

Aircraftman Michael Fraser Cross, Royal Air Force, of All Stretton
Died 21 May 1941, Lincolnshire, aged 18



Maidenhill Wood, All Stretton

Michael Fraser Cross was born on 18 January 1923 in Ambala in the state of Haryana in India. He was the eldest child of Charles Ralli Cross, at that time a Captain in the Royal Garrison Artillery, part of the army in India, and Stella nee Becker who were married in India in 1921.

Charles was born in Epsom in Surrey, the son of a consulting chemist. By 1915 he had joined the army serving as a Lieutenant in the Royal Artillery. He achieved the rank of Captain by the end of the First World War and was awarded the M.C. After the end of the First World War Charles remained in the army serving with the Royal Garrison Artillery in India in the 1920s. Stella was born in India where her father was also an Officer in the Indian Army.

After their marriage Charles and Stella lived in India, though Michael's younger brother and sister were born in Staines in Middlesex in the UK. Michael was educated at Bradfield College, a public school in Berkshire along with his brother, Adrian. In the 1939 register Stella is listed as living in Walton-on-Thames along with her daughter Patricia. Adrian was boarding at school. It has not been possible to locate Charles and Michael.

However, we know that by around 1940 the family were living in Maidenhill Wood, a large detached house in All Stretton. Michael served in the 'A' Platoon of the Church Stretton Home Guard which had an official age for entry of 17. He joined the RAF as soon as he was 18 in January 1941. His rank was Aircraftman, the entry level for non-pilots at that age.

At the time of his death in May 1941 Michael was based at RAF Scampton in Lincolnshire serving with 83 Squadron part of Bomber Command flying Hampden Bombers. The flight on which Michael was killed was a routine transit flight of a Hampden Bomber from Scampton to the nearby RAF station of Dunholme Lodge. The aircraft crashed shortly after take-off; there were no survivors. As Michael's role was not as aircrew but ground support staff it is not clear why he was on the aeroplane for that flight.

Michael is buried in the cemetery at St John's the Baptist Church, Scampton which contains 64 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War and 8 German war graves. He is also commemorated on the Church Stretton War Memorial and on the Roll of Honour at Bradfield College.

Charles Cross had gained the rank of Major by 1941. Adrian served in the army during the Second World War and survived. Michael's parents seem to have left Church Stretton sometime during the 1940s and moved to East Horsley in Surrey. Stella died there in 1952, and Charles died in 1953.



Scampton war cemetery