



In Memory of
Leading Aircraftman WALTER GERALD KELLY

620024, 49 Sqdn., Royal Air Force
who died
on 23 November 1939

Remembered with honour
SCAMPTON (ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST) CHURCHYARD

The following information kindly provided by Carolyn Brier (Walter G. Kelly's grand niece) and Lorna Butterfield (nee Kelly – Walter's niece)

Walter was born in Bradford to Walter Kelly (a mill mechanic) and Minnie Kelly (a worsted weaver) on the 18th December 1920, which made him only 18 when he died. He had an older brother, Ernest Patrick (my grandad), a younger brother, Leslie and an older sister, Molly.

Family photo of Walter:



Excerpt from Slightly Below the Glide Path, with info we previously provided to Gary Mennell:

Sadly this accident also caused casualties on the ground. Three airmen of Waddington's 50 Squadron, who had been working in number two hangar were killed when one of the engines from the aircraft fell through the roof onto their work area.



LAC Walter Gerald Kelly

Investigations into the accident established that the radio, which transmitted the bearings to the pilot, was poorly sighted and this directly led to the crash. As a consequence the transmitter was re-sited and procedures improved to prevent future accidents.

The aircraft involved had been the first Hampden to be delivered to Bomber Command on 20th September 1938, making it just over one year old at the time of the crash. While Corporal Keating who was from Winchester was relatively old at 46, those killed in the hangar were much younger. Corporal Archibald MacDonald Henderson was 24 and a native of Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne. He is buried with other RAF colleagues just outside RAF Waddington in St Michael's Churchyard (Shown below). Aircraftman First Class Leslie McGarvie is buried in Prestwich whilst Aircraftman Second Class Frank Talbot, who was only 18 years old, is buried in Blackburn Cemetery.



Ernest Kelly (Left) with his father



Waddington Cemetery

Aircraftman Second Class M. Bastow was injured; however, the extent of his injuries are not known, but he appears to have survived the war. Although most of the crew of L4034 were buried at Scampton, the pilot, Squadron Leader McGregor-Watt was buried close to Scampton in All Saints New Church, Nettleham. Although it can't be said with certainty this is more than likely because he lived in the village. Walter Kelly's grave is still visited by his family and through the memoirs of his brother, Ernest, a fascinating insight into the background from which Walter came can be gained.

Extract from Ernest Kelly's Memoirs

Our parents through all this were hard working people who worked from 6am to 6pm daily with Saturday morning 6am to noon and one weeks paid holiday per year (if you had worked for 51 weeks prior). The pay was poor and the families arge, but we ate well and enjoyed ourselves even without televisions, motor cars and the like. Holidays consisted of a day at Wetherby Races, a visit to the park or left to our own devices, a trip to Shipley Glen.

At school we learnt to speak English (with a Yorkshire accent), some French, which consisted of a few standard phrases and enough maths to enable us to count our pocket money (6 pence a week if you ran errands for the neighbours).

Father was a Mill Wright, locally known as a Mill Mechanic. We always respected him for a hard working man who knew his job thoroughly and could turn his hand to almost any do it yourself chores. Our shoes were made by him from cut-off drive belt leather used on textile machinery. He lacked academic knowledge but made up for it in basic wisdom and know-how.

**Pilot Officer Oliver Harry Launders
Pilot**

8th July 1940

Pilot Officer Launders took-off from Scampton at 9:50pm on 7th July 1940 as the pilot of 83 Squadron Hampden L4066. His target carried the code A 161 but to him and his crew, that meant bombing Frankfurt in Germany.

That night he was part of a force of fifty-four aircraft attacking Germany and Holland, but his aircraft was to be the only one lost. Early the next day it crashed three miles north east of Clacton. One of the crew of four, Sergeant Leonard Howard

weapon, which the powers that be had been in no position to issue before calling in the rifles!

A Hampden Crash at Waddington

In November 1939 the Standard Blind Approach System was not widely available. At the time, Waddington was the only Hampden airfield to have it installed, the system being more commonly known as the 'ZZ' System. Other Hampden squadrons had to fly their aircraft to Waddington in order to carry out the required practice approaches. On 23 November a Hampden (L4034) belonging to No 49 Squadron at Scampton, and piloted by S/Ldr P McG Watt, was tasked with carrying out 'ZZ' practices at Waddington. On board were four airmen Wireless Operators and their instructor, Corporal Keating. Visibility was poor when the practice approaches were commenced and deteriorated quite rapidly until the cloud base was nearly at ground level, almost obscuring the tops of the hangars. At the time that the visitor was carrying out his approaches, Sgt Harry Moyle, an Observer on No 44 Squadron, was standing outside the squadron W/T office, which was located in the front of the hangar.

One of the squadron's W/Ops had tuned in the signals office radio to the control frequency and was giving a running commentary, as all approach instructions by Air Traffic Control were given by W/T using the 'Q' code. The Hampden made two successful approaches and was given clearance to land each time. On the third approach the pilot was given the "Go round again" signal and Harry Moyle heard the roar of engines as the pilot opened up and turned away. Later on he again heard the sound of engines gradually getting louder, when suddenly he saw the Hampden, which was almost at ground level. S/Ldr Watt must have caught a glimpse of the Watch Office (ATC) almost in front of him, as the aircraft banked hard to starboard, just missing it. Tragically, it struck the main hangar door girders at the corner of No 50 Squadron's hangar. The building was covered in camouflage netting, which caught fire when one of the engines broke off and crashed through the roof of the Armourers' Office, killing Corporal Henderson and injuring several others who were there at the time.

While Harry Moyle was standing in the W/T office, Jimmy Bennet was talking to the squadron armourer, Flight Sergeant Martin, in the Armoury Office. The noise of the overshooting Hampden kept disturbing their conversation, seemingly coming closer each time. To Bennett, it sounded as if one approach had brought the aircraft directly over the hangar roof with little room to spare. Knowing that the visibility outside was very poor, Bennett was not convinced that all was well and suggested that they continue their conversation across the other side of the hangar if the Hampden once again passed low over the roof. The noise got louder as the machine approached once again, so the

two men left the office and started to walk across the hangar. As they reached the other side the engine noise became deafening and there was a resounding 'bang' as the bomber struck the roof. One of the engines fell into the office that they had just vacated!

Another airman to have a lucky escape was Sgt 'Lofty' Stenner. He was in the Link Trainer room with another pilot while the visiting Hampden was carrying out its approaches. He had not paid a great deal of attention to the noise or to what the aircraft in question was doing; he was more concerned with the Link Trainer exercises. Suddenly, without any warning, there was an ear-splitting crash and the room was deluged with aviation fuel from one of the Hampden's ruptured fuel tanks. The two pilots, their uniforms soaked in fuel, fled to the safety of the aerodrome, pulling off their uniform jackets as they went.

As soon as the Hampden crashed everyone rushed to the scene, including the young Harry Moyle and one or two other Observers. As they ran across the tarmac between two of the hangars, they were stopped by a grizzled old Flight Sergeant who ordered them to go away and have their lunch, adding that there were more than enough people available to deal with the situation. On reflection Moyle thought that the SNCO was trying to spare them the sight of the mangled bodies. In the event it was a forlorn hope, for as the young Observers turned away to go to their Mess, Harry Moyle accidentally kicked against what turned out to be a flying helmet. As it rolled away, he saw to his horror that it contained pieces of flesh and blood. On looking around them with a new sense of awareness, Moyle and his friends realised that there was quite a lot of blood and human debris floating in the puddles on the tarmac. They hurried away, and by the time they reached the Sergeants' Mess, the Station personnel had the fires well under control, this despite exploding ammunition. After the chaos and confusion had died down, 'Lofty' Stenner was leaning against the wall of a small building near the damaged hangar, talking to one of the Wireless Operators, who had miraculously survived the crash, but as they talked the W/Op nearly collapsed, so he was rushed off to the Station Medical Centre, where he subsequently died of ruptured kidneys. The casualties in the Hampden were S/Ldr Watt, Cpl Keating, AC1s McGarvie and Taylor, and AC2s Kelly and Talbot.

With the mess cleared away and the damage under repair, things on the Station quickly reverted to what had soon become normal. Most of the operational tasks consisted of sweeps over the North Sea hunting for units of the German Navy (Kriegsmarine). On 24 November No 50 Squadron was detached to RAF Wick in Scotland in preparation for a planned attack on the German battleship Deutschland. After a frustrating week of fruitless waiting, the operation was cancelled and the detachment returned to Waddington on 2 December. During this early phase of the war,

Contract No:- 1948/22

SCHEDULE "A"

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Name and Address of firm:-

H. A. Legg & Sons
 City Road,
 Chester



Name of Burial Place:-

SCAMPTON (ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST) CHYD., LINGS. NO.2

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| <p>10</p> <p>1192/1/A/4 Old Part 4 (S.P.) 1</p> <p>Pilot Officer C.M. Lochhead Royal Air Force 19th September 1940 (Cross)</p> <p>12 13 14 <u>42</u></p> | <p>1192/1/T/5 Old Part 12 (S.P.) 5</p> <p>639031 Sergeant J.H. Green Wireless Operator Royal Air Force 3rd November 1940 (Cross)</p> <p>14 16 13 <u>43</u></p> |
| <p>14</p> <p>1192/1/A/4 Old Part 5 (S.P.) 2</p> <p>620024 Ldg. Aircraftman W.G. Kelly Royal Air Force 23rd November 1939 (Cross)</p> <p>20 13 16 <u>49</u></p> | <p>14</p> <p>1192/1/T/8 Old Part 13 (S.P.) 6</p> <p>740422 Sergeant B.E. Redgrove Pilot Royal Air Force 3rd November 1940 Age 24 (Cross)</p> <p>14 5 13 20 14 14 <u>93</u></p> |
| <p>14</p> <p>1192/1/A/4 Old Part 6 (S.P.) 3</p> <p>552191 Aircraftman 1st Cl. S. Taylor Royal Air Force 23rd November 1939 (Cross)</p> <p>22 13 16 <u>51</u></p> | <p>10</p> <p>1192/1/T/7 Old Part 14 (S.P.) 7</p> <p>751289 Sergeant R. Norris Wireless Operator/Air Gunner Royal Air Force 4th November 1940 Age 22 (Cross)</p> <p>14 26 13 20 18 12 <u>103</u></p> |
| <p>19</p> <p>1192/1/A/8 Old Part 7 (S.P.) 4</p> <p>348825 Corporal T.A. Keating Royal Air Force 23rd November 1939 Age 46 (Cross)</p> <p>At the going down Of the sun And in the morning We will remember them</p> <p>14 13 21 14 8 15 18 <u>103</u></p> | <p>14</p> <p>1192/1/T/5 Old Part 15 (S.P.) 8</p> <p>Flying Officer K.W. Michie Pilot Royal Air Force 7th December 1940 (Cross)</p> <p>13 5 13 <u>31</u></p> |

