

The Wapping Blaze Impressions of Sheffield Fire Brigade Chief

"I had never seen such a spectacle in my life," said Superintendent Breaks, Chief of the Sheffield Fire Brigade, describing to a "Star" reporter to-day his impressions of the £250,000 Colonial Wharf blaze in Wapping.

Superintendent Breaks, who had been supplied with helmet, boots, and the necessary equipment for fire fighting, drove to the building when the fire was at its height on the second day.

Tongues of flame were lapping from the windows of the giant building, cascades of sparks rebounded from crashing roofs and walls, whilst the daring fire-fighters occupied every vantage point and poured upon the furnace thousands of gallons of water a second," he said.

"We approached the building. At first the ground was sticky with molten rubber, and as we advanced the depth of the molten mass became greater until we were wading up to our knees.

"Part of the building had collapsed into the river and sunk three barges, whilst casks of tea were being washed from the wharf.

"Over a hundred firemen were still at work. And they had literally cut the building apart with the aid of a jet three inches in diameter from a fire float, Massey Shaw, named after London's first Fire Chief.

"The pressure on this jet was so great that masonry weighing half a ton was washed away with it. From a 150-foot crane we looked down upon the 100-foot high flames which were still raging when I left."