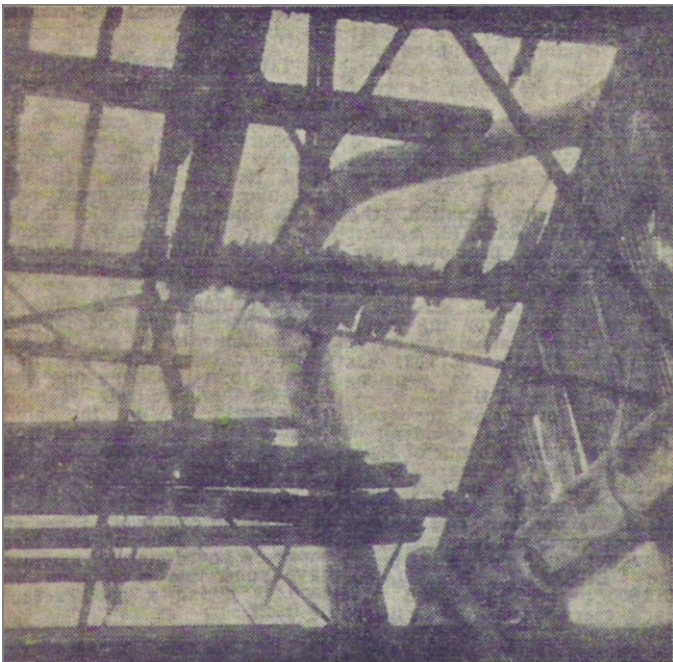


Fire Sweeps Timber Yard Traffic on Main Road Halted by Smoke

FIRE swept through a Sheffield timber yard on Saturday causing thousands of pounds worth of damage when it destroyed scores of tons of planking, guttering, plywood and machinery.

Traffic on the main Sheffield-Chesterfield road at Meersbrook was diverted on a quarter mile detour and a fleet of buses had to be called out to take hundreds of passengers from a convoy of trams brought to a halt by the smoke and firemen's hoses sprawled across the tracks. A director of the yard - Frank Gresham and Co. Ltd said the damage would not have been so severe had there been men working overtime, as on a normal Saturday.



The burned-out roof of the timber store of Frank Gresham and Co. Ltd., Meersbrook Sheffield

"But with Christmas so near there wasn't anyone on duty to check the flames when they started," said Mr. Gordon Gresham.

P.c. Dennis Bristow, from Woodseats division, gave the alarm when flames began shooting through the top of a 45ft. high sawdust grinder.

Flames Spread

Smoke billowed across Chesterfield Road. Meersbrook, and in minutes the flames spread to an adjoining wood shed stacked high with 50 tons of softwood.

Four appliances from Sheffield Fire Brigade went to the scene and in less than half-an-hour the blaze was brought under control, the firemen being led by Assistant Divisional Officer Frank Peel until the arrival of Chief Fire Officer Ben Jones and his assistant, Mr. Stanley Lambert.

Police directed traffic via Beeton Road, Burcot Road and Binfield Road. Nearly a dozen trams full of Christmas shoppers were brought to a standstill stretching in a long line back to Woodbank Crescent.

A fleet of buses was sent from the city centre to take the tram passengers the rest of the way.

In Grinder

Chief Fire Officer Jones climbed over the smouldering, charred planks to inspect the hopper on top of the sawdust grinder.

He told the "Sheffield Telegraph": "The fire started in the grinder and spread to the dust extractor and woodshed. Part of the roofing there was damaged and we had to remove and quite a number of planks before we could get at the flames burning some plywood and doors at one end of the shed."

Mr. Gresham said: "We won't be able to take stock of the damage properly until a few days' time when we can find out exactly what has been lost."

Of the gutted £1,000 sawdust grinder, he said: "That is a write-off. And the dust extractor is also damaged - but there was a lot of plywood and boarding stacked in the 30ft., long shed. It has certainly cost us thousands of pounds."

This was the first fire in the 28 years at the yard, he said.

SMOULDERING

All through the night and into yesterday, a trio of firemen worked by arc lamps, clearing away debris and dousing the smouldering wood from a hydrant. An emergency tender stood by until early yesterday.

Assistant Divisional Officer Peel said yesterday: "It is difficult to pin-point the cause of the fire - it could have been a spark which set the sawdust smouldering in the grinder and it later grew hot enough to ignite but that's only a theory".

A quarter page notice placed in the Star after the fire

Thanks to the efficiency of the Sheffield City police in immediately detecting the fire at our Chesterfield Road Saw Mill and the prompt and effective action taken by the Sheffield City Fire Brigade

**FRANK GRESHAM
& CO. LTD.**

(Timber Importers, Hull and Sheffield)

are able to assure their customers of

BUSINESS AS USUAL

with no delay to their orders in hand or pending.

We extend thanks to our friends in the trade for their kind offers of assistance.