

Coventry Blitz – 14/15 November 1940: Hawkesbury Connections

The air raid on Coventry on the night of 14/15 November 1940 lasted for 14 hours and resulted in the deaths of at least 554 people.

Amongst those killed were three young lads from Lentons Lane.

Dennis Lapworth was born on 16 August 1923 at Hawkesbury. He was the son of Joseph Thomas Lapworth (1895 – 1969) and Annie Lapworth (nee Twigg) (1895 – 1966) and the brother of Margaret A. and Phyllis H. Lapworth. The family lived at 40 Lentons Lane, Hawkesbury. Mr and Mrs Lapworth continued to live in this house until they died.

Dennis was employed by Alfred Herbert Ltd as an Apprentice, Combination and Bar Lathe. He was a member of the Air Defence Cadet Corps, No. 163 Alfred Herbert Squadron.

Dennis died aged just 17 on 14 November 1940 and the location of his death was recorded as 'outside Wootton House, Coventry Road, Longford'. He was buried at the Zion Baptist Church, Hawkesbury.

George Walter Boyles was born on 14 March 1925 at Foleshill. He was the son of George Amos Boyles (born 1887) and Hannah Boyles (nee Ross) (18883 – 1983). George lived with his parents and his sister Phyllis at 60 Lentons Lane, Hawkesbury.

George was employed at Riley Motors as a Surface Grinder.

George died aged just 15 on 14 November 1940 and the location of his death was recorded as 'outside Wootton House, Coventry Road, Longford'. He was buried at Bulkington Parish Graveyard.

The Boyles family were to suffer a further tragic loss when George's sister Phyllis passed away in March 1941 just a month before her 20th birthday. She had worked as a Wire Winder for GEC but by 1939 was recorded as 'now incapacitated'.

Mr and Mrs Boyles lost both of their children within four months.

Leonard Ward was born on 17 June 1923. He was the son of Henry Ward (1885 – 1963), a widower. Father and son lived at 149 Lentons Lane, Hawkesbury.

Leonard was employed doing coal deliveries.

Leonard died aged just 17 on 15 November 1940 at the Nuneaton Emergency Hospital. This hospital was set up at the start of World War 2 on the site we now know as George Eliot Hospital. It took in many casualties from the Coventry air raids.

It would be a fair assumption that these three lads from Lentons Lane were out together on the night of 14/15 November 1940.

The recorded location for Dennis and George's deaths was almost certainly outside a big house called 'Southfields' in Longford Rd, Longford which was the home of the Wootton

family and was known by the locals as 'the Wootton's house'. Longford Rd is the road to Coventry from the village of Longford. There is a record of substantial bomb damage in this location on the night of the Coventry Blitz.

It could have been that the deaths were recorded by Registrar's staff from out of Coventry, and they recorded just what was said to them, possibly, '*Outside **the** Wootton's house on **the** Coventry road at Longford*'?

On the same night two former residents of Lentons Lane also lost their lives. They were amongst a group of people who were sheltering in the cellars of the Motor Hotel (a pub) in Dorset Rd, Coventry. It is said that a bomb struck the wooden beer drop (the trap door down from the street used to get beer barrels into the cellar) and then exploded in the cellar killing eleven people. I can only find records for ten of the fatalities. They included:

Eliza Garside (nee Golby). She was 41 years of age and lived in Somerset Rd, Coventry.

Frederic Golby. He was 50 years of age and lived in Middlemarch Rd, Radford, Coventry.

Both were the children of the late William Golby (1865 – 1934) and the late Mary Golby (nee Sears) (1870 – 1935) of Lentons Lane, Hawkesbury. An alternative spelling for their name was Goalby.

Both Eliza and Frederic were living at home with their parents for the 1911 Census.

The extended Lapworth family had suffered another loss just a month before.

Donald Lapworth was born on 11 July 1923 at Foleshill. He was the son of William Arthur Lapworth (1901 – 1952) and Catherine Ann Lapworth (nee Matheson) (1900 – 1972). He lived at The Grove, Hawkesbury. Donald was employed by Alfred Herbert Ltd as a Grinder. Donald was the cousin of Dennis Lapworth. Donald died on 4 October 1940; he was just 17 years of age. He is buried at Lentons Lane Baptist Church. It is not known how Donald died but there is a vague memory that it may have been because of a road accident, possibly involving a military vehicle or a motorcycle.

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