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# TERRIFYING GLOUCESTER FIRE SCENES

## FAMOUS CIRCUS HAS AMAZING ESCAPE

### FRIGHTENED ANIMALS MOVED TO SAFETY

### SCREAMING ELEPHANTS—ROARING TIGERS

### KINGSHOLM FOOTBALL STAND BURNT OUT

TERRIFYING scenes were witnessed on the Kingsholm Rugby Football Ground shortly after noon to-day, when a fire almost totally destroyed the big stand close to Mr. Bertram Mills' Circus. At one time there was a grave danger that the circus, with its menagerie of wild animals, would become involved, for only a few yards separated it from the blazing building.

Heroic efforts by the Gloucester Fire Brigade and the employees of the circus, however, averted all but damage to the motor-caravan and their contents, but the terrified animals had to be rushed to a place of safety.

At the outset of the fire remarkable scenes were witnessed. Elephants were trumpeting in alarm, tigers were roaring, and some of the horses got loose. So promptly were measures carried out, however, that before long the animals affected were far away from the scene of the fire.

excitement of the moment, found a lair in the Kingsholm Recreation Ground.

All that remained of the stand after the blaze was twisted and blackened framework, the whole of the wooden material having been reduced to ashes. The uprights still supported the bulging roof, which at one time threatened to fall, and but for fencing on each side, having been torn down, the flames might have spread further.

So intense was the heat that two frames and a cross-aisle were overthrown by the flames and heat, but seen revived after attention.

**One Huge Blaze**  
Erected about seven years ago at a cost of £25,000 the stand measures 180 feet by 40 feet, and was almost to end. As the fire broke out, a stream of water on to the flames had been directed by the firemen.

The escape turned out from the City Fire Station, and the whole available police resources were called upon to control the thousands of people who crowded around the ground.

**Like a Raging Furnace**  
How the outbreak actually originated does not appear to be known. This morning Mr. George Morgan, of 105, Riverside, Gloucester, had been engaged in painting the rear of the stand with a motor-driven sprayer. At about 12 noon he had a conversation with his employer, Mr. William Jones, builder, and when he returned to the stand he found a fire had broken out.

He immediately shouted for a fire engine, and ran into the Circus marquee, to get a bucket of water, to obtain one.

"When I returned," he said, "a big fire was burning, the stand was one mass of flames, and within five minutes the whole place was like a raging furnace."

**Three Engines at Work**  
With remarkable promptitude the City Fire Brigade rushed out with three engines, and in a very short time 1,000 feet of hose in following streams of water from the Dials in Riverside and Dean's Way.

Twenty-foot flames were roaring up the side of the stand in a remarkably short space of time, and the crackling of burning timber rose like a roar, other sounds. The space between the stand and the huge marquee was occupied with smoke, and the stand itself was a mass of flames because ignited.

**A Grave Danger**  
There was a grave danger that the flames would have crossed the gap, and in that case would have become involved.

Employees of the circus, assisted by the firemen, rushed the animals to a place of safety. The elephants were taken to St. Catherine's Church, and the tigers with tiger cubs were taken to Dean's Way. In the case of the horses, some of whom broke away in the

kept back the densely-packed mass who blocked the road.

The worst was over after about 25 minutes, and all that remained to do was to extinguish completely the remaining timbers of the stand. Great volumes of steam shot up from the burning, in mingles with the clouds of black smoke from the wood.

At one o'clock it was considered safe enough to start bringing the horses back. Most of them came quietly, though oddly the far side of water in the road that caused the fire.

**Strenuous Efforts**  
Many of the grounds had blazed and staked on their faces, marks of their strenuous efforts to get their charges out of danger.

That the members of the Fire Brigade bravely "red risk" was shown by the fact that two men, in addition to a circus hand, were temporarily overcome by the terrible heat.

**"Looked Desperately Dangerous"**  
Captain Leonard Dudgeon, who was in the bottom end of the menagerie with his wife and four small children when the fire broke out, said: "The thing looked desperately dangerous for a few minutes."

There was only a few people there, but the animals were badly frightened. Directly the elephants smelt the fire they commenced trumpeting, and the tigers roared, creating a deafening noise.

"Panic was prevented only by the wonderful way in which the circus employees came to their posts and took care of the animals. They way they handled them was remarkable, and they soon took them to safety."

**Secretary's Incident**  
Among the officials of the Gloucester Football Club sadly contemplating the scene from a quiet path of blackened turf, was Mr. Arthur Hoffman, the Secretary.

"The first I knew of the fire was when I saw huge clouds of smoke from my alone window," he said. "I could not tell what

When the safety of the Circus was assured, the Brigade was enabled to concentrate on the stand itself.

A raging inferno, with heat blistering their skins, saved them, and the acid fumes made breathing difficult.

As the flames licked up to the roof the corrugated iron bugged in dangerous fashion, and there appeared to be a prospect of the whole structure collapsing.

Luckily, however, the roof, though badly buckled without the terrific strain imposed on it, and though every scrap of woodwork was reduced to smouldering ruins, the framework of the stand gaunt but upright when the blaze died down.

**Roaring Animals**  
Dense clouds of smoke rolled over the city, and in a few minutes thousands of people, attracted by the clanging of alarm bells and the roar of the animals, crowded to the ground.

The whole of the police, including the detectives, were called out to the scene, and



A picture which illustrates the short gap between the blazing stand and the circus tent. The menagerie containing the animals is marked with an arrow.