

Pilot Officer Harold Knight, Royal Air Force of Church Stretton

died 30 November 1941, over Hamburg, aged 25



Harold Knight

Harold Knight was born in February 1916 in Solihull on the outskirts of Birmingham. Harold was the eldest son of Matthew Knight, a Schoolmaster, and his wife Pleasance Lois nee Loveless who were married in 1911. Harold had two elder sisters and a younger brother.

Matthew was born in Heaton Norris a suburb of Stockport in Lancashire where his father was a Warehouseman. Initially Matthew worked as a builder but by 1911 he was an Assistant Schoolmaster at the King Edward VI Camp Hill Grammar School in Birmingham. Pleasance was born in Diss in Norfolk where her father was a minister for the Society of Friends. Pleasance was educated at a Society of Friends School in Suffolk. At the time of the 1911 census she is living at home in Diss without employment, her father having died in 1898.

Matthew and Pleasance married in Diss, and he continued to work at the King Edward school until the late 1930s. In the 1939 register Matthew is described as a Retired Schoolmaster and he and Pleasance have moved to Windyridge, Watling Street South, Church Stretton.

We know nothing of Harold's education, but his sister attended the Quaker Ackworth School, so it is possible he was also educated in a Quaker school. He was not living with his parents at the time of the 1939 register, and it has not been possible to locate him.

Little is known of Harold's service record though at the time of his death he had the rank of Pilot Officer and was part of 58 Squadron based at Linton on Ouse in North Yorkshire. The Squadron flew Armstrong Whitworth Whitley V bombers which had a crew of five. Harold would have been the pilot of the bomber. His plane disappeared on a raid over Hamburg on 30 November 1941.

Harold is commemorated on the Runnymede Air Forces Memorial which lists over 20,000 Air Force personnel who have no known grave. He is also commemorated on the Church Stretton War Memorial.

Harold's will was proved on 30 October 1942 as he was 'presumed to have died on or since 30 November 1941' and probate was granted to his father. His effects were valued at £568 10s. Harold's parents and his brother John, who became a dentist, remained in Church Stretton. Matthew died in 1956; later Pleasance moved to Taunton where she died in 1961.



Runnymede Air Forces Memorial