

Westcott WW2 Recollections from Bob Cherry

Sheet SP 71 Waddesdon. Westcott Airfield opened September 1942.

(1) Wellington - December 1942. Map Reference 718143. Bob Cherry in a village life says "The Local Airfield (Westcott) had previously opened, (September 1942), and soon afterwards(I think December) a Wellington crashed close to Watbridge Farm, the aircraft being totally destroyed."

(2) Wellington - November 1942. Map Reference 707132. (see SP61).

In Bob Cherry a village life the description is " Sometimes after came a crash on the outskirts of the village, this took place on a very stormy November night (I think 1943) and despite the fact that the plane (a Wellington) ended up only a few hundred yards or so from two occupied houses, it wasn't found for hours. It had previously struck a row of Elm trees, at Upper Pollicott, just taking the top branches off, before turning some ninety degrees, and finally striking an ash tree at Lower Pollicott head on, most probably somersaulting, and being almost totally destroyed, though unusually there didn't seem to be much evidence of a fire. I believe the most likely reason for this was the fact that the aircraft completely broke up, and was scattered that basically there was nothing left to burn. The awful part of this crash was that had the aircraft been some forty feet to the right it would have had a clear run to the bottom of the hill with only a few small bushes, and a low hedge to contend with in the next mile or so. It was always thought that the only survivor was the rear gunner."

3) Wellington - August/September 1944?

Hit Akeman Street signal Box. Map reference 716177

(4) Lancaster overshoot, and hit a Wellington that had previously done the same. Bombs blew up, night of 31st May 1944.

Map Reference 716177.

(5) Wellington - Crashed on railway line. 1943 ?.

Map Reference 700166.

(8) Wellington - Crashed in Plantation, but missed Petrol Depot.

Map Reference 738163.

(9) Wellington - Hit by a Stirling, both crashed, 15th March 1944.

Story in local Paper March 11th . Map Reference 743190.

The crosshatched area, starting at Watbridge Farm was covered in Incendiaries, with the X's marking roughly where the H, E, s landed. Late 1941.

Xs at 699110 were Bombs, 2 x very large H, E, + 2 x Oil Bombs fitted Late 1940 ?. We watched from the lookout point at the Blacksmiths

The large X at 713116 was the site of a mobile Beacon, we knew night flying was contemplated if this went through the Village in the morning.

a) 706146. There were houses here in the early Twenties (1925 ish), I understand but, only ruins in my early days. They must have disappeared very quickly. Mrs Cattle lived there, and there are possibly Photographs.

b) 702137. There must have been houses here in the early Thirties (1932 ish), but like those above they too must have disappeared quickly. We think a daughter of the Knibbs family, of lower Pollicot lived there, before moving to California. Certain a family called Goss did.

c) 702138. This was known as "The Old Gardens", when we were young, and there were signs of having been houses there. Fruit Trees, and ruins. In the Field/Paddock shown as Pickles on the Map of the Field Names I feel that there must have been houses at sometime. Certainly a Walnut Tree stood there, and there may have been other Fruit Trees.

Sheet SP61 Brill.

(6) Wellington - first hit trees at blue X, January 1945?.

Map Reference 697152. Bob Cherry in a village like says "Later in the war a Wellington crashed just outside Wotton Station, this was on a Saturday afternoon, and I would think it must have been in January 1945. It first hit a row of Elm trees, taking out the tops before diving very steeply into the ground, apparently under power."

(7) Wellington - on Wotton Estate Yard, 1943 ?.

Map Reference 691165.