

In early August 2022 I visited the history archives at Beverley to find information on a crashed Avro Manchester at Holmpton, East Yorkshire. I was looking for the police telegrams when I came across a Lancaster Bomber crash that I had no knowledge of.

Having looked at this since then there are a number of reports where it came down, Humber Estuary, Withernsea sea front but none are true and the following story is what I have found out so far.

The crew all arrived at 550 Sqn on the 13th March 1945 and as such a new crew in North Killingholme, Lincolnshire.

On the 17th March 1945 they were to conduct a training bombing run at Cowden, East Yorkshire with fighter cover. The fighter cover was cancelled but the run went ahead. After doing one run and dropping ten out of 16 practice bombs they received a radio message to return to base. At about 4000 feet and over the airfield they received a message "lights out" as enemy aircraft were in the area and to return to base. German fighter bombers going to bomb Hull came in over Mablethorpe and followed the coast up and one found Lancaster NG132. At about 2135 hours Sgt Lucy (rear gunner) reported that a twin engine aircraft was flying behind them and began to close rapidly. He gave the instruction "Corkscrew port" which the pilot carried out and the night fighter overshot them. Two further attacks were made and in each the Lancaster pilot evaded being hit by making corkscrews. The Lancaster did 4 differing corkscrew manoeuvres before being hit in the rear and middle of the aircraft and fire broke out. The AC become partially out of control due to the elevators being U/S. The captain ordered the crew to bail out and unfortunately two of these landed in the Humber Estuary (Berry & Farmer). The crew and OIC Lieut Col Herron of 133 Field Battery, Anti Aircraft guns at Stone Creek, Sunk Island could hear their screams for help and called the lifeboat out but nothing could be found of the two airmen. One (Berry) was found a month and half later at Withernsea and the other (Farmer) has never been found.

The third crewman Drawbridge was to bail out with the Berry & Farmer but his parachute got stuck behind a step and once he had released it he bailed out and immediately pulled his ripcord and landed within seconds in a field near Patrington and badly sprained his ankle about two or three miles from the crashed AC. He crawled to the road where a local bus stopped and took him to the doctors in Patrington. Mrs Cripps at Patrington reported that the airman was slightly injured, once seen he was taken to Withernsea Police Station. A dance was being held at Rimswell village hall and most people heard a aircraft with engine failure coming towards them. Everybody ran out of the hall and saw the Lancaster fly very low over them and crash in a field nearby (behind the water tower). The Lancaster was reported to have crashed behind the water tower in a field and the pilot was found dead at the side of it. He was taken to nearby Manor House barn till the RAF at Catfoss recovered him the following day.

NG 132 is allegedly the last allied bomber to be shot down over the U.K.

The ORB log for RAF Catfoss states 23rd March that Flight Sergeant Lockyer AC (NZ428130) No 550 Sqn buried at Harrogate and body of 1796949 Sergeant Lucy D (550 Sqn) left Hornsea Railway Station at 0917 hours for Blamey.

1st May 1945 Body of Sergeant 1202847 Berry (navigator) of Lancaster NG 132 of 550 Sqn , washed ashore at Withernsea - body brought to Catfoss mortuary.

4th May 1945 Body of 1202847 Sergeant Berry of 550 Sqn left Hornsea Railway Station at 1925 hours for burial by next of kin at Eastbourne.

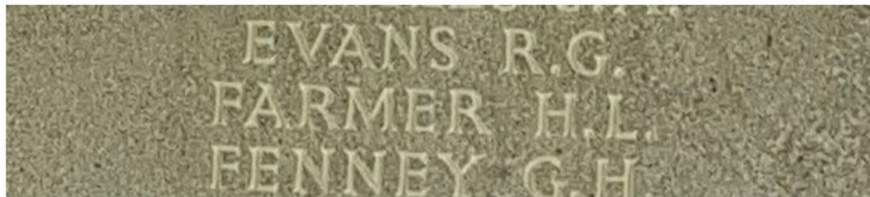
I have copies of the local police telegrams to HQ which give the location of the downed A/C as a field behind the water tower at Rimswell, Withernsea. The first telegram was sent at 2200 and stated

“plane crashed 1 mile west of Withernsea not known if Enemy plane or not. Plane on fire. Time of occurrence 2155hrs” it was only on the 6th telegram that the location was given as “near the water tower Rimswell”. At 2315 the telegram stated “plane confirmed as British”.

Also I have a copy of Nachtjagd Combat Archive and the German credited with the shooting down of the Lancaster NH 132 as Heinz Hummel of 7/NJG2 in a Ju88.

I also have a elderly witness that has given an account of this and exact location. I have a daughter of another witness (mother) who has passed away unfortunately. She states that her mother and others left the dance hall in Rimswell as they heard an aircraft flying low and sounded in difficulties, they watched the plane fly over the hall and towards the water tower where it crashed and she has given the same location. She stated that the local farmer would not plough that area of field which had a large hole in it and it became overgrown and left to wildlife. Unfortunately the farmer passed away and the field was sold. About 18 years ago the hole was filled in and again used as farmland. Although once the field has been ploughed you can see the differing colour in soil that was dumped in the large hole to level out the field.

I think the misconception over the years of the A/C crashing at Sunk Island and Withernsea front is due to the two airmen in the Humber and one later being found at Withernsea.



At this stage I cannot find where the other aircrew died either bailed out or still on the A/C on crashing.

- Sgt Leslie Elliott, Wireless Operator, (buried Goole Cemetery)
- Sgt Dennis Lucey, Rear Gunner, (Canovee Graveyard, Cork, Ireland)
- Sgt William Berry, Navigator, (Ocklynge, Cemetery, Eastbourne)
- Pilot Officer Alfred Churchill Lockyer, Pilot (Stonefall Cemetery, Harrogate)
- Sgt Sidney Matthews, Air Gunner, (All Saints Churchyard, Holme on Spalding Moor) buried 14/5/45
- Sgt Harry Lawrence Farmer, Air Bomber (Still missing in action, remembered on the Runnymede Memorial)
- Sgt Edward Drawbridge, Flight Engineer, (Survivor)

Lockyer's service records can be found free online at the NZ archives services.



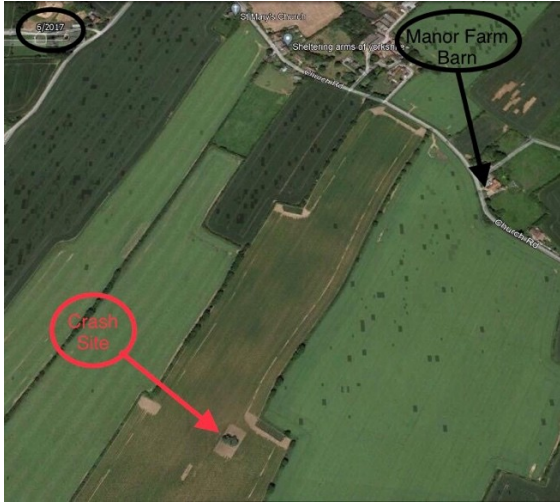
Manor Farm barn where Lockyer was taken to after the crash and from where was taken, the following morning, to RAF Catfoss.



The barn between 1930 and just after WW2 before it's restoration (as shown in the photo above).



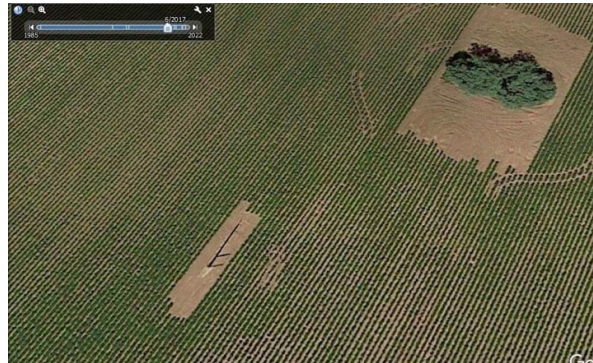
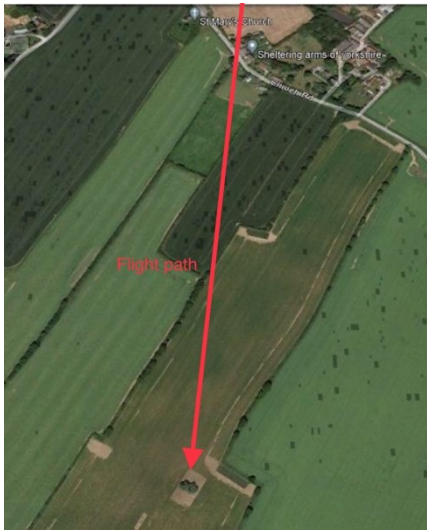
Elliot's Nephew who tends all the graves in Goole Cemetery on behalf of Goole Council.



Crash site 2017



Crash site 2019





Crash site of NG132 in dip the other side of the line of stubble, where the ground changes colour.



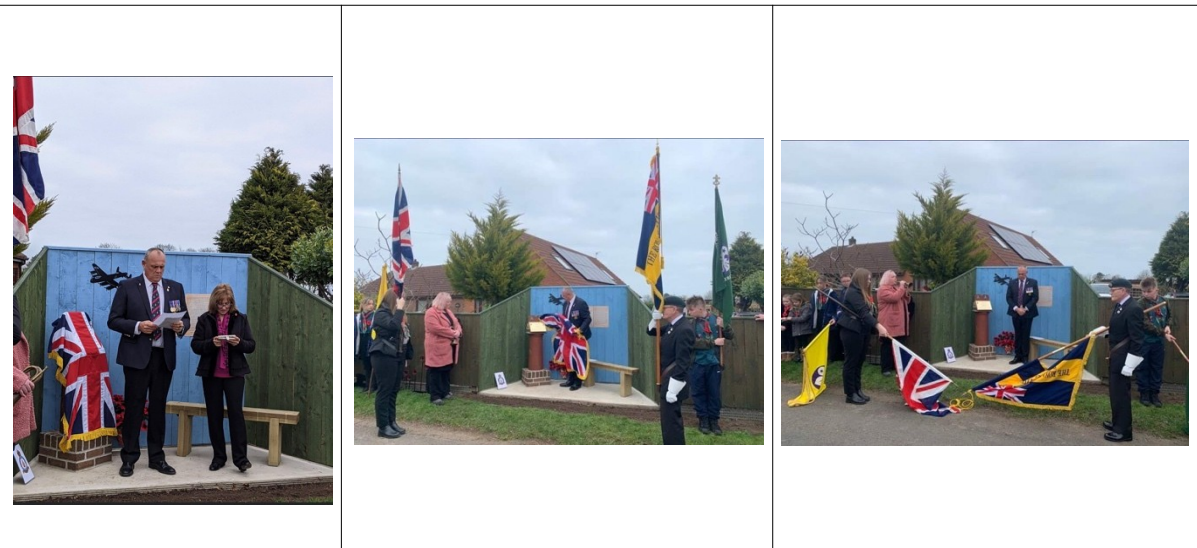
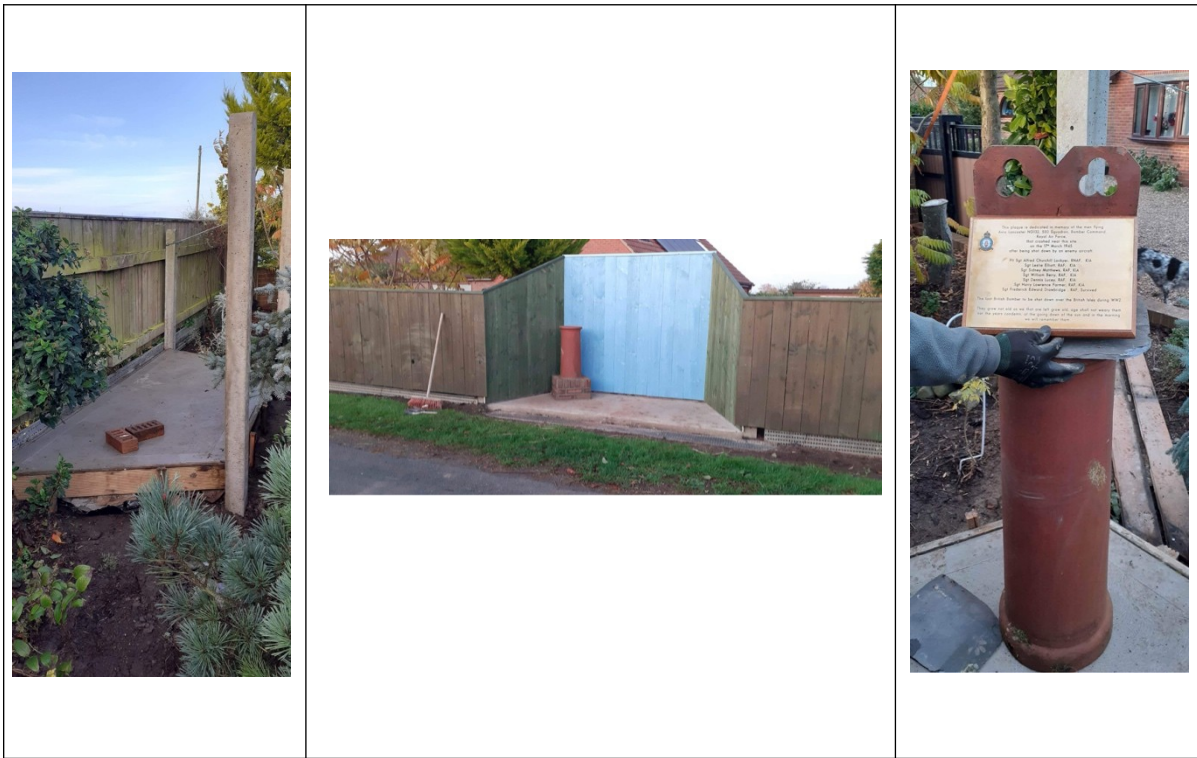
133 Battery, Anti Aircraft Regiment, Stone Creek, Sunk Island.

Registration District **HOLDERNESS.**

1945. DEATHS in the Sub-District of PATRINGTON in the County of YORK (E.R.).									
Columns—	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
No.	When and Where Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
216	Seventeenth March 1945. Withernsea U.P.	Alfred Churchill Rockyer.	Male	23 years	^{of the 1st Squadron - 2nd} No. N.Z. 428130 Royal New Zealand Air Force.	Due to War Operations	Certificate received from M.H. Dewyer Officer Commanding.	Twenty- first March 1945.	<i>[Signature]</i> Registrar

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218	Seventeenth March 1945. Withernsea U.P.	Dennis Rucey	Male	25 years	Model Village Stamsted Hill County Cork Ire. Sergeant Air Gunner No. 1796949 R. A. F.	Due to War Operations	Certificate received from M.H. Dewyer Officer Commanding	Twenty- second March 1945.	<i>[Signature]</i> Registrar



Police telegrams, Beverley archives
Air Operations logs, National Archives
Nachtjagd Combat Archive
CWGC
New Zealand Archives
550 Sqn Memorial pages
Gov. Death Certificates