Sgt. Frederick James William Bichard 650625 RAF



Frederick Bichard was one of four 49 Squadron aircrew who died after drowning a little over a mile away from rescuers on the Lincolnshire coast.

Their Hampden, X3027 (EA-A), ditched around a mile off Skegness beach at 0030 hours on 28 October 1940 after being attacked over the North Sea by a Luftwaffe intruder. The Hampden was badly damaged but the crew managed to make it all the way back to England before hitting the sea.

Rescuers at Skegness could initially hear the shouts from some of the downed Hampden crew but only three bodies, including that of Frederick Bichard, were later recovered. Frederick was one of two wireless operator/air gunners in the Hampden, which had been one of eight that left Scampton to join 12 others for an attack on Hamburg, an attack that caused very little damage.

The bodies of the three crew members were brought ashore by Skegness lifeboat and a memorial was later erected in the lifeboat station to the crew, a memorial that was enhanced by a propeller from X3027 which was found in 1994.

Frederick was the 22-year-old son of Henry and Amy Bichard and came from the West Yorkshire village of Oulton, where he is buried in St John's Churchyard. Alongside him is his brother, Clifford, who served in the RASC and died in May 1943. The others who died were the pilot F/O John Bufton, observer P/O Konstantine Ballas-Anderson and wireless operator/air gunner Sgt. Robert Robertson.

His name can be found on panel 009.

Sources: 49 Squadron Association/Bomber Command Losses 1939-40 by Bill Chorley/The Hampden File by Harry Moyle.