

## Two newspaper reports regarding property fires in the village

### BLACK BULL INN

(Date of newspaper unknown)

#### SHOCKING ACCIDENT AT RIMINGTON

##### ----- A LANDLADY BURNT TO DEATH

Late on Saturday evening a most distressing accident happened in this village, by which Mrs. Metcalfe, a widow and landlady of the Black Bull Inn, was burned to death. It appears that shortly after eleven o'clock Mrs Metcalfe was retiring to rest, and took up stairs with a paraffin lamp. On reaching the landing at the top of the stairs she must either have fallen or let the lamp fall, this breaking it and setting her clothing on fire. She was the only occupant of the house at the time, except Mr. H. Metcalfe, her son, who is a young man, and he had retired to rest about an hour previous. He, however, was awakened by hearing a moan. He at once got up and lighted a candle, and on emerging from his room a most ghastly sight presented itself, His mother was laid on the floor in flames and almost unrecognisable. He hastened to extinguish the flames, and when he had done so he found that his mother was fearfully burned all over her body, and quite dead.

The inquest was held on Tuesday, before Mr. T. P. Brown, coroner, and a jury of which Mr Duckworth was foreman. From the detailed evidence given below it appears that the poor woman was dead when found by her son, and that was at 12.35a.m, so that it was more than two hours after her son had gone to bed. It appears almost certain that her clothing was quite saturated with paraffin, for the purse and money that she had had in her pocket were burnt to one piece, the silver and copper coins being undistinguishable from each other and all fast together; in fact they seemed to have been almost melted, distinctly showing the fearful heat there must have been when the fire was at its height. The lower parts of her dress were not burnt. It seems strange that after being put out, the fire should break out on her clothing two or three times. The deceased was 59 years of age, and was well known through a wide district.

The first witness called was Hartley Metcalf, who said: Deceased was my mother, and widow of the late H.S. Metcalf. She was an innkeeper of Rimington, and aged 59 years. On Saturday night a little after 10 p.m. She was sat in a chair in front of the fire in the kitchen. I left her there alone and all right when I went to bed. There was a good fire and two lamps burning – one on the table and one hanging up; they were paraffin lamps. My mother was quite sober, She generally went to bed about 10.30. About 12.30 a.m. I heard a moaning noise upstairs. When I wakened I shouted “Mother,” but there was no answer, and I smelt some smoke. I got up and struck a light, and found my mother on the landing. I went to her and saw she was on fire. I put it out and stirred her by her arm, and found she was dead. I went out for assistance, and when I came back I went up again, and her clothing was still burning. I put the fire out again, and a little after a man named John Duckworth came in, and he went upstairs, and the fire had broken out afresh. There was no trace of fire in the kitchen, nor in the bedroom: the only trace of fire was on the step. There was a lamp beside her on the landing. The vessel that held the oil was broken. She was burnt about the arm and face. I did not hear anything before 12.30. I put the fire out with my hands. - By the Foreman: I slept in the bedroom next to the stairs top. My mother has had very good health, except being rather troubled with heart disease. There was no blaze.

Alice Walton, wife of Richard Walton, of the Spread Eagle, Lamb Road, Whalley, said: I am daughter of the deceased. She had generally had good health. A few years since she had pleurisy, and consulted two doctors; and they said she had heart disease. She has been short of breath recently.

P.C. Watts said: I got to the Black Bull Inn, Rimington, at 2.30 a.m. On Sunday, and found the body on the landing. The deceased was lying on her left side. I found a lamp broken close to her knees; the chimney of the lamp was broken, and the bottom portion holding the oil was against her head. The purse and money (produced) were near her. I found the bar-room key under her. The money is all burned into a lump. I could not smell paraffin, and there was not much sign of fire on the stairs.

A verdict of "Accidentally Burned to Death" was returned.

[A check of the Lancashire BMD website suggests this occurred in 1884. A death was registered this year in the Gisburn Sub-district in the name of Margaret Metcalfe ages 59.]

## NEWBY MILL FIRE

CLITHEROE TIMES January 15<sup>th</sup> 1890

### Rimington

#### Mill Fire

Great Commotion was caused in Rimington, on Friday evening last, by the alarm being spread that Newby Mill was on fire. The report proved to be correct, and there were quickly half the inhabitants of the district flocking to the place. The mill is only a small one, and is the only one in the district. It is run by Messrs J. Cook & Sons of Clitheroe. There is a reading room attached to the mill, and on Friday evening, at about half past seven, some of the members of this reading room noticed flames on the second storey of the mill. An alarm was at once raised, and it was found that the fire had originated in the call room on the second floor, and had got a good hold of the room. A large number of willing hands with buckets, at once set to work to subdue the flames, and as there was a good supply of water in the lodge, which was very convenient, they were soon able to have a beneficial effect. A hand pump belonging the mill was also very useful, and by one way and another the fire was extinguished in about two hours. It was supposed the fire was started by a match dropped whilst the lamps were being lighted. On Saturday morning, about eleven o'clock, the fire again broke out in the same room, but it was extinguished in a short time. The damage done was chiefly to healds and machinery, and amounted to about £150 which is covered by insurance. The affair caused great excitement in the neighbourhood, for a good many of the inhabitants have to depend on the mill for their means of livelihood.