



## Arthur Cecil Bowery

Arthur Cecil Bowery was born in Great Oakley on 21<sup>st</sup> January 1900. His father was Harry Bowery from Hemel Hempstead, his mother Caroline Bowery (nee Bolton) from Dunstable. Harry and Caroline had married in 1894 in Hemel Hempstead.

### The Family

Harry Bowery was a railway signalman. In the 1901 Census the family were living in Railway Cottages, Great Oakley. With Harry and Caroline were their daughter Constance (b. 1897) and son Arthur.

By 1911 the family had moved to Melton Mowbray. Harry was still working as a railway signalman. Constance worked in a stocking factory and Arthur was a "school newsboy". Three more children had been born, William (b. 1903), Winifred (b.1906) and Reggie (b.1909).

### Military Service

Arthur Cecil Bowery joined the Royal Navy (J/43274) and was a Telegraphist on the HMS Ariel.

HMS Ariel was an *Acheron*-class destroyer built in 1911. It participated in the battles of Heligoland Bight, Dogger Bank and Jutland. In addition it was involved in the sinking of at least two U-boats.

In 1917 HMS Ariel was converted into a minelayer, capable of carrying up to 40 mines. In 1918 it was serving with the 20<sup>th</sup> Flotilla out of Immingham. Its main role laying mines in order to stop the German navy from entering the North Sea.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1918 the 20<sup>th</sup> Flotilla was in the North Sea off the German coast. A V-class destroyer HMS Vehement hit a mine and was badly damaged; 48 crew were killed in the explosion.

HMS Ariel attempted to exit the minefield but hit a mine itself, lost her bow and had sunk within an hour. Her commanding officer Lieutenant Frank A. Rothera and 48 of the crew lost their lives, including Arthur Bowery.

An attempt was made by another vessel to save HMS Vehement but Vehement eventually started to sink; her remaining crew opened her hull valves to aid her on her way.



Arthur Cecil Bowery is remembered on the Chatham Naval Memorial.

After the First World War, an appropriate way had to be found of commemorating those members of the Royal Navy who had no known grave, the majority of deaths having occurred at sea where no permanent memorial could be provided.

An Admiralty committee recommended that the three manning ports in Great Britain - Chatham, Plymouth and Portsmouth - should each have an identical memorial of unmistakable naval form, an obelisk, which would serve as a leading mark for shipping. The memorials were designed by Sir Robert Lorimer, who had already carried out a considerable amount of work for the Commission, with sculpture by Henry Poole.

The Chatham Naval Memorial was unveiled by the Prince of Wales (the future King Edward VIII) on 26 April 1924.

After the Second World War it was decided that the naval memorials should be extended to provide space for commemorating the naval dead without graves of that war, but since the three sites were dissimilar, a different architectural treatment was required for each.

The architect for the Second World War extension at Chatham was Sir Edward Maufe (who also designed the Air Forces memorial at Runnymede) and the additional sculpture was by Charles Wheeler and William McMillan. The Extension was unveiled by the Duke of Edinburgh on 15 October 1952. Chatham Naval Memorial commemorates 8,517 sailors of the First World War and 10,098 of the Second World War.

#### Reference –

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

***Lest We Forget***

**Arthur Cecil Bowery**  
of HMS Ariel, Royal Navy  
d. 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1918