

## **The Zeppelin Air Raid 1916**

On Monday evening, 14th October, Mel Gould of the Loughborough Carillon and War Memorial Museum gave a superb talk and presentation to the Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves Local History Group. His subject was the Zeppelin Raid on the night of January 31st-February 1st 1916.

Mel explained the origins and basic principles of the Zeppelin airship and outlined the use of these huge lighter-than-air machines during the First World War, primarily by the German Navy.

He gave a fascinating insight into how their crews were drawn from the cream of that service and explained how propaganda on both sides of the conflict cast its shadow over them, greatly exaggerating the impact of their hazardous missions in Germany but also making them into figures of hate in Britain.

Mel told us who the English victims of the raid on Loughborough were, how and where they died, and precisely where the German bombs fell. His listeners were fascinated by the chance and almost random nature of the bombing which reflected the fact that Zeppelin commanders rarely if ever knew where they were when flying at night – because of the extremely primitive navigational aids available at that time.

His talk concluded with a look at the fate of the Zeppelin crews, including that of the airship L20 which actually bombed Loughborough. The commander Franz Stabbert had been under the impression that he had attacked a battery of anti-aircraft guns east of Sheffield, before dropping more bombs on Burton-on-Trent in the belief that this target consisted of blast furnaces north and south of Sheffield itself.

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