

From 'SOUTHEND STANDARD' Dated 11th Dec 1903.

FIRE AT GREAT WAKERING
THE 'ANCHOR' BURNT DOWN
EXCITING SCENE

Nothing remained of 'The Anchor', Great Wakering, on Friday morning, except some brickwork supporting the chimneys,. It was a very old house of two storeys, constructed mostly of wood. Mr Charles Deeks had been landlord for nearly three years. The occupants of the house on Thursday were Mr Deeks, his two daughters, a lady friend who was staying with them, Mr Deeks, Junior, and two men lodgers. Towards 2 o'clock in the morning of Friday, Mr Deeks awoke, to find smoke in his room. He heard a cracking and snapping noise and looked out of the window to see the flames running along the boards of the building. He rushed to the room occupied by the young ladies (under which the fire appeared to have started), in the front part of the building, and found that the fire had already reached there. He dropped out of the into the back yard, falling on his hip. He secured a ladder, placed it against the window, and brought down the ladies, who were screaming with terror, one by one, also his son. One of the lodgers went to the window, and, it is reported, said "I know I am bad, but I don't think I am bad enough to be burnt alive", he therefore jumped out, followed by the other lodger. Through the kindness of Mr Bishop, the members of the family and the Misses Deeks' lady friend found a temporary home. The place was now blazing furiously, and messengers on horseback were sent to bring the fire brigades. Mr Deeks, junior rode, to Shoebury to fetch the Garrison Brigade and Mr Wedd's coachmen set off to appraise the Southend Brigade that their services were required. Pending their arrival, measures were taken to prevent the fire from spreading. The inn adjoined a house on the right hand side, and there was a brick washhouse and wooden stables close in the rear. Fortunately, there was a pump in the backyard, and from this water was procured and thrown onto the buildings. Mr Deeks worked hard, and was rendered valuable assistance by Ps Totterdell, Pc Law, Pc Chapman, Dr Raper, Messrs John Mobbs, Outen, Beadle, and others.

The liquor in the house helped the fire on its way considerably, bottles of spirits went off like little cannons, and tubs of beer boiled over.

The Southend Brigade got the call about 3.30 and were on the spot with dispatch: their arrival being witnessed by a large crowd. The place was down by this time, and there was nothing left to do but put the flames out which necessitated playing on them until nearly six. Four men went on the steamer, and nine on the escape tender. Two men were left in charge of the Fire Station, and at four the Ship Hotel fire alarm rang. They turned out the hose cart, but found it was a false alarm, caused owing to the high wind making contact. The Garrison Brigade did not arrive.

The house was the property of Miss Martha Harris and Mrs Mitchell, and was leased from them by Messrs Wells and Perry, of Chelmsford.

Mr Deeks estimated his losses at between 400 and 500 Pound; more than half being covered by insurance.

The members of the brigade attending were: Capt Garon, Lieut Harvey, Chief Engineer Willingale, Engineer White, Firemen Wood, Thorogood, Edwards, Norton, Finch, Sawkins, Calvert, Barker and J Ayres.