

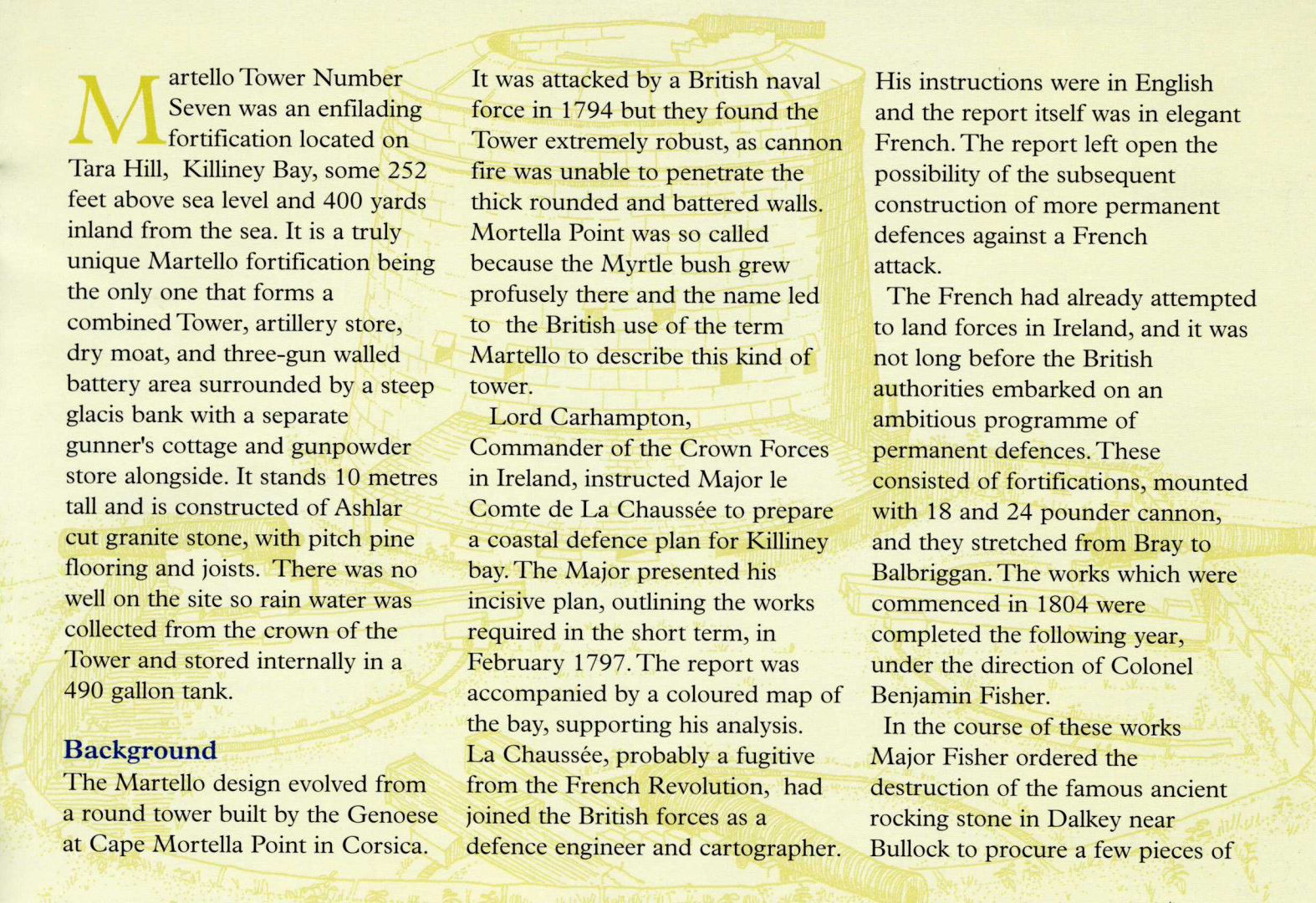


Welcome

**Tara Hill Fortification
Martello Tower Number Seven
Killiney Hill Road
Killiney
Co. Dublin**

*Victor Du
Noyer's water
colour, 1866
showing the
guns in place
at Martello
Tower Number
Seven.*





Martello Tower Number Seven was an enfiling fortification located on Tara Hill, Killiney Bay, some 252 feet above sea level and 400 yards inland from the sea. It is a truly unique Martello fortification being the only one that forms a combined Tower, artillery store, dry moat, and three-gun walled battery area surrounded by a steep glacis bank with a separate gunner's cottage and gunpowder store alongside. It stands 10 metres tall and is constructed of Ashlar cut granite stone, with pitch pine flooring and joists. There was no well on the site so rain water was collected from the crown of the Tower and stored internally in a 490 gallon tank.

Background

The Martello design evolved from a round tower built by the Genoese at Cape Mortella Point in Corsica.

It was attacked by a British naval force in 1794 but they found the Tower extremely robust, as cannon fire was unable to penetrate the thick rounded and battered walls. Mortella Point was so called because the Myrtle bush grew profusely there and the name led to the British use of the term Martello to describe this kind of tower.

Lord Carhampton, Commander of the Crown Forces in Ireland, instructed Major le Comte de La Chaussée to prepare a coastal defence plan for Killiney bay. The Major presented his incisive plan, outlining the works required in the short term, in February 1797. The report was accompanied by a coloured map of the bay, supporting his analysis. La Chaussée, probably a fugitive from the French Revolution, had joined the British forces as a defence engineer and cartographer.

His instructions were in English and the report itself was in elegant French. The report left open the possibility of the subsequent construction of more permanent defences against a French attack.

The French had already attempted to land forces in Ireland, and it was not long before the British authorities embarked on an ambitious programme of permanent defences. These consisted of fortifications, mounted with 18 and 24 pounder cannon, and they stretched from Bray to Balbriggan. The works which were commenced in 1804 were completed the following year, under the direction of Colonel Benjamin Fisher.

In the course of these works Major Fisher ordered the destruction of the famous ancient rocking stone in Dalkey near Bullock to procure a few pieces of

granite for the Bartra Martello Tower. A report some years later stated that Colonel Fisher died by his own hand in a water closet.

Of the 16 fortifications south of Dublin, 14 had Martello Towers, eight of which were accompanied by batteries. There were also 2 batteries without towers: number 8, Limekiln Battery, at the junction of the Strathmore and Station Roads, Killiney, which was removed around 1846 in the course of the construction of the new railway line to Bray, and; number 5, on the Shanganagh cliffs, which was abandoned in 1812 due to coastal erosion. Both batteries had three cannon.

The Towers, with number 1 at Bray on the promenade, later demolished without trace. Number 2 is located near the harbour and had a three gun battery. Numbers 3 & 4, were also removed due to coastal erosion. Number 6, on

Loughlinstown beach, has a circular two story house built on top. Number 7 has been restored. Number 9, with a gun battery, on Dalkey Island, is abandoned. Number 10 is now a dwelling. Number 11, Sandycove Tower, is now a Joycean Museum. Number 12 was taken down and was located in the Peoples park, Dunlaoghaire. Number 13 was removed during the construction of the Dublin to Kingstown railway. Number 14 is at Seapoint. Number 15 is at Williamstown and was a two cannon Tower; a one third lower portion of the Tower is beneath ground level which was raised by Dunlaoghaire Corporation; the sea used to surround the base of this Tower. Number 16, at Sandymount, was also a two cannon tower. Martello Towers & Batteries south of Dublin had overlapping fields of fire.

The Martello Towers in Dublin

Bay were decommissioned in the 1840s but were rearmed again in the early 1850s with 24 & 32 pounder cannon as a precaution against a Russian attack during the Crimean war 1853 to 1856. Victor Du Noyer's water colour (*see page 2*) dated 1866 shows the guns in place at Martello Tower Number Seven.

The last Martello Tower built was Fort Denison in Sydney Harbour, Australia to defend Sydney in the event of a Russian attack during the Crimean war. So, the Martello Towers are both Napoleonic and Czarist Towers.

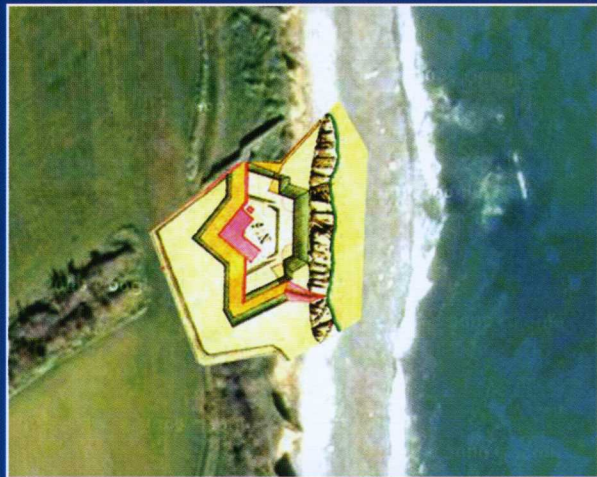
Some of the decommissioned George 3rd Blomefield cannon were put to use as bollards outside the Beggars Bush Barracks in Ballsbridge where they can be seen chained and inverted alongside the public footpath on Haddington Road.

Viewing the Tara Hill Fortification.

As you approach the Martello Tower from the entrance gates you will see the fortified entry door to the Tower, 3 meters above ground level, with the Machicolation supported by three corbels above to protect the doorway below. This was entered by ascending a timber stairs that could be pulled up and into the tower during attack. To the right of the door at eye level you will see a bevelled hood over a blind gunpowder vent leading to the tower's internal gunpowder store.

Just behind you is the coach house, a small stable with a loft overhead. A small lean to beside covered the coach. You will then see the Gunners cottage behind a railing. It is entered through a gated granite

Overlay of military drawing on top of current Google map of battery no.5 (Shanganagh cliffs).



Overlay of military drawing on top of current Google map of battery no.8 (corner of Strathmore and Station roads, and subsequently the site of the Killiney station 1857-1882 approx.)



arch with steps down to the cottage and gunpowder store. The stone slabs on the ground once formed the roof of the store. They were removed in the 1980s by a prior owner.

You can visit the Martello Tower by descending granite steps and entering the Artillery Store. Be careful of the low headroom on entering. Once inside the artillery store, you will see the exhibition of Towers from Bray to Sandymount, with plans of fortifications, and certificates. Next you ascend the stairway leading to the murder hole shaft above entering the interior of the Tower, again please watch out for low headroom of opes and stairways.

The shaft/murderhole entered from the guardroom allowed the large 2.5 ton cannon to be hoisted by block and tackle to the second floor and then through a second shaft at the Machicolation to the

Crown of the Tower. The two internal shafts were also murder holes or drop boxes from which the enemy could be shot.

You will see the living quarters with an open fireplace and light vent, the soldiers' dressing room with light vent, and the gunpowder store and the inner side of the blind vent. The granite spiral stairway leads to the second floor where the soldiers slept.

On reaching the crown of the tower you will see the 18 pounder replica Blomefield cannon on its timber traversing carriage with the block and tackle attached. The rope is made from hemp to match the original. You will see a blocked drain exit on the channel behind the cannon which was a boiling oil hole. This allowed the burning oil to flow through tower wall and then through the machicolation and the corbels above the entrance door to deter the most enthusiastic

attacker.

Outside the Artillery store/ Guardroom is a dry moat and a 3 cannon walled gun battery area surrounded by a steep glacis bank. At the base of the Glacis you will see 3 granite bench stones, no. 5 has WD, and 3 & 4 have marking of the crown of King George 3rd.

Restoration

Martello Tower Number Seven has been restored between 2004 and 2008. Sea gravel was used on the pathways. Pitch pine timber flooring was used and fixed with moulder brads. All cables and services were placed underground. The cannon was cast in UK in 2006 and proofed for blank firing by the Birmingham Proof Master. It was imported under EU licence. The timber traversing carriage was made by Mainmast Conservation.

You can view a video of the casting in the Artillery store.

Internet Links

On the internet do visit

<http://photopol.com/martello/no7.html>

to view the 2008 & 2009 events at Martello Tower Number Seven, and,

http://photopol.com/martello/killiney_bay.html

to see photos of the sites and overlaps showing coastal erosion, and

http://photopol.com/articles/martello_map.html

to see locations of the fortifications and overlapping fire

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martello_tower#Ireland

for background on the Irish Martello Towers.

Martello Tower Number Seven is listed in the SMR number 026/011.

Heritage is a national resource.

Please remember to sign the visitor's book, and thanks for your interest in the project.

This project was funded by Niall O'Donoghue.

Donations of artefacts would therefore be appreciated to help with the final restoration.



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