

Flying Officer J.P.Angold – Royal Air Force

John Penrose Angold was born in 1909 and was the only son of Herbert and Henrietta Angold who lived at 'Oaklyn' in The Hildens, Westcott. He married Katherine Rosemary Odhams shortly before the outbreak of war in 1939 and they lived at The Glen in Mickleham.

John Angold was very keen on flying and obtained his competence as a member of the Oxford University Air Squadron in the 1930s. After joining the RAF he reached the rank of Flying Officer but in June 1943 he relinquished this rank at his own request and was transferred as a Pilot Officer to General Duties; it is apparent that he did this so that he could continue serving in an airborne role.

In late 1943 John was serving as a Pilot Officer at RAF Lyneham with 301 FTU (Ferry Training Unit) whose role was to train crews to ferry aircraft overseas. On 31st December 1943 he was the navigator of a Beaufighter VI (KW 152) when it crashed on Bootle Fell, near Millom in Cumberland. He and the pilot, Flt Lt Hubert Ray, were killed. His body was found on the fell on 11th January 1943 and he was buried in the extension churchyard here at Westcott.

From his early childhood, John Penrose Angold had a deep love of poetry which was inspired by his mother. He became a poet, as well as a translator and critic, and a number of his poems were published in the *New English Weekly*. After his death, the American poet Ezra Pound took a considerable interest in his work and lamented his loss in his poem *Pisan Cantos*. T.S.Eliot also admired John's work.

The interest shown by Pound and Eliot encouraged Philip Mairet, the Editor of *New English Weekly* to get a collection of John's poems published. He wrote to the publisher, Peter Russell, saying '*I would very much like Angold's poems to be in existence in print elsewhere than in the files of the N.E.W. and the one or two other places in which his work may have appeared. He was essentially in an independent and experimental stage when he died. The interest of his work is admittedly the probability that he would have done something substantial had he lived. But at least one would like to see his work extant somewhere.*' A book entitled *Collected Poems by J.P.Angold* was published as a limited edition by Peter Russell in London in 1952.

