

## **PRINCESS MARY A GUEST IN BURNING YORKSHIRE MANSION.**

### **BLAZE AT BRETTON HALL.**

### **PEER RESCUES HIS CHILDREN.**

### **STARTLING EXPERIENCE FOR LORD ALLENDALE'S HOUSE PARTY.**

Fire broke out early this morning at Bretton Hall, near Wakefield, not far from rooms occupied by Princess Mary and Viscount Lascelles, who were staying there as guests of Viscount and Viscountess Allendale.

Lord Allendale himself rescued his three children from a room adjoining that in which the fire originated.

Summoned by a rocket alarm, estate workers and villagers did good work before the arrival of the Wakefield and Barnsley Fire Brigades. The principal damage was done in the library, over which is the nursery.

### **VILLAGERS SUMMONED BY ROCKET ALARM.**

Bretton Hall is a mansion dating from the Queen Anne period. It stands in an extensive wooded estate about five miles from Wakefield. The Hall is one of the residences of Viscount and Lady Allendale, who this week are entertaining a shooting party there, and amongst the guests sleeping in the Hall last night, only a few rooms away from the seat of the fire, were Princess Mary and Viscount Lascelles.

Other members of the house party were the Hon. Agatha Beaumont (sister of Lord Allendale), Lord and Lady Wharncliffe, and Mr. Buchanan Jardine.

The fire was discovered at about 5 o'clock by Lord Allendale himself. He immediately raised the alarm, and personally rescued his three young children from the night nursery, adjoining the apartment in which the fire originated. The children are two boys and a girl, the eldest of whom is five years old.

Rockets were sent up, and the bell of the church, which is in the park grounds not far from the Hall, was tolled.

There was a quick response by villagers, and the Wakefield Fire Brigade was soon on the scene, followed by the Barnsley Brigade. In the meantime, however, the household staff, with the aid of appliances recently installed, had succeeded in confining the fire to the day nursery.

## **BOOKS ON THE LAWN**

As it happens, however, the day nursery is immediately over the library in which were valuable books, furniture and pictures. The helpers had to contend with dense smoke, and when windows were broken and the smoke had cleared, it was found that the library ceiling was burning to such an extent as to be in danger of falling in at any moment.

The efforts of the workers, apart from the extinction of the fire, were directed to the saving of the contents of the library, and a large number of books, together with pictures and furniture, were brought on to the lawn.

The library ceiling fell in, and in spite of every effort on the part of the villagers and the firemen, valuable books, furniture and pictures were damaged or destroyed.

Members of the house party were interested spectators. They had quickly left their rooms, after throwing heavy coats over their night attire. Princess Mary, Lady Allendale, and Lord Lascelles were among them.

A member of the Wakefield Brigade said he thought they broke all speed records, covering the seven miles to the Hall. "When we rushed up the drive," he said, "the nursery end was well alight. The fire had a good hold, but we were given splendid assistance by the servants and the farm hands from the estate."

## **OVERCOME BY SMOKE**

The estate electrician, W. Parkinson, was overcome by smoke, and his rescuers had to make two attempts to get him safely out of the library.

One of the suggestions as to the possible cause of the fire is that there may have been a heavy fall of soot on to the carpet of the nursery.

Another theory is that there may have been a smouldering beam in the chimney breast. The fire brigade soon had the matter well in hand, but a number of firemen remained at the hall during the day in readiness for any emergency.

Directly after the fire, telegrams were sent to the King and Queen, informing them that Princess Mary and Lord Lascelles were uninjured, and had been in no danger.

Princess Mary had visited Bretton Hall on previous occasions, but we understand that this was the first time she had stayed overnight.

This afternoon, all approach to Bretton Hall was barred, guards being posted at the gates, and the men of the estate were forbidden to give any information.

Lord Allendale was out shooting with the house party. Princess Mary was still at the Hall.

## **PRINCESS PREMONITION.**

### **THE CEILING THAT WAS ABOUT TO FALL IN.**

According to another account, a member of the household said the first alarm was given at 5 a.m. by one of the guests sleeping in a room opening on to the same landing as the nursery. He thought he smelt burning, and he aroused Lord and Lady Allendale, and Lord Lascelles and Princess Mary.

It was some minutes before the searchers could discover where the fire was. Lord Lascelles, partially dressed, assisted in the search. Presently they found that it must be in the nursery, where a nurse, with Lord and Lady Allendale's three children, was sleeping.

By this time the drawing room, dining room, and library were full of smoke. Lady Allendale hurried to the nursery and found this room also full of smoke, and the nurse and children asleep. She warned them of their danger, and they quickly escaped and joined the house party assembling downstairs.

Princess Mary, in a dressing-gown, went with other guests to the library. Shortly afterwards she expressed the opinion that it was in a dangerous condition, and that the ceiling would probably fall in soon. She suggested that everyone should leave the room, and told the servants, who were using fire extinguishers there, to come away.

Two minutes later, the ceiling fell in. The insistence of the Princess on getting everyone to leave undoubtedly saved a number of people from serious injury, if not from death.

While the estate fire brigade fought the flames, members of the house party busied themselves in carrying furniture, pictures, books, and objects of art to a place of safety.

One of the Wakefield Fire Brigade officers said afterwards that when they arrived the fire was gaining every minute, in spite of the efforts of the estate brigade, house staff and guests. Fortunately there are two lakes in the grounds, and from one of them, two hundred yards from the house, the firemen were able to direct strong jets of water into the flames.

After about twenty minutes they had the fire well under control, and later they were helped by the Barnsley brigade.

His belief is that a wooden beam near the fireplace in the nursery caught alight, and so started the fire.