

Memorial plaque unveiled at station remembers air crash

Lost flight crew finally honoured



● **DEDICATION:** Standard bearers at Market Rasen station honour the memory of those killed in the crash. Below, pictured unveiling the plaque are, from left, John Skelton of Market Rasen Station Adoption Group, Flying Officer Rob Neaum of 207 Squadron, Padre James Caulfield, Deberoh Lewis and Richard Mills.

TWO hundred people gathered to honour a five-man crew who lost their lives in a plane crash 46 years ago.

Among those who attended the ceremony at Market Rasen train station, organised by the Station Adoption Group, were Richard Mills and Deborah Lewis – the children of Flight Lieutenant George Mills.

Mr Mills had travelled from Ascot, and Mrs Lewis from Somerset, to unveil a commemorative plaque on the Grimsby-bound platform.

Mrs Lewis said: "I was very young at the time, only four years old, and have distant memories of my father, but not of that night. It was a tragic accident and this is a very

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emotional day for my brother and I.

"I thank the Station Adoption Group for providing this fitting tribute."

The crash happened on May 6, 1964.

Brian Oxborrow was at home in Linwood Drive in the town when he heard what he described as a "whooshing sound" in the sky.

"I had just gone to bed and heard an aircraft. My wife said she thought it was going to crash and suddenly the sky lit up a pale blue, then silver bits fell over the town."

The plane, a Valiant WZ463, crashed at West Farm on Linwood Road. Local people praised the action of the crew, led by pilot Flight Lieutenant Christopher Welles, in diverting the plane from the housing areas.

The other three who died that night were Navigator Flight Lieutenant JR Stringer, Navigator Flight Lieutenant LR Hawkins and Sergeant R Noble.

Members of 207 Squadron, past and present, came to pay their respects.

The Market Rasen RPC Band accompanied the hymns at a memorial and dedication service led by the Chaplain at RAF Marham



Norfolk, where the crashed plane was based, Padre James Caulfield.

Michael Feane was based at RAF Binbrook at the time.

He said: "The plane was picked up on the PBX, a tracking system, and said to be heading for base at RAF Marham. Then it was gone, the crash was believed to be caused by mechanical failure."

Jane Bridger, living in the town then, and now wife of Market Rasen Town Mayor Ken Bridger also shared her memories.

"I remember all the bits dropping on the town. Five men lost their lives that night and we believed they did their best to avoid crashing on houses."

Padre Caulfield said in his

address: "We commemorate today the crew, men who in their final moments grew support to one another.

"Flying is still dangerous and in action men need true courage and dedication.

"We owe these men our gratitude and we say how wonderful it is that the Station Adoption Group have chosen to organise this occasion."

The memorial plaque was funded by the RAF Waddington Charities Committee.

Market Rasen station has in recent years been a success story of devoted voluntary restoration work, thanks to the Station Adoption Group, led by John Skelton and including volunteers such as Mr Oxborrow.



● **FLASHBACK:** How the Telegraph reported the crash in 1964.