

Sebastopol Cannon



Introduction

The Crimean War took place between October 1853 and February 1856. In 1854 a siege of Russia's main naval base, Sevastopol, on the Black Sea began. At the time the British referred to Sevastopol as

Sevastopol. The siege lasted for nearly a year. The British decided to send cannons captured in the Sevastopol siege and related battles to many British towns and Malton gained one of these.

Arrival in Malton

The editorial leader of the Malton Messenger dated 12 February 1859 describes the gift to the town of the Sebastopol Cannon as being engineered by Major-General Norcliffe of Langton Hall. Its arrival was reported as being imminent. The Borough Bailiff had called a meeting for Monday 14th February to discuss the best site for the 'trophy.' The editor of the Malton Messenger favoured the Market-place and was aware of ideas that it be placed at the top of Yorkersgate or on the old foundry site in Old Maltongate.

The site chosen was one between the 'Town Hall and Mr Marshall's house' in the Market-place. [1] In April 1859 it was reported that it had 'during the past few days been placed in its permanent position on the pedestal erected for its reception in the Market-place. It is expected that the inaugural ceremony will take place very shortly.' [2]

Subsequently, at a date not known, the cannon was moved to the end of Yorkersgate.

Enclosure

A meeting of the Malton Board of Health in September 1879 decided 'to protect the Sebastopol Cannon on the York-road with an iron fencing, and to plant shrubs around it' [3] It was enclosed in iron railings by Ralph Yates a 'number of years' before 1888.

A newspaper report [4] tells of Mr. Yates attending a Local Board meeting 'to consult the board with reference to an account due to him for enclosing the

Sebastopol gun and for the general improvement to the approach to the town in Yorkersgate. Although it was some years since the work was carried out applicant had not received the sum due to him.' Mr Yates quotation for this work was originally £15 and he reduced this by £5 as his contribution [5].

Removal



When discussions about a War Memorial (in the context of those fallen in the First World War) were held in 1920, the Sebastopol cannon was still at the

end of Yorkersgate. It had by then apparently acquired a companion – a German cannon. A proposal to remove the Sebastopol cannon to a site at the top of Newbiggin was made, and one to move the German cannon, the popularity of which was mixed, to an island site in the river [6]

As the picture on the left shows, the Sebastopol cannon co-habited the Yorkersgate site with the war memorial, at least initially. Oral history suggests that both cannons and the railings were salvaged to meltdown for the Second World War war effort.

References

- [1] Leeds Mercury, 19 February 1859
- [2] Malton Messenger, 23 April 1859
- [3] York Herald, 25 September 1879
- [4] Yorkshire Gazette, 3 March 1888

- [5] York Herald, 1 March 1888
- [6] Yorkshire Gazette, 29 May 1920