

Stamford in the Second World War

The 1942 “Drift Estate Blitz”

Although Stamford suffered damage, it experienced few enemy bombs during the war despite the fact that during the German raids on Coventry and the Midlands, hundreds of hostile planes passed over the town.

The worst “blitz” was in the early hours of 30th June 1942 in the Drift estate area. A number of bombs were dropped just before 3am - aimed at nearby factories.

One bomb buried itself outside 45 Drift Avenue (the home of Detective Constable Peart) but failed to explode. (It is pictured left) A large area had to be evacuated and residents were evacuated to the Fane School.



One fell on open ground over 200 feet from the nearest building but it still caused damage to 124 houses, smashed panes of glass at the two engineering works on Ryhall Road and wrecked corrugated iron fencing around the sports ground. There was also damage to 3 sports pavillions, a garage, a car and a 20-seater bus which was parked about 30 yards from the crater.

Another bomb fell behind nos 37-39 Rutland Road, damaging many houses in the area. Most fortunate of all were two families in adjoining houses, in the garden behind which the first bomb fell. The lip of the crater was scarcely a couple of yards from the houses, but despite this none of the occupants was hurt and the damage to the properties was surprisingly light. This was doubtless due to the fact that the bomb fell in soft earth, which it penetrated to a depth of some 20 to 30 feet.

In one lived Mr and Mrs G.H. Cole and their two children. Mr Cole did not hear the “alert”, and the first he knew was being shaken out of bed by the force of the explosion. He was dazed for a moment, but quickly recovered and went to look after his children, whom he found frightened but very brave. The explosion had caused an interior wall to cave in and garden produce had been thrown through the window.

Strangely enough, when the salvage squad got to work under Mr C.R. Knighten, removing the furniture from the house and from that of Mrs Forsyth next door, it was found that not a picture or a mirror was even cracked and not a piece of furniture was damaged..

Mrs Forsyth, however, had left her breakfast table ready set, and every piece of crockery on the table, except for a basin, was smashed. Mrs Forsyth, too, was awakened by the explosion and all the seven children were remarkably plucky. From the baby's cot Mrs Forsyth picked pieces of plaster weighing anything up to a pound. The window frame of a bedroom in which two children slept was blown inwards and hung suspended over the bed. A quantity of masonry was also dislodged, but fortunately the bricks fell outwards.

Fortunately there were only two casualties who luckily only had minor cuts from flying glass. Altogether 286 houses were damaged but only two were made uninhabitable.

Under the direction of the Borough Surveyor's department, repair work proceeded apace, each local builder being allocated a sector and over 100 operatives being employed.

A mobile canteen served hot drinks, etc., during the day.



Stamford Local History Society