

Firm rises from ashes as new warehouse launched

by Nial Anderson

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NEW buildings have risen from the ashes of the old at Hale & Co Builders Merchants in Drybrook.

With completion of the new plumbing and heating centre now within sight, the company is expecting to be back to normal soon following a devastating fire last year.

In June of 2009 warehouses filled with stock and the recently finished plumbing and heating centre were destroyed in a huge fire attended by up to 80 firefighters from several counties.

The Baroness Royall of Blaisdon came to officially mark the completion of the new building last Friday.



FLASHBACK: The inferno at Hale & Co.

She unveiled a plaque and praised the efforts of independent family businesses to expand and contribute to the local economy.

Managing director Leslie Hale said that due to delays caused by the weather, the new building would be fully fitted out and trading by February next year.

He said with the new facilities, and the biggest challenge in the firm's lifetime overcome, the company would be stronger than ever before as a result.

"I think we dealt with the aftermath of the fire very well," said Leslie.

"Staff morale was excellent and everyone pulled together to keep the business functioning the best we could.

"We're expecting the groundfloor heating and plumbing centre, with a showroom for Rayburn and wood burning stoves, to be open by February.

"We're expecting that our kitchen and bathroom showroom, which will be the biggest in the area, will be open by Easter.

"We've been trading now for 100 years and hopefully when this work is completed it will set us up well for the next 100."

Hale & Co will be expanding their shop once they have moved the kitchen and bathroom showroom to its new location.

Over the last 16 months the company has reclaimed vital storage place for stock with the construction of several warehouses.



LAUNCH: MD Leslie Hale, left, and Mike Bennett assistant general manager.