Mary McLoughlin





Civilian War Dead

Died: - Died during the blitz in London, St Pancras 15/03/1944 Age: 40 years.

Cemetery: - Birstall (St Peter) Churchyard Extension A. 1470.

Mary was born in 1903 the eldest daughter of James and Ann McLoughlin nee O'Loughlin who had married in 1901. Thomas was born in 1901 followed by Mary, John 1905-1906, Theresa 1907, James 1909, Martin 1909, Ann 1911, William 1913, Kathleen 1916, Eileen 1919. In 1911 the family lived at 53, Brownhill Road, Batley. Her father, James, died in 1938. In 1939 the family lived at 13, Rock Terrace, Birstall.

Mary was a well-known Batley and Birstall contralto, who was prominently associated with the local amateur operatic societies. Before going to London, 12 years previously, to work in an office, she attended St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, Birstall.

On the night of the 14/15 March 1944 bomber crews were briefed to attack London again. This time the target was Whitehall with Buckingham Palace being marked out as a special target. The bombers were ordered to congregate over the North Sea, north west of Rotterdam at 16,400 ft. The attacking force was to cross the coast at Leiston and turn south using Cambridge as a waypoint. Once the bombs had been dropped the pilots were ordered to exit British airspace at Beachy Head. For the first time, the *Luftwaffe* attempted a diversion during *Steinbock*. Until this operation, deception was limited to the wholesale use of *Düppel*. Peltz ordered the FW190s of *SKG* 10 to fly a diversion sortie over Plymouth fifteen minutes ahead of the planned attack. FW190 pilots carried flares to encourage the British to think that the port town was the primary target.



BIRSTALL SINGER KILLED IN RAID ON LONDON

News has been received that Miss Mary McLoughlin, the well-known Birstall and Batley contralto, who was prominently associated with the local amateur operatic societies and whose home address was 13, Rock Terrace, Birstall, was killed during the Tuesday night air raid on London.

Miss McLoughlin, who was 39, worked in a London office for 12 years. She attended St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, Birstall, before going to London.

The news of her death was received by her fiance, Mr. Glyn Phillips.

She was the eldest daughter of Mrs. A. McLoughlin and the late Mr. J. McLoughlin.

The funeral is to be at Birstall Parish Churchyard.

Batley News, 18 Mar 1944

The operation was poorly executed; bomber units were prompt in getting airborne and the fighters were late. By the time the FW190s were closing on Plymouth the vanguard, if not the bulk, of the conventional German bombers were over the English coast in the north east. The mass use of *Düppel* was rendered ineffective because of the sheer number of British radar units able to scan the skies. It was quickly determined that the main attack was occurring in the north. British radar operators were suspicious of the small number and high speed of the southern intruders, which alerted them to its diversionary function.

The bombers reached the target and dropped their bombs but little damage was done. In the Belgravia region, some damage was done by exploding high explosives. One notable casualty was Muriel Wright, the girlfriend of Ian Fleming the future novelist, who at that time was serving as a naval intelligence officer. A bomb fell through the roof of her apartment and killed her. She was the only casualty in Westminster. Around 162 tons of bombs were dropped on London. 54 Boroughs reported 390 fires. Paddington, Westminster, Marylebone, St. Pancras and Bloomsbury were damaged. Bombs

also fell in Hyde Park. In Drayton Park, Highbury, in the borough of Islington, 26 people were killed, more than half the night's total fatalities. Two bombs damaged 100 houses in Worthing while there were reports of strafing from German aircraft with incendiary rounds which burnt out a furniture depository.

The *Luftwaffe* lost 19 aircraft. *KG* 2 lost three bombers; KG 6 lost two while *KG* 30 lost six. *KG* 54 lost one bomber while *KG* 51 lost two Me 410s. *SKG* 10 suffered the loss of three FW190s. Six are known to have been shot down by Mosquitos and another by ground fire. Four further claims of German aircraft destroyed, plus one probable, were made which cannot be attributed to a particular loss. 33 German airmen were posted as killed in action on the operation, 13 were listed as missing while six were captured.

Mary died at 63, Albany Street, London and he fiancé Mr. Glyn Phillips was informed of her death.

Her funeral took place at Birstall Churchyard on 18 March 1944.

Mary is remembered with Honour at Westminster Abbey, Civilian War Dead Roll of Honour 1939 – 1945 and Batley and Birstall War Memorials.

Researched by members of
Batley History Group