

Page I. 7:10 pm Thursday 12th December 1940 to Friday 13th December 1940 5:00 am.

5:00 pm

Afternoon- V. Brammer & Girlfriend, Phyl and I went for run to Bakewell. Had tea at the George Hotel, Hathersage. The waitress speaking of the bombing said that the Germans would not find Sheffield . It was the best Blackout City in England, so an airman friend of hers had said.

6:30 pm

Slight mist. Arrived home at Uplands. Went in for a warm before getting new car out and going to Crosspool prior to going into work. I was on the 10 pm to 7am shift.

7:05 pm

Started new car up. Joan on hearing this said it was an aeroplane. I laughed but then heard an explosion Sheffield. Decided to wait at home for a bit. From the field at the back I could see huge fires which I thought were over East End works. Brilliant flares were dropped and floated slowly to earth. Our anti-aircraft batteries tried to shoot these out. Tracer bullets could be seen evidently trying to shoot down barrage balloons. The noise was terrific. The gun nearest our house changed its firing direction and fired out over our house to meet the incoming planes. Not a minute without the crash of bombs over Sheffield.

About midnight slight lull so suggested setting off with old car, but attack started again. Waited whilst 1:25 am and then decided that the huge fires to be seen were not over Crosspool. We should travel so far and investigate.

Passing Moscar Top saw two cars smashed up. Just passed Blackbrook. shells were bursting above us so pulled up and sat under wall until guns changed their trajectory. Quiet for a moment so made a dash for Crosspool leaving V. Brammer at Coldwell Lane. Watching for shell bursts near the Sportsman Inn I failed to notice debris in the road, the result of a land mine in Cardoness Road and nearly turned the car over. Arrived at Watt Lane. Phyl's Mother and Father next door at the Bradshaw's. Told them of the damage in Manchester Road and Benty Lane. Borrowed Phyl's tin hat and set off for town. The police stopped me at Kings Head, I was running without lights. Passed Chapel and saw a huge explosion down at Broomhill. I got the wind up and went to Lydgate Lane Ambulance Station. All their ambulances out of service through crashes and burst tyres due to glass.

No chance of a lift to town so decided to try again. Got as far as Oak Park when I saw soldiers rushing out of Tapton House Road. I pulled into the side of the road, opened the car door, and was about to get out when a bomb, exploding at the back of Redlands lifted my car on to its side and threw me out on to the causeway. I was only shaken and five soldiers helped me put the car back on four wheels again, it still ran. The front wheels were a little damaged and petrol had spilled out of the tank but it was still serviceable .

I next went as far as the York Hotel at Broomhill. The house next door but one to Col. Lycett was on fire. I next turned down Glossop Road, St Mark's Church was on fire.

A bomb had dropped on my right down Newbould Lane . About at Wilkinson Street I saw a huge fire in front of me (Reuben Thompsons Garage), so I turned left and went up to the University and turned to go down Brook Hill. A crater the width of the road stopped me so I backed out and went down Leavygreave Road where I had to bump over fire hoses. Jessops Hospital had a small fire. Turned down Gell Street into West Street as far as Regent Street where Boots chemists shop had received a hit. Toilet rolls were all over the place blown out of the window. I turned up Regent Street (as West Street was littered with broken glass) and across Broad Lane into Red Lane. Passing St. Vincent's a stained glass window was blown out in front of me. I could see the figures plainly in the moonlight. I came out near the bushes, they had a background of fire. Church Street, Campo Lane and St. James Row were a mass of flames. I got as far as Scotland Street and became entangled in tram wires, the car engine stopped and as I got out to restart it the new Police Station received a direct hit and instantly became a mass of flames. I just got into reverse to back round to Scotland Street when Shaw's newsagents blew up twenty yards in front of me. The blast blew me back to Solly Street I got up Scotland Street and turned down Lambert Street when three explosions blew out the windows of the flats. Some dropped on the back of the car but did not stop me.

Came out into Gibraltar Street . I was stopped by a convoy of fire tenders from Huddersfield and Dewsbury. They were stopped by a huge pile of three tramcars piled in a heap. A bomb had dropped on top of them.

They wanted to know how to get to the Central Fire Station. I directed them and noticed a big black Rolls Royce car and trailer which I afterwards saw in St. Mary's Road smashed up.

Crossing the road I went across Spring Street and arrived at the Central Ambulance Station. I parked "Thunderbolt" under the shed and went into the Shelter under Mellows where the Staff were. As I went down the steps a fire bomb landed on the roof of Mellows and started a big fire. After reporting to Capt. Kenny I went upstairs again and found the whole of the building above a mass of flames.

I went back and told Capt. Kenny who said they would be alright, but he evidently changed his mind and ordered everybody out I started the Daimler and ran it down the road full of spare tyres, A number of ambulances in the garage not in service were driven out and parked away from the fire which was showing signs of spreading across the road . The heat was unbearable. I turned on the hosepipe and sprayed the petrol pump and my own car and pushed it as far from the flames as possible. The Fire Brigade arrived but could not get water so went away. I was sent to Oxford Street Chapel with two ARP Girls as attendants on ambulance 340.

I arrived to find it had received a direct hit and that a number of people were buried in the houses below. An old man, who said his family were under the first house, told me they had pleaded with him to stay with them in the cellar, but he would not and so lived to tell the tale. As there was no chance of getting at them for sometime I went hack to Corporation Street.

In Spring Street I meet Capt. Kenny who sent me to Shoreham Street tram-sheds for a number of cases. I got three of them alive. One of the fire attendants told me she lived next to the Cathedral in the Church House and that all her people were there so I decided to run round and see what had happened at Church Street and St. James Row. They were burning fiercely. The nearest we could get was Leopold Street so the ambulance was parked and I asked a fireman if it was safe to go. He said no, but after explaining, he said he would help us but that we went at our own risk. This made me laugh. It seemed strange somehow in the middle of an air raid.

We found the house shattered but only one old man was injured so he was taken with the rest to the Royal Hospital. These two jobs, although not far from the station, took three times as long to reach as it was impossible to travel along nine out of every ten roads. After unloading my patients I saw Harry Buck (another driver) behind the Hospital door sobbing. Thinking it was an attack of nerves I took no notice of him, but on entering the Lodge I learned he had just been told his brother George (another driver) and Percy Wood his attendant had been killed. Attendant Dolphin who had been with Harry came with me and as we set off for Carwood Avenue the "All Clear" went.

The raid had been in progress for Ten Hours. On arrival we found that the casualties were all people in the air raid shelters. Out of about fifteen Anderson Shelters, all built without blast walls and containing three or four people each, only two were alive. These we taken to Fulwood Annex, the Royal being full .

On returning to the Station we were sent to Reginald Street where the rescue parties had recovered some bodies - two alive and one dead. They were taken to the Royal Hospital Taking the bodies to the mortuary we found that out of fifty three bodies only seven had been identified. The bodies of some A.F.S. men were in canvas bags not much bigger than sand bags, they could not be recognised as men. As it was now about 12:15 pm I packed up and went home.