

AVIATION ARCHAEOLOGY

Hurricane crash site

THE Wirral-based Warplane Wreck Investigation Group has investigated the site where a Hurricane crashed and demolished a house at Higher Carden, between Chester and Whitchurch, on May 29, 1945. The Hurricane, LE391 from II (Pilot) Advanced Flying Unit at nearby RAF Calveley, was being flown by a trainee pilot, P/O Jefford, on a local map reading exercise when it crashed. Witnesses called to the court of inquiry stated that the aircraft had been involved in a series of (unauthorised) low flying manoeuvres, including chasing other aircraft at low level, when it was seen to "shudder" and then crash into the roof of a house at high speed with the engine still under power. The pilot was killed.

The top storey of the house was almost



entirely demolished and the fuselage and starboard wing of the Hurricane fell among the rubble where a fire broke out. Other wreckage, including the port mainplane, engine and propeller, was strewn along a trail which stretched for 120 yards and to the opposite side of a nearby lane. The inquiry concluded that the accident resulted from a high speed stall from which Jefford was too low to effect a recovery.

The accompanying photographs, supplied by Andy Saunders, were taken shortly after the crash and close examination shows that fire was fairly limited, apart from the fabric being burnt from the tailplane of the Hurricane (above). Fortunately the house was apparently unoccupied.

WWIG Museum Curator John Molyneux, reports that, not surprisingly, when the group arrived on the scene 37 years later there was no trace of the house or the bulk of the wreckage, but a few relics were acquired for the Fort Perch Museum collection!

Irish Junkers mystery

LAST year, the Warplane Research Group of Ireland invited some members of the Hibernian Aviation Society to accompany them on one of their field trips to Dursey in West Cork. There, on July 23, 1943 a Ju 88A-14 collided with high ground in fog at 0725 hours killing the crew of four. The Junkers had hit a hillside about 100 feet below the summit in a sparsely populated part of the country. Had it hit the summit then it would almost certainly have taken an Irish Army observation post with it! As it was, fuel from the aircraft escaped and ran down the hill where it caught fire. An engine from the Ju 88 rolled away and came to rest in the yard of a farmhouse where it put the stock to flight and started a fire in some hay.

The WRGI is particularly anxious to

trace the names of the crew of the Junkers who were first buried in the cemetery at Garnish - which lies at the base of the hill - and then moved to Glenree in County Wicklow, where the bodies of other German servicemen who died in Eire were gathered. Apparently Luftwaffe records give no clue as to the identity of the crew and little is known about the aircraft or its mission. Any information which readers might have about this incident will be passed on to the WRGI.

Right: The largest relic found during the WRGI and HAS field trip was this propeller hub which was found embedded in a low stone wall. (Joe McDermott).

