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POLICE HAVE 'OPEN MIND' ON CAUSE OF CUDDESDON FIRE

WATER FROM SWIMMING POOL SAVED PALACE

Oxfordshire police officers are "keeping an open mind" about the cause of the fire which swept through the west wing of Cuddesdon Palace, home of the bishops of Oxford for 300 years, on Tuesday night.

A police spokesman said yesterday that, while at the moment there is no suggestion that the fire was started deliberately, they are carrying out a routine investigation.

Forty firemen had fought the blaze for two hours with water brought from a swimming pool and well at the nearby theological college.

The Chief Fire Officer for Oxfordshire, Mr. Timothy White, said yesterday: "We are quite satisfied where the fire started. The next problem is how it started. We have passed on information to the police.

"We are still not satisfied about a pocket of fire found in the lavatory on the ground floor, for which we can't give any explanation," said Mr. White.

Police Investigations

The fire was confined to the west wing. The Palace was unoccupied at the time.

Fire officers and police started investigations immediately trying to find the cause of the fire.

A third of the roof of the Palace was completely destroyed. The fire funnelled down to the ground floor, burning out 11 rooms—five on the

second floor, three on the first floor, and three on the ground floor.

"At its height, the fire was blazing like a giant bunsen burner," said Mr. White, on Wednesday.

He ruled out the possibility that lightning, which was intense at times on Tuesday night, had started the fire.

Firemen used all the water in the Theological College swimming pool nearby and a well.

Alarm Given

Mr. White said that had it not been for that supply, the work of the firemen would have been much harder. "The college authorities agreed some time ago to keep the swimming pool filled at all times," he added.

The fire was first seen soon after 10 o'clock by Mr. Tim Bravington, a student at the college.

While he telephoned for the fire brigade, other students ran to remove cars and motorcycles stored near the blazing building.

Mr. Bravington said that he first saw a light in one of the upper windows.

"I had to look a number of times before I was sure that the building was on fire," he said.

Within a few minutes of the fire being discovered a crowd of students and villagers had gathered at the gates of the burning palace.

One spectator reported seeing blue flashes from the building at about the time the fire was discovered.

Rick Alight

Wheatley and Oxford City were the first brigades to arrive, quickly followed by Thame and Woodstock. Between 30 and 40 firemen attended.

The gale sent clouds of sparks down, setting light to a rick.

This fire was quickly extinguished and a fire tender was

detailed to patrol neighbouring property.

The palace, which has been empty for some years, with only a few of its rooms used for meetings of local organisations, has not been occupied by the Bishop of Oxford since the late Dr. T. B. Strong lived there.

There was scarcely anything of value in the building. Only one chair was brought out. Some pictures had been removed recently.

Mr. Bravington, who is Scoutmaster, said that some Scout equipment was stored in the undamaged part of the building.

The palace was burnt down in the Civil War when Charles I had his headquarters in Oxford. It was rebuilt by Bishop John Fell.

Bishop's Plan

It was the intention of the present Bishop, Dr. Harry Carpenter, to live in the palace. He considered that he would then be at the geographical centre of his diocese.

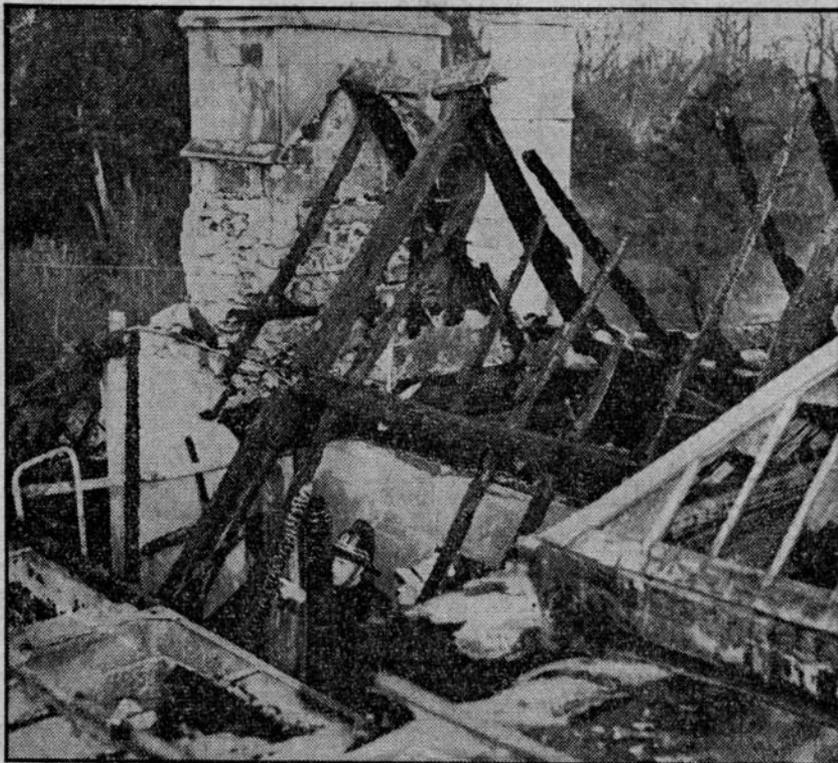
At a diocesan conference two years ago the Bishop said that he would be content to live in a parsonage of moderate size. "But," he said, "a Bishop has responsibilities which could not be properly exercised in such a house."

He said then that there had never been any question of restoring the house at Cuddesdon as it stood. A much smaller house would have to be provided on the site, as a condition of his going to live there.

Dr. Carpenter was not available to comment about the fire today as he is attending the Church Assembly in London.



A view of the damaged west wing of the Palace in which 11 rooms were gutted by fire on Tuesday night. (Below) Firemen examine the charred remains. Investigations are now being carried out by fire police in an attempt to discover the cause of the fire.



CITY RATES TO RISE AGAIN?

LIABILITY OF SCHEMES

A rise of between 1s. and 1s. 6d. appears inevitable for ratepayers in Oxford, because of major schemes to which the City Council is committed during the next financial year.

Coun. J. N. L. Baker, chairman of the Finance Committee, warned in November that increases in the cost of education and in running the police force would be equivalent to a ninepenny rate.

The construction of the Eastern by-pass, costing more than half-a-million pounds, and the plans by the Housing Committee to build more than 600 houses costing more than £1m. are among the large projects

CANNOT SELL WINES

C. NORTON DECISION

Magistrates at Chipping Norton rejected, for the second year in succession, an application from the National Co-operative Chemists on Tuesday for a licence to sell wines at their chemist's shop in High Street, Chipping Norton.

MIND' ON DON FIRE

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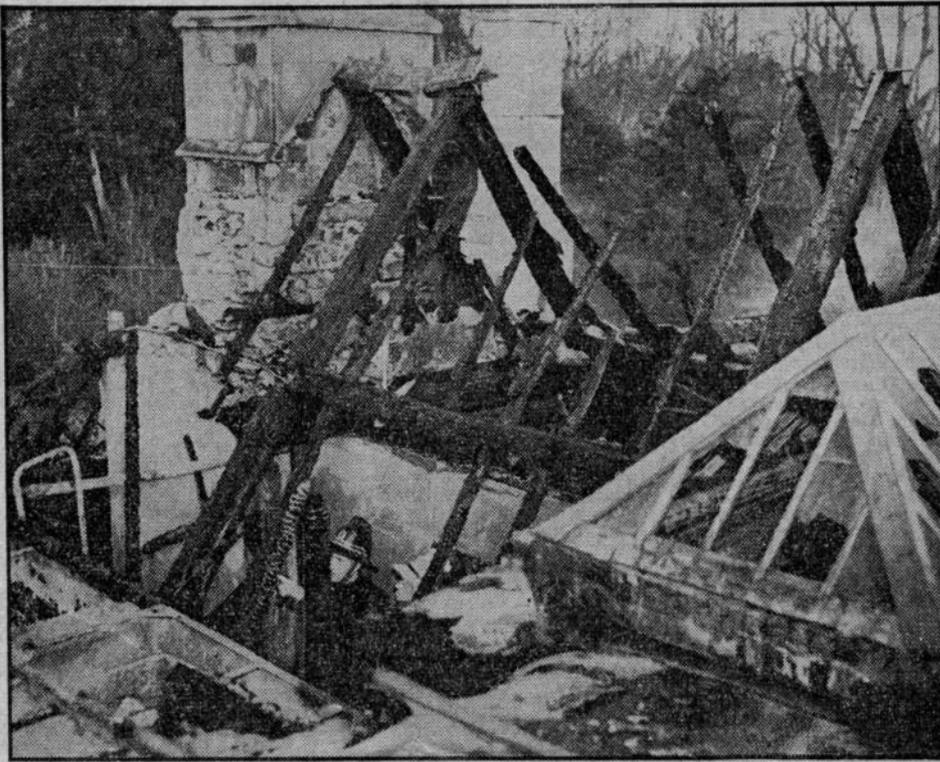
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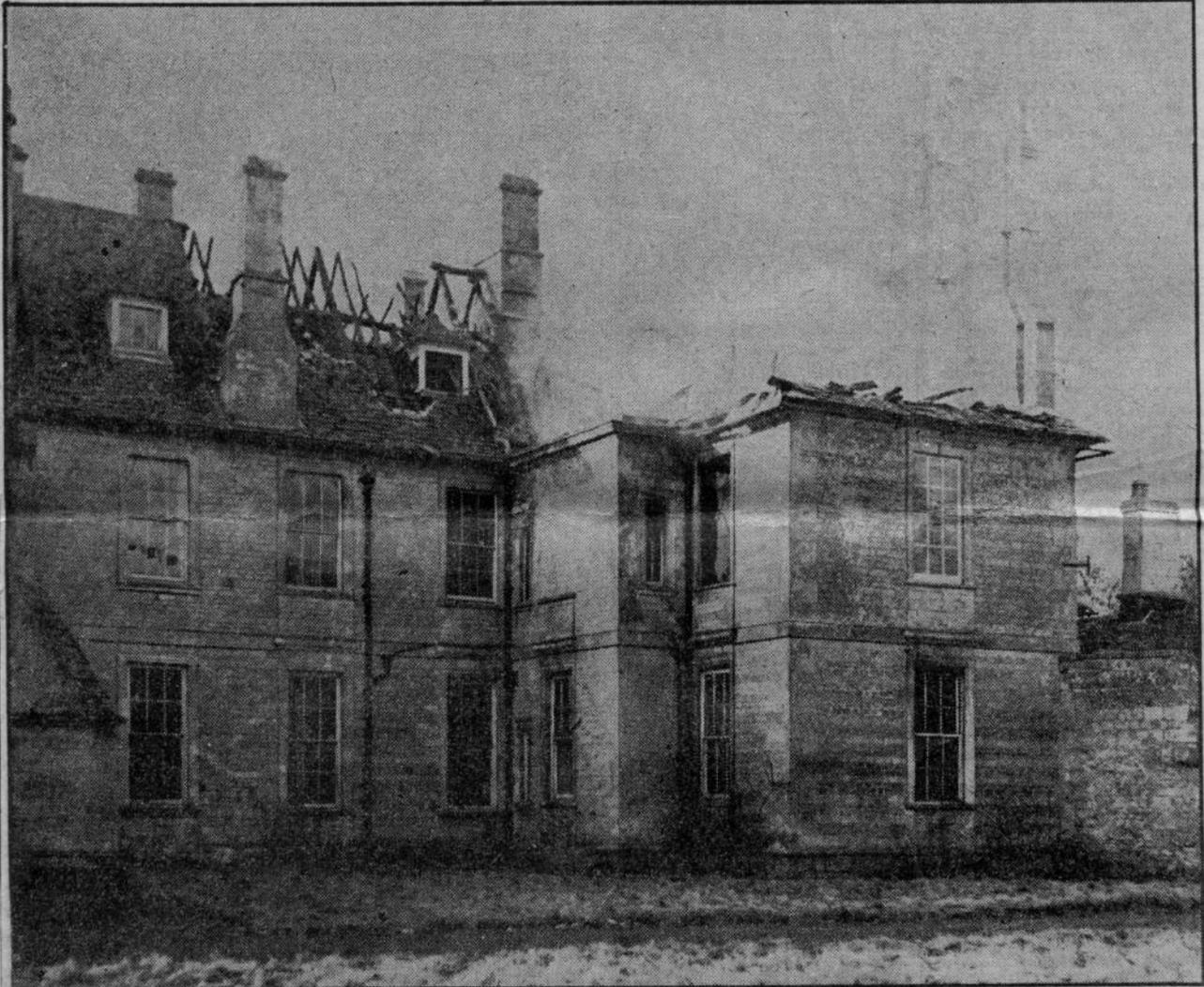


A view of the damaged west wing of the Palace (above), in which 11 rooms were gutted by fire on Tuesday night. (Below) Firemen examine the charred rough timbers. Investigations are now being carried out by firemen and police in an attempt to discover the cause of the blaze.



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CUDDESDON PALACE BLAZE IN GALE



Cuddesdon Palace, photographed today after the blaze which gutted 11 rooms and destroyed much of the roof during the gale last night.



Cuddesdon Palace roof ablaze at the height of the fire.



Cuddesdon Palace roof ablaze at the height of the fire.

Fire sweeps 11 rooms in unoccupied building

CUDDESDON Palace, for three centuries the home of former Bishops of Oxford, was severely damaged by fire last night when the flames were fanned by a gale, but firemen were able to confine the outbreak to part of the west wing.

A third of the roof of the Palace was completely destroyed. The fire funnelled down to the ground floor, burning out 11 rooms—five on the second floor, three on the first floor and three on the ground floor.

Police were called to the blaze last night, and today fire officers are trying to discover the cause of the outbreak in the Palace, which was unoccupied.

"At its height, the fire was blazing like a giant bunsen burner," said Mr. Timothy White, chief officer of the Oxfordshire Fire Service.

Officers today tried to find the reason for what is described as an isolated pocket of fire they found in a lavatory on the ground floor. Old clothes were blazing there, well away from the main outbreak.

Mr. White said: "It may be that when we have made a thorough investigation we shall find that the fire crept under the floor boards and spread to the clothes."

"There are all sorts of openings running up through the building."

He ruled out the possibility that lightning, which was intense at times last night, had started the fire.

The firemen got the outbreak under control in about two

hours. They used all the water in the Theological College swimming pool nearby and a well.

Mr. White said that had it not been for that supply, the work of the firemen would have been much harder. "The college authorities agreed some time ago to keep the swimming pool filled at all times," he added.

Firemen are expected to stay at the palace all day today and may well have to spend two days ensuring that there is no possibility of a hidden pocket of fire.

Last night they worked with floodlights of the Fire Service lighting unit.

Seen by student

The fire was first seen soon after 10 o'clock by Mr. Tim Bravington, a student at the college.

While he telephoned for the fire brigade, other students ran to remove cars and motorcycles stored near the blazing building.

Mr. Bravington said that he first saw a light in one of the upper windows.

"I had to look a number of times before I was sure that the building was on fire," he said.

Within a few minutes of the fire being discovered a crowd of students and villagers had gathered at the gates of the burning palace.

'Blue flashes'

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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1958

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This beautiful furniture is attractively shown in model rooms at

WARDS Park End Street OXFORD

Second fire this year at home of former Bishops of Oxford

CUDDESDON PALACE BLAZE

Workmen slept unaware firemen were seeking them



Mr. F. Culverwell, one of the workmen demolishing Cuddesdon Palace, who awoke to discover the firemen looking for him and his companions.

FOR the second time this year Cuddesdon Palace was on fire today.

The palace, for three centuries the home of former Bishops of Oxford, is unoccupied and is being demolished. It was badly damaged by fire in February.

Workmen resumed demolitions in one corner of the palace while the firemen were still busy preventing the flames from spreading.

Six workmen slept in a room there unaware for some time that a search was being made by firemen for them after the outbreak had been discovered.

Firemen searched the rooms of the staff who went to the Palace near the burning part of the building but the workmen, luckily, were bedded down in a room in the only part of the Palace which escaped.

One of them, Mr. Fred Culverwell, awoke when he heard a noise outside their room. "I thought it was somebody scrumping the lead, so I went out to have a look and found it was the firemen looking for us," he said.

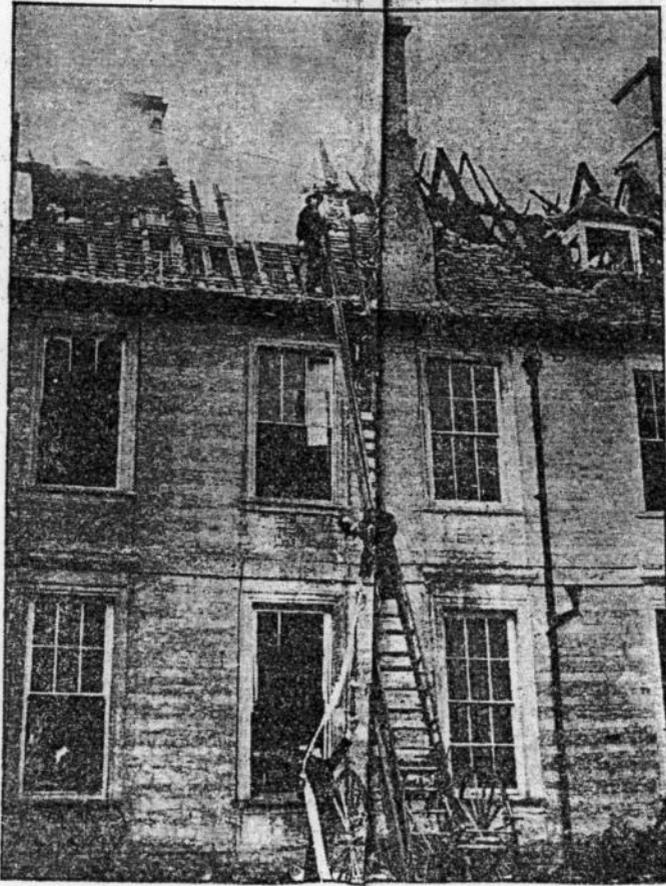
The seat of the fire was near the chapel, but firemen were able to save it—the only part of the Palace which is not to be pulled down. The fire is believed to have started near the chapel, close to the west wing gutted by the outbreak in February.

Firemen took water from the swimming pool at the college, but the supply ran out after they had the blaze under control and a fresh source was found in an underground tank in front of the college.

Mr. White said "This is one of the worst parts of the county as far as water supply is concerned. The Palace has always been quite a problem for us."

The cause of the fire is not yet known. Mr. White said he was inclined to discount any theory that it was due to arson.

The Palace, empty and derelict, has not been lived in since 1937. Dr. T. B. Strong was the last to live there.



Firemen at work today on the site at Cuddesdon Palace.

QUIET PASSAGE FOR U.S. CONVOY

CHINESE Communist artillery blasted the Quemoy islands again today, but the fourth American escorted convoy of supply ships, due at the beleaguered islands today, is reported to be meeting no opposition from Communist vessels.

A Nationalist Chinese spokesman said today the convoys had come to a temporary halt because of bad weather.

Rear Admiral Liu Hoh-Tu said the seas around Quemoy were too rough for beaching landing craft safely.

According to Nationalist intelligence reports, the Communists have about 19 small gunboats of the corvette type, 12 torpedo boats and 12 tank-landing ships.

More than 4,000 shells fell on the Nationalists' offshore stronghold between midnight and dawn.

Peking radio reported that Mr. Wang Ping-Nan, Chinese Communist Ambassador in Warsaw, had left Peking for Poland after five days of consultations with his Government.

If agreement is reached on the resumption of talks between Communist China and the United States at ambassadorial level, Mr. Wang will meet Mr. Jacob Beam, the United States Ambassador in Warsaw.

Meanwhile, the Soviet Press and radio attacked the United States again today for her "policy of provocations and blackmail" in the area of the Formosa Strait.

NOT COMMITTED
Mr. Menzies, the Australian Prime Minister, said in Canberra today that the increase in Communist activity in Formosa was part

£1,000 gem raid at Headington: dog helpless—was locked up

THIEVES who broke into the home of Mr. and Mrs. C. Haines, of Woodlands, London Road, Headington, got away with £1,000 worth of jewellery it was disclosed today.

Poika, the five-year-old boxer who might have prevented the break-in, was locked in the kitchen when the intruders forced an entry during daylight yesterday by smashing a window in the lounge at the rear of the house.

Mr. Haines is managing director of H. Haines (Witney), Ltd., building material suppliers.

Mrs. Ruth Haines said today that some of the jewellery was hers. The rest belonged to a friend who is staying at the house.

With her friend, mother-in-law and two children, Mrs. Haines left the house at 11.45 a.m. for a day at Whipsnade Zoo. A cleaner left the house at noon.

Tore up pillow

Mrs. Haines said the gardener had called at about 3 p.m. and that she returned at 6.40 p.m.

"The first thing we usually do is to go in and see my dog," she explained. "She had ripped a pillow to pieces. It was on the floor, all torn up. She must have been disturbed by this thing. She is a good house dog," said Mrs. Haines.

"The thieves broke into the back lounge window, smashing it and lifting the catch."

"They were in a terrific hurry—that was pretty obvious."

The jewellery was taken from two upstairs rooms. The children's rooms were undisturbed. Oxfordshire police are investi-



Poika—locked in the kitchen during the theft.

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CONTROLS
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DISCONTINUANCE AT ST