

History of Canford Heath and World War Pilots

Canford Heath History

Canford Heath has been occupied by humans for a very long time, firstly by hunter gatherers. The area was covered in woodland 3,500 years ago but the open heathland habitat was formed when Bronze Age people cleared the trees to make fields and pastures. Their burial mounds can still be seen on top of Canford Heath. Farming continued through the Iron Age when peat, turf and heather were used for fuel and cows, sheep, pigs and horses grazed on the heath. Wheat and rye were grown and water came from natural springs. The Romans dug quarries and began pottery industries on the heath using gorse and heather to fuel their kilns. The name Canford comes from the Saxon word "Cana". The Normans called the heath "Cheneford". Roads were built upon it during medieval times, there are still traces of them today. The heath remained important for centuries for locals to graze their animals and collect firewood.

In the 1800s, Roma travellers lived on the heath in tents and caravans. They lived off the land and worked for local farmers as well as mending household articles. The women also told fortunes and sold lucky heather.

South Walk was the main route between Wimborne and Christchurch in the 18th century. Longfleet Drive was a route from Canford Manor House (now Canford School) to Poole in the late 19th century.

During the Second World War the British and American armies used Canford Heath for military exercises. The trenches they dug can still be found along with fragments of shells.



In 1988 Canford Heath was awarded Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) due to its important heathland habitat that is home to rare species such as the sand lizard, smooth snake and Dartford warbler. Further development of the land was halted to aid conservation.

In 2008 permission was granted to develop the area of the landfill site, as that was not a designated SSSI area, and Cornelia Gardens was built in 2014.

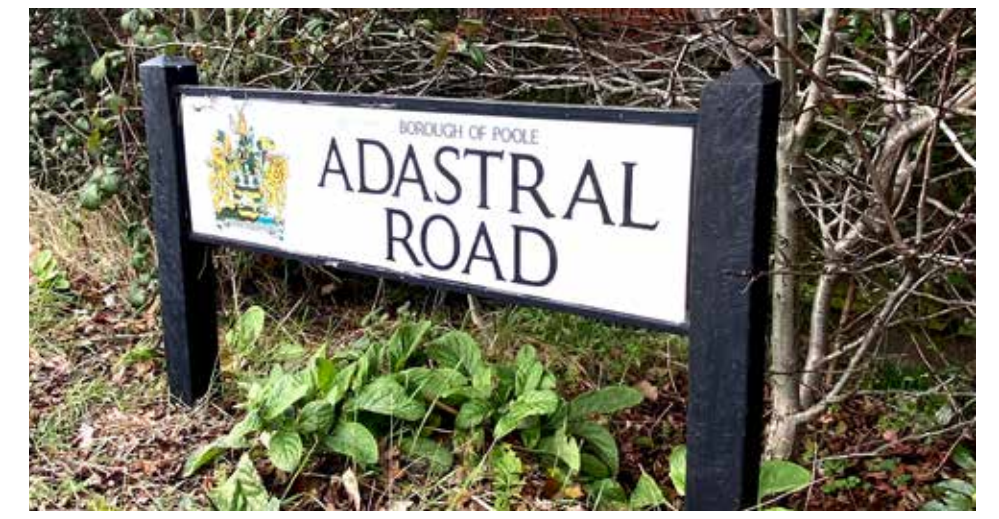
The Pilot Public House

The Pilot public house started life as The Fighter Pilot and was opened in 1970 by ace WW2 pilot Sir Douglas Bader, CBE, a man with an incredible life story. He was commissioned in the RAF in 1930 but in 1931, while attempting some aerobatics, he crashed his plane, narrowly escaped death and lost both his legs. Despite this, he recovered, retook and passed flight training. During WW2 he returned to the RAF and scored victories during the Battle of Britain. In 1941 he was forced to bale out over German occupied France and was captured. Despite his disability, he made several escape attempts. Eventually he was sent to the notorious prisoner of war camp at Colditz Castle. He was liberated by the USA army in 1945. A film was made about his life entitled "Reach For The Sky".



Canford Heath Road Names

Many of the roads on Canford Heath were named after WW2 pilots. This tradition was carried on when Cornelia Gardens was built in 2014 but this time WW1 pilots were honoured. Keeping with this theme **Adastral Road 1** was named after the Royal Flying Corps headquarters in London, later the RAF. Ad Astra was the RFC's motto and so joining it together with the L from London we have Adastral (Ad Astra means "to the stars").



The pilots behind the road names

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|--|--|--|--|---|---|
| | | | | | |
| 2
Wing Commander Roderick Learoyd "Babe"
5th Feb 1913 - 24th Jan 1996
Awarded Victoria Cross | 3
Squadron Leader John Dering Nettleton
28th Jun 1917 - 13th Jul 1943
Awarded Victoria Cross | 4
Group Captain Sir Douglas Robert Stuart Bader C.B.E.
21st Feb 1910 - 5th Sept 1982 | 5
Group Captain Adolph Gysbert Malon
24th Mar 1910 - 17th Sept 1963 | 6
Group Captain Sir Hugh Dundas C.B.E.
22nd Jul 1920 - 10th July 1995 | 7
Air Marshall Sir Peter Guy Wykeham
13th Sept 1915 - 23rd Feb 1995 |
| | | | | | |
| 8
Flight Lieutenant Eric James Brindley Nicholson
29th Apr 1917 -
Awarded Victoria Cross | 9
Wing Commander Brance Burbridge
4th Feb 1921 - 1st Nov 2016 | 10
Wing Commander Guy Penrose Gibson
12th Aug 1918 - 19th Sept 1944
Awarded Victoria Cross | 11
Air Chief Marshal Sir Lewis Hodges
1st Mar 1918 - 4th Jan 2007 | 12
Group Captain Willie Tait
9th Dec 1916 - 31st Aug 2007 | 13
Lieutenant Commander Pat Kingsmill
19th Sept 1920 - 1st Jan 2003 |
| | | | | | |
| 14
Squadron Leader Arthur Stewart King Scarf
14th Jun 1913 - 9th Dec 1941
Awarded the Victoria Cross | 15
Flight Officer Leslie Cyril Gosling
19th July 1943 | 16
Arthur Louis Aaron
5th May 1922 - 13th Aug 1943
Awarded Victoria Cross | 17
Flight Lieutenant David Samuel Anthony Lord
18th Oct 1913 - 19th Sept 1944 | 18
Reginald J Mitchell
Designer of the Spitfire
20th May 1895 - 11th Jun 1937 | 19
Wing Commander Adrian Warburton "Warbby"
10th Mar 1918 - 12th Apr 1944 |
| | | | | | |
| 20
Group Captain Francis Victor Beamish
27th Sept 1903 - 23rd Mar 1942 | 21
Group Captain Verity
6th Apr 1918 - 14th Nov 2001 | 22
Squadron Leader C. C. (Jock) Calder
Leader of the Dambusters
12th July 1920 - 17th May 1997 | 23
Wing Commander L A Lynn
Died 18th March 2000 | 24
Squadron Leader Winston Herbert Kellaway
16th Nov 1915 - Apr 1994 | 25
Major Edward Mannock
24th May 1897 - 26th July 1918
Awarded Victoria Cross |
| | | | | | |
| 26
Captain Peter Carpenter
6th Dec 1891 - 21st March 1971
Awarded Military Cross | 27
Lieutenant Tom Noel
12th Dec 1897 - 22nd Aug 1918
Awarded Military Cross | 28
Group Captain Harold Whistler
30th Dec 1896 - March 1940
Distinguished Service Order | 29
Flight Commander William Patrick
24th Dec 1889 - 17th Feb 1967 | 30
Major John Gilmour
28th June 1896 - 24th Feb 1928
Awarded Victoria Cross | |