



19th JUNE 1997

FIRE BOMBED



DEVASTATED...Mrs Jenkins amid the wreckage.

MYSTERY ATTACK: Café owners feared for neighbours' lives.

A MYSTERY arson attack on one of Amman Valley's best known café businesses was meant to put it out of business, owners fear.

Damage estimated at £25,000 was caused by a home-made explosive device thrown into the dairy and freezer section of Cresci's Café at Gwaun-cae-Gerwen.

The firm is known throughout West Wales for its award-winning ice-cream. Stocks of lollipops and ice-cream, worth £5,000, were destroyed in the blaze caused by the bomb.

Joint owner Mrs Rose Jenkins said of inflammable liquid being thrown at the dairy at the rear of the café, a trail of petrol-soaked rags and paper was laid to link six ice-cream vans which had been doused with petrol.

Another trail was laid to link the vans with the café, which had a window smashed and petrol sprayed inside.

Mrs Jenkins also feared the attack could have caused an explosion, with neighbours lives at risk, because the vans were parked over a gas main.

"Whoever did this went to great lengths in an attempt to put us out of business. But nothing will stop us. The café is open and the ice-cream vans are on the road."

STORY:
ARTHUR
WILLIAMS

PHOTO:
GUARDIAN
PICTURE

The blaze blacked out the electricity in the house next door, occupied by Mr Hugo Cresci, who alerted the fire service. Neighbours then helped the owners from the area of the fire.

Mrs Jenkins said: "We are very lucky that the whole place did not go up in flames. I don't know why we were victims of such an attack. To our knowledge we have no enemies. It must have been carried out by sick people."

Cresci's was established in Gwaun-cae-Gurwen in 1905, the business being taken over by Hugh and Jane Jones, and Dylan and Rose Jenkins, 10 years. They employ 20 people.

Police said they were investigating arson as the cause. Fire crews from Ammanford and Pontardawe were called to the scene.

The fire service said: "We are treating it as a very serious incident. There was a risk to adjoining properties by fire but there was no explosion risk as the gas pipes were laid deep underground."

