

Pilot Officer Frank Baldwin, Royal Air Force, of Church Stretton,
died 23 June 1941, Middle East, aged 22

Frank Baldwin was born in Cowleigh, Worcestershire (Malvern district) on 3 June 1919. His baptism took place on 24 June in the Church of England parish church. His parents were Frederick, a (master) butcher, and Charlotte Hilma Cypress Baldwin. At the time of Frank's birth they were living in Montpelier Rise, Cowleigh Road.

At the time of the 1921 Census the family were still living in Worcestershire in Upton on Severn. Frederick is 52 years old and is listed as a General butcher's shopkeeper on his "own account", meaning he was self-employed and worked "at home". Frank was 2 years old. Jack his older brother was 17. Mother Charlotte was 42.

The family had moved to Church Stretton by 1928 when Charles Edward Robinson's widow sold his butchers business at 3, High Street (where Saxton's now is) to Frederick Baldwin. Frederick died in Church Stretton at the beginning of 1930. It appears that Frank's elder brother Jack took over the business, which was listed as Baldwin F and son, butchers in Trade directories. Frank was still at school. From this time onwards there are several press cuttings referring to Frank being a soloist at various events in Church Stretton.

Frank's mother, Charlotte died in Church Stretton in 1936. It is not known what Frank was doing at this time – he would have been just 17 – but by 1939 he was 19 and living in Shrewsbury, working as a General Clerk in the Education Department. A note at the side of his entry in the 1939 Register states that he was an RAF VR (volunteer reserve) awaiting instructions.

Frank became a Pilot Officer in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, 260 Squadron, with the service number 61213.

Very little is known of Frank's service, or his movements, until an article in the Shrewsbury Chronicle on Friday 4 July 1941 reports that he is missing after a recent operational flight. It would appear that he joined the reserve sometime in 1940. Later there is confirmation that Frank was killed in action, shot down by Vichy Air Force while attacking Vichy Air Command on Rayak Airfield, now in Lebanon.

He died on 23 June 1941. He was just 22 years old. He is buried at the Alamein Memorial in Egypt.

Frank's brother continued to work as a Master Butcher living and working at 3, High Street, Church Stretton. This is what is remembered as Robinson's butcher's shop, well known in the Strettons.

Their parents Frederick and Charlotte are both buried in Cunnery Road cemetery, Frank is commemorated on their grave.



FREDERICK BALDWIN
4 JANUARY 1930 (60)
CHARLOTTE BALDWIN
7 JUNE 1936 (56)
THEIR SON PILOT OFFICER
FRANK BALDWIN R.A.F.V.R.
MISSING 23 JUNE 1941 (22)