

ST WYSTAN'S CHURCHYARD, WWII WAR GRAVES' SECTION

A number of graves relate to airmen killed in accidents while based at Burnaston Airport, an all-grass airfield that was opened in 1938. Many airmen were trained at Burnaston and on 1 January 1942, NO 16 Elementary Flying Training School was formed. After attending basic training at Tilshead, prospective glider pilots transferred to RAF Burnaston to complete a twelve-week course to learn to fly light aircraft, eg Tiger Moths and Miles Magisters. They were known as the Burnaston Boys. Approx 10,000 passed through the training course and 14 airmen were killed. The student pilots proceeded to a further course to train as glider pilots. Gliders were used in the second half of World War II to deliver British Airborne Forces into combat. Some of the pilots flew gliders on D-Day and at Arnhem.

The section also includes graves/inscriptions for three local men, i.e. Horace Pearson, John Smedley and Alfred Hawksworth.

Sergeant CECIL WILLIAM KELSEY-WILKINSON, 919407. Cecil was the son of William Charles and Sybil Hilda Kelsey-Wilkinson of Cranley Drive, Ilford, Essex. In January 1942 he was one of the first to be accepted at the newly formed Glider Pilot Regiment at Burnaston. Cecil was the husband of Rosamund Evelyn, the daughter of the late Mr James Percy Adams and Mrs Stella Adams, of Gordon Villa, High Street, Repton. Cecil and Rosamund married at St Wystan's Church on 28 November 1942. He died 2 April 1943, aged 24, in the Bournemouth area.



Cecil William Kelsey-Wilkinson

Pilot Officer ERNEST JOHN HURST, 116530. Ernest was the son of Ernest and Laura Amelia Marie Hurst of West Dulwich, London. A pilot instructor at Burnaston, Ernest was acting as the second pilot (L Stanyought, below, was the first pilot) of Magister N3891 when it crashed and struck a tree at approx 7.15 am on 28 June 1942. The accident occurred during Station Defence Exercises while the pilots were performing a practice attack on a Home Guard unit. Ernest was aged 32.

Corporal SIDNEY JOHN GRAHAM, 2878116. Sidney applied for service with the Glider Pilot Regiment in 1942. He was killed on 5 June 1942, along with G Evans (below) in a Miles Magister from No.16 EFTS at the Relief Landing Ground at Abbots Bromley. The engine stalled on takeoff.

Corporal WILLIAM JOHN SCUDAMORE, 6352145. William was the son of William John and Dora Millicent Scudamore of Lee, London. He applied for service with the Glider Pilot Regiment in 1942 and died aged 19, on 8 May 1942. He was the first member of the Regiment to die in a training accident. William, flying in Magister P6447, was killed when the aircraft crashed after an airborne collision with Magister P6373. The other pilot flew his damaged aircraft (and student pilot) back to the aerodrome. Corporal Scudamore baled out, near Hilton, but was too low for his parachute to come into operation. He fell near the Salt Box. He was the only casualty of the incident.

Aircraftman JOHN ANGUS MacDONALD TEACHER, 655829. John was the son of Donald Macdonald and Nora Teacher of Spittal, Roxburghshire. He was the husband of Irma Millicent Teacher. John was performing aerobatics over Repton. The aircraft crashed at the woodyard at Milton sawmill. John baled out but the parachute failed to open. He died on 5 November 1941, aged 30.

Pilot Officer VICTOR HARRY SAUNDERS, 115511. Victor was killed when Magister T9823 hit a tree at Atlow near Ashbourne. He had a civilian passenger with him, Mr R. Paine, who survived the accident. Victor died 5 December 1941.

Sergeant GORDON HENRY JAMES EVANS, 1376597. Sgt Evans & Cpl Graham (above) were both killed in the same crash, in a Miles Magister from No.16 EFTS. They died at the Relief Landing Ground at Abbots Bromley when the engine stalled on takeoff. Gordon died on 5 June 1942, aged 29.

Pilot Officer GODFREY HARRY GRANTHAM, 118749. Godfrey was the son of Capt. Frederick William Grantham (formerly of the Royal Munster Fusiliers) and Alexandra E. Grantham, of Abingdon, Berkshire. P/O Grantham died in Magister L8227 in a forced landing at Dalbury Lees/Trusley. His pupil Cpl G.P. Ward of the AAC was seriously injured. Godfrey was born 24 July 1911 and died 21 June 1942. His grave is a tombstone, embossed with the RAF crest and a carved portrait.

Pilot Officer LESLIE CHARLES PERCY STANYNOUGHT, 118815. Leslie was a member of 16 EFTS, Burnaston. He was the first pilot of Magister N3891 which crashed and struck a tree. The accident occurred during Station Defence Exercises when performing a practice attack on a Home Guard unit. Ernest John Hurst (above) was the second pilot. Leslie was born 1910 in Lambeth, London and died on 28 June 1942.

Sergeant WILLIAM SEYMOUR BARTON, 4213820. William was a pilot of the Royal New Zealand Air Force. Sgt Barton was flying Tiger Moth N5451 when it collided with Oxford NM637 of No.11 (P) AFU Calverley over Derby Road, Chellaston. The pilot of the other aircraft, Sgt W.H.J. Bell, was also killed. The accident happened on 31 August 1944 when William was aged 24.

Flying Officer HORACE HORATIO PEARSON, 134671, Adjacent to a row of Commonwealth War Graves is a memorial cross for Horace Pearson, who along with his wife Annie, kept The Boot Inn, Repton, from April 1940. It is also a memorial to their son, Horace Horatio, who was a Flying Officer (Air Bomber) with the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, 10 Squadron. Horace, a surveyor, joined the volunteer reserve of the RAF just before the outbreak of war. He passed through his training under a government scheme in Canada. Horace received his wings as an observer in November 1942 and two days later he was commissioned as a pilot officer. In May 1943 he was promoted to flying officer. He made his last flight on 29 June 1943, aged 24. Horace is buried at plot EE grave 61, Eindhoven (Woensel) General Cemetery, Noord-Brabant, Netherlands.



Horace Pearson

Private JOHN HENRY SMEDLEY, 4805697. John died aged 31, at Derby Royal Infirmary on 4 March 1946. A local man, he was the son of George William and Margaret Mary Smedley of Main Street, Repton. John lived at Main Street and then Mount Pleasant. Before he joined the Lincolnshire Regiment 1st Battalion, Infantry, SEAC, he was employed in the maintenance of water supplies.

Aircraftman ALAN JOHN McLAREN KEAY, 305234. Alan was the pupil pilot of Tiger Moth DE473 when it collided with a Halifax of No.1665 Heavy Conversion Unit near Abbots Bromley. His instructor, Flt Sgt A.R. Edwards, and the crew of the Halifax were all killed. This crash was recorded in the records of a unit stationed at Hixon. Alan died 9 March 1945.

Flying Officer THOMAS OWEN-JONES, 108573. Thomas was promoted within RAFVS on 11 October 1941. F/O Owen-Jones is recorded as "Died on Active Service" and his death was registered in Westminster. DOAS covered things such as none service related accidents and illness. He died 22 December 1942.

Corporal ROBERT EDWIN HALL, 916303. Robert was the son of Robert Leonard and Amy Mary Hall of Great Crosby, Liverpool. He applied to join the Glider Pilot Regiment in 1942. Instructor Sergeant Pilot George Thornhill 1222586 and his pupil Corporal Hall were killed on 1 September 1942 in Magister R1877 on the Burton side of the airfield. They suffered multiple injuries and burns, death was instant. George Thornhill is buried at Spalding Cemetery.

Flight Sergeant ALAN REGINALD EDWARDS, 1339063. Alan was the instructor of Tiger Moth DE473 when it collided with a Halifax of No.1665 Heavy Conversion Unit near Abbots Bromley on 9 March 1945. Alan was aged 22. His pupil A J M Keay (above) and the crew of the Halifax were all killed.

Corporal ALFRED JOHN HAWKSWORTH, 1905564. Alfred was a local man, the son of John and Mary Hawksworth of Park End, Repton. A corporal in the Royal Engineers, he died 6 November 1945, aged 25. His death was registered at Aldershot – the base of the Sappers.

ELSEWHERE IN THE CHURCHYARD

RICHARD ALFRED and CYNTHIA EVELYN FULLER (brother and sister). Their parents were Ernest and Catherine Fuller, who had three children. Ernest was the managing director of English Grains Ltd and Peach and Co., Maltsters, Burton.

RICHARD FULLER, T/121164. Richard was a dispatch rider with the R.A.S.C. He was killed 4 June 1940 in France, aged 21. Richard had been educated at Malvern College. He is buried at Escoublac-la-Baule War Cemetery, Loire-Atlantique, France and is remembered on his sister's tomb.



Richard Fuller

CYNTHIA FULLER, 39477. Cynthia served with the W.R.N.S. and died on the 16th March 1946, aged 23, of illness at R.N. Auxiliary Hospital, Wootton.

Lieutenant NIGEL REGINALD PEARCE, 184589, was in the Infantry, Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derby Regiment). He was the son of Reginald and Frances Pearce who lived at Greystones, Repton. Reginald was a brewer. Nigel had been a prefect at Oakham School and was a holder of rugby colours. Nigel died aged 22, on 6 September 1944 at Coriano Ridge, which was the last important ridge in the way of the Allied advance in the Adriatic sector in 1944. After heavy losses the ridge was successfully taken on 12 September. Nigel is buried at Coriano Ridge War Cemetery, Italy but is remembered in an inscription on the kerb stone of his father's grave.

With thanks to Alan Clark of Peak District Air Accident Research.

Repton Village History Group
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