

Test Pilot David Robert McCartney, Royal Air Force of Church Stretton

died 21 July 1941, Shropshire, aged 32.

David Robert McCartney was born on 24 May 1909 in Church Stretton. David was the only child of Robert Ernest McCartney, a corn merchant and maltster, and his wife Agnes nee Hyslop who were married in 1906.

Robert was born in Church Stretton and inherited a successful malting and corn business from his father, also Robert, who was born in Scotland. Robert Ernest built the malthouse on the corner of Sandford Avenue and Easthope Road, now used by the Stretton Antique Market, around 1904. Agnes was born in Church Stretton and her family also originated in Scotland. Her father was the Postmaster in Church Stretton.

LOCAL WEDDINGS

Mr. D. R. McCartney—Miss Betty Wood

A large congregation assembled to witness the marriage of this popular Pershore bride to Mr. David Robert McCartney, at Pershore Abbey on Saturday.

She is the daughter of Mrs. A. Howell, of the Woodlands, Worcester-road, Pershore, and a granddaughter of Mr. William Wood, who was for many years the chairman of the Pershore Board of Guardians and Rural District Council. She comes of a sporting family and played hockey for her school and later for the Pershore Ladies' Club.

The bridegroom, who is a son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert McCartney, of "Longhills," Church Stretton, is Flying Instructor at Castle Bromwich Aerodrome, and was formerly a pupil of the Worcestershire Flying School at Tillesford, Pershore. The Abbey bells rang merry peals for



THE BRIDE AND GROOM.

the wedding and the happy event excited much interest in the town. The Rev. Canon Bingham officiated.

The service was fully choral, the choir being in attendance, and the hymns sung were "Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven" and "Lead us, Heavenly Father, lead us." Mr. Charles Mason, of Worcester, played at the organ.

BRIDE'S DRESS

The bride, who was given away by Mr. David A. Howell, of Pershore, wore a beautiful gown in a classical style of cream and gold metallic cloque, the train being cut in one with the skirt. Her head-dress was a heart-shaped coronet of orange blossom and white heather. Round her left wrist was a bracelet of orange blossom and white heather and she carried a prayer book.

She was accompanied by four bridesmaids, Miss Amy Swann, Miss Dorothy Pettifer, and Miss Jeanne Elkerton, of Pershore, and Miss Market Byrd, of Evesham. They were attired in picture gowns of old-gold, quilted with sashes of deep gold velvet, which fell in loops to the hem of the trains. Their unusual small velvet haloes had circular veils falling from the back. All carried sheafs of gold roses.

The bride's mother was becomingly gowned in a tan georgette and lace gown, with a Russian ermine coat. Her matching hat was of felt and velvet.

Mr. Edward R. Bomford, of Greenhill, Evesham, was best man. The reception was held in the Masonic Hall, Angel Hotel, and was attended by over 90 guests.

Newspaper account of David and Betty's wedding

In the 1911 and 1921 censuses the McCartney family were living in The Longhills, a large property on the junction of Longhills Road and Shrewsbury Road. Robert was educated at Mill Mead Preparatory School in Shrewsbury and then at Bromsgrove.

David had numerous other family members in Church Stretton – his uncles, Colin, also a corn merchant, lived in Chatsworth on Trevor Hill and Henry, a farmer lived on Burway Road. His aunts Fanny and Stella lived in Little Stretton and later at Chatsworth, Trevor Hill.

He worked at his father's business for a number of years. He took up flying and trained at Pershore Flying Club.

David was married on 11 December 1937 in the Abbey church in Pershore in Worcestershire to Kathleen Beatrice (Betty) Wood. She was 19 at the time and had been born in Rugby but grew up in Worcestershire. His occupation is given as Flying Instructor in the marriage register and he worked at Castle Bromwich Aerodrome which had been in operation since 1909.

In the 1939 Register the family are living at 223 St. Bernard's Hill, Solihull. He was listed as a Flying Instructor (Civil). Their daughter Ann was born in the April quarter of 1939. With the outbreak of war in September 1939 David served with the Auxiliary Air Force before becoming attached to the RAF as an instructor.

David's father Robert died in February 1941 in Church Stretton. He left £24,644.15s.6d in his will with his widow and son being executors. David joined Rolls Royce, whose Merlin engines were used in many British aircraft, as a test pilot in 1940.

David died on 21 July 1941 in Shropshire. He and Kathleen were living at Hillcrest, Thoresby Avenue, East Kirby, within Kirkby-in-Ashfield parish, in Nottinghamshire, and David was based at nearby Hucknall air base. His death is recorded as an air accident, the result of his Hurricane plane's engine stalling and then crashing on the approach to Ternhill, Shropshire. The Roll of Honour states 'He was returning from an Engine Test Flight following modification'.

David's funeral took place in Church Stretton on 1 August 1941. The newspaper account records that there was a large congregation in St Laurence's Church and that, 'There were signs of mourning throughout the town'. David was buried in Cunnery Road Cemetery and is also commemorated on the Church Stretton War Memorial. His will was proved on 14 November and states that he died at Sutton Grange Farm, Sutton-on-Tern. He left assets worth £16,402 14s 9d.

David and Betty's daughter Ann sadly died aged four years in 1943. However, Kathleen subsequently re-married to Eric Lund Alexander in Pershore, Worcestershire. They had three children, and she died in 2008.



David's grave in Church Stretton Cunnery Road Cemetery