



St. Lawrence Hall destroyed by fire, 1951



The *Isle of Wight Mercury's* headline of June 8th 1951 was 'St. Lawrence Hall burnt out –Ventnor's biggest ever blaze?' The beautiful residence built around 1886 in the style of a French Chateau, once the home of Admiral of the Fleet Lord Jellicoe, had been gutted by fire in the small hours of June 1st. Formerly called Inglewood, it had 24 bedrooms by this time, a fine set of reception rooms and stood in ten acres of grounds with views of the Channel.

Since 1945, the Hall had been run as a private hotel with Mr. Percy Scott-Jackson in possession for the last two years. He had been awoken at about 1.15 a.m. with the smell of burning and smoke. Upon investigation, he discovered that the rear of the house was well alight. A neighbour raised Ventnor Fire Brigade by telephone, its crew arriving on site within about half an hour. By then the blaze had become extensive and brigades were urgently sent for from other stations on the Island. Soon it became clear that a strong easterly wind was spreading the fire to untouched areas of the Hall. When parts of the roof and first floor fell in, it became clear that little of the building could be saved. At one stage, there were sixty firefighters on site. The men salvaged what they could of the contents, but the wreckage was still smouldering at 6 pm that day.



Today, the house site and grounds accommodate a large housing estate known as Inglewood Park.

Ventnor & District Local History Society: Michael Freeman, from files in Ventnor Heritage Centre



Ventnor & District Local History Society is a registered charity, working to preserve and record the history of our area and make it available to the public in the Ventnor Heritage Centre.

The Society and Heritage Centre are run and managed by volunteers.

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