

then on, until the Turret was superceded, before the First World War, by the development of longer-range weapons, it was being constantly improved. Its story is almost the history of the progress of technology.

1883 -85. The Turret was still at the pierhead, not half way along the pier as it is now, and was given the rounded corners which are still visible.

Electric lighting, powered by a dynamo, driven by its own steam engine, was also installed by 1885, replacing gas lamps. There were four additional steam engines used in the operation of the Turret. One ran the guns in and out, elevating and depressing them and worked the ammunition lift and the rammer. The main engine rotated the Turret. An auxiliary engine and a donkey engine supplied the boilers and drove the pump for the " Hydro Pneumatic accumulators " which were used for hosing out the guns.

Compressed air was " applied as a substitute for steam " to the Turret's engines as early as 1886. The compressed air was supplied through iron pipes from compressors belonging to the then Channel Tunnel works, two miles distant. A lift for raising the 112- pound shells was installed and " an overhead traveller " , a gantry with a travelling crane, to transfer them.

There was constant rearrangement-improvement of the accomodation and the ammunition storage. For the present all that we, the public, are able to see is the guns themselves and part of their inclined slides, which used to let them descend until their muzzles protruded from the gun ports, ready for firing. But someone with the informed historic eye of Jim Butler can point out what remains of the items listed above - or the site of them if they are gone.

I hope that these brief notes may recall the interest and pleasure of that September visit to those who were there and arouse the interest of those who may be able to visit the Turret in the future. One thing is quite clear : the Admiralty Pier Fort is a site of the greatest historic interest and if , one day, it could be sufficiently restored for safe public visiting, as Jeremy Cope wrote : " The tourists would flock to see it. "

Leo Wright Secretary

THE FIRST BOMB

Earlier this year I contributed to the Dover Society Newsletter a review of "DOVER IN OLD PHOTOGRAPHS" compiled by Mark P. Smith. One of the photographs in the book intrigued me particularly. It was a picture of a fragment of a German bomb mounted on a wooden stand with an engraved plate on the base recording that it was a piece of the first hostile bomb dropped on British soil. The bomb had been dropped at 10.45 a.m. on Christmas Eve 1914.

The text of the book tells the reader ". . . Lieut. von Prodzynsk dropped the bomb from his Taube aircraft. It fell in Mr. Terson's garden in Leyburne Road breaking a number of windows and blowing a man, who was cutting holly, out of a tree. Fortunately no one was killed. Members of the Anti Aircraft Corps collected the fragments and presented the mounted objects to the King." (In fact only one piece was mounted and presented.)

It prompted me to ask myself two questions: Where exactly did the bomb fall? Should this spot not be marked in some way? It was after all a milestone in the history of war, a milestone of considerable significance when one has in mind the appalling destruction of life and property caused by aerial bombardment since then.

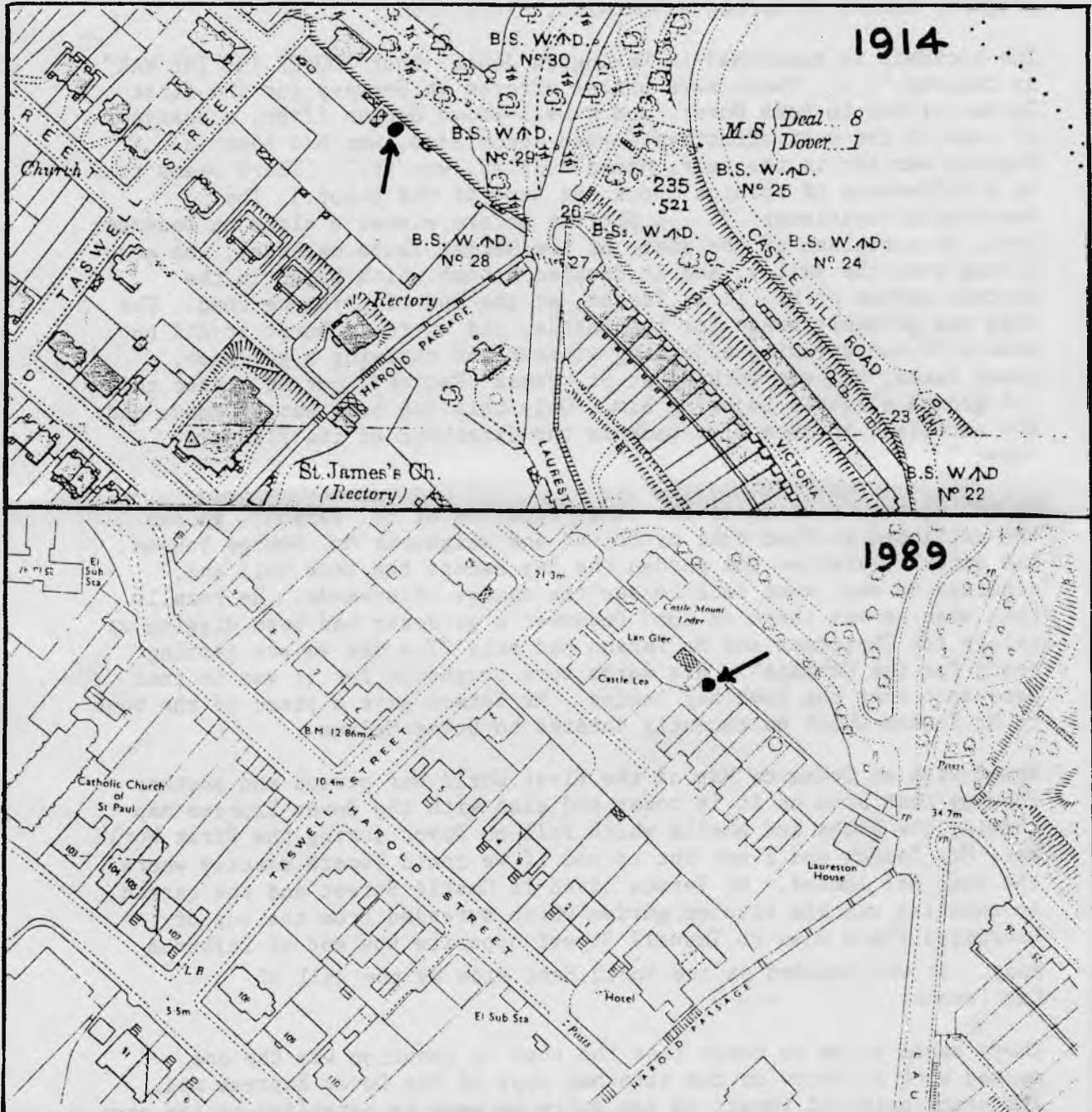
The incident is described in Bavington Jones' book "DOVER AND THE WAR" as follows ". . . There were prizes offered in Germany for the first German airman to bomb Dover, and a well-known German flyer, a designer of some of the most effective German aeroplanes, who had been in England earlier in the year, named Rumpler, won it." (There seems to be a difference of opinion about the name of the pilot.) The description continues ". . . Shortly before eleven o'clock on December 24th, an aeroplane of the shape of the German Taube machines, was seen flying down the valley, and it dropped a bomb which burst in the kitchen garden of Mr. T. A. Terson, at the end of Leyburne Road. The bomb was probably meant for the Castle, and where it burst it did no damage beyond breaking adjoining windows and throwing a gardener, named Banks, who was working at St. James' Rectory, out of a tree to the ground slightly injuring him. Only this one bomb was dropped, and the aeroplane at once flew back in the direction of the Flanders coast."

On making enquiries as to the exact location of Mr. Terson's garden I was delighted to find that my friend and neighbour Mr. George Youden had actually visited the garden the day before the bomb fell and, needless to say, went back to see the damage afterwards. He recalls that when he was there on 23rd December a gardener had been digging up celery for Christmas and Mr Terson had said "You see we are getting ready for the Germans". His words were prophetic for it was in that very spot that the bomb had landed. Mr Terson gave a piece of the bomb to Mr Youden which he recently donated to Dover Museum.

Armed with an Ordnance Map of the First World War period and another showing that area as it is today and also with the Dover Express map showing the bombs and shells which fell on Dover during the First World War, Mr. Youden and I set out to see if we could locate exactly where the bomb had landed. Mr Terson lived in Castle Street and the garden in question was his kitchen garden which extended from the top of Laureston Place down to Taswell Street opposite the end of Leyburne Road. It was bounded on the North East side by the wall of Castlemount.

There seems to be no doubt that the bomb in question was the one marked with an arrow on the attached copy of the Dover Express map. The exact point of impact is not quite so easy to establish as the area changed considerably when Taswell Close was developed a few years ago. As closely as I can assess the location the bomb landed in what is now the garden of No 1 Taswell Close.

The gardener, Banks, who was blown out of the tree was Mr James Alfred Banks the elder brother of Mr Ted Banks who is well known to many Dovorians. He was himself a gardener and for many years had the nursery off Salisbury Road. He retired only recently and when I spoke to him he recalled well the historic incident in which his brother was unwittingly involved. He told me that his brother had been gathering greenery for decorating the church when he heard the aeroplane approaching. He apparently climbed higher up the tree to get a sight of the plane but he was unable to see it. He was climbing down again when the bomb landed and blew him to the ground. Happily, he landed on a pile of greenery which he had already assembled under the tree and suffered no injury.



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