

Former City Fire Chief Dead When Police Served With Brigade



Mr W. Frost

Superintendent of Sheffield Fire Brigade from 1895 to 1915, Mr. William Frost, who played a large part in building its reputation as one of the smartest and best equipped brigades in the country, has died at his Morecambe home at the age of 74.

During his time in Sheffield he attended more than 500 fires and thousands of ambulance cases, the ambulance service being at that time attached to the fire brigade.

Within a short time of his appointment in Sheffield he completely reorganised and remodelled the Brigade.

At that time members of the police force served in the dual capacity of policemen and firemen, a man having to attend a fire outbreak after he had completed his eight hours police duty on the streets.

By gradual stages more up-to-date equipment was introduced until all the latest appliances were at the disposal of a body of whole-time firemen.

Days of Horses

In the days of horse-drawn fire engines Mr. Frost introduced in 1895 the "slinging harness" Sheffield being one of the first places in the country to adopt this time saving device.

So outstanding were his abilities that at the conclusion of the South African War, he was selected by the Corporation of Cape Town to re-organise the Cape Town Fire Brigade and report generally on methods of protection from fire and on fire appliances.

On another occasion he inspected the fire brigades under the jurisdiction of the Lanarkshire County Council and afterwards gave expert evidence before a Select Committee of the House of Commons.

His investigations into fighting and preventing celluloid fires were reported to the Celluloid Commission in Parliament.

One of the most important fires he attended was that at Welbeck Abbey in 1900 when the brigade saved a considerable portion of the Abbey.

After serving with the Royal Garrison Artillery he served in four police forces before coming to Sheffield.

The interment will be at Crookes Cemetery, Sheffield, this afternoon.