

Jewish Chronicle – 10th October 1902

THE FATAL FIRE AT TREDEGAR, SOUTH WALES

SIR,—I should like to call the attention of your numerous readers to the brave and plucky conduct of Miss Ellen Marks on the occasion of the lamentable fire which occurred at Tredegar on Sunday night, September 29th.

Miss Marks, a sister of Mrs. Levene, (who unfortunately lost her life) was in one of the bedrooms on the second floor of the building when the fire occurred, and on hearing the cry of fire she immediately took one of the children in her arms with the intention of going out into the street. She found however, that she could not get through owing to the heat and smoke

Undaunted by this check, she made her way back upstairs and breaking the window with her arm she threw the child out to those who were waiting to receive it, and afterwards jumped into the street herself. But it was feared that her brave action had been done at the cost of her own life, owing to the loss of blood, resulting in a severing of one of the arteries of the arm. Her life was despaired of, but happily, now she is on the road to recovery. I think it was a most plucky action of any girl to do, and I am sure it was owing to her presence of mind and prompt action that the child's life was saved. I would therefore ask your readers and all true lovers of a brave deed to cordially assist any effort which may be made to recognise either by a testimonial or otherwise the brave and plucky conduct of Miss Marks on that sad occasion.

Yours obediently,

LEWIS COHEN

20, Cleveland Street, Merthyr Tydfil

JC – 31st October 1902

THE DISASTROUS FIRE AT TREDEGAR, SOUTH WALES.

AN APPEAL

THE benevolent of the Jewish I community are earnestly appealed to for their aid and sympathy on behalf of the sufferers in the above, which resulted in the loss of a life—the wife of Mr. Solomon N. Levene, Shochet and Reader of this Congregation, and leaving two children, aged two years and three months respectively. The other occupants of the house at the time—a sister of the deceased, Ellen Marks, and a brother-in-law, Harry Levene—both sustained such severe injuries in their heroic endeavour to save their relative and the children that they are now inmates of the local Infirmary, and it is feared will be long incapacitated from following any employment.

The young woman specially distinguished herself by her plucky conduct, and saved one of the children by breaking the window of the room in the second storey and throwing the child to someone in the crowd outside the burning dwelling, and then jumping out herself, thus severing one of the arteries of her arm, and through the great loss of blood her life was at one time thought to be in danger.

The Committee beg to assure all intending donors that the cases are most deserving, and they hope to be enabled to afford substantial relief as will not leave them permanently

destitute, and to also enable them to lay by a sum in trust for the two *poor* orphans so sadly bereft.

The following sums have already been received:-

Lewis L. Fine - £3 3s

Mrs T. Fine - £2 2s

G. Freedman - £2 2s

Lionel L. Harris - £1 1s

H. Gittelshon, Esq. - £1 1s

H. Broder, Esq. - £1 1s

H. Freedman, Esq. - £1 1s

Alfred L. Freedman, Esq. - £1 1s

S. Louis Harris, Esq. - £1 1s

H. M. Bernstein, Esq., London - £1

S. Rosenbaum, Esq. – 10/6

S. Wolfson, Esq. – 10/6

W. Fine, Esq. – 10/6

Frank Fligelstone, Esq. – 10/6

Harris Isaacs, Esq. – 10/6

M. Levinsohn, Esq. – 10/6

Mrs L. Freedman – 10/6

Israel Fine, Esq. -10/6

M. Simons, Esq. – 10/6

Sums under 10 shillings - £4

Further donations will thankfully received by any of the under mentioned officers and Committee of the Fund and will be duly acknowledged in the Jewish Chronicle

Gabriel Freedman, Esq. – Union Street, Dowlais – Chairman

A Roskin, Esq. Beaufort Hill, Beaufort – Vice Chairman

Lewis L. Fine, Esq. Terrace House, Rhynassy – Treasurer

Herman Gittelshon, Esq. Dowlais

I. Isaacs, Esq., Bailey Street, Brynmyr

M. Ash, Esq., Somerset Street, Abertillery

Lionel L. Harris, Esq., Muriel House, Tredegar

H. Broder, Esq., Commercial Road, Tredegar

S. Rosenbaum, Esq., Church Street, Tredegar

S. Wolfson, Esq., Church Street, Tredegar

**At the Jewish Chronicle office, 2 Finsbury Square, E.C. and S. Lewis Harris, Hon. Secretary,
87 Queen Victoria Street, Tredegar**

Evening Express – 2nd October 1902

THE TREDEGAR FIRE. The persons injured at the Tredegar fire are not progressing favourably. Harry Levine, brother-in-law of the lady burned to death, has been taken to the Merthyr Hospital suffering intense pain. The heroine of the affair, Miss Ellen Marks, is also in a low state owing to loss of blood. A strange story is told by a married sister, who has just arrived from the Isle of Wight. She had a dream and awoke fancying she could smell smoke. Her husband searched the house without finding any trace of an outbreak. Subsequently she heard of the affair at Tredegar.

Weekly Mail -11th October 1902

THE TREDEGAR FIRE

MISS MARKS TO RECEIVE GIFTS FOR HEROISM

A movement is on foot in Tredegar and neighbourhood with the object of raising a fund for a presentation to Miss Ellen Marks, the heroine of the recent fire in that town. A large sum has already been collected, and, in addition, the Royal Humane Society has been made acquainted with the facts of the case. Miss Marks, it is pleasing to know, is recovering, though Very slowly, from her serious injuries, and Mr. Harry Levine is also making some progress, but in his case it is feared he will never regain the use of one of his hands.

Evening Express 1st October 1902

TREDEGAR FIRE

Extraordinary Evidence at the Inquest

PLUCKY CONDUCT OF TWO POLICE CONSTABLES

Mr. J. B. Walford held an inquiry at Tredegar Police-court on Tuesday afternoon into the circumstances attending the death of Mrs. Phoebe Rebecca Levine from burns sustained in the fire at No. 5, East Lane, on Monday morning, as already reported. The Rev. Solomon Levine, Hebrew minister at Tredegar, husband of the deceased, said she was 28 years of age. On Sunday night he and his wife, Mr. Harry Levine (his brother), Mr. W. Fine, Mr. M. Davidson, and Mr. L. Bernstein were in the second sitting-room. He and the other men sat round a table, which was covered with a heavy cloth, and on which was a paraffin lamp, which was of china and glass, and had an extinguisher which was out of order. While they were sitting round the table his wife rose from the armchair and lay down on the sofa, which was alongside the table. Witness could give no intelligible account of what happened, but he

saw the lamp fall over. The glass was smashed and appeared to him to fall over the deceased on the couch. He could not say whether the tablecloth was pulled or not. In a moment the deceased and the room were in a blaze, and he got hold of a coat and threw it over his wife, and his hands were burned in the attempt to extinguish the flames. Witness said he did not remember anything else.

The Coroner: Did you faint? Witness: No.

Do you remember going out of the room? No

What do you remember next? Seeing my poor wife in Mr. Bernstein's house

A Juror: Where were the children at the time the lamp was turned over? One was upstairs and the other in the cradle in the room with us. I did not know it was there at the time.

And you, being a father, did not think to look for them or do anything to preserve their lives? I lost all control of myself.

Wm. Fine, pawnbroker, Commercial Road. Tredegar, said he tried to extinguish the flames with a pillow and a coat, but they were too strong. His (witness's) hair began to burn, and he ran out of the room. He thought the deceased had then been taken from the room. He believed he was the last to leave.

The Coroner: You think Mr. Solomon Levine left the room before you? Yes.

Did you make any effort to put out the fire on Mrs. Levine? No.

Or to get her away? I thought she was taken away.

Was there any quarrelling? No.

Michael Davidson, Market-street, Tredegar saw the lamp upset, but he could not say how it happened. He saw the paraffin run over the couch, and the flames spring up as if they came from Mrs. Levine.

The Coroner: How long had you been there? About two hours and a half

And you did not know Mrs. Levine was on the couch? No.

The Coroner: Now, be careful. Witness: I saw Mrs. Levine in the armchair when I came in, but I did not see her get on the couch.

The Coroner: It is a very extraordinary statement. What did you do when the lamp fell over? I lost all consciousness. I was trying to put out the fire from Harry Levine's trousers.

What did you do next? I was so excited that when I saw the whole room on fire I ran out.

Did you notice a child in the room after the fire broke out? I was too excited.

The Coroner: You forgot the woman and the child, but you did not forget to get outside yourself. The child has evidently not you to thank for being alive at this moment.

Lewis Bernstein, pawnbroker, Bridge-street, Tredegar, said he saw Mrs. Levine take hold of the tablecloth, which she dragged, and the lamp was upset. Witness took the baby up and ran out into the street and took it to his own house. He returned in a minute or two but failed to get into the house again. Before leaving the house, he saw Harry Levine pull Mrs. Levine, who was in a mass of flames, off the couch and put her in a standing position. The room in a few seconds was like a furnace. Police-constable Hiron described the efforts of himself and Police-constable Hampton in getting Mrs. Levine out of the burning house. When they found her, she was lying with her feet against the inner door, which they had, to force in, and which fell over her. In the second attempt they groped their way on their hands and knees along the burning passage, and when the woman was got out, she was frightfully burnt. The Coroner at this point said it was fair to state that Miss Marks had informed Inspector Wilmot that morning that Mr B. Levine was got into the passage by someone, and she went back to look for her baby, thinking it was still in the room. The Coroner, in summing up, said that, under the trying circumstances described, the men seemed to have thought that someone had seized Mrs. Levine, and, probably, that was correct, and it was equally as probable that she had returned into the room. Two persons in the room could not be said to have done anything to assist Mrs. Levine. Lewis Bernstein was re-called and said he did not know why the other three men did not get Mrs. Levine out of the house before the policemen came. He was under the impression that she had been got out of the house. He asked where she was, and no one answered him. The Rev. Solomon Levine was re-called.

The Coroner: You knew where your wife was before the policemen came? I don't remember anything beyond putting a coat over her. After deliberating, the jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death."

They were also unanimous in thinking that William Fine and Michael Davidson ought to have been able to make better efforts to get the woman out of the room before the police came. The Rev. Solomon Levine wished to point out that the position in which the deceased was lying seemed to indicate that she had returned to the room.

The Coroner: You must have realised, and Davidson must have realised, that she was still in the room, and every effort should have been made to get her out. It is one of your duties to try not to lose your head in difficult circumstances. The jury highly commended the two constables for their promptitude and bravery.