

## St Edmund's Community War Memorials

The church has three memorials – a bronze plaque remembers those who gave their lives in the First World War and framed vinyl listings do the same for the Second World War and more recent conflicts

Early in 1919 discussions started as to how to record the lives of Roundhay Service personnel of all faiths and none. The original idea was to build a “memorial chapel” and to include a brass plaque in the chapel. But when the brass plaque was ordered in January 1920 the new chapel had yet to be completed. As a consequence, the brass plaque was fixed in its current position in a blind arch in the east wall of the south transept. The dedication took place on 2 April 1921. Forty two names are recorded in the brass plaque and all were Roundhay residents before the First World War: some, but not all, would have been members of the St Edmund's congregation. The side chapel was eventually completed in October 1925.



There are many memorials to those killed throughout the world. In our Memorial Chapel there are windows dedicated to two young soldiers killed in action in **World War One**. These young men were brothers, **Edmund Leatherbarrow and William Leatherbarrow** who lived in Lidgett Lane in the property named Ryecroft, Roundhay, Leeds. The house is still there opposite Gledhow Primary School. Their parents were John Clough Leatherbarrow and Fanny Leatherbarrow. They were married in 1856 and had 10 children.

Edmund (known as Ted) was a Private 16590 18<sup>th</sup> Battalion Kings Liverpool Regiment and was killed in action 01/07/1916 aged 32.

William Leatherbarrow, W10260, was a Lance Corporal in the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment and was killed in action on the 27/08/1915 aged 19 years at Sulva Bay. In 1934 his effects of £20 were left to his father. Sulva Bay is on the Aegean coast of Gallipoli peninsular in the then Ottoman Empire. It was there that the August Offensive, the final British attempt to break the deadlock of the Battle of Gallipoli took place.

William served as “Leather” and was well known in sporting circles in North Leeds, as a cricketer, tennis player and member of the Roundhay Hockey club. He had joined the army

at the beginning of the war, and was sent to the Dardenelles. He died only eight or nine weeks later on a hospital ship, having been wounded in the head a fortnight earlier.

**For many decades after the Second World War** there was no formal record at St Edmund's of those who had died in that conflict. In 2013 discussions started and much of the research was carried out by Peter Marles, a reader at St Edmund's. Jon Vogler, a congregation member, offered to carve a memorial in slate but the church authorities refused permission saying that slate did not fit with the other ornaments in the church. After much discussion permission was given for a framed printed vinyl memorial and this was presented and blessed at the Remembrance Service of 2016.

The war memorial has forty two names and every one must have been a dreadful loss to the families and the Roundhay community. We list just a few of them below.

### **Arthur Louis Aaron VC DFM**

The most decorated of the service men of the Second World War is Arthur Louis Aaron VC, DFM (5 March 1922 – 13 August 1943) who was a Royal Air Force pilot and



recipient of the Victoria Cross, the highest award for gallantry in the face of the enemy that can be awarded to British and Commonwealth forces. He had flown 90 operational flying hours and 19 sorties, and had also been awarded posthumously the Distinguished Flying Medal.

Aaron was born in Leeds. He lived with his family in Thorn Lane, overlooking Roundhay School. He trained as a pilot in the United States in Texas and in September 1941 returned to England to train at an Operation Conversion Unit before he joined No. 218 "Gold Coast" Squadron, flying Short Stirling heavy bombers from RAF Downham Market.

His first operational flight was a mining sortie in the Bay of Biscay but he was soon flying missions over Germany. On one sortie his Stirling was badly damaged but he completed his bombing run and returned to England, his actions were rewarded with a Distinguished Flying Medal. Aaron was 21 years old, flying Stirling serial number EF452 on his 20th sortie.

The official citation for his VC reads:

*"Air Ministry, 5th November, 1943.*

*The King has been graciously pleased to confer the Victoria Cross on the under mentioned airman in recognition of most conspicuous bravery:—*

*On the night of 12 August 1943, Flight Sergeant Aaron was captain and pilot of a Stirling aircraft detailed to attack Turin. When approaching to attack, the bomber received devastating bursts of fire from an enemy fighter. Three engines were hit, the windscreen shattered, the front and rear turrets put out of action and the elevator control damaged, causing the aircraft to become unstable and difficult to control. The navigator was killed and other members of the crew were wounded.*

*A bullet struck Flight Sergeant Aaron in the face, breaking his jaw and tearing away part of his face. He was also wounded in the lung and his right arm was rendered useless. As he fell forward over the control column, the aircraft dived several thousand feet. Control was regained by the flight engineer at 3,000 feet. Unable to speak, Flight Sergeant Aaron urged the bomb aimer by signs to take over the controls. Course was then set southwards in an endeavour to fly the crippled bomber, with one engine out of action, to Sicily or North Africa. Flight Sergeant Aaron was assisted to the rear of the aircraft and treated with morphine. After resting for some time he rallied and, mindful of his responsibility as captain of aircraft, insisted on returning to the pilot's cockpit, where he was lifted into his seat and had his feet placed on the rudder bar. Twice he made determined attempts to take control and hold the aircraft to its course but his weakness was evident and with difficulty he was persuaded to desist. Though in great pain and suffering from exhaustion, he continued to help by writing directions with his left hand.*

*Five hours after leaving the target the petrol began to run low, but soon afterwards the flare path at Bone airfield in Algeria was sighted. Flight Sergeant Aaron summoned his failing strength to direct the bomb aimer in the hazardous task of landing the damaged aircraft in the darkness with undercarriage retracted. Four attempts were made under his direction; at the fifth Flight Sergeant Aaron was so near to collapsing that he had to be restrained by the crew and the landing was completed by the bomb aimer.*

*Nine hours after landing, Flight Sergeant Aaron died from exhaustion. Had he been content, when grievously wounded, to lie still and conserve his failing strength, he would probably have recovered, but he saw it as his duty to exert himself to the utmost, if necessary with his last breath, to ensure that his aircraft and crew did not fall into enemy hands. In appalling conditions he showed the greatest qualities of courage, determination and leadership and, though wounded and dying, he set an example of devotion to duty which has seldom been equalled and never surpassed."*

Aaron was an 'old boy' of Roundhay School. There is a plaque in the main hall of the school to his memory incorporating the deed that merited the VC. There is also a statue at a roundabout at the bottom of Eastgate in Leeds city centre.



**Flight Sergeant Adam Desmond Stanley Boulton** is remembered in a window donated by his parents, Adam and Rose Boulton of Oakwood, in the north aisle. Adam Boulton was an RAF Volunteer Reserve pilot who gave his life for his country on the Burma frontier on 14 January 1943 aged just 22 years. He served with 155 Squadron who flew Mohawk BJ545 planes. He is buried and commemorated at Maynamati Cemetery in Bangladesh.

#### **Sub-Lieutenant Harry Garbutt RNVR Fleet Air Arm 1920 – 1944**

Harry Garbutt was the only child of Frederick and Ethel Garbutt. Fred was Head Ranger at Roundhay Park and they lived in Park Cottages, part of what is now The Roundhay Fox pub. Harry was educated at Roundhay School and had just started work at Bryant & May's, match manufacturers, in Leeds when war broke out. He was a good-looking and popular figure among his peers and well-known as a rugby player for Old Roundhegians and as a swimmer at the open air pool in Roundhay Park.

In 1940 Harry joined the Royal Navy, transferring to the RNVR Air Fleet Arm two years later. In 1943 after training in Canada, he was commissioned. He returned to RNAS Burscough, also known as HMS Ringtail, in Lancashire. This was a former military airfield which had been adapted by the Admiralty to accommodate four narrower-than-normal landing strips (30 yards instead of 50 yards), used for training pilots to land on aircraft carriers.

At the time, a new carrier-borne aircraft called The Firefly was being built and developed by Fairey. This was a monoplane similar to a Spitfire but with room for a pilot and an observer. Harry and his observer, Midshipman Kenneth Neuschild, from Enfield, were part of this programme. Unfortunately, on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 1944 while on a training exercise, the Firefly crashed into the sea off Fleetwood and both Harry and Kenneth were killed. Both are at rest in Fleetwood Borough Cemetery and their names appear on the Fleet Air Arm Memorial Plaque at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

**At the 2017 Remembrance Service a third memorial** was put up in the south transept recording those who have given their lives in wars since the Second World War. Sadly, but thankfully, this contains but a single name.

**Gunner Kim MacCunn** was killed whilst peace-keeping in New Lodge Road, Belfast in June 1974. The 18 year old lived in the parish and had been a St Edmund's Scout. The service was attended by the soldier's mother. We hope and pray we do not have to add further names to this framed printed vinyl record.

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*[www.stedmundsroundhay.org.uk](http://www.stedmundsroundhay.org.uk)*

*Charity Number 1131904*

*August 2021*