

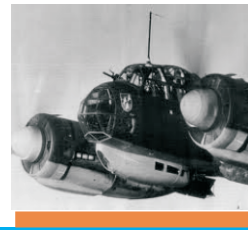
TUNNEL GAME

Exciting new idea to explore and learn about the tunnels



NEWS & UPDATES

Tunnel break-in costs thousands & could cost lives



AUGUST 24th 1940

Ramsgate Blitzed, Tunnels saved the town

ISSUE 6
August 2012

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TUNNELTIMES

NEWSLETTER OF RAMSGATE TUNNELS HERITAGE GROUP

PLAYING THE GAME A NEW WAY FORWARD...

The Ramsgate Tunnels Heritage Group is constantly looking for new ways to let people explore and engage with their local history. Working closely with arts organisation Marine Studios CIC, who are based in Margate, the RTHG think that video game technology would be a good medium to allow the development of innovative ideas.

Under the guidance of Marine Studios director and designer Richard Houghton, who is a volunteer member of RTHG, the starting point for this proposal is to take stories from the tunnels and information from research and surveys to create a digital map of the tunnels that is developed as a game for people to explore freely, discovering the memories and histories of the tunnels, Ramsgate and the community.

The idea of using the survey data and stories that we have collected as the basis for a game of discovery was not part of the group's original plans, but the concept is exciting, in that it will allow us to engage with an entirely different part of the community (i.e. the younger, digitally aware audience) that do not naturally come to our exhibitions and events.

The idea of mobilising the younger generation to help us bring alive the histories of the tunnels is an exciting one. We would hope that this engagement would continue into the longer term development of the visitor experience.

This exciting idea will extend our project by using the collaboration of historians, artists/designers and games developers to produce new and interesting

material. The results of this collaboration will benefit the residents of Ramsgate by giving them access to a part of their town's history and enabling virtual access to the tunnel system beneath them. This will take the project from one of nostalgia to an intergenerational exploration.



To help get this project off the ground we're asking if any of our Friends have knowledge or skills that would help develop this concept working with open source software such as Flash, Unity3D and Blender. Funding is already being sought to finance a partnership with a digital media company to improve the skills needed in the design and development of video games. If you can help us with this, please contact us in the first instance by email to: admin@ramsgatetunnels.org.

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?

THANK YOU WAITROSE

Each month Waitrose donate £1,000 to be shared between three local organisations. The amounts are decided by customers voting with green tokens issued at the checkout. A big thank you to everyone who supported us throughout July. Thanks to your support the project will now receive £572 towards the running costs.

TUNNEL SURVEYS

Surveys of the tunnels have now been completed without any major problems being found. The most significant issue is the presence of a small quantity of asbestos which unfortunately is widely distributed along the length of the railway tunnel. Removal and disposal of asbestos must be carried out by a licenced contractor, the estimated cost of which is around £10,000. The team are already working on obtaining funding for this.

GRANT FUNDING

The Ramsgate Tunnels Team were disappointed to find out that their bid for £2.6 million to the Coastal Communities Fund had not been successful. We understand that there were 500 applications to the £18m fund with requests for a total of £300m!

The Tunnels Team are not, however, beaten and are currently looking at other sources of funding and bid preparation is on-going. We will keep going until we get the money to realise our ambitious plans for an exciting tourist attraction for Ramsgate.

TUNNEL BREAK-IN

The former railway tunnel on Ramsgate seafront was recently broken into by urban explorers. Power tools were used to cut through the fencing surrounding the entrance and door hinges were cut allowing access. What appeared to be harmless fun may have serious consequences as someone was seen leaving the tunnels with children who would have been the closest to any asbestos fibres kicked up from the tunnel floor.

Authorities were informed of the incident by the Tunnels Group. Police and Fire Service personnel attended together with Council officials. The tunnels were sealed again after making sure nobody was left inside and remedial work was carried out by Council contractors to make the tunnel more secure.

RAMBLE IS A STOMPING SUCCESS

The first in a series of guided walks around the tunnels route took the group by surprise when over 60 people turned up. Project Manager Peter Borough provided an entertaining history of the tunnels together with fascinating snippets of history as the walk wound its way round Ramsgate from the West Cliff to the East Cliff.

Further walks are planned throughout August; please see the website for details.

www.ramsgatetunnels.org

Thanet at War

Large crowds and a great deal of interest in the Tunnels Project were the order of the day at this year's Thanet at War event held on Ramsgate's Government Acre field on the 28th/29th July. The group were exhibiting a mock up of sleeping arrangements in the tunnels together with some wartime memorabilia including a working Air Raid Siren. Needless to say the siren wasn't run as it has a range of half a mile or more.

Members were on hand to answer questions about the project and its progress and to learn about people's experiences of the tunnels during wartime. One elderly lady told of her childhood exploits in the tunnels when she went around at night altering people's alarm clocks and hiding their chamber pots!! This lady has now joined the list to have her oral history recorded.



This Siren remains in preservation at the junction of High Street and South Eastern Road, Ramsgate.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We are a collective group of volunteers from various backgrounds, cultures and experience. It is our aim to survey, promote and design an attraction in Ramsgate to rival any in the South East.

Email: admin@ramsgatetunnels.org or visit: ramsgatetunnels.org
Ramsgate Tunnels (Ramsgate Tunnels Heritage Group, Custom House, Harbour Parade, Ramsgate, CT11 8LP

August 1940 - Tunnels Save Ramsgate

World War II had been underway for almost a year and the Battle of Britain had reached a point of stalemate as the Luftwaffe failed to penetrate Britain's defences. Raids had diminished during August due to the typical unpredictability of the British weather. This lull in activities gave both sides time to reflect on the Battle so far and it was becoming clear that the RAF were more than holding their own and the Luftwaffe had not yet achieved the advantage that it had hoped for.

While Air Chief Marshal Hugh Dowding and Air Vice-Marshal Keith Park were readying themselves for the renewed onslaught when the weather broke, they were unaware that Luftwaffe tactics were about to change. Realising that things weren't going his way, Reichsmarschall Goering issued a directive on August 23rd:

To continue the fight against the enemy air force until further notice, with the aim of weakening the British fighter forces. The enemy is to be forced to use his fighters by means of ceaseless attacks. In addition the aircraft industry and the ground organization of the air force are to be attacked by means of individual aircraft by night and day, if weather conditions do not permit the use of complete formations.

Saturday August 24th 1940

After a week of relative inactivity the weather broke. Most of the cloud in the south had cleared with the prospect of clear skies and a warm, peaceful summer's day. Goering had other ideas as he unleashed a savage attack on Britain with Luftwaffe pilots under instructions to concentrate their attacks on Royal Air Force airfields.

10:28 hrs

A heavy attack was made on RAF Manston but was turned away by ground fire and Spitfires of 610 Squadron from Biggin Hill. Manston had taken such a pounding since the start of the Battle of Britain that it was reduced to being used for refuelling and emergencies only.

12:46 hrs

The Luftwaffe made another attempt to destroy Manston using Junker Ju88 aircraft of Kampfgruppe 76 (Combat Formation 76) from Cormeilles-en-Vexin, just north of Paris and less than ½ hour from Ramsgate.

This attack was again met by heavy ground fire and was engaged by R.A.F. Boulton Paul Defiant interceptors of 264 squadron from Hornchurch which had been at Manston refuelling. The Ju88s were turned away from the airfield but unfortunately they jettisoned their bombs on Ramsgate. The Mayor of Ramsgate at the time, Alderman A.B.C. Kempe, states in his book "Midst Bands and Bombs" that:

"their leader was shot down by a gun on a trawler off Ramsgate - they circled the town and in three minutes dropped 500 bombs, and in that time this happy seaside resort took the greatest battering any town had during the period of the Battle of Britain".

The following Admiralty communiqué was issued on Saturday 24th August:-

"When HM Trawler Arctic Trapper (Skipper W Hilldrith

RNR) was attacked by enemy aircraft this afternoon, she shot down two enemy bombers into the sea and probably damaged two others. HM Trawler Arctic Trapper was machine gunned by German fighters which were escorting a force of bombers. The trawler opened fire on the bombers. The first shell burst between two of the enemy bombers and it is probable that both aircraft received damage. The second shell scored a direct hit on another bomber and this aircraft crashed into the sea. The third shell burst very close to another bomber and this machine was seen to turn over and come down into the sea. There were no casualties in the Arctic Trapper"



Special Constable W.J. Cooper from Ramsgate stated in his diary for August 24th:

Fine Sunny morning

<i>Raid warning</i>	<i>8.10 - 9.40</i>
<i>" "</i>	<i>10 - 11.10</i>
<i>" "</i>	<i>11.30 -</i>

Entries then cease which may indicate how the day unfolded. A subsequent entry states:

During the warning a number of bombers (approx 20) dropped a whole lot of bombs on the town. This was the worst raid yet. Vye's was demolished (incendiary bomb through roof). Estimated 600 bombs dropped. 80 houses completely razed. 1,000 other houses damaged. Deaths 27 Injured 50/60

Fm. Moore and Auxiliary Fireman Herbert J. Wells were proceeding to report to their station, whilst bombs were falling, when a bomb exploded near them. Wells sustained a very severe laceration to the abdomen from a bomb splinter and was gravely injured. Fireman Moore received two splinter wounds in the right thigh and suffered from shock. The enemy then machine gunned the two firemen and Moore received three bullets in the left arm, one making a hole through the arm whilst another severed an artery. A further bullet injured his left wrist. Although bleeding profusely from the severed artery, Fm. Moore dragged his comrade to a more protected spot and then tried to carry him to a First Aid Post. Wells was a very big man, and Moore being much smaller, found the task impossible. Moore succeeded, as quickly as his injuries and condition permitted, in staggering to a First Aid dressing station 350 yards away to report the condition of his comrade and an ambulance was at once despatched. After first aid treatment had been applied Wells was at once conveyed to hospital, where he died three days later. Fireman Edward Henry James Moore was in hospital for three weeks.

As a result of his actions Auxiliary Fireman Moore attended Buckingham Palace in May 1941 to receive the George Medal from the King.

13:30 hrs

Further raid engaged by the Manston guns.

14:47 hrs

Further raid engaged by the Manston guns.

Several areas of the town were devastated on this fateful day and numerous fires threatened to get out of control. The most significant of these were at Vye's grocery store in Cliff Street and at the Gas Works in Boundary Road. Vye's was heavily bombed with the resulting fire threatening adjoining properties. Quick work by the Fire Brigade prevented fire spreading but Vye's was completely destroyed. On the other side of town the Gas Works was ablaze but again the Fire Brigade were quickly in action and managed to confine the damage to a small area. While fires were being brought under control the Luftwaffe returned to machine gun the town, killing one Fireman as he fought the Gas Works blaze from a ladder.

Other areas of the town to be hit were Denmark Road, St Lukes Avenue, La Belle Alliance Square, Camden Road, Albion Square, Cottage Road, High Street, Park Road, Kings Road, Sussex Street, Hardres Street Station Approach Road, Central Road, Princes Road, Hillbrow Road, Newlands Road, Woodford Avenue and Margate Road.

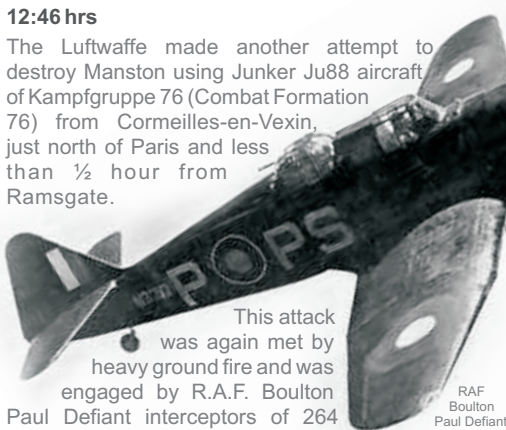
Tunnels Save the People

Casualties were relatively few for such a raid as the majority of the population were sheltering in the town's underground network of tunnels. In this one raid alone the tunnels undoubtedly repaid their investment, and continued to do so throughout the war.. Despite the devastation, Ramsgate residents were in good spirits and the town was soon back up and running. In the immediate aftermath members of the Women's Voluntary Service were on duty at the Rest Centres around town, providing clothing and meals for the homeless. The Gas Works was out of action for several days and meals had to be cooked on Primus Stoves. In the following 12 days nearly 3000 meals were cooked on 6 such stoves. Wherever possible temporary accommodation was provided by the authorities and by late 1940 a



census revealed that 957 people (324 families) were living in the former railway tunnel from Ramsgate seafront to Broadstairs.

August 24th 1940 was a day that shocked the nation and changed the course of the War. Ramsgate was the first town in the United Kingdom to be blitzed. The Luftwaffe went on to carry out a sustained strategic bombing campaign of Britain's major cities between September 1940 and May 1941 leading to British reprisals on major German cities.



RAF Boulton Paul Defiant