

House Flattened in Bomber Crash

Four Die-But Farmer And Wife Escape

SHOCK FOR DERBYSHIRE FAMILY AND FRIENDS

WHEN a 90-ton four-engined jet bomber crashed on Friday afternoon on a charming 17th century farmhouse in the Lincolnshire hamlet of Stubton near Newark, four people died—two members of the crew and two women employed at the house. But the farmer and his wife, both well-known in the Chesterfield district, especially among members of the local Caledonian Association, escaped alive in miraculous manner from the farmhouse which was reduced to a heap of rubble.

They were 32-year-old Mr. Denis Burt and his wife, Jean, also aged 32, only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Wilson of Ashgate Road, Chesterfield. As the plane blasted into their home, they were hurled clear of the centre of devastation and escaped with injuries for which they are now detained at Nocton Hall R.A.F. Hospital near Lincoln.

Severely Shocked

Mr. Burt suffered severe injuries, including a double fracture of the leg, a fractured pelvis, multiple bruising and lacerations and burns. His condition at the week-end gave cause for serious anxiety, but by mid-week his condition was reported to be improved, although he is expected to be in hospital about three months.

Like her husband, Mrs. Burt was severely shocked and in addition to burns and bruising, she suffered a very deep laceration of the left thigh and an arm fracture. She is reported to be making good progress and is likely to be in hospital for less than a month. On Monday, she was taken by wheelchair to spend a few minutes at her husband's bedside.

The story of their escape before the farmstead was annihilated is truly a remarkable one. It was their usual practice to adjourn to the drawing room after lunch, and as they did so, just before 2 p.m. on Friday, no doubt chatting about their new home into which they were due to move very shortly, an unfamiliar noise burst upon them, louder and louder.

They had become accustomed to the sound of jet aircraft overhead, but this was something very different and very frightening. Mrs. Burt dashed to the window to investigate and her husband hung open the front door.

Hurled Through Window

These moves undoubtedly saved their lives, for as the massive Victor bomber ploughed into the house after sheering off the end of a high barn, the blast hurled Mrs. Burt through the window on to the lawn, while Mr. Burt was flung out of the door over the rose-beds. Here, as he lay helpless, falling debris surrounded him as the house collapsed.

Neither lost consciousness and Mrs. Burt was able to pick herself up and dash in terror for help, clambering over a wall into the village street, towards the cottage of the farm foreman.

As tremendous flames and clouds of smoke rose from the wreckage, Mrs. Burt had to be forcibly restrained from trying to return to the scene of devastation.

Farm foreman, Mr. John Scrimshaw, with assistance, managed to drag the seriously injured Mr. Burt across the farmhouse lawn and into the shelter of a sunken garden just before there was a terrific explosion.

Within minutes, fire engines, police cars and ambulances came pouring into the village and Mr. and Mrs. Burt were rushed for medical attention and eventually to Nocton Hall R.A.F. Hospital.

When the plane spiralled out of the sky and scythed its way through the farmhouse, two of the crew were killed—the other three are reported to have escaped by the use of ejector seats.

Children have since been staying at the home of their uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Burt, at Hougham Manor, about three miles from Stapeley. No doubt in the near future they will be spending a few days with their grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, at Chesterfield, where they have been regular visitors.

New House But—

For Mr. and Mrs. Burt, the disaster has meant not only injury to themselves and the death of two they loved dearly, but the complete destruction of all their personal belongings—furniture, clothes, household equipment, and a host of items of great sentimental value, which can never be replaced.

Nearing completion about a mile from Stubton, they have a magnificent new house, but now they have nothing to put in it and the task of restocking a complete home will face them when they have recovered from their injuries.

For months they have been collecting additional furniture and other items to go into their new home—some of it was only delivered to the farm on the day before the crash. But all was shattered when the Victor bomber, which was on a test flight from the Handley-Page works in Herefordshire, plunged on to the farmstead.

Victims of the crash were Mr. and Mrs. Burt's two black retriever dogs, "Tommy" and "Dove." In kennels near the house, they suffered from the blast, and although every effort was made to save their lives, they died the following day.

Terrier Survives

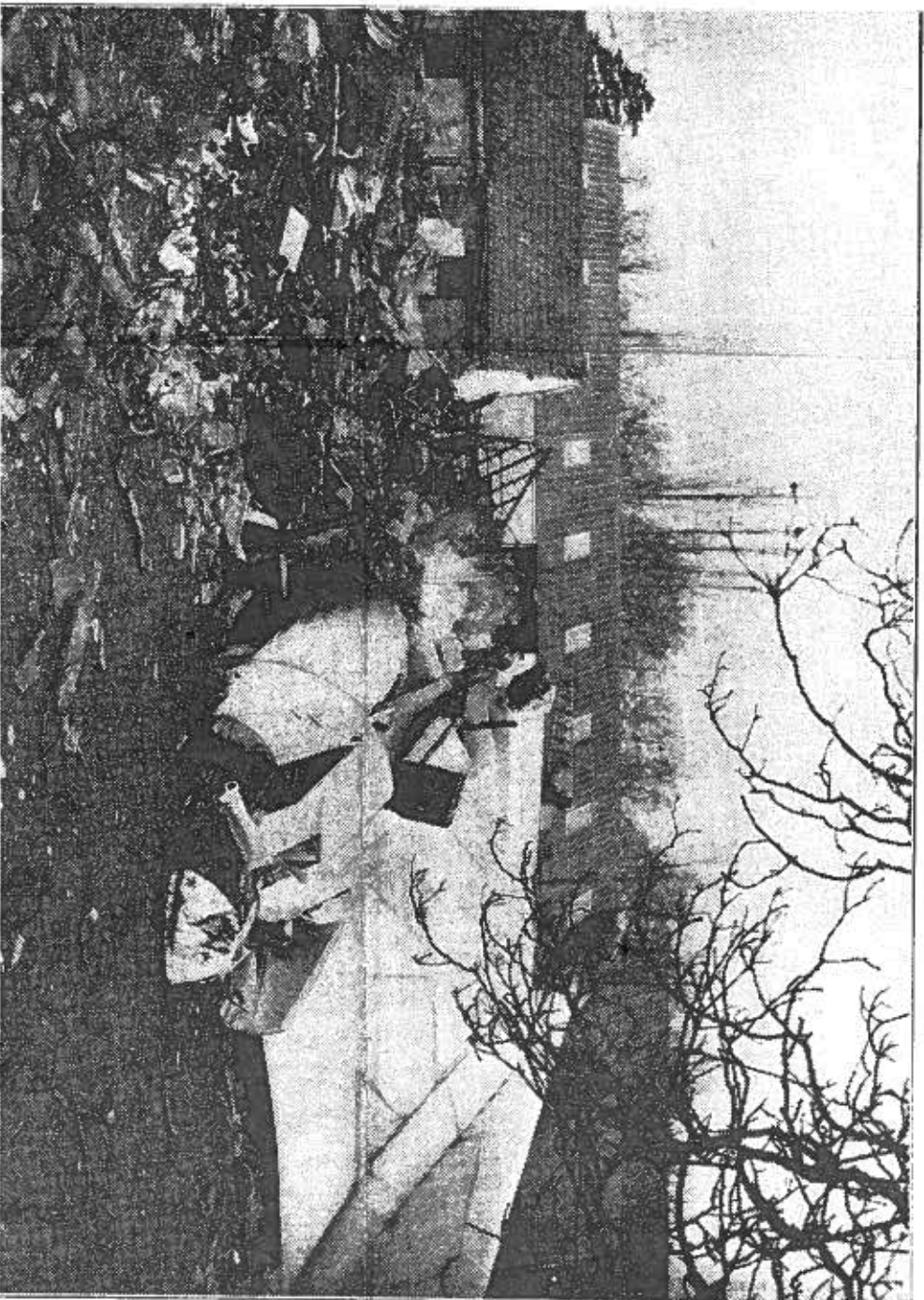
But "Sharp," the little Jack Russell terrier, who was blown through the window with his mistress, survived. He was found wandering in the village some time later.

It is understood that when Mrs. Burt is able to leave hospital, she and the children will make their home temporarily with her father-in-law at Court Leys, Brandon, not far from their new house, until Mr. Burt is fully recovered and able to join his family in the task of restocking a home.

To Mr. and Mrs. Burt in hospital this week have gone messages of condolences and best wishes for a speedy recovery, and many of these have been from friends in Derbyshire.

Mr. and Mrs. Burt have been regular attenders at functions of the Chesterfield Caledonian Association of which Mrs. Burt's mother, Mrs. Wilson, is the President. During the past season, Mr. Burt proposed the toast of "Scotland" at the St. Andrew's Day function, while his wife responded to the toast of "The Lassies" at the recent Burns' Night celebration.

At the Ashgate Road home of Mr. W. S. Wilson, former Borough Engineer, and Mrs. Wilson, sympathetic messages and inquiries have been pouring in all week from friends in the town and from far afield—friends who no doubt also remember the double tragedy suffered by the family during the World War, when two sons were killed while serving with the R.A.F.



Pictured above is the scene of devastation on Saturday morning with part of the massive V-bomber sprawled across the heap of debris which was all that remained of a charming 17th century farmstead. On the right is the house as it was, the bay window on the right of the front door being the one through which Mrs. Burt was hurled by the blast. Mr. Burt was standing by the open door when the crash came and was thrown on to the lawn. The two women who died were in the part of the house on the far left of the picture.

