



St John's Church, Ranmoor

**Remembrance
Reflections**

by

Members of the Congregation

November 2020

TO THE GLORY OF GOD
AND IN MEMORY OF

A Message from Matt



Dear Friends,

Since Clare and I arrived at St John's in early June in the midst of all of the challenges and changes to everyone's lives that the coronavirus has brought about, I have been struck time and time again by the powerful and enduring sense of community that exists in the parish, despite the fact that we have, for a long while now, been necessarily apart from one another.

Finding ways for everyone to stay in touch has been a priority, and it has been a real privilege to be part of the team organising the deliveries of afternoon tea which have proved so popular over the past few months.

The addition to these deliveries of a newsletter where we can share some updates about all that has been going on in our lives has been very welcome and we aim to carry this on for the foreseeable future. This month, Mary Grover has put together a wonderful collection of stories gathered around the theme of Remembrance.

Remembering isn't easy. We live in a culture which often applauds the putting on of a brave face, but it's important to acknowledge that a sense of grief is nonetheless present in our remembering; important to allow space for what might be painful feelings of loss and vulnerability.

We learn in the gospels of Luke and John that Jesus himself experienced acutely the pain of loss and bereavement at the death of his friend Lazarus.

So, the Christian faith certainly does not deny death and loss, but it does show us that grief does not have to have the final word. Love is stronger than death. The boundless love shown to us by God who sent his Son to live among us, to die for us and to rise from the dead on Easter Morning, is our hope and our courage in times of loss and pain.

And so as we remember, we can be brave - courageous even - but not the sort of brave that buries our grief. God knows how we feel and He is with us to comfort us in our darkest hours. Rather, we can take courage from the power of love illustrated so beautifully in Paul's words to the church in Rome:

'I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

Enclosed with this newsletter is the order for our Service of Remembrance which starts at 10.30am this Sunday. Do join us online if you're able or spend some time with the familiar hymns and words on Sunday morning ahead of two minutes silence at 11.00am.

Do stay in touch with us via Claire in the Parish Office. We are still very much available to you during the lockdown restrictions, so please do give us a call if there's anything you need. You will all be held in our prayers.

God bless, Matt

Revd Matt Wood (Assistant Curate)

Thank you to the following people for sharing their reflections and personal memories:

Sue Coombe

Mary Grover

Trudie Kelly

Bridget Brooke

Maria Bajaria

Bryan Beedham

Jean Couldrey



Some reflections on the Father she never knew from Sue Coombe

David Lockwood was born in Sheffield on 29 September 1911. He lived with his parents Joseph and Dorothy Lockwood at 48 Belgrave Road where his Father had a beautiful 2 acre garden (now Snaithing Park Close) which was open to the Public in the 1920s – 1940s.

He was educated at St Anselm's in Bakewell, and Charterhouse in Surrey. He studied Engineering at Sheffield University and joined Newton Chambers, Thorncliffe Works in Chapeltown in 1930.

They were one of the leading iron castings firms producing Churchill tanks. He became Works Manager.

In his spare time in 1930 he joined the Hallamshires, the local Territorial Army, at Endcliffe Hall where he remained until the outbreak of War.

He married my Mother, Mary Roberts, on 6th Sept 1939 in Hope Church. They lived at 7 Slayleigh Avenue where my brother Ben was born in April 1942.

The Hallamshires saw action in the disastrous Norway campaign in 1940. They were then sent to train in Iceland for 2 years until 1942 where they became known as The Polar Bears. David was recalled in 1941 to



Newton Chambers to dismantle a 20,000 ton blast furnace.

The Hallamshires trained in various locations in UK until they sailed from Newhaven on 9th June 1944 and landed on Gold Beach – Ver sur Mer.

David's memory lives on in 3 publications written over the years about the Normandy Campaign:

“Normandy to Arnhem” by Trevor Hart Dyke from his War diaries. 1966

“Polar Bears from Sheffield” by Don Scott. 2001

“The Bear and the Fox – Fontenay to Rauray” by Frederick Jeanne. 2020.

David's name is inscribed on the new Normandy Campaign memorial being constructed on the headland above Ver sur Mer beach – due to be completed in 2021.

It was in the early morning of 25th June 1944 that David was leading “B” company into the village of Fontenay-le-Pesnil in foggy conditions, when he was caught in sniper fire and died instantly.

His Commanding Officer, Brigadier Trevor Hart Dyke, D.S.O. wrote to my Mother:

“He was one of the most popular officers the Hallamshires ever possessed. He was a great leader of men, as he had sympathy and understanding to a very high degree. He knew his men intimately and their way of living. His cheerfulness in adversity, loyalty and devotion to the men under his command will remain a shining example.”

“He was found lying in a wheat field. His face wore that look of undisturbed confidence they knew so well, he did not look unhappy. He looked as though he was facing death with the same courage, assurance and understanding with which he faced other things.”

During this time my Mother had been living with her parents in Bamford and I was born on 1st December 1944.



He is buried in the Commonwealth War cemetery at St Manvieu near Caen which Andrew & I visit regularly. It is a very peaceful spot beautifully maintained by the local gardeners.

Twenty years later, as chance would have it, Trevor Hart Dyke was invited to a reunion dinner at Endcliffe Hall where he met my Mother again. They married in August 1965 and had nearly 30 happy years together in Bamford. Trevor died in 1994 aged 91, and Mary in 2011 aged 94.

Claud Low, the grandfather of Mary Grover

I remember my grandfather with great affection as I lived with him quite often while my parents worked in Pakistan and India. He talked to me a lot about the First World War which is why this war is strangely closer to me than the Second in which my father served, in France.

Grandpa was wounded in the Battle of the Somme, at the battle of Loos and at Givenchy. These wounds saved his life. His letters to the families of the many men in his care who died are in the Imperial War Museum. The humanity of his letters are a testament to his great care for these men and boys who died in terrible conditions.



This is Grandpa in 1914 with my one year old mother on his lap, shortly before he left for France.

Memories of my Parents, by Trudie Kelly

My parents Kenny and Clara Smith were both born and raised in and around the Falkirk area in Central Scotland. My parents met just before the war and continued their love by writing to each other throughout and then married shortly after the war ended. I was born after they were married and then had a younger brother Kenny who died recently.

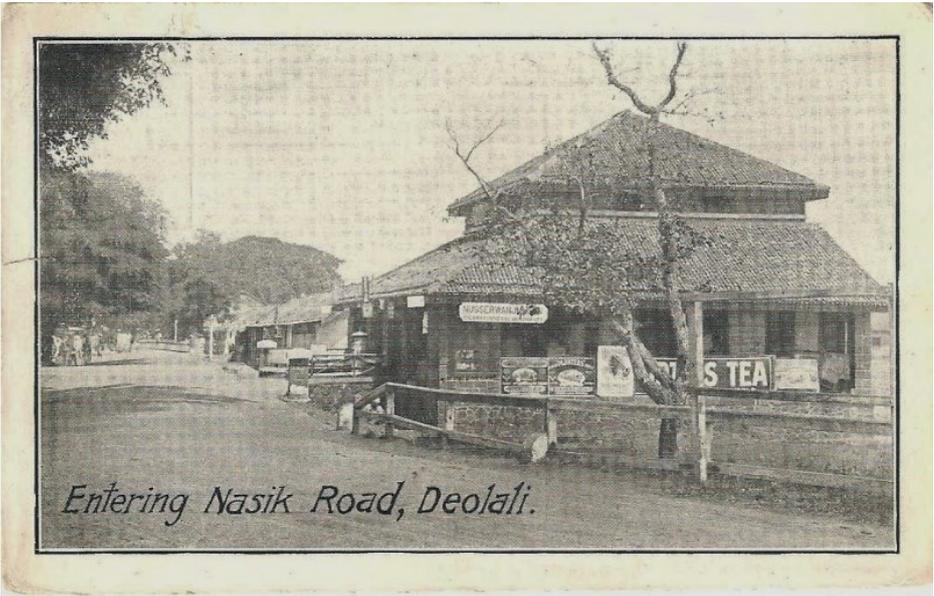
In 1939 when my Dad was 20 he was called up for National Service. He joined the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders. He used to recall how sad that day was when he looked up to the window and saw his younger brother Alec age 10 crying and waving. Little did he know it was to be 6 years before he would see him and his younger sister Helen again.



My Dad served under General Montgomery (*British Field Marshall Bernard Law Montgomery (1887-1976) who was among the most decorated military leaders of World War II*) My Dad was a Sergeant in the REME which is the maintenance and engineering section. He was posted in Abyssinia, Eritrea, Sudan . Part of his duties were guarding Haile Selassie who was emperor of Ethiopia. He was posted on duty until the war ended in 1945. I will never forget the sacrifices he made during his time serving our country. I was very proud of him and loved to hear his stories of how he escaped as a Prisoner of War by jumping off the back of a moving lorry; he lived amongst the lions and tribal families in Africa. He watched as his closest friends died in front of him and he loved to tell stories of his daily adventures. He left

home a boy and came home a man . . . almost unrecognisable to his mum and Dad.

His time in the National Service far exceeded any time a serviceman would undertake nowadays without a break. Towards the end of my Dad's time in the war meant he had seen and been involved in such hostilities that they recognised he needed a break and just before the war ended he was taken to a military hospital called **Deolali Transit Camp** which was a British Army transit-camp in Maharashtra, India. Built in 1861, the camp remained in use throughout the time of the British Raj. It served to house soldiers newly arrived in the country and those awaiting ships to take them to Britain (in this case my Dad). It also housed a military prison and during the two World Wars served as a prisoner of war camp. Conditions in the camp were said to be poor especially for those stationed there for long periods and the term "doolally" became a slang term for mental illness.



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He was a wonderful Dad and Grandpa and shared so many special stories with my children Billy, Claire and Alan and all three of them share these stories with their loved ones and children.

My mum Clara was in the ATS which was the Auxiliary Territorial Services. She was based in the UK, mainly working on ammunitions and soap works and was granted compassionate leave when her mum was very ill and she needed to look after her.

This Remembrance Sunday we will be thinking of them both for their service in British Army fighting for the freedom of others. Remembrance has always been a special time for our family. The legacy of my parent's sacrifices inspires me every day and will live on forever in our hearts. When we wear our poppies, we do it with great pride.

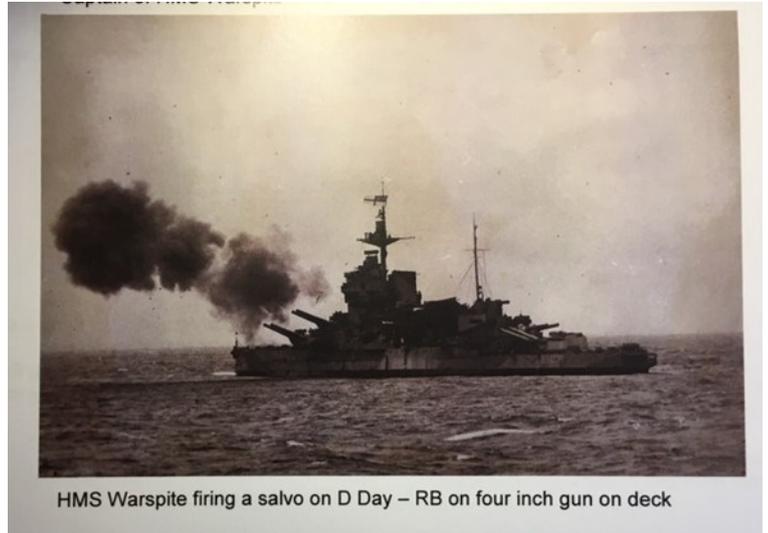
Office Stamp
RECORD OF
CHESTER No... 29.8.5.6.37... Ran
Name..... S.M.I.H.
(in block letters)
Regts./Corps as follows :

| Regt./Corps | From | To |
|-------------|----------|---------|
| 9.4 S.H. | 40/10/39 | 17/1/43 |
| REME. | 18/1/43 | 20/5/46 |

1National Papers

Bridget's brother served in the navy during the Second World War.

'Richard was born in 1927 and at the age of 13 years went as a Cadet to the Royal Navy College at Swanage in 1940. As a Midshipman at 17 years old, he joined HMS Warspite and took part in D Day, bombarding the enemy lines behind the beaches.



Enemy shells were splashing nearer and nearer to the ship so the Captain decided to move away. They continued the bombardment and when the magazines had emptied and become inaccurate the ship had to return to Rosyth in Scotland to have the guns rebored. However, passing through the Straits of Dover the ship struck a mine and listed severely and all on board manned emergency stations. It was certainly a time of fear but no one showed it. The ship didn't sink and managed to get to Rosyth where, in Richard's words, 'they filled up the hole in the bottom with concrete and sent us off again'. There were two more bombardments in Belgium before Richard left the ship and joined the Norfolk.'

Richard was an explorer with Edmund Hilary on the Antarctic expedition of 1957 and has a mountain named after him.

Otto Machhammer

Maria Bajaria has lived in Sheffield for fifty years. These are her parents, Otto and Johanna Machhammer.

My father was the enemy, he was Austrian. Otto Machhammer was 18 years old in October 1943, when an officer came into the classroom and told him to leave for military training. He was going to study electronic engineering, but was called up to fight for his 'Vaterland'. After four weeks of training he was sent to the Russian front.

As a young boy he was fascinated by transistor radios. He repaired and rebuilt them from spare parts. As a soldier he told us he had to repair damaged communication wires, often under enemy fire. He suffered terribly but survived the prisoner of war camp in Russia.

He was in his eighties when he could share some of his painful memories with me. He never talked about it before



Bryan Beedham and the Sheffield Blitz 1940

In memory of Sheffield civilians killed in the Sheffield Blitz, Bryan Beedham has shared with us his painting of a photograph taken soon after the first attack by German bombers on Sheffield City Centre. Many of us have childhood memories of those days. In December 1940 the Germans attacked in two waves, the first on Thursday, 12 December. Brian writes:

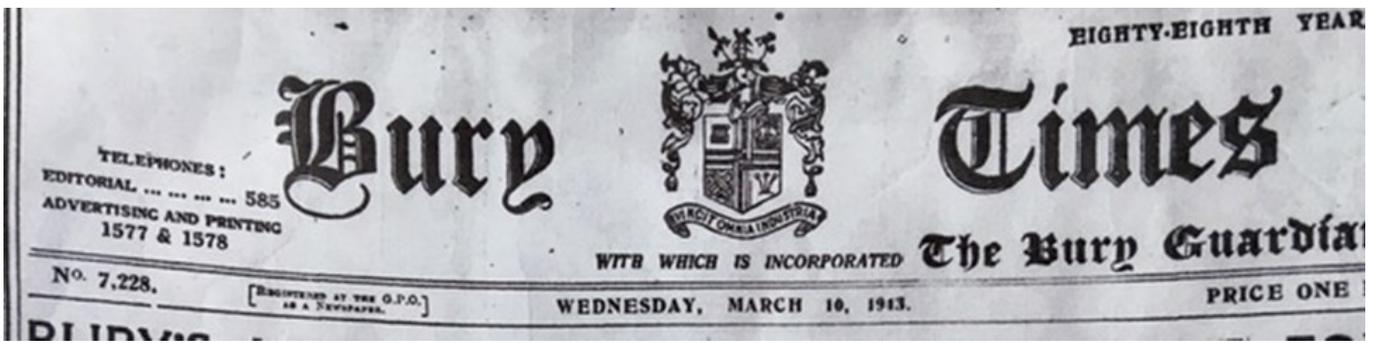
My mother-in-law was a shop assistant for F. G. Thomas, a stationer's at the top of Angel St, when the siren went. Her manager checked it out and decided to send all the staff home. Not long after, the bombs started to fall and all the shops on both sides of Angel St were hit.

On the left hand side of the painting was the stationer's and Burtons. On the other side of the High St was Fitzalan Square and Marples Hotel on the corner. About 60 or so people in the Hotel at the time were ushered into a shelter underneath. Unfortunately the Hotel took a direct hit. Further up the High St was the department store, Walshes (on the right hand side of the painting) which was also hit with incendiary bombs.

F. G. Thomas also had a shop on Surrey St. Eventually my mother-in-law, Miss Barstow, was sent there and years later was the manager until she retired, when her daughter, my wife Anne, became manager.

On Sunday 15th December the planes returned to continue where they left off.





Jean Couldrey and the “Battling Baileys” from Bury

Many of you know Jean Couldrey. Before she married Graham, Jean’s surname was McNerney. Her mother, Phoebe McNerney was the child of Jack and Mary Bailey, a Bury family with a distinguished war record. So much so that on March 16, 1943 the Bury Times published an article about the Bailey family which Jean has kindly shared with us. Jean’s mother, Phoebe was a wireless operator. Here she is on the far right.



The Bailey family, of Walmersley-Road, Bury – mother, father, seven brothers, seven sisters and a brother-in-law – believe they can claim the town’s record as its largest war-working household.

They have reason, too; in fact, the family might well be called the “Battling Baileys.” Head of the household is 53-years old Mr. Jack Bailey, last-war soldier, who joined up under age at 16, an ex-air-raid warden and now on military work at Bury Barracks. He has five sons and a daughter in the Forces, five daughters and two sons on war work, and a son-in-law in the Army. To Mrs. Mary Bailey, 54, falls the task of looking after the war-workers, and the “baby” of the family, who is still a schoolgirl, but in between she finds time to write regularly to her children in uniform. But even her own large family doesn’t take up all her attention and in addition motherly Mrs. Bailey looks after two grandchildren, and two lodgers who are on munition work.

Gunner Jack Rowland, another artilleryman, and their thirty-years old adopted brother, who is also serving abroad.

Most of the family haven't seen each other since they entered the services, but a letter she received this week-end told her that two of them, 20-year-old Gunner George and 34-years-old Driver Lewis, had met in Cairo in December. The brothers, both serving in the Royal Artillery in the Middle East, worked together at the same local firm, joined the Artillery together, and parted on Friday night, September 1st, 1939, when they left home to join their respective units.

After serving in France, they were both evacuated from the beaches of Dunkirk, and later they sailed for overseas in the same convoy without seeing anything of each other. This, an accidental meeting in Cairo while Lewis was on leave, is their first since that pre-war Friday night.

George, slightly wounded now, was recognised by his family when a Christmas news-reel, filmed in the desert, of soldiers rolling barrels of water to supply the fighting men of the British army was shown at a local cinema. At one time, four other members of the family worked alongside George and Lewis in the same firm, but now only thirty-years old Sally (whose husband, Sergeant James Johnson worked there too, served with her brother in the "Terriers," and is now in the Royal Artillery), is left there.



Now meet the rest of the family.

They are Sapper Herbert, 23 years old, serving for the past three years in Palestine with the Royal Engineers.

Ronald, 27, a sergeant in the K.O.S.B. in England, who was called up eighteen months ago and is married.

Gunner Jack Rowland, another artilleryman, and their thirty-years old adopted brother, who is also serving abroad.

A.C.W.2 Phoebe, the only girl wearing uniform who has been a wireless-operator in the W.A.A.P. for eighteen months and is twenty-one.

Phoebe McNerney, who was Phoebe Bailey (Jean's mother)

Margaret, 32, her eldest sister, who is on war work, and who lost her husband, Arthur Clarke, when the Rawalpindi was sunk.

Betty, twenty-six years old, waitress in a local café, who is reserved in her job and whose fiancé was taken prisoner a year ago in Libya.

Edith, ex-Elton Council School girl, and now a twenty-years old munitions worker.

Clara, who at 16 works on a vital job in the clothing trade.

Jack, thirty years old, also a war-worker, and the latest member of the family to leave school, 15-years old Albert, who has also taken up a war job.

In peace-time the Baileys ran their own darts team, and writes Lewis in his letter from Cairo, "I don't think this war will last long now, Dad, so get some good darts ready and we'll start the team again."



Here is Jean's father, John McNerney in the Western Desert, 1943. He is on the right in the picture above.





The aftermath of the First World War saw the biggest single wave of public commemoration ever with tens of thousands of memorials erected across England, both as a result of the huge impact the loss of three quarters of a million British lives had on communities and the official policy of not repatriating the dead, which meant that the memorials provided the main focus of the grief felt at this great loss.

One such memorial was raised at Ranmoor as a permanent testament to the sacrifice made by the members of the local community, who lost their lives in the First World War. The memorial was unveiled on 28 May 1921 by Major William Howson and dedicated by the Bishop of Sheffield. It commemorates 58 local servicemen who died during the First World War. Names of the fallen servicemen are listed for the WW2 are also now listed on the memorial.