

NEWS FROM THE BRANCH

Chairman Rob Dickinson

December - Remembrance edition 2021

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Amid the challenges of COVID it was good to see this year's Remembrance Parade and Service resumed to some sort of normality. On 11th November The Revd. Alison Way led a short Service at the War Memorial in the grounds of Wincanton Memorial Hall, wreaths were laid by Branch member Angela Keay and Georgina Old, David Shave from Wincanton Silver Band played Last Post and Reveille. Following this Service a representation then walked up to the 'Old Faithful', memorial where again a short Service took place with Cllr. Tom Power and Branch member Tony Goddard laying wreaths, David Shave again played Last Post and Reveille, thanks to David. On Remembrance Sunday the Parade marched off at 10.20 am and included our local MP David Warburton, Wincanton Mayor and members of the Town Council and District Council, Army Cadets, Scouts, Cubs and Beavers, Army Cadets, Fire Service and Cadets, Police, RBL members and our Veterans who we are most proud of. We were again delighted to be joined this year by 1 Regiment Army Air Corp who not only were a great help but joined the Parade, Church Service and also held a joint Service at the same time as the Church Service at the Memorial Hall War Memorial. Branch member Dave Hill again did a splendid job as Parade Marshal. Following the Parade a Service of Remembrance was held at the Parish Church with the laying of wreaths at the War Memorial inside the church (thanks to Branch members Anne and Mike Rowlands, Bob Mussard and Des Casey for laying wreaths along with the other organisations), with a very moving and engaging Sermon being given by Revd. Alison Way. Following the Service a short Parade back to Churchfields took place with Branch member Lt. Col. Colin Thomas taking the salute, we are again most grateful for the support Colin gives to the Branch. Wincanton resident Lara Hiscock, supported by the Branch worked with our three schools to produce coloured poppies, poems and pictures which were displayed throughout the businesses on the High Street and at Cale Park Café, just one of the many volunteers who made this year's Parade and Service possible, they all deserve special praise. It was also an honour for the Branch to pass on over 300 of Tony Goddard's book 'More Than Just Names - The Wincanton Roll of Honour of the Great War', to the students of King Arthur's, we are fortunate to have three schools that all fully engage with Remembrance helping to ensure that the generations 'Never Forget'.

At our Remembrance Sunday Service this year the Revd. Alison Way mentioned in her Sermon the tragedies of war and the youngest casualties from our town, William Dean during the First World War and David Morse in the Second World War. William Deane was just 19 years old and David Morse only 17 years old. William Dean was born on 5th August 1898 the son of Edward and Charlotte Deane (Nee Renison). His father Edward (known as Edwin), was a pedlar or hawker and they lived at Cross Row which was near Silver Street, Wincanton. His parents married in 1881. William had 5 sisters and 3 brothers; Margaret, Flo, Angelina, Elizabeth, Mabel, George, Joseph and Charles. The children were born Wincanton as was their father, his mother was born in Henstridge. Sadly both William's parents died when he was quite young. His mother Charlotte died in December 1901 at the age of 44 and his father Edward who was 20 years older than his mother died in December 1910 aged 71. Sister Mabel brought up two of the boys William and Charles with her in South Street. Brother Charles left school early and became an assistant groom. William was a bright boy and the local veterinary surgeon Mr. Joseph Robins gave him a job before joining the army at Yeovil in 1915 when he was 17 years old, he lied about his age. He was described as 'a likeable lad and well known in the town'. William went to France in late July 1916 amongst the replacements for the horrific losses suffered by the Somerset Light Infantry during the Battle of the Somme, joining the 1st Battalion. Although the Battle of the Somme is rightly remembered for the carnage of its first day (1st July 1916 when 57,000 casualties were suffered in one day), the terrible battle raged on until November and William immediately found himself in the heavy fighting and a very traumatic experience it must have been. On 1st May 1917 the battalion rested in Arras and undertook some training in preparation to attack the fortified shattered village of Roeux. By the evening of the 2nd they had marched from Arras and were in position, zero hour being 3.45 a.m. on the 3rd May. It was a very dull dark night and as the Somersets entered Roeux Wood it was impossible to see anything. Unknown to them the wood contained large numbers of enemy machine guns and had not been shelled by British artillery. All contact was lost with several platoons and although some got through to Rouex village 132 of them were killed, wounded or missing. William Deane who was now nearly 19 years old was amongst those killed that night, 3rd May 1917, just ten months after arriving in France. He is buried at the Rouex British Cemetery plot C 2 which is in the Wood they attacked. I have visited William's grave on several occasions, the brutality and savagery that took place there is now hidden now by beauty and quietness. He is buried at the Rouex British Cemetery plot C2. William's grave is pictured (end of row with wreath from Wincanton Royal British Legion).

Article written by Tony Goddard



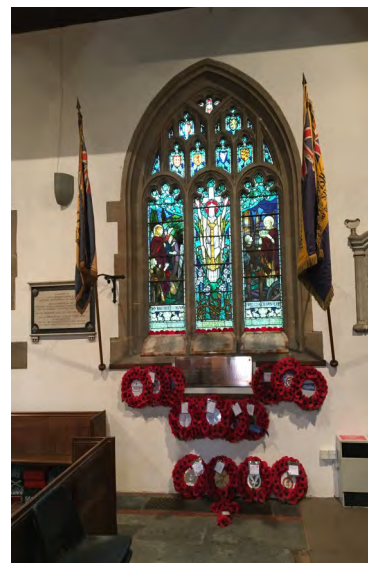
Remembering David Morse - Wincanton's youngest serving casualty of the Second World War



Considering Wincanton is near 40 miles from the sea, between the two World Wars many lads from Wincanton joined the Royal Navy, several of them joining the boys service at 15 years old. This was the case with our youngest casualty of the Second World War David Morse who was 17 years old when he was killed. David Morse was born on 8th June 1922 in Monmouth the son of James and Catherine Morse. It is not known what happened to his parents but he found his way into Rodber House Orphanage, Wincanton. The orphanage building still stands in Shadwell Lane and is currently sheltered housing. David went to Wincanton Council School (now the Primary School) in South Street. The only surviving photo of David to be found was taken in 1935 in his class photo at the school to commemorate King George V Jubilee. He had a part time job as an errand boy. Two years after the photo was taken David joined the Boy's Service of the Royal Navy, joining HMS Ganges the training establishment for boys at Ipswich on 20th September 1937 as Boy 2nd Class. His Navy record shows him as only 5 ft 1 inch tall upon joining the Navy. A year later on becoming Boy 1st Class he was posted to the light cruiser HMS Dunedin. Then in June 1939 David was transferred to HMS Royal Oak and was serving on her at the outbreak of war on 3rd September 1939. HMS Royal Oak was a Dreadnought Class battleship, the last ship to be built in the Devonport Naval Dockyards at Plymouth. It had an impressive array of firepower and equipped with the largest guns in the Royal Navy, eight 15 inch guns, which could hurl a 17 cwt (876 kgs), shell 18 miles away. It was 29,000 tons and was 600 feet long, a truly formidable war machine. During the First World War HMS Royal Oak fought at the Battle of Jutland but by 1939 she had difficulty keeping up with the newer faster ships built between the wars and was deployed at the Royal Navy main anchorage Scapa Flow on Orkney to provide anti aircraft cover for the Home Fleet. Shortly after midnight on Friday 13th October 1939 the German U Boat U47 commanded by Gunther Prien was lying off the east coast of Orkney. Scapa Flow had four narrow channels between the islands and had block ships sunk. Prien found a channel, known as Kirk Sound, which he was able to navigate through and entered main anchorage. By a quirk of fate all of the Navy's capital ships were at sea, with the exception of HMS Royal Oak. Had they not been at sea, Prien may well have drastically altered the course of the Second World War. Prien fired his first salvo of torpedoes at the Royal Oak which did only minor damage to the bows. Those on board thought there must have been a small internal explosion and no alarm was raised. As the ship appeared to be in a secure anchorage it did not occur to anyone that there had been a submarine attack. Prien reloaded his torpedoes and after 20 minutes went in for a second attack. This time three torpedoes hit the Royal Oak amidships causing massive explosions and a fireball of cordite which killed most of her crew. The ship turned over and sank, the U47 escaped without being detected. On that night 835 sailors lost their lives, as it was very early in the Second World War HMS Royal Oak still had onboard boy sailors under training and of those killed were 134 boy sailors and amongst them was David Morse aged 17 years, he has no known grave but the sea. David Morse is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial Panel 34. Column 2

Article written by Tony Goddard

WINCANTON REMEMBERS 2021 - In photos



Poppy Appeal 2021 - A Message from Wincanton Poppy Appeal Organiser Dawn Old



As we go to press sadly I still don't have the total from Morrison's but I will let you all know how much was raised there as soon as possible. Each and every single penny raised for the appeal makes a massive difference to many, many people for lots of different reasons and this year those that have donated have been very generous. I personally appreciate every single venue that has a poppy box, we have managed to add a few new venues this year to host boxes and some businesses are getting very competitive with each other which is good to see. This year we were able to do proper collections in Morrison's even with the rising number of local COVID cases. Naturally several volunteers, who were vulnerable were unable to assist this year, fully understandable and I look forward to welcoming them back next year. As such we were limited with the hours and days we could cover at Morrison's. Each volunteer who helps out both at Morrison's or at the Races is important to me and this year, despite every thing, we welcomed a few new volunteers and the Wincanton's Army Cadets were amazing at covering the weekends for us. Wincanton Racecourse Badger Beer Day was on the whole dry and a successful day for us with visitor numbers very much up, so the collection ended up as £1811.70. Thank you to the Yeovil Naval Cadets, Steve Lee, Hannah Lee, Rob Dickinson and Mrs Dickinson, Georgina Old and Richard Old. There was a healthy turn out for this year's Parade and for the short Service held at the Memorial on the 11th. The collection from the Church on Remembrance Day was £182.22. As we have reached a point where we have more volunteers for the Appeal that are not members of the RBL for the first time we laid our own wreaths on behalf of all the Poppy Collectors. The Primary School are always good supporters of the Appeal, the snap bands are very popular but this year when I collected their box I could barely lift it, when I opened it and saw how much there was I was overwhelmed and had a few tears. There are also a few businesses around the town that deserve an extra mention and a round of applause for their efforts, these are Papertrees, Uncle Toms, The Petshop, Homecanton House, Co op, No 16, The Chip Shop, King Arthur's, Kimber's, The Unicorn, Anchor Hill, Screwfix and Wincanton Auctions. Both Rob Dickinson and Anne Rowlands made large collections at their places of work. Tracy & Ann Cook ran a Bingo for us, Nell Sheppard also donated from proceeds from her Bingo and lastly Steve Hewett kindly donated the collection in loving memory of his Mum June. Molly and Grace Hewett also donated all of their pocket money. Last years total was £4029.26 a lot of that was taken at Morrison's, the Post Office, Papertrees and Co op which were the only places we were allowed to collect during COVID. So far we have banked a massive £7,069.00! Thanks once again to you all. Apologies in advance if I have forgotten to thank anyone. Once again a massive thank you to my Mum Georgina Old for all of her help and support.

And finally for 2021 may I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

