

Radio communications

From Charlie Lindsley, Baobab, Y3 Churchfields

Francis William Aufflick, known to everyone as Frank, was my Grandma's dad - my great-grandfather. He was in the RAF for the war, but he didn't fight the war by flying - he stayed in England. His job was in radio communications, and his main objective was to block German aeroplanes' signals and messages to each other so they couldn't do their bombing raids. This exercise book shows one of the tests he did to show how his equipment could work. He was involved in the early development of radar. His writing is very neat!

He was based in Ticehurst, near Tunbridge Wells in the south-east of England, but his wife and family lived in the north-east of England, in Hetton-Le-Hole. Unfortunately, 'leave' was only 48 hours and there was no way he could get all the way home in that time, so he hardly ever saw his wife. When my grandma was born in 1944, he was given special permission to go and see her, but he only had the usual 48 hours.

He had to rush all the way there on trains, first up to London and across to Kings Cross station to get another train north. It was getting late so at Kings Cross he got on the first train heading north, which was going fast to Newcastle. That happened to be the station he wanted, but it was still an hour's drive away from Hetton-Le-Hole.

So as the train sped through York station, he threw a note out of the window wrapped around a half-crown coin. The note said 'To whoever finds this note - please telephone Tommy Strawn and tell him to meet Frank off the train at Newcastle.' Tommy was the butcher and taxi driver in Hetton-le-Hole and sure enough someone phoned him and gave him the message and he was waiting for Frank when he got off the train. Frank then got to spend a couple of hours with his daughter before rushing back south. Wasn't that kind of the stranger who found the note on the platform York station?

After the war ended, when everyone was being 'demobbed' and leaving the RAF, Army and Navy, the RAF lost Frank's papers. He had to stay in the RAF for another two years while they sorted it all out! They sent him to Beltchley Park to work on the exciting machines there. Finally, he was able to come home in 1947.

I am very proud of my great-grandfather.