

Rudgwick Woman Severely Injured in Bramley Plane Attack

It was Wednesday 16 December 1942. The Rudgwick and Horsham-bound train carrying Rita Leaney home to Rudgwick from visiting her husband with their newly born infant, Paul, was strafed by German aircraft fire for no obvious reason, except that here was a sitting duck to have some fun with regardless of the human consequences. At the end of this article, it becomes clear from one of the sources used that it was part of a Luftwaffe "piracy" plan for the whole of 1942.

Rita was the daughter of Rudgwick School headmaster Alfred Bacon and his wife Marguerite (Rita was also baptised Marguerite). Her husband was in army camp at Farnborough awaiting a foreign posting. This had been a significant and doubtless emotional day out. Paul may have been sleeping.

It is Paul to whom the words below are attributed from interviews at Billingshurst Library in 2005.

Marguerite Kathleen Leaney, nee Bacon - a very brave lady

"She was born at Lurgashall, West Sussex in 1915, the daughter of Mr and Mrs Bacon. Mr Bacon was a teacher and a few years later moved to Rudgwick on his appointment as headmaster.

She had an independent nature, and unusually for that time, chose to leave home at age 15 or 16 to learn the art of floristry in London, which she did under the expert tuition of Constance Spry. She worked at the Cavendish arranging and selling flowers to wealthy clients under the management of the lady who in more recent times was featured in the TV series *Duchess of Duke Street*. She was frequently driven to Covent Garden by Daimler to buy the stock, and often returned on foot to exercise the pampered pooches of the rich and famous. She often returned to Rudgwick to visit her parents, and later when she moved back into the area chose to ride a motor bike and sidecar.

In 1940 she married Trevor Leaney, a teacher at Christ's Hospital and they moved to Horsham. When he was drafted into the army she moved back in with her parents at the School House at Bucks Green, where her son Paul was born in 1942.

On December 16th 1942, she travelled by train to Farnborough, where her husband was on standby with the Tank Corps for embarkation to North Africa, and had not seen their ten week old son. On her return journey from Guildford that afternoon, a lone Dornier 217 bomber descended from the clouds looking for an opportunist target as the train was approaching Bramley Station. It was bombed and strafed by machine guns, killing seven and injuring many more. The raider was shortly afterwards pursued by a Beaufighter over the coast and crashed into a gasometer at Bognor killing the four crew members.

Rita as she preferred to be called was struck in the side of the face by a bullet which shattered her jaw bone and exited from the opposite temple taking out an eye. She also had

deep penetration wounds from the glass from the shattered windows. Her son Paul also had glass wounds and she remembered passing him down from the wrecked carriage to a Canadian soldier who helped her on foot along to the station.

She was taken to Park Prewitt Hospital at Basingstoke, where she found herself laying in a dingy cell with a small barred window that was made to house 19th century lunatics. She was later transferred to East Grinstead for operations by Alexander Macindoe, the celebrated plastic surgeon. This was followed by a long period of convalescence at Shoreham, where family lived. Paul was looked after by grandparents in Rudgwick for two years.

She was very philosophical about her fate and didn't blame anyone, considering herself lucky: the woman who had been next to her on the train was killed, and she remembered the other patients at East Grinstead mostly burnt airmen who had lost their faces and their eyesight and still kept a sense of humour. Before telling a joke the question would be asked, 'Are there any women about?'

In 1949 she opened The Flower Box on Horsham Station and later kept a flower shop in The Carfax until 1962. Her husband died in 1957. Later after moving to Billingshurst she opened The Flower Box Shop there.

She underwent operations on her face throughout her life as techniques improved, but also to remove pieces of glass as they made their presence felt."

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"I remember her sitting down in the evening and working out huge pieces of glass from her face," explained Paul. She's just one of those people that got on with life and she never held any malice. If anyone said anything to her she would say the train was an open target."

GetSurrey in 2011 added these two sentences to the same story.

Rudgwick Injuries

Unknown to other sources, Rudgwick Parish Magazine had a short tribute to the injured and killed in January 1943. The vicar revealed that, as well as Rita Leaney and Paul, the following were injured, not seriously:

Mrs Viola Maud Long, 30, née Gill, and her daughter **Monica Viola Long**, 2, (husband Harold Long, a carpenter), Arundene, Haven Road.

Mrs Eveline Maude Farley, 36, née Wakeford, and her daughter **Sylvia A Farley**, 2, (husband Percy Farley, bricklayer) Dene Croft, Haven Road.

The women were next door neighbours.

The Wider Picture

Bramley bomber was the same aircraft that fired on school - and we've found the bullet holes!

David Rose assembled the 'jigsaw' of the events of Wednesday, December 16, 1942. September 22, 2000.

"The phone rang in the control room run by the Civil Defence at the back of the Citizens Advice Bureau in Guildford's upper High Street. June Griffiths, who worked for the CAB, was a part-time telephonist and took messages for the ARP wardens. It was about lunchtime and when she picked up the phone the voice at the other end said they were from Bramley and that an aircraft had bombed a train. She immediately contacted all the emergency services and sent them off to Bramley and Womersley station.

When they arrived they found a scene of carnage. A two-coach train on its way to Horsham from Guildford had just pulled out of the station when it was attacked by a single Dornier. The locomotive's fireman saw the plane approaching and then heard machine-gun bullets hit the train. Although smothered in dirt, he was not hurt. He attended to some of the injured and, using a mail bag as a cushion, he placed it under the head of the driver, George Budd, of Horsham. In total seven people lost their lives, including Mr Budd, 45, who died later in hospital.

George Carter, of Farncombe, recalls seeing the aircraft as he was walking along Snowdenham Lane. He says: 'The siren sounded so I got down between two houses for cover. It was a Dornier and I saw it follow the line of the railway, the bomb door opened and I saw three bombs fall out. I think one bomb went through the bedroom of a house in Eastwood Road and came out the other side.'

The Surrey Advertiser of December 19, 1942, reported the incident but, for security reasons, did not give the actual location. It said that one bomb fell on a large house, causing considerable damage; another by the side of a road; and two came down in an open space.

Back in her Guildford office, June Griffiths heard the phone ring again. She recalls: 'This time the caller asked whether I knew anything about a plane firing on a school? I think I heard later that a goose had been killed.'

Working as a junior clerk for the Friary Brewery in Guildford was Don Moore. One of his wartime jobs was to climb to the top of the brewery tower and keep a look-out if the siren sounded. It had indeed gone off and he had reached the top of the tower with its panoramic views of the town. He says: "I heard two thumps of bombs exploding somewhere to the south of Guildford, and then from out the clouds, from the direction of Shalford, I saw a plane. It flew towards the railway station and the hospital. It was quite close and I could clearly see the pilot and the crew. 'Bullets fell on the railway station and then it headed off in the direction of the sports ground and then followed the railway line to Cobham.'

Raymond Chudley, of Ash Vale, backs up the story. He says: 'I was cycling back to my office in the clerks' department of the Guildford Rural District Council at Millmead House after my lunch break. I had got as far as Guildford Park Road when I saw a Dornier 217 come out of

the clouds at 500ft. It had a camouflage top and was painted light blue underneath. The German crosses were clearly displayed on the fuselage. It was flying over the railway station towards the tunnel. Suddenly there was a crackle of machine-gun fire from the dorsal turret (towards the rear on the starboard side). The gunner appeared to be trying to shoot up the railway station but, because of the aircraft's low height, was unable to depress the gun low enough. The bullets sprayed the area to the right of Guildford Park Road and actually broke a window of the fish and chip shop there.' In the event it did far more damage but amazingly no one was injured.

The Surrey Times of December 19, 1942, like the Advertiser, reported the incident at Bramley and, separately, the one at Guildford under the headline: 'Duck and goose killed'. It said: 'On the same day an enemy raider flew low over an inland town in the Home Counties and blasted away with its machine-guns. There were no personal casualties and only superficial damage was done to brickwork, windows, doors and slates of roofs of houses and other buildings. Among the latter were a girls' secondary school and a large hospital.' The report concluded: 'In the garden of one house a duck, which was being fattened for Christmas, and a stock goose were hit by bullets and killed.'

Margaret Tirrell (née Bird) was a pupil at the County School in Farnham Road. 'We heard the air-raid siren and were told to make our way to the shelters,' she says. 'We had a very strict drill but had become immune to any danger. On this day a plane suddenly dived very low. We couldn't help thinking why was it shooting on us children?'

Thelma Briggs (née Cawt) adds: 'Some of us were getting ready to perform a play and were already in costume in the dining room. For once we were given permission to stay there and that's when the rattle of machine-gun fire hit the school. We dived under the dining tables.' The Advertiser report mentioned that bullets passed through tiled roofs and in one instance they lodged in the sill of a back bedroom. In another case a garage and a car were hit.

However, there is no mention of others schools in the vicinity coming under fire. But Edwina Lipscombe (née Mills), of Bramley, was a pupil at St John's Preparatory School in Farnham Road and clearly remembers the plane overhead and firing its bullets.

Clifford Collins was eight years old and a pupil at Guildford Park School in Ludlow Road, behind the Royal Surrey County Hospital. He says: 'The siren had sounded and we were making our way to the shelters that were built into a bank opposite when the plane came over with its machine-guns firing. We all dived to the ground. Afterwards we found bullet holes in the school wall.'

Another vivid memory is that of Phil Marshall, who was six years old. 'My teacher said: "Under your desks". We were then told to head for the shelters. As I ran out of the door I looked up and the first thing I saw was the aircraft overhead and a man in it wearing a helmet.'

The Surrey Times mentioned that the Royal Surrey County Hospital was hit. It said that two bullets had smashed windows of a women's ward and pieces of glass had fallen into the lap of a visitor.

Raymond Chudley heard that later that day the aircraft was shot down on the seafront in the Brighton area. It has also been suggested that it was shot down over Bognor Regis.

A Dornier 217 did crash at Bognor that day. The time was 2.45pm and eyewitnesses said the plane was travelling from the south. Its bombs caused a number of fatalities while injuring others. Nearly 500 homes were damaged. It was shot down and crashed into Bognor's gas holder, killing the crew. Alan Redmond at the West Sussex Record Office casts doubt on the theory that it may have been the same plane that had visited Bramley and Guildford."

He was right to question this, as the reader will find in the last section.

Back to the main story

Among the many wartime stories found in the archives of the Surrey Advertiser is that of the bombing of a passenger train travelling from Guildford at Bramley.

"The report shows how the wartime spirit helped save the lives of many innocent people caught up in the attack. The death toll was reported as "at least seven" at the time and later rose to eight. The original article refrained from actually naming Bramley, for security reasons, referring only to it as a "village in the Home Counties". We have used sections of this story before but for the first time we are posting the whole account online, as written after the event."

Published in the Surrey Advertiser on December 19 1942:

"On Wednesday December 16 1942, an enemy plane dropped bombs in a village (Bramley) in the home counties and machine gunned a train, causing casualties, at least seven of them fatal, among passengers in the train, and afterwards bombed and machine gunned a town in the vicinity (Guildford). In the village where some casualties occurred, bombs also considerably damaged a residence and made a crater at the side of a road.

Apparently the raider came in from the south coast. It visited the village first. One bomb fell onto a large house (Brook Grange, Bramley) causing considerable damage; another by the side of a road and two came down in open space.

A two coach train was machine gunned causing a number of deaths and injury to many of the passengers. Assistance was quickly forthcoming, and members of the casualty services with doctors were soon on the spot.

The dead were removed and assistance given to the injured, who were taken to hospital. The train driver was badly injured, and later died in hospital. The fireman was also stated to be among the injured.

The tops of the train carriages were significantly damaged, and the windows and footboards were shattered. The story is best told in the words of people who are interviewed shortly after the occurrence;

Mr AG Poore, who was a special constable, said: 'I was in my garden when I saw the plane approaching. It was flying up the railway line, and was very low. I ran to find out what had happened.'

A more graphic tale was that of Mr A Lamberth, who, with Mr F Thumwood, was at work at in a siding very nearby. 'We'd just drawn in to load up,' he said, 'and we at once ran to render whatever assistance we could. When we got to them there was not a great deal of noise. One woman was very brave [Rita Leaney], she was carrying an injured child some distance along the line, handed it over, and returned to help others. Some soldiers rushed up; other assistance was quickly forthcoming, and we got the injured out. Some were placed on seats from the carriages. We heard the noise of a bomb exploding in the vicinity, but there was no panic among the passengers. The engineer attended to the injured, and helped place them in the ambulances to be driven away. I can tell you that those who were hurt were very brave.

Miss Violet Wisdom, a railway booking clerk, did fine service in rendering help to the injured. She was a first-aid nurse, holding the British Red Cross certificate. When interviewed, she had blood stains on the sleeve of her blouse. This is what she told a reporter. 'The plane was coming along very low when I first saw it; in fact I felt as though I could almost touch it. It came straight along over the railway line. I ran between the metals when I saw that the train had been damaged and immediately commenced to do what I could for the injured. I took four of the casualties into a nearby house and bathed their wounds. Then the man there gave me some material suitable for first-aid services and I went back and continued to help until compelled to go back to my office.' Miss Wisdom had by then rendered first aid to 10 of the 40 or so people who have been hurt.

The headmistress of a school for girls [St. Catherine's] about 100 yards from the scene said; 'We saw the plane overhead and shortly afterwards heard the firing. Three of our windows - one in the gymnasium, another in a dormitory and a third in the junior school - had pieces broken out of them. It was very alarming but the children were very calm indeed.'



PTE. D. M. CLYDE, son of Mr. and Mrs. V. R. Clyde of Elginburg, was killed on Dec. 16 in an air raid somewhere in England. Pte. Clyde was born in Ceylon, Sask., and later came to Kingston where he attended Frontenac Public School and the K.C.V.I. When called in the army he was employed at the Canadian Locomotive Works.

Houses in the vicinity of the railway line were damaged. Some of the inhabitants were naturally suffering from shock, but happily none of them were hurt.

Those killed:

Private Donald Clyde, Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps, of Elginburg, Ontario, age not recorded.

Mrs Avice Sevenoaks, of Clarence Road, Horsham, aged 40.

Mrs Ada Newham of Market Place, Devizes, Wilts, aged 41.

The driver of the train, **George Budd**, of Cambridge Road, Horsham, who died in hospital, aged 45.

George Marshall of Sevenoaks, who died in hospital the same day, aged 56.

The guard of the train **George Jeal** of Gladstone Road, Horsham, who died in hospital the same day, aged 58.

Michael Evans, of Alexandra Road, Farnborough, formerly of Newbury Berks, who also died in hospital, the next day, aged 17. Michael was an Old Blue, a former pupil at Christ's Hospital. Further information can be found at the end of this article.

[The name of a nine year old boy who died later is proving difficult to find]

Among the 36 injured were [Mrs Rita Leaney], Mrs Mary Elizabeth Parsons, Mrs Margaret Ruth Appleton, Miss Alice Fortune, Marjorie Bourne, Monica Tireman, Margaret Hoad, and Mollie Cantlie. See above for Rudgwick injured.

For some reason, the newspaper omitted Rita's name and those of the other Rudgwick women, which mean so much to us in Rudgwick.

A soldier: 'They handed me a very young baby [Paul Leaney] asking me to take it to safety somewhere, as the mother [Rita Leaney] was badly injured. I took the baby which seemed unhurt except for a small cut on the end of its nose. I suppose its mother was hurt protecting it from the flying glass and was unable to protect herself in any way. I thought the

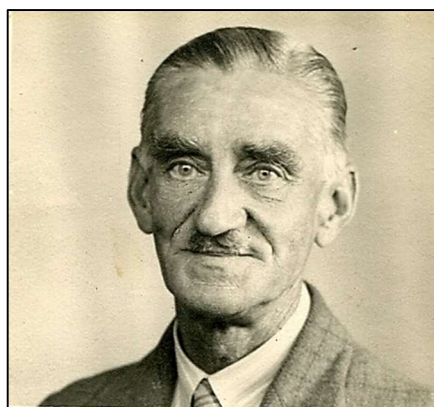


best thing to do was to take the baby to the station where there was sure to be someone to help. A little way down the line I saw people leaning over a fence looking along the railway line to see what happened. One of them promised to look after the baby so I handed it over to them to care for.'

Rudgwick School Canteen during the war. Marguerite Bacon, Rita's mother, seated serving food. She was celebrated for the work she did in feeding the children and evacuees.

Alfred Bacon, headmaster, Rita's father, Paul's grandfather, about the time of his retirement in 1948.

Alfred and Marguerite looked after Paul in Rudgwick for two years whilst his mother was in hospital and convalescing.





Paul Leaney, showing no obvious sign of a scar as he grew up.

Rita, on her engagement to Trevor.



Trevor Leaney, father (home on leave), Paul, and grandfather Alfred.

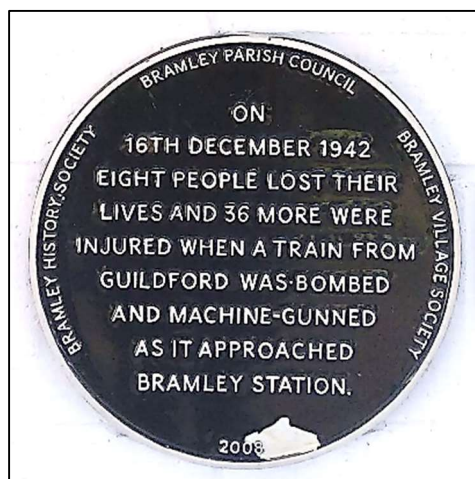
Marguerite and her grandson, Paul.

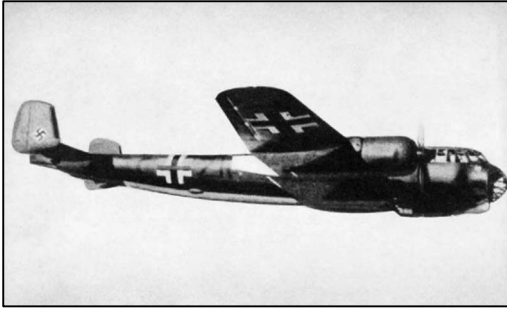


Man to man - Paul and his Dad.

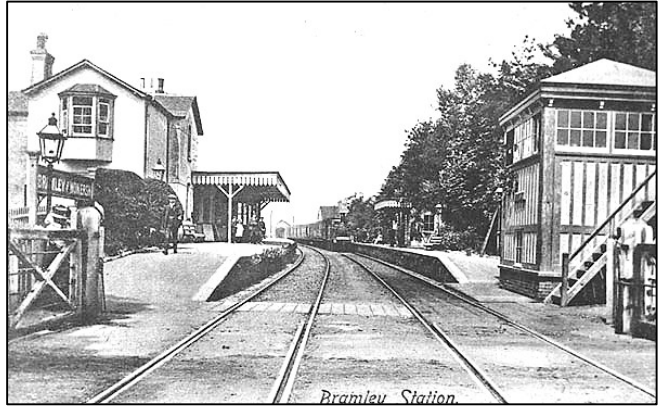
Many of these photographs are acknowledged to come from Paul Leaney's collection. Paul died in 2019, when he received many tributes as a longstanding parish councillor in Billingshurst, after a career in the aero industry at Dunsfold other photos are from SurreyLive website.

The plaque that commemorates the day in 1942.





A Dornier Do217.



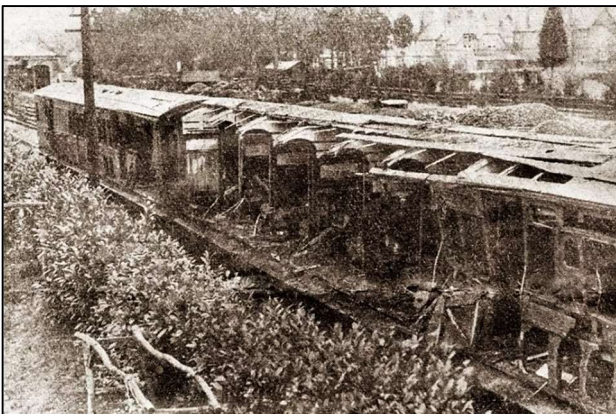
Historical image, Bramley and Womersley Station, with double tracks.



The most graphic photo of the damage to the train at Bramley.

Another view of the wrecked train, most damage to the front coach

.Brook Grange, Bramley, bombed on the same raid.



This next account is by a young woman who was the very person who helped Rita and Paul in the immediate aftermath of the attack. It was posted on the BBC's WW2 People at War website by Bramley History Society on behalf of Ruth Bailey, née Appleton, in 2005. We understand that as this is a free-to-view source the BBC are happy for us to post this account here. Copyright remains with Ruth Bailey.

"Wednesday Dec.16th was a dull dismal day, low clouds and drizzle at times but not particularly cold. I was nineteen at the time and having recently qualified as an orthoptist in the summer I was in my first job. I worked part time at the RSCH in Farnham Rd, Guildford and part time at three other hospitals, including the Cottage Hospital at Horsham. On Wednesdays I worked in Guildford in the morning, caught the Horsham train during my lunch break, and worked at the Horsham Cottage Hospital in the afternoon. Fortunately there was a convenient train from Guildford but I had to rush to catch it.

On Dec. 16th on leaving the hospital I ran to the station as usual but on reaching the entrance in Guildford Park Road I realised I had not posted an important letter in the pillar box, as I had intended to do. I ran back to the pillar box on the corner of Guildford Park Road (I believe it has now been moved) posted it and then returned to the station. My usual custom was to get a cup of tea and a 3d bun to supplement the sandwich I had brought from home for my lunch. Although bread was rationed there was nothing much one could put in a sandwich, as practically everything was rationed, so I could only have a small one. I then usually got into the train which was already waiting at the station. It consisted of two coaches pushed by a small, "Puffing Billy" engine at the back. From habit I normally got in the coach nearest the engine but on this occasion as I was in a great hurry and still bolting my bun, got in the front coach which was nearest the cafe. This coach had no corridor. The train set off and I got my sandwich out and ate it, and also my knitting. I was making my mother some warm underwear as a Christmas present. It was not a very busy train. I believe there were about 40 people on it. There was an old couple (at least they looked old to me) in my compartment. I settled in my corner with my back to the front of the train on the side of the carriage furthest from the platform. I believe there was a luggage compartment in the very front of the coach. I was comfortably knitting, pleased that I had nearly finished the garment, when as we slowed down on our approach to Bramley Station, I suddenly heard machine gunfire hitting the train. On looking up I had a fleeting glimpse of the plane out of the window flying in the direction of Guildford. It was very low, just above the trees. Then there was a big explosion and the train rocked on the rails, but fortunately did not go over. The door on the far side was blown out and the glass from the windows flew across the compartment.

I realised at once what had happened, but then everything went completely quiet and still. I suppose, because I was young my reactions were quick. I got my hands over my face before the glass blew in and had no bad damage done to my face, only nicks, although my hands were cut. Many people were not so lucky and had bad facial injuries, several losing eyes. I can remember getting up off the seat and feeling blood running down my face from cuts on my head and ear and thinking "Well. I am still alive" The old couple seemed all right too. We were certainly in the best part of the train to survive the attack. If I hadn't returned to post

the letter I should most probably have been in the other coach next to the engine which was more badly damaged than ours. As the door of the compartment had blown out of the train I was able to jump down out of the train onto the grass verge, other passengers were emerging too.

Someone called to me from the 1st coach (the one nearest the engine) asking me to go round to the other side of the train to help them with an injured passenger. To get to them I had to go round behind the engine and along the embankment on the far side of the train. It was much steeper on that side but I was able to scramble along it. There was a man lying on the ground, quite still, and I imagine he had been blown out of the train. I couldn't stop to look at him as **I was being called from the train by the man who had originally spotted me. They handed me a very young baby asking me to take it to safety somewhere, as the mother was badly injured. I took the baby which seemed unhurt except for a small cut on the end of its nose. I suppose its mother was hurt protecting it from the flying glass and was unable to protect her in any way. I thought the best thing to do was to take the baby to the station where there was sure to be someone to help.**

A little way down the line I saw people leaning over a fence looking along the railway line to see what happened. One of them promised to look after the baby so I handed it over to them to care for. On returning to the train I found some Canadian soldiers doing great work in getting the injured out of the train and administering First Aid. One passenger I noticed was a soldier who had been propped up against the fence, pouring blood from a wound in his neck and shaking like a leaf. He also looked as if he had bad injuries to his eyes. A Canadian soldier said he could take him to hospital in his jeep if he could get him to the road. We tried to stop the bleeding making a pressure pad with a handkerchief, but it did not do much good. We then pulled a seat out of the train to make a kind of stretcher and covered him up with a coat to keep him warm. By this time the ambulances were beginning to arrive, and I don't know what happened to him after that.

Two other incidents I remember clearly. One was of a distraught young man rushing to the scene and asking everyone he could see if they had noticed a boy of about nine years old. I had not, and I do not know if anyone could help him. Later I read in the newspaper that one of the dead was a boy aged nine!

The other incident that comes to mind was a young woman lying in the grass clutching hold of a terrified little girl's hand. On seeing me she asked me to see her little girl was all right. I could hardly understand what she said because her face and particularly her mouth were so badly cut. Her lips and cheeks must have been cut right through so when she tried to talk they moved in different directions, bleeding profusely at the same time. I heard later she was sent to another hospital for plastic surgery. The little girl was taken to the RSCH. The sister on the children's ward was a friend of mine, told me how distressed the poor child was, and, when she heard heavy lorries changing gear to go up Farnham Hill Road, she would scream thinking she heard another plane coming."

From Wikipedia entry on Bramley and Womersley Station history

"On 16 December 1942, an enemy aircraft attacked a passenger train carrying Christmas shoppers home from Guildford near the station. The Dornier Do 217 dropped two bombs on the line and strafed the carriages with machine gun fire. Seven people were killed, including the driver and guard, and one passenger later died of their injuries. The wounded and dying were assisted by a medical unit of the Canadian Army, who were billeted nearby. The wreckage was removed and the damage to the track was repaired, with services able to resume the following day. The Fireman, William Fairey, and station porter, Violet Wisdom, were presented with certificates of merit for their actions in assisting the injured, and Miss Wisdom was commended for her 'great courage and resource directly the bombs had fallen'."

Sky Pirates

From <https://www.keymilitary.com/article/sky-pirates>

Key Military reveals the name of the pilot who executed this raid on Bramley

"December 1942 saw lone Luftwaffe bombers mounting a series of daring daylight raids on Britain, as **Chris Goss relates**. For many months in 1942, lone German aircraft had been mounting a series of daring raids on Britain, leaving their bases in occupied Europe and venturing out into the English Channel. Crossing the south or east coasts, they continued inland until reaching their unsuspecting targets, dropping their bombs and returning home fast, before a scrambled fighter could intercept them.

These attacks were officially called 'störangriff' (harassing attacks), although they were more commonly referred to as 'pirateneinsatz' (pirate operations) and were perhaps best described by a German airman captured in August 1942, who revealed: 'Suitable targets are selected many weeks in advance and intensive preparations are made. Very careful thought is given to the choice of route, large-scale maps and any available photographs of the target, and the approaches to it are closely studied – III./KG 2 even had a special sand table prepared for use in connection with pirate raids. Pains are taken to work out a route that runs over flat country and avoids any hills or natural or artificial obstructions. Towns are studiously avoided. A hand-drawn sketch is frequently made covering a strip eight miles wide on either side of the route, and all of the crew are expected to memorise the landmarks along it.

Death came to Bramley

One such dramatic attack was carried out at 2.10pm by Oberleutnant Rolf Häusner of 7./KG 2, who attacked a train from Guildford that was approaching Bramley. A young girl on board wrote: "When we slowed down on our approach to Bramley Station, I suddenly heard machine guns hitting the train. Looking up I had a fleeting glance of a plane out of the window headed for Guildford. It was very low just above the trees.

"Then there was a big explosion and the train rocked on the rails. The door on the far side was blown out and the glass flew across the compartment... Everything went completely

quiet and still. I got my hands over my face before the glass blew in and had no bad damage to my face, although my hands were cut. Many people were not so lucky, several lost eyes." In 2008, a plaque was placed at the former Bramley and Womersley station remembering the eight killed, the youngest being 17-year-old Michael Evans [and the nine-year old boy?].

However, Häusner and his crew met their ends just the next day, killed when they flew into a hillside as they were bombing York. Startlingly, in the wreckage, the RAF found a 1:500,000 map of southern England, on which a rectangle marked precisely the location of Bramley."

Note that this contradicts stories of the bomber crashing at Bognor or Brighton. The crash at Bognor was however another similar lone pirate raider, and it was chased by a Beaufighter.



Astonishingly, the website also has a photograph of Oberleutnant Rolf Häusner. He was born in 1917, and is buried in the German cemetery on Cannock Chase. He had been flying similar missions since January.

Michael George Langly Evans



Michael was one of the younger passengers, and a tragic fatal casualty, who died next day in Royal Surrey County Hospital, Farnham Road, Guildford. Reader, please excuse the diversion from the Rudgwick-related story told so far, but this young man was a pupil at the same school as the author attended, Christ's Hospital, and of course it has already been pointed out that Rita Leaney was married to Trevor, the soldier who in peacetime had been a master at the school.

He had left the school in 1942, and being too young to join up had found useful wartime employment as a lab technician at The Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough. Now 17, coming on 18, he had that day been to Guildford, maybe Stoughton Barracks, to sign up for service. He then wanted to return to his old school by train, it is thought, to tell his old friends what he had done. Why else would he have been traveling away from home?

Michael Evans was the only son of Tyrell and Elsie Evans who lived on an estancia in Paraguay (**information and photo from the school's digital archive**). Returning to Paraguay in 1942 was not a realistic option. He was born on 27 March 1925. He was admitted to CH

in 1935 from an address in Beckenham and discharged to an address in Newbury. Michael was taken to the Royal County Hospital in Guildford but died from his injuries on the following day. At the time of his death he had not seen his parents since he was admitted to CH in 1935. He was buried in the churchyard at Shaw cum Donnington in West Berkshire.

©**David Miller**, who wrote a book, *Freedom We Died For You*, about the school war memorial, adds, "it is clear that Flecker [the then headmaster] knew of this incident as he mentioned the death of the 'boy from Paraguay' in his 1946-ish unpublished memoir on the war at CH, but the name was not added to the War Memorial until I proposed it in 2009/10". He also wrote a small booklet on Evans's story "The Death of an Old Blue".

Part of the War Memorial at Christ's Hospital, including names added in recent years, including that of MGL Evans.

It will be noted that another even younger civilian Old Blue, Edwin Pillow, died. Investigation shows this to have been in a V2 rocket attack on Crystal Palace Park Road on 15 March 1945.

29-35	S.E. WODEHOUSE	
29-36		1931-36
32-39	G.C.R. WOODHOUSE	
16-22		1927-32
29-38	H.L. WRIGHT	1919-26
28-35	L.A. WRIGHT	1904-11
19-26	M.G.L. EVANS	1935-42
	R. GOODDAY	
14-20		1898-1902
20-27	C.B. LOCHNER	1902-08
23-31	W.I. NEWMAN	1908-11
31-38	J.R. OLIVER	1931-36
25-32	E.C.S. PILLOW	1938-44
03-10	D.A. TAYLOR	1926-31
	E.M. UNDERY	1920-27
28-36	F.A.A. WILKINSON	
25-31		1912-18