



ABOVE: Firemen silhouetted against the blazing mill tower. LEFT: The burning wreckage of the house a short distance from the mill

MILL BURNS TO GROUND —MYSTERY OVER CAUSE

PLAIN-clothes detectives and county fire officers have this week been investigating the cause of a fire which destroyed three buildings, including the centuries-old Black Mill, at Nonington on Sunday morning.

A spokesman for Canterbury Fire Brigade told the *Dover Express* afterwards: "Our files will, of course, remain open until we discover the truth of the matter."

The fire is believed to have broken out soon after midnight, and by the time the alarm was raised—at 1.45 a.m.—flames were leaping forty feet into the air.

Firemen from Aylesham, Whitfield and Canterbury rushed to the scene, but were unable to save the buildings. Altogether, twenty firemen with three appliances fought the fire for nine hours before they managed to get it under control.

And until Wednesday, fire officers made regular inspections of the site to make certain that the fire did not break out again.

OFFICIAL RECORD

A spokesman for Canterbury Fire Brigade said on Tuesday that the cause of the fire was officially recorded as "unknown."

The circular windmill—three floors and 24ft. in diameter—had for years been a well-known landmark. It was burnt to the ground.

Also badly damaged was a disused private house—two floors and a basement—a short distance away, and a 900 square foot single-storey barn.

The property, it is believed, has been up for sale for some time.

The blaze also destroyed a large stack of wood and this created fresh difficulties for the firemen because clouds of black smoke covered the area.

Another setback they had to overcome, the Fire Brigade spokesman said, was the shortage of water and the difficulty in getting it to the burning buildings.