

PEACEHAVEN and TELSCOMBE

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1940

Telscombe residents heard the wail of the sirens at about 10.43pm on this day, indicating their first air attack.

A single aircraft, possibly a Junkers Ju 88, was spotted in the darkness some 100 yards offshore at Saltdean, flying eastwards. Shore batteries opened up but failed to hit the aircraft. It gained height and released three high explosive bombs that detonated on the beach and cliff edge about fifty yards east of where the Badgers Watch pub now stands.

Slight damage - a door blown off and windows broken - was caused to a couple of cliff top dwellings.

On this same night, London suffered several air attacks. Enemy aircraft suffered a number of casualties, including fifty two destroyed, eleven probably destroyed and another thirteen damaged.

It is possible that this aircraft's mission was also to bomb London, but for reasons unknown the pilot turned to a softer target.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1940

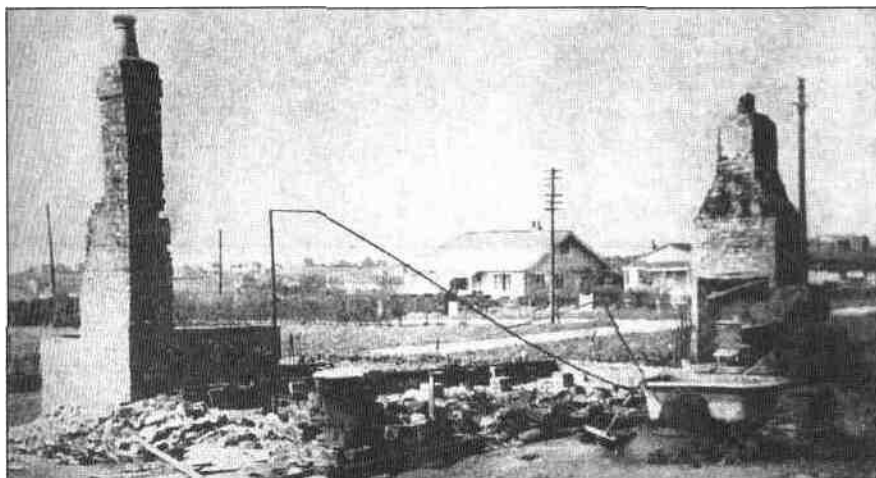
A few minutes after 5pm on Saturday, September 21, 1940, a single raider dropped three smallish bombs on Downland, just north of Rodmell Avenue, Saltdean. One house sustained roof damage, broken windows and a cracked ceiling and a second had its windows broken. Nobody was injured.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1940

At 12.20pm on Sunday, October 6, 1940 a single aircraft was spotted over the Channel, possibly three miles out from Peacehaven, flying west to east. It was suggested later that the aircraft was probably hunting for coastal shipping.

It may be that the crew became bored as the aircraft turned in over the Peacehaven coastline and released three high explosive bombs. One fell in Tor Road, striking a bungalow called Littlewood Lodge, which was considerably damaged, while the occupant was slightly injured. A second bomb demolished and set fire to Rose Cottage in Glynn Road. Fortunately it was unoccupied at the time. Three other properties received blast damage, and another two received slight damage, with just broken windows.

Rescue services were soon on the scene, taking care of the casualty and extinguishing the fire.



The remains of Rose Cottage in Glynn Road

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1940

It was 7.15am on a very cold morning, and many people were still in their beds. Suddenly, two German aircraft came in low, flying south east to north west. They were accompanied by the sirens, the pips (warning that the enemy was directly overhead) and anti-aircraft gunfire.

The raiders dropped seventeen small high explosive bombs in a concentrated arc, striking a number of residential properties. They quickly crossed the Tye, turned and sped back across the Channel.

The first two bombs exploded on the foreshore, and although they made a very loud noise, there was no damage. The next one struck the cliff top, some yards west of the area now known as The Esplanade, and another struck the main coast road. None of these bombs caused any significant damage.

The next few bombs fell in and around residential properties. One fell just east of the Union Church, causing some damage to the church windows and very slight blast damage. Yet another exploded in the garden of a house close by. This caused slight damage to the rear of the property.

The seventh bomb landed close to the junctions of Amhurst and Buckhurst Roads and then failed to explode. People were evacuated from the area and a UXB (unexploded bomb) sign was installed. The bomb went off a few hours later, again causing minimal damage.

The next bomb scored a direct hit on a residential property called Bubzone in Tyedean Road. This caused considerable damage as did another which

exploded seconds later on the east side of Tyedean Road. Two other bombs struck the opposite side of the road causing considerable blast damage to several houses.

The eleventh bomb struck a house called Garth, in Springfield Avenue, causing damage to the cesspit - an event that prompted a few lighthearted laughs and jokes. Another bomb also landed in Springfield Road, severely damaging a house called Raycot, where the occupant was injured. This was the only injury, from this raid, that required hospital treatment. A small fire broke out but it was soon brought under control.

The thirteenth bomb struck yet another house in Springfield Avenue, called Sunningdale, causing roof damage, a split door and broken windows.

The final three bombs fell and exploded in a field just **to the north of** Springfield Avenue, causing slight damage to four houses.

The Civil Defence and rescue workers were quickly on the scene, assisting the occupants to clear up the debris, and the first aid team attended to three residents who suffered slight injuries but needed no further treatment.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1940

The Butlins building in Longridge Avenue was taken over by the National Fire Service (NFS) as a training centre for the duration. On a number of occasions towards the end of the London Blitz, there were exchanges of firemen between London and other areas, and the South Coast.

This had been a very wet evening and night, with a large number of heavy showers. Sunset was at 5.09pm, but it was dark a while before then. It was the day after the infamous Coventry attack, when very serious damage was inflicted on that city.

At 12.03am the sound of an enemy aircraft was heard, gradually getting louder, and warnings were given. People took shelter, expecting to hear explosions at any moment, but everything was strangely quiet, and the sound of aircraft engines could no longer be heard.

What the residents did not know was that between thirty and forty incendiary bombs had

been dropped. Two landed on a house called St Michaels in Homebush Avenue, East Saltdean, causing a small fire in the roof area. The residents, assisted by the neighbours did what they could, but were powerless to stop serious damage being caused.

Another thirty or so incendiary bombs were dropped across a wide area on Telscombe Tye, causing no damage. One fell on the cliff top, just south of Longridge Avenue, but failed to go off.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1940

At 1.27pm on this dry, cold but cloudy day, the warning sirens indicated the approach of enemy aircraft. As people took shelter, a German aircraft, almost certainly a Dornier Do 17, was seen approaching the coastline at low altitude. Suddenly, it turned away to the west and then released its bomb load of twelve small high explosive bombs - which dropped harmlessly into the sea and exploded.

This caused a staccato of explosions, sending a huge cascade of water **some** 50ft high about a quarter of a mile south of the Portobello outfall.

At about this time word was circulating that a German bomber had been shot down near Newhaven, and the crew killed. Was this the reason why the Do 17 suddenly turned tail and dropped its bomb load?

THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 1941

The sirens sounded at 9.33pm on this Thursday evening, warning of an impending attack. Residents just had time to take cover in their shelters when a German bomber, possibly a Dornier Do 17, approached the coastline from the east and dropped a number of small bombs.

One high explosive bomb fell in Cissbury Avenue, causing blast damage **to** three properties, and two incendiary bombs fell on Merryweather, starting a fire which destroyed the house. The two occupants were slightly injured.

Two other high explosive bombs fell in Southview Road, causing slight damage to four properties. Yet another bomb fell in Firlie Road but failed to explode, and people in the area were hastily evacuated.

A number of incendiaries, estimated at 140, were dropped as well as the high explosive bombs. These all fell in the residential area. Many small fires occurred as a result but were quickly put out by the residents, aided by the Civil Defence workers. The two people who were injured were treated at the scene and did not attend hospital.

The UXB exploded at 12.50am the next day, causing some minor damage to properties in the vicinity.

TUESDAY, APRIL 8, 1941

The night was cloudy with moderate visibility. At about 11.30pm residents were awakened by the warning sounds as an enemy aircraft approached from the sea. A single aircraft dropped in the region of 150 incendiary bombs, these

being scattered over Telscombe Tye, with a number falling at the southern end, close to Portobello. The only damage was a rather spectacular fire as a large patch of gorse bushes burned. The NFS soon had the problem under control. There was no damage caused to property. One fireman suffered a small injury - a bum to the left hand.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 1941

People had just returned to bed from the incendiary raid less than two hours earlier, when they were once more seeking shelter. Again it was a lone aircraft, almost certainly a Messerschmitt ME109. This one, flying close to the coastline, dropped a single high explosive bomb that exploded at the south end of the Tye, close to the roadway. A number of properties suffered roof damage, broken windows and minor blast damage. There was no report of injuries.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1941

There is very little detail on this particular air-attack. The records state only that a single aircraft dropped one incendiary bomb at 9.40pm and this caused a minor fire to the roof of a house in Central Avenue. The fire was quickly put out by neighbours with the aid of a stirrup pump.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1944

The only details on this air attack are that one high explosive bomb fell on the south east area of Telscombe Tye, causing slight damage to four properties. No injuries were recorded.

NOTES FROM THE WAR RECORDS

At about 9.30am on Tuesday, February 18, 1941, PC Fred Leggett went from Peacehaven Police Station to The Warren, a large property in Telscombe Cliffs Way. He was met by Captain James Mackay and a large stray barrage balloon. The balloon cable had become entangled in the Captain's 60ft flag staff, and this had snapped off about 4ft from the base. The long section of the staff was wedged in a pine tree, thus anchoring the balloon.

The cable had also become entangled in the stable roofing dislodging a number of tiles and had fused the lighting system. RAF Tangmere was informed and the balloon was later removed by airmen from RAF Tichfield.

At about 7.30am on Monday, March 15, 1942, a naval barrage balloon was found in Horsham Avenue. It was initially guarded by the local police and later collected by naval personnel from Newhaven.

On Tuesday, October 5, 1942, a stray barrage balloon was located at Hoddem Farm, Peacehaven. The RAF at Newhaven Harbour was informed and later attended, collecting the balloon.