



Bierton, Broughton & Hulcott in the Second World War



Information about the 7 residents who died in World War 2 as well as information on the WW2 war memorial, POW Camps, bombs which landed in and around the area and the refugees who lived in Bierton.

It seems such a shame that we don't have much information on some of these men and for some, we don't even know their first name or why they have a connection with Bierton, Broughton and Hulcott. If you have any information or photos you would like to add, please send them to the Parish Council

parishclerk@bieronvillage.org.uk

Contents

War Memorial in Bierton	2
World War II Casualties.....	3
Reverend Arthur James Kayss Thompson.....	3
Peter Vivian Base	5
JG Cooper	5
L Crystal.....	5
John H Hoddinott	6
Alfred Joseph Saunders.....	7
James Theodore Sear	8
Bombs in Bierton, Broughton and Hulcott in WW2.....	9
Bierton Home guard.....	10
Prisoner of War Camps	11
Refugees.....	12

War Memorial in Bierton

St James' Church features a stained-glass window commemorating WW2 and also a plaque featuring the names of those residents who died in the war.



World War II Casualties

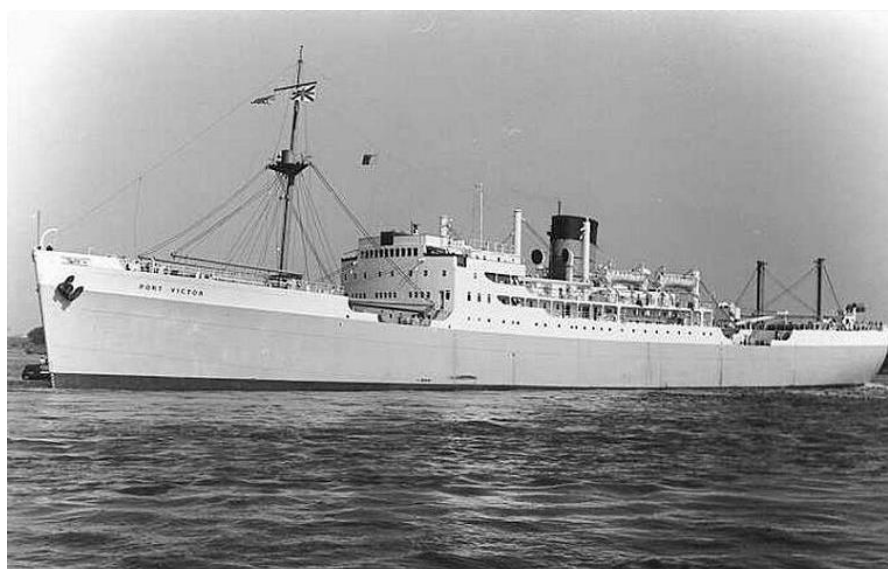
Reverend Arthur James Kayss Thompson – was born in 1872 in Lancaster. He took the middle name of Kayss which was his Mother's maiden name.

Arthur attended St Johns College and became a Reverend, serving in several parishes and prisons including Warick Prison, Brussels, London and North Chile.

The 1911 census shows him aged, 39, working as the Prison Chaplain at HMP Aylesbury, he is married to Mary Lucy, has 2 daughters, Dorothy and Joan, a son called Patrick and 4 servants. The photo above shows Arthur, Lucy, one of their children and their dog.



Arthur was the Vicar at St James, Bierton 1913-1926. In 1942 he is Cannon Thompson in the Falkland Islands. In April 1943 he is returning home, whether this is for his next posting or a short trip home, we don't know. Arthur is aged 70.



He was travelling on SS Port Victor (see left), about 500 miles from the South West coast of Ireland, when it was torpedoed three times by a German Uboat on 1st May 1943.

The Port Victor broke up and sank, Arthur was one of three/five people to

die (records are conflicting), but it looks like everyone was rescued by HMS Wren and Arthur either died on the 1st or 3rd May. Arthur is listed as a civilian casualty of WW2 as he died due injuries as a result of the boat he was on being torpedoed by an enemy submarine.

At 00.30 hours on 1 May, 1943, U-107 fired a spread of two stern torpedoes at the unescorted Port Victor (Master William Gordon Higgs) northeast of the Azores, which was zig-zagging directly into a good firing position in about 1000 metres distance. The ship carried 65 passengers (including 23 women and children), stopped after one torpedo hit amidships and the crew made the lifeboats ready to be launched.

After a first torpedo hit amidships at 00.36 hours the boats were lowered, but when she was hit in the bow by a second torpedo at 00.45 hours two lifeboats were destroyed and the occupants killed. The vessel developed a list to port but still sent radio messages until being hit underneath the bridge by a third torpedo, which broke the ship in two and caused her to sink. Twelve crew members, two gunners and five passengers were lost. The master, 74 crew members, ten gunners and 60 passengers were picked up by HMS Wren (U 28) (LtCdr R.M. Aubrey) and landed at Liverpool.

Information from <https://www.wrecksite.eu/>

[Peter Vivian Base](#). Born in Brentford, London in 1923. Son of Herbert Vivian and Rene Julia Base, of Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex. Herbert Vivian was born in 1895 and Rene in 1896. In 1939, Herbert was the Manager of a Wharf in Southend.

Peter was a Signaller in the Royal Corps of Signals, 49th Division. His service number was 2388794. He died, aged 20 on 22nd October 1944. Roll of honour for WW2. He is buried in Geel Cemetery, near Antwerp, Belgium. His records show him as living in Buckinghamshire. I can't see what his connection with Bierton is – can anyone shed any light?



Geel Cemetery, burial place of Peter Vivian Base.

[JG Cooper](#) – sadly we don't have any information on him. Can anyone help?

[L Crystal](#) – again we don't have any information. Can anyone provide information?

[John H Hoddinott](#) was born in 1924 or 1925 in Bicester, the son of Henry and Dorothy Hoddinott from Bierton and they lived in the Old House in Parsons Lane.

He was a private in the 8th (Midlands) Parachute Regiment - 14556549. He was involved in Operation Overlord in Normandy.

The 8th Regiment was involved in the following action:

On 6 June 1944, the 8th Parachute Battalion landed in Normandy on their own drop zone 'K' between Cuverville and Touffréville 3 miles (4.8 km) to the south of the main force at Ranville. The battalion's objectives were to destroy two bridges crossing the River Dives near Bures and a third at Troarn. The parachute drop was widely scattered, with fourteen of the Battalion's thirty-seven Dakota aircraft, releasing their parachutists some distance away, in the operational area of 5th Parachute Brigade. When the commanding officer Lieutenant-Colonel Pearson arrived at the battalion rendezvous point (RVP) at 01:20, he found only thirty paratroopers and a small group of engineers with a jeep and trailer who were supposed to demolish the bridges. By 03:30 a further 140 men of the battalion, but no more engineers had arrived at the RVP. Pearson decided to send a small force to demolish the bridges at Bures and lead the rest of the battalion to a crossroad north of Troarn where it would await more reinforcements before it attacked Troarn itself. However, the small force sent to Bures discovered that the two bridges had already been demolished by a group of engineers who had reached the bridges a few hours earlier, and so rejoined the battalion at the crossroads, which by now numbered 150 men.

A reconnaissance party was sent into Troarn to ascertain the status of the bridge there, alongside a party of engineers, which came under fire from a house near the bridge. After a brief fire-fight the paratroopers captured a number of Germans from the 21st Panzer Division and then made their way to the bridge, which they discovered had been demolished already. Once the engineers had widened the length of bridge demolished using their explosives, the party retreated to the battalion at the crossroad. Having achieved its objective, the battalion then moved north and took up positions near Le Mesnil to widen the airborne bridgehead formed by the division. By midnight the battalion was in the Bavent woods.

The 8th Battalion's objective was to hold the woods and disrupt German movements in the area. Isolated from the rest of the division, they were assisted in their defence by the dense woods, which broke up infantry assaults and made armoured vehicle attacks impossible. Adopting a policy of mine laying, setting ambushes, raiding and patrolling, at times the battalion's patrols reached as far as Bures and Troarn. The battalion remained in the woods until 16 June. When they returned to the front, they continued patrolling and harassing the Germans for the next six weeks.

He died on 2nd July 1944 and is buried in Ranville in France. He appears on the army role of honour



[Alfred Joseph Saunders](#) was born on 9th April 1912 and lived in Burcott Lane and at one point, at 2 Manor Drive, Aylesbury. His parents were Alfred James and Annie. He married Jane Winifred and worked as a Printers Compositors Stonehand in Aylesbury.

Alfred was a Lance Sergeant in the 3rd Battalion of the Grenadier Guards.

His battalion were involved in the following action:

The 3rd Battalion was in the 1st Guards Brigade attached to the 1st Infantry Division, commanded by Major General Harold Alexander. As the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) was pushed back by the German blitzkrieg during the battles of France and Dunkirk, these battalions played a considerable role in maintaining the British Army's reputation during the withdrawal phase of the campaign before being themselves evacuated from Dunkirk. After this, they returned to the United Kingdom, where they undertook defensive duties in anticipation of a possible German invasion.

Universal Carriers of the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards cross 'Euston Bridge' as they deploy for Operation 'Goodwood', 18 July 1944. Photo from wikipedia



The 3rd, 5th and 6th Battalions served in the North African Campaign and in the final stages of the Tunisia Campaign, under command of the British First Army, where they fought significant battles in the Medjez-el-Bab and along the Mareth Line.

The battalions took part in the Italian Campaign at Salerno, Monte Camino, Anzio, Monte Cassino, and along the Gothic Line. The 3rd Battalion, still with the 1st Guards Brigade, was attached to the 78th Battleaxe Infantry Division for two months in Tunisia until it was exchanged for the 38th (Irish) Brigade and became part of the 6th Armoured Division, where it would remain for the rest of the war.

Throughout the course of the conflict, two men of the regiment were awarded the Victoria Cross. They were Lance Corporal Harry Nicholls of the 3rd Battalion, during the Battle of Dunkirk, and Major William Sidney of the 5th Battalion during the Battle of Anzio in March 1944.

Alfred died on 11th October 1944, aged 32 and is buried in Italy. He appears on the army roll of honour.

[James Theodore Sear](#) - born in 1920 or 1921 in Leighton Buzzard. In the first quarter of 1938 he married Violet M Clark. They had one daughter.

He was a Private in the 5th Battalion of the Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment. His soldier number was 5955850.

The 5th Battalion was attached to the 55th Infantry Brigade, part of the 18th (East Anglian) Infantry Division formed part of the reinforcements dispatched to Malaya in early 1942. It surrendered to the Imperial Japanese Army with the Fall of Singapore and the men spent the rest of the war as POWs

James was captured on 15th February 1942 and was kept as a prisoner of war in Camp TH. He died nearly 2 years later, on 1st February 1944, aged 23. He is buried in the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery in Thailand.

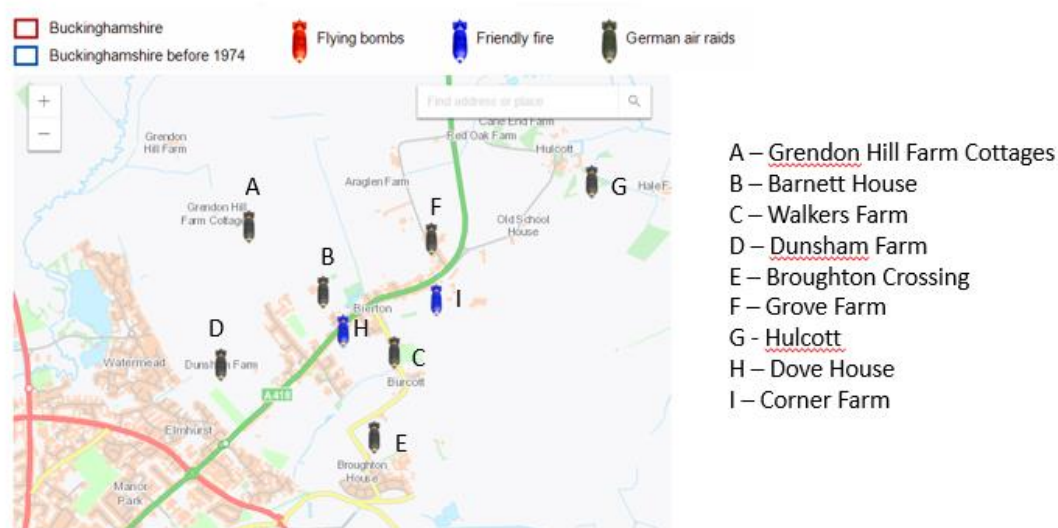
His widow and daughter still live in Berton.



Bombs in Bierton, Broughton and Hulcott in WW2

The following bombs landed on Bierton, Broughton and Hulcott during WW2.
Information from Bucks County Council.

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/culture-and-leisure/centre-for-buckinghamshire-studies/online-resources/bombs-over-bucks/>



8th August 1940

- A. 2 bombs near Grendon Hill Farm Cottages (top of Great Lane) – no damage.
- B. 1 bomb near Barnett House (Barnett Way)– barn demolished, windows damaged
- C. 1 bomb near Walkers farm, Burcott Lane (near recreation ground) – slight damage to house

25th/26th September 1940

- D. 1 bomb near Dunsham Farm – damage to windows.

4th October 1940

- E. 100+ incendiary bombs near railway crossing at Broughton crossing – no damage
- F. high explosive bombs Grove Farm, Rowsham Road – no damage

5th October 1940

- G. 20 incendiary bombs in Hulcott – no damage

15th April 1941

- H. 1 bomb near Dove House – damage to main sewer

15th February 1944

- I. 1 friendly fire practice bomb at Corner Farm (Gib Lane/Aylesbury Road)

Bierton Home guard

At the start of WWII, the government created Local Defence Volunteers, which later became known as the Home Guard. There were over 18,000 members in Buckinghamshire. Their role was to look out for and repel German parachutists, which might indicate the first wave of an invasion force.

There were Home Guard observation posts at Lacey Green windmill and Cane End Farm, Bierton. In Bierton there were search-lights which had to be manned in the evenings in Burcott Lane and in Great Lane (top of the hill leading down to Grendon Farm)



Back row from left to right.

1? 2? 3 Horace Woodruff. 4 Stan Thorne. 5 Brian Bell. 6 Desmond Gander. 7 ?

2nd from back row

1 Jack Pearce. 2. Cyril Thorne. 3 Ray Hill. 4 Eric Hayward. 5 Ted Davies. 6 Reg Wallace. 7 Bill Washington. 8 ? 9? 10. Morris Bonham (Butcher).

3rd from back row

1 Bob Rickard. 2? 3? 4 Joe Jeffs. 5? 6? 7? 8? 9? 10 Mr ? Thorne. 11?

Front row

1 Ted Honour 2? 3? 4? 5? 6? 7? 8 Eric Biggs 9? 10? 11 Bob Wright

Prisoner of War Camps

There were around 162 Prisoner of War camps in the UK. Buckinghamshire had 5. After the war ended, the 'prisoners' could visit the local area and sometimes popped into the local pub.

Wilton Park, Beaconsfield – tented accommodation. In 1939 the house was taken over by the War Office and used as an interrogation centre for Nazi prisoners of war: German refugees working for the allies would listen into prisoners' conversations. After the War the house was used by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to re-educate prisoners of war into the British way of life: between January 1946 and June 1948 approx 4,500 Germans were made to attend re-education classes there.

Hartwell Dog Track Camp - Hartwell Dog Track was used from 1942 as a Prisoner of War Camp for Italians captured in North Africa. This camp of tents and a hut was primarily to house Italian prisoners who were held there from 1942-46. The camp buildings were still in existence in the 1950s on land adjacent Sedrup Lane - now known as the Meadoway housing estate.

Shalstone (4 miles north west of Buckingham). The first prisoners at this Camp were Italians who were in tents and later had to erect the concrete building themselves, these were slotted together like today's garages. Buildings included a canteen, water tower, ration store and various huts.

Norduck Farm, Aston Abbotts, housed initially Italian, then German prisoners of war. Many prisoners were taken to local farms to work each morning. Some were allowed out for a time on a Sunday. Along the approach roads to the village were 'defence logs', large elm tree trunks fixed to be swung across the road in the event of an invasion.

Hitcham Park, Hitcham Lane, Burnham housed German prisoners of war.

Refugees

Several families and children moved to Berton during the war to seek shelter from the bombs raining down on London.

The Prince of Wales pub (now the Doghouse) in Broughton Crossing, housed at least 4 refugees. Mr and Mrs Mary Abrahams and their toddler son, Brian were Jewish refugees living in the pub. Mrs Cooper from Jamaica Road in the East End of London also lived there, she was Catholic. The pub owners were Church of England. Apparently, there were never any issues or disagreements.

Just down the road at 11 Broughton Crossing, lived Mrs Cooper's daughter and son in law, who had also moved to get away from the London bombings.

The Prince of Wales pub was also a regular haunt for another London couple, who used to visit, the husband is remembered as warming his back by the fire and physically shaking whenever the air-raid siren was sounded.

Berton School, which was at that point was located on the Aylesbury Road, near the Church/bus stop, was overflowing with refugees.

A local resident, Joyce, remembers a refugee at Berton school, who, unlike all other children was rather plump. She remembers him kissing the Teacher, Miss Willis, on the cheek every time he went out to break.

As the school was so overcrowded, a large group of the children walked in a long line to the Baptist Chapel (left hand side of the road as you go towards Rowsham) where they read.