

## Faringdon Advertiser 4<sup>th</sup> August 1900.

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Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> August 1900

### **FIRE IN THE MARKET PLACE**

Faringdon has possessed a Fire Engine and Brigade for very many years, but the town has providentially not required its use, although it has rendered good service at very many places in the district. However, in the early hours of Tuesday morning heartrending cries aroused the inhabitants in the Market Place, and it was soon ascertained that Mrs. L. Heath's premises were on fire, and from the windows of several houses the sparks could be seen rising above the house, the dense volume of smoke for a time almost filling the Square. The impression on the minds of those who first went out was that the houses in that part of the Market Place were doomed.

On either side of Mrs. Heath's premises are those of Mr R. Pocock and Mr. W. R. Cook, and between these at the rear is a separate low building used as a back kitchen, belonging to Mrs. Heath. Here the fire originated and had got a firm hold before the inmates of either house became aware of the danger they were in.

Mr. and Mrs. Cook's bedroom is at the back of their house, and Mrs. Cook states that she awoke and found the room oppressively hot. The window was open and she heard a peculiar noise like hail against the window; then she heard a crackling noise and saw a light, and on going to the window she was horror stricken to see the building below all in flames. The inmates at Mrs. Heath's were aroused at the same time. Mr. Heath was called by one of the assistants, and at once went downstairs. Finding the place on fire he went to open the back door so that anyone could get in, and had some difficulty in making his way back to his room. Mrs. Heath went out and called Mr. E. E. Haines (Captain of the old Fire Brigade), and her servant rushed frantically through the streets uttering distressing cries. Mr. Cook's first thoughts were directed to some tanks containing oil, turpentine, and benzoline at the back of his house, and in close proximity to the building on fire. With the assistance of Mr. W. Heath, Mr. Joseph Newman, his son, and Mr. C. H. Bevan, he succeeded in getting them through the house into the street. They then worked energetically by throwing buckets of water on the fire, the roof of the building by then having fallen in. Mr. Pocock and his sons were doing the same thing from their premises.

In the excitement no one seems to have called the Fire Brigade, but some of them living close by heard the cries, who at once donned their uniform, and called the others, all hurrying to the Engine House.

The Brigade promptly had the engine out and placed in position at Port Well with the hose attached. After playing on the fire for a short time from the back of Mrs. Heath's house, the firemen took the hydrant through Mr. Cook's premises. Here they had much more scope, and after pouring water on the fire for some time they had so far subdued it that all danger was over. Then they took the hydrant through the Brewery House occupied by Mr. G. Gerring, and played on the debris from that direction.

At first the fire had such a serious aspect that it was deemed advisable to have the old manual engine from the Workhouse in case of necessity. Captain Lane directed the men with the new engine, whilst the Sub-Captain, with Mr. E. E. Haines, who rendered great assistance, got the Union engine into play from the yard by the Red Lion, with a supply of water in the Coxwell Street water cart.

The inmates of all the houses were naturally much alarmed, and were making preparations for the worst, in which they were assisted by many friends, and it was a great relief to them all to find the danger was over in so short a time.

It was most fortunate that Port Well afforded an ample supply of water. The men were pumping at the engine altogether for two hours, and had just about exhausted the supply. Had there been any delay, or had the supply of water run short, it is difficult to say where the fire would have stopped. The alarm was given about 2.0 a.m. and it was just on 6.0 a.m. when the brigade left the premises, having seen that all was safe.

The cause of the fire cannot be ascertained. Mrs. Heath's servant says when she went into the back kitchen, before retiring for the night, the fire was nearly out, and Mr. Heath went round about 10 o'clock, before going to bed, when all appeared quite safe.

The properties are all insured.

The firemen carried out their duties very smartly, and there is no doubt they were the means of saving the block of buildings. Although the Faringdon Fire Brigade has but recently been formed, they have already done enough to let the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood know that should the dread enemy, fire, break out, they may feel assured that these young and energetic fellows will be ready to answer to the call of duty.