

A Boy Burnt to Death near Bolsterstone

This morning a disastrous fire occurred at Wood Farm, Bolsterstone, occupied by Mr. George Steel, and forming part of the estate of Mr. Rimington Wilson, of Broomhead Hall. The fire was first discovered shortly after 6 o'clock, by Mr. Steel's eldest son, who saw smoke issuing from one of the barns. Mr Steel, on seeing the great danger of the flames spreading to the stables and other farm buildings, hastened to Stocksbridge and called in the aid of the Local Board Fire Brigade. The brigade headed by Captain Milnes, arrived at Wood Farm with great promptitude, and rendered very effective service in preventing the spread of fire, but owing to a very strong gale blowing it was impossible to save the stables, cowhouses, and barn. All the live stock was saved. There were many willing helpers, including Mr. George Sampson, agent to Mr. Rimington Wilson, and a number of farmers living in the neighbourhood. Mr. G. Marsden, Agent for the Lancashire Fire Insurance Company, with whom the stock was insured, was also present. The damage will amount to some hundreds of pounds.

The most deplorable incident of the fire has yet to be recorded. Soon after the alarm was given Mrs. Steel missed her little son John Henry, aged six years. Search was made for him all over the house, but without result. Then it occurred to Mrs. Steel that the lad was in the habit of visiting the barn in the morning to collect the eggs. Every effort was immediately made to discover the child's whereabouts, but owing to the fierceness of the fire it was impossible for a long time to make a complete search. At last fully two hours after the boy was missed, his body, terribly charred, was found in a corner of the barn where the fire originated. It is conjectured that, in his search for eggs, he may have lit a match and accidentally set fire to the barn; but the exact circumstances are never likely to be known. The greatest sympathy is felt for Mr. and Mrs. Steel in their terrible affliction.