had what you thought was a good motive for saying this."

Verdicts of "Accidental death" were recorded" on Mr. George Kirk aged 47, his wife, Nora, 47 both of Far View Road Sheffield Lane Top, Sheffield, and Mrs. Doris Kerry, 56, Somerville Terrace Walkley Sheffield.

## Paraffin Heater

The Coroner said that three persons were trapped in the burning building when unstoppered bottles of substitute turpentine caught fire after being inadvertently knocked over near a paraffin heater.

He added the premises were not laid out adequately as a safeguard against fire risks.

Alan Digby questioned by Mr. Kerry said he had been helping Mr. Kirk with his lorry outside the premises when Kirk asked him to go inside and see if Mrs. Kerry wanted any help in the filling room.

"As I was just going in the door .I saw these bottles falling. I ran up to stop most of the bottles falling. Mrs. Kerry said: "You have been a very good lad. I am pleased.'

"I ran and told Mr. Kirk..."

### "Flare up"

Alan said he saw the bottles fall towards the paraffin stove in the room and "flare up."

"I saw a flash and went back to fetch Mr. Kirk."

The bottles of substitute turpentine were leaning against a piece of wood on the floor.

The boy admitted to the Coroner that he went on his own initiative to tell Mr. Kirk.

Station Officer A. Cornish, of Sheffield Fire Brigade, said the filling room was burning fiercely when he arrived at 6.23 p.m., and it spread soon afterwards.

### Dangerous

When he asked a man if there was anybody inside? He was told: "The two men are out."

Even if the information he received had been different, he realised now he could have done nothing.

"I could not have got into the building at that time. He said the building had a dangerous layout for the type of business done.

The bodies of the two women were found in the office and the body of the man in the kitchen.

The Station Officer said he had no theory as to how the fire started.

Dr. Gilbert Forbes pathologist said each of the bodies had been burned beyond recognition. But death was due to asphyxia from incomplete combustion.