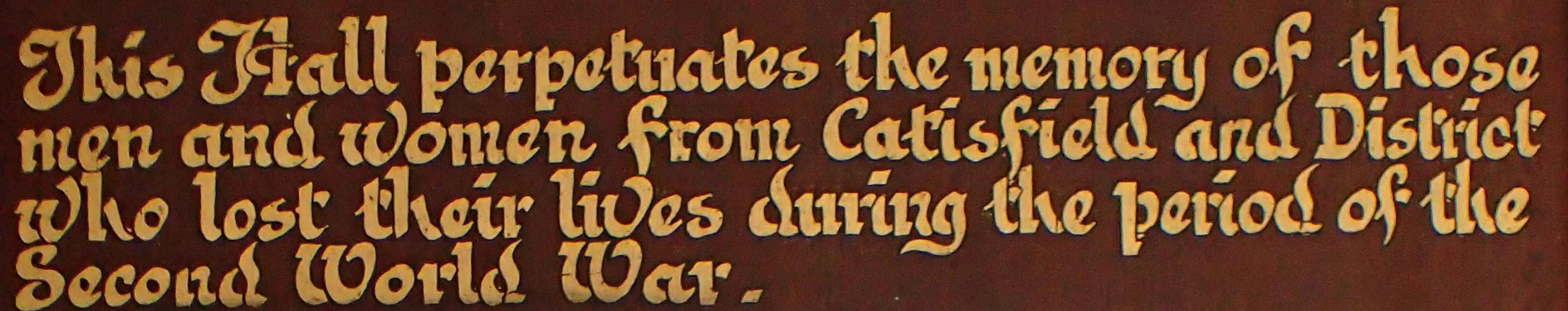


# Catisfield Memorial Hall - The WW2 Dedication



This Hall perpetuates the memory of those men and women from Catisfield and District who lost their lives during the period of the Second World War.

From the researches of Doug Glading, with assistance from Glenn Duggan.

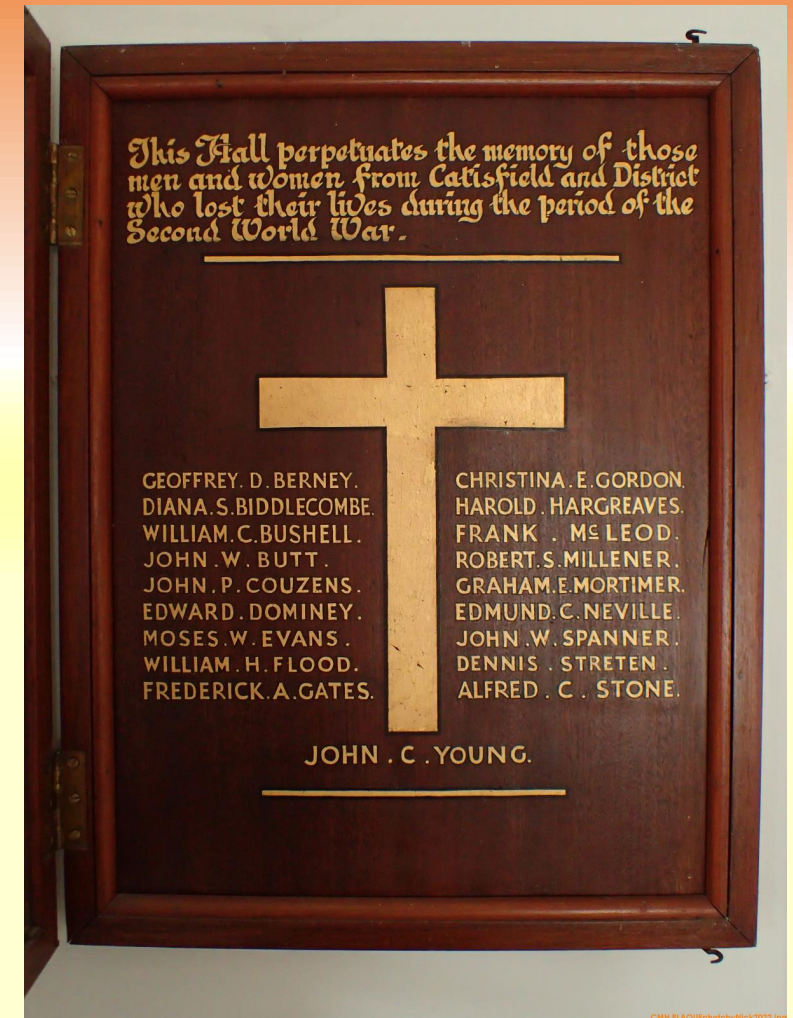
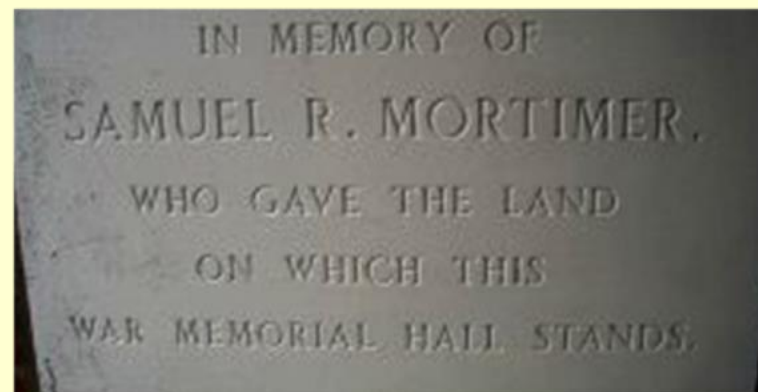
*Last update 20/4/2025*

*Note: the Video version has no sound.*

**This is a Summary of what  
has been learned**

**- so far -**

**about each of the people  
named on the Plaque.**

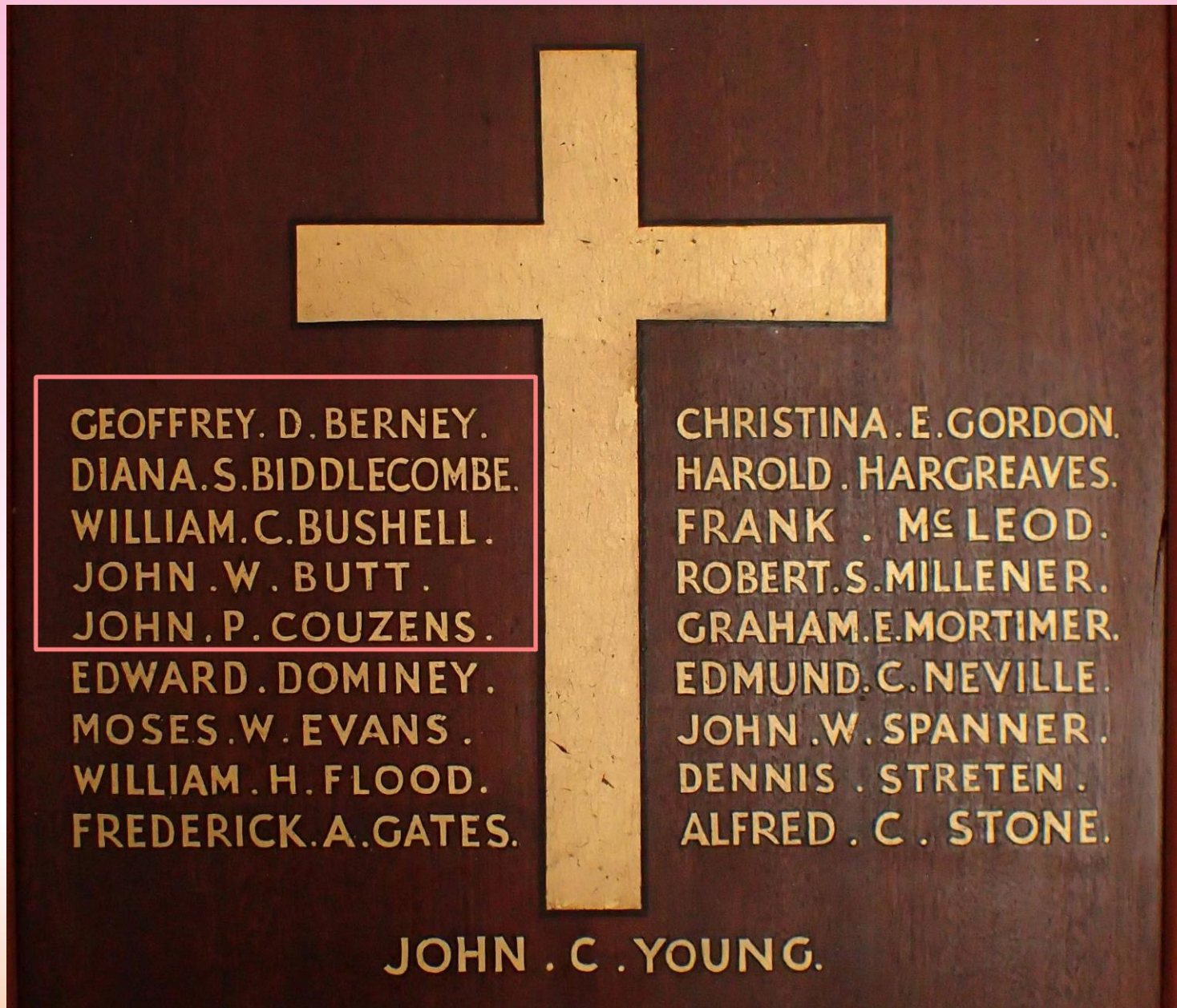


# The Plaque inside the Hall records that:



- " This Hall perpetuates the memory of those men and women from Catisfield and District who lost their lives during the period of the Second World War".
- And lists:
- Geoffrey D Berney, Diana S Biddlecombe, William C Bushell, John W Butt, John P Couzens, Edward Dominey, Moses W Evans, William H Flood, Frederick A Gates, Christina E Gordon, Harold Hargreaves, Frank McLeod, Robert S Milliner, Graham E Mortimer, Edmund C Neville, John W Spanner ,Dennis Streten, Alfred C Stone, John C Young. "



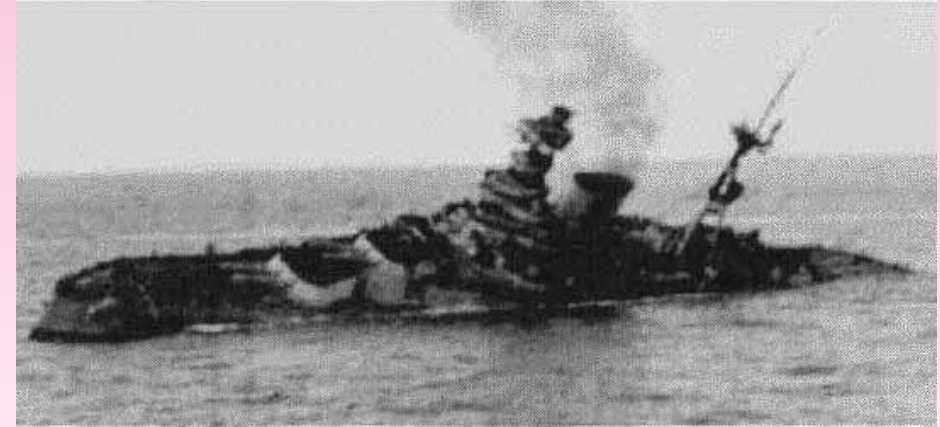


There are many  
tragic stories  
behind these  
names.

- Let's look at  
the first ones.....

# Geoffrey D Berney

- **Supply Assistant Geoffrey David Berney** RNVR [ P/DX 86(V) ] served on the Battleship HMS *Barham* .
- It was part of the Mediterranean Fleet from Alexandria when it was sunk by 3 torpedoes from German U-331.
- It turned over and exploded with 861 men lost and 450 survivors.
- He died age 20 with no known grave. Commemorated on Portsmouth Naval Memorial.



*Catisfield connection: Son of Maurice Rupert Berney and Lily Berney, of Heathfield Farm. Maurice developed much of the land between Catisfield Rd and Blackbrook Rd. Spouse Tasha.*

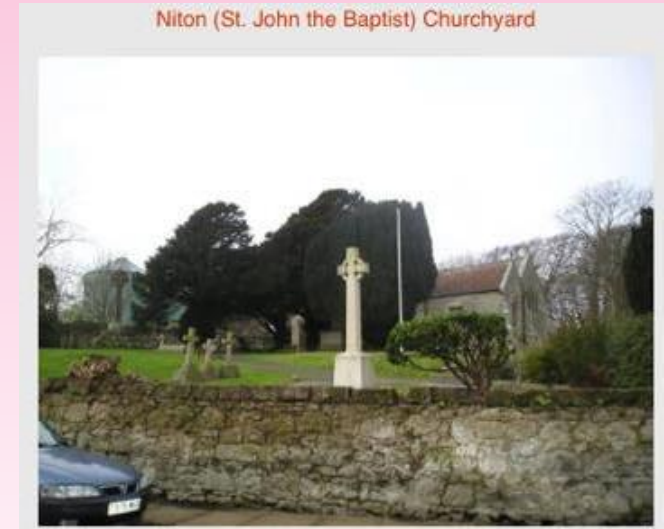
# Diana S Biddlecombe

**Wren Driver Diana Sydney Biddlecombe [ 476]**

Joined the Wrens in 1940 and was a driver at HMS Daedalus.

Died 21/10/1944 age 33 from illness.

She has a memorial at Niton, Isle of Wight



- *Catisfield connection: She was the daughter of Col. and Mrs. Glendower Ottley, who for many years resided at Clanconnel, on Catisfield Rd., and niece of Mrs C M Rynney of Catisfield.*
- *In 1942 she married Pilot Officer Eric Holman Biddlecombe, RAFVR , elder son of the Rev. S. H. Biddlecombe (Rector of Whippingham, Isle of Wight) and Mrs. Biddlecombe at Holy Trinity. The service was conducted by the bridegroom s brother, the Rev. P. H. Biddlecombe (Curate at Holy Trinity), and the reception was at Fairgreen, Catisfield. Query – lived at New Clements, The Avenue Catisfield.*



# William C Bushell

*The Distinguished Service Cross.*  
Commander William Charles Bushell, Royal  
Navy, H.M.S. Wivern.  
Lieutenant-Commander Bernulf Henry de

- **Commander William Charles Bushell DSC died 9 November 1940 from illness age 40. Buried Haslar Royal Naval Cemetery.**
- In May 1940 he commanded the Destroyer *HMS Wyvern* (also spelled *HMS Wivern*), or 'Tiddly Wiv' as she was affectionately known by her crew, which assisted in the evacuation of British and Dutch troops from the Hook of Holland.
- Wivern sustained damage when she came under attack from German bombers and a 500lb bomb hit the destroyer killing 29.
- So Wivern could not take part in the later Dunkirk evacuation. But Lt-Cdr Bushell took over other commands and made several rescue trips on HMS Vanquisher and Tynwald.
- He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross in August 1940.
- 
- *Catisfield connection: The Bushells lived at 'Aveley', Titchfield Road, Catisfield*

# John Weldon Butt

- **Flying Officer John Weldon Butt** , Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, crashed a Spitfire whilst training in 1941.
- Reports say he never really recovered from this.
- He died near Taunton on 18/9/1942 age just 19. Sadly this was by his own hand on the morning of his wedding.
- He is buried in Fareham Cemetery.
- 
- *Catisfield connection: Butts lived at 'Savandi' on the Avenue.*
- *Father Lt. Colonel A C Butt was involved with St Columba and was one of the original fundraisers for the first Memorial Hall.*



# John P Couzens

Lieutenant **John Philip Couzens**, Royal Artillery 3 Lt A Regiment [90419] was captured at the fall of Singapore 15 Feb 1942. (see also story on Edmund Neville).



- On the 18th October, 1942, 600 men of the Royal Artillery were marched to Singapore Docks and put aboard a ship, the Kenkon Maru, in horrific conditions.
- The prisoners were disembarked at Rabual.
- On the 15th November 1942, a parade took place at Rabaul where the fittest 517 men, out of the remaining 599, were chosen to go to Ballali (Balalle / Balalae) Island to build an airstrip.
- They were taken by trucks to board another hell ship for the two day journey to Ballali.



*On the 21st of January, 1943, the U.S. Navy submarine SS 212 Gato torpedoed and damaged the Kenkon Maru and it was scuttled. This was the action that led to the Japanese lie that the 600 Gunners had been "Lost at Sea".*

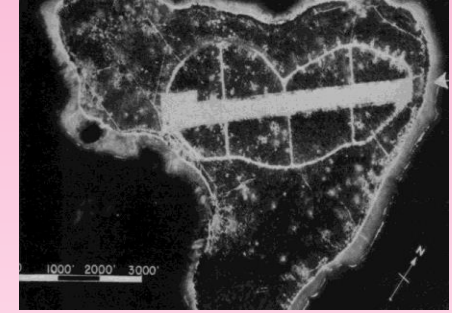
## John Couzens cont'd

On to Ballali prisoners were forced to crush coral to surface the runway. Reportedly, the Japanese forbid the British prisoners from taking shelter during attacks or building air raid shelters for protection

Some 70-100 of the prisoners died from overworking, exhaustion and tropical diseases, and an unknown number of prisoners were killed by B24 raid on the night of 12-13 March 1943.

On the 29th June 1943, an American warship bombarded the island. The next day the remaining prisoners still alive were lined up and killed by sword or bayonet

He died age 22 with 517 other gunners – all are recorded as dying on 5/3/1943. The remains of those found are laid to rest, unidentified, 12 miles north of Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.



- *Catisfield connection: Probate said 'Woodstock', The Avenue. Various other Couzens lived in the area, eg Fairthorne Cottages, Catisfield Lane*



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DENNIS. STREten.  
ALFRED. C. STONE.

JOHN. C. YOUNG.

**And to continue:**



# Edward Dominey

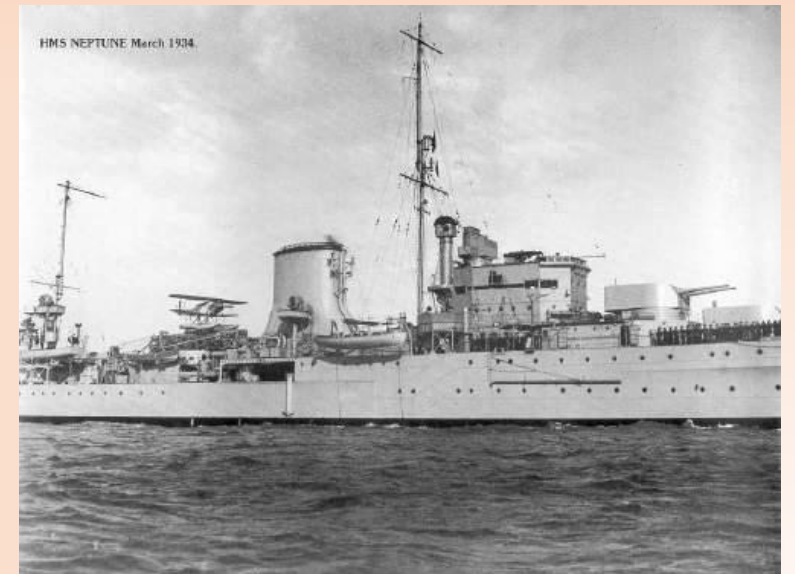
- **Lance Bombardier Edward Lionel Dominey**, Royal Artillery Anti-Tank Regiment [5498904]
- Died in France 22/5/1940 age 20.
- Buried Outreau Cemetary , Departement du Pas-de-Calais, France
- 
- *Catisfield connection: Domineys lived in a house called Edna on Highlands Road.*

OUTREAU Communal Cemetery (Pas de Calais France)



# Moses W Evans

- **Warrant Mechanician Moses William Evans, RN.**
- Serving on HMS. "Neptune".
- Died 19/12/1941. Aged 38.
- No known grave. Commemorated on Plymouth Naval Memorial Panel 45/1



## Moses Evans cont'd

On the afternoon of December 18<sup>th</sup> the cruiser HMS Nelson's squadron was despatched from Malta to intercept an important enemy convoy bound for Tripoli. On the night of 19 December 1941, there occurred one of the most extensive but least known naval disasters of the Second World War.

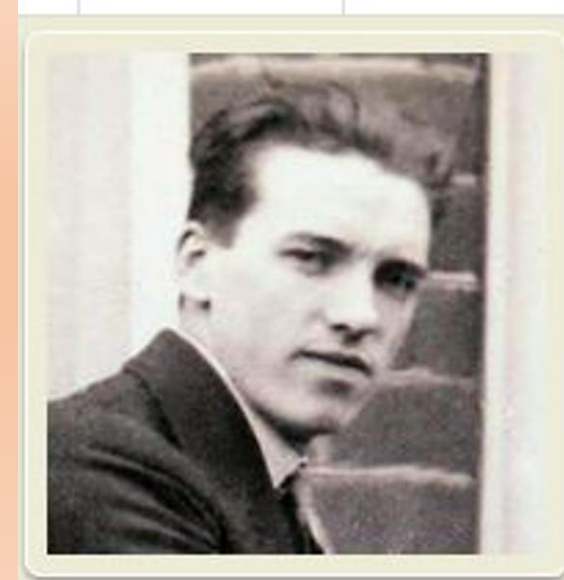


- HMS Neptune ran into an uncharted minefield in the Mediterranean off Tripoli, and sank with the loss of 764 officers and men.
- Over 30 people managed to get to a raft. Next morning there were 16 left.
- Eventually there was only one man left alive - he was rescued by an Italian torpedo boat, after 5 days in the water, and became a POW.
- *Catisfield connection: Husband of Lillian Violet. Evans of Littleholme, Highlands Road (now 203 - in those days houses just had names).*



# William H Flood

- **Leading Aircraftsman William Henry Flood.**
- Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.[1268926] .
- Died 8/1/1943. Aged 30. Death registered Chippenham, Wilts, from appendicitis complicated by peritonitis. Recorded as 'Died on Active Service' in Casualty Communique No. 246, Flight Magazine, June 24th 1943, page 676.
- Buried in Fareham Cemetery, Hampshire. A-A-3799
- 
- *Catisfield connection: Son of John Rawle and Emily Lillian Flood of Bishops Waltham. Husband of Elsie Maud Flood of 42 Woodcote Lane, Fareham, Hampshire (actually Peel Common).*
- *Had 2 sons – one became vicar in Romsey.*



# Frederick A Gates

- **Warrant Officer Class I Frederick Augustus Gates**
- **RSM**, 4th Coast Regiment / 12<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment, Royal Artillery [1056171]
- Killed at 484 Searchlight Battery HQ, Naxar in an air-raid on Malta.
- On 15/11/1941 age 27.
- Buried Pembroke Military Cemetery Malta 2
- 
- *Catisfield connection: Husband of Phyllis Nora Gates nee Dougan, of 5 Fairthorne Cottages, Catisfield.*





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JOHN. C. YOUNG.



# Christina Emsie Gordon

- A story with two tragedies
- Christina was born in June 1918 at Ormskirk, Lancs, to Lt Jasper Clark (Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders) and Emily Clare Bedwell. They had married 4 Nov 1916 at Southport.
- Unfortunately Lt Clark was killed in action at Aisne, France on 2 Oct 1918 – so almost certainly never saw his daughter.

Emily, daughter of a RN Staff Commander, re-married at Kensington Dec 1930 George Bramsden Addison (1872-1970). George (*incidentally his brother was brother Admiral Sir Albert Percy Addison KBE, CB, CMG, Legion d'honneur*) was a Solicitor in Addison and Son Solicitors in Petersfield and Portsmouth.

*And lived at Peaklands, 73 The Avenue (on the SE corner of Peak Lane and A27)*

Continued....

# Second Tragedy:

- Christina left from Peaklands when she sailed from Southampton on the P&O Strathaden on Dec 12 1939 to India age 21.
- She married Lt Robin Dill Gordon, 8<sup>th</sup> King George V's Own Calvary, at Quetta, India (now Pakistan) on 9 Jan 1940 (*note: seems rapid journey?*)
- They had a daughter born 5 Oct 1941 at Quetta.

**GORDON.**—On Oct. 5, 1941, at Quetta, to CHRISTINA EMSIE (*née* Clark), wife of CAPTAIN R. D. Gordon, daughter.

- Unfortunately then Capt Gordon was widowed when Christina died 2 Nov 1942. Her burial record says of Coronary Embolism.

**GORDON.**—On Nov. 1, 1942, at Quetta, CHRISTINA EMSIE, darling wife of CAPTAIN ROBIN DILL GORDON, Indian Army, and well loved and only child of Mrs. Addison, of Peaklands, Farchani.

though she not a combatant, perhaps she qualified for the Memorial as being in India due to war

# Harold Hargreaves

- **Temporary Acting Gunner (T) Harold Hargreaves** . He died aged 38 on 28/3/1942, buried Le Clion-Sur-Mer Communal Cemetery.
- He was mentioned in despatches (posthumous) for gallantry, determination and devotion to duty in HMS Cambeltown in the raid on St Nazaire.

Listed as Gunner (T) Mr Harold Hargreaves, RN ('Mr' implies he was a Warrant Officer)

Of the 611 personnel who took part in this 'Operation Chariot', 169 gave their lives - killed 64 were Commandos and 105 were naval personnel.

*Catisfield connection: His wife Helena lived at 37 Highlands Road.*





# Frank McLeod

- **Lieutenant (E) Frank McLeod** Royal Navy, H.M.S. *Electra*
- Killed in action 27/2/1942 age 42.
- HMS *Electra* was a Destroyer that was sunk in the 'Battle of the Java Sea', 122 of the 173 men on board died.
- Buried Chatham. A stained glass window at St. George's Chapel at the Royal Naval Barracks, Chatham, is dedicated to the crew of *Electra*.
- *Catisfield connection: Son of Frank and Ellen McLeod, husband of Sheila Jane McLeod, of Fareham, Hampshire*



# Robert S Milliner

**Petty Officer Robert Savitri Millener, RN** Age 26, died 03/08/1944. [P/JX 142252].

Memorial: Portsmouth Naval Memorial.

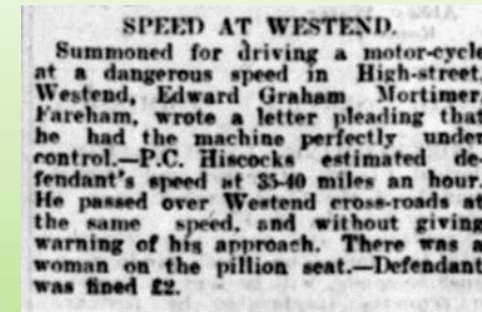
In June 44 HMS Quorn was an escort for convoys of personnel during Operation Neptune, the naval support of Operation Overlord, the Normandy Landings.

- On 3 August she was hit and sunk by a German explosive motorboat or manned torpedo off Le Havre. 130 of ship's company including 4 officers lost their lives.
- *Catisfield connection: husband of Gladys Rose Millener, of 'Lynton' Highlands Road. Widow of John Spanner - also on plaque*



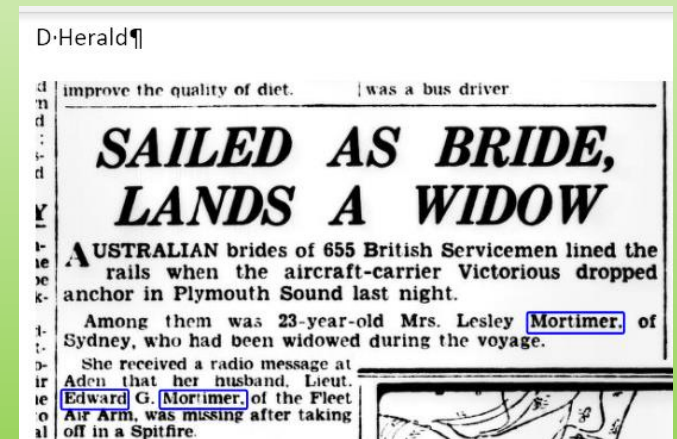
# Graham E Mortimer

- **Lieutenant Edward Graham Mortimer RNVR.**
- Died 22/7/1946 age 39, test flying a Seafire from HMS Heron (ie Yeovilton).
- Remembered on the Lee-On-Solent Memorial.
- In early years he lived a Playboy life, drove fast, took up flying, was married and divorced. Fined £5 (equiv £430 today) for buzzing Catisfield in his plane.
- Joined the RNVR and c. 1945 he was posted to **Australia** (to RNAS Bankstown ie 'HMS Nabberley' nr Sydney)
- Whilst there he met and married **Leslie Irene Caldwell** (nurse at Sydney Children's Hospital).



# Edward Graham Mortimer cont'd

- HMS Victorious departed Sydney packed with Aussie War Brides, including Leslie.
- Edward returns to HMS Daedalus on return from Australia then on to Yeovilton
- Death - Crashed into the sea (near Lulworth Cove, Dorset) due to engine failure during a test flight of a Seafire (marine Spitfire)
- Radiogram informed Leslie at Aden of husband's death whilst at sea in HMS Victorious



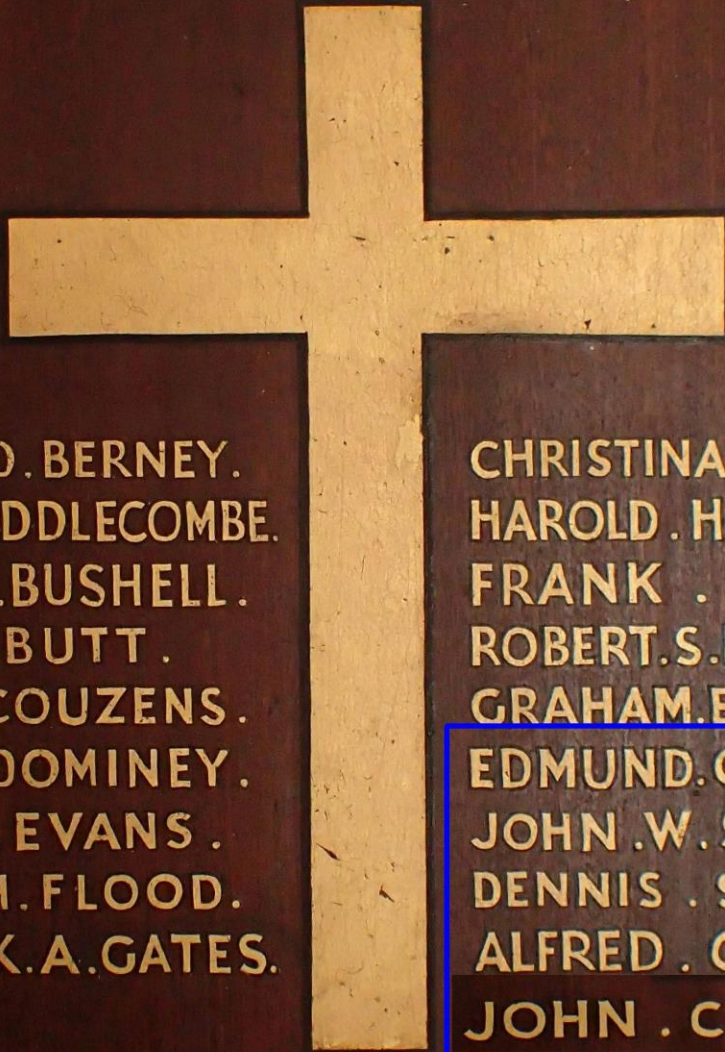


# Edward Graham Mortimer cont'd 2

- Victorious arrived Plymouth with c. 650 brides – Leslie a widow.
- Leslie taken in by Mortimer family
- Marries Gerald Desmond Mortimer (brother of Edward). He was Farm manager of Chilling Farm Warsash.
- Leslie Irene Mortimer (04 Feb 1922 - 23 Jul 1998)  
Buried at St Mary Churchyard, Warsash.

*Catisfield connection:* Eldest son of **Samuel Reginald** (1879-1948) and **Annie Beatrice Mortimer** (1872-1938) of Brownwich nr Titchfield who moved to The Limes, Catisfield c.1927 (*Samuel donated the Hall land in May 1946 – before Edwards death*)





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# Edmund C Neville

- **Private Edmund Charles Neville**, Infantry, [5829992] was born in County Cork, Ireland but his family moved to Suffolk.
- He joined the First Battalion, Cambridgeshire Regiment who were rushed to join the defence of Singapore 29/1/1942
- He died at Braddell Road, one of the last defensive points, on 15/2/1942 age 26.
- At **17.15 that day** surrender was announced.
- Buried 'near this spot' Kranji War Cemetery, Singapore



Cont'd.....



# Edmund Charles Neville cont'd

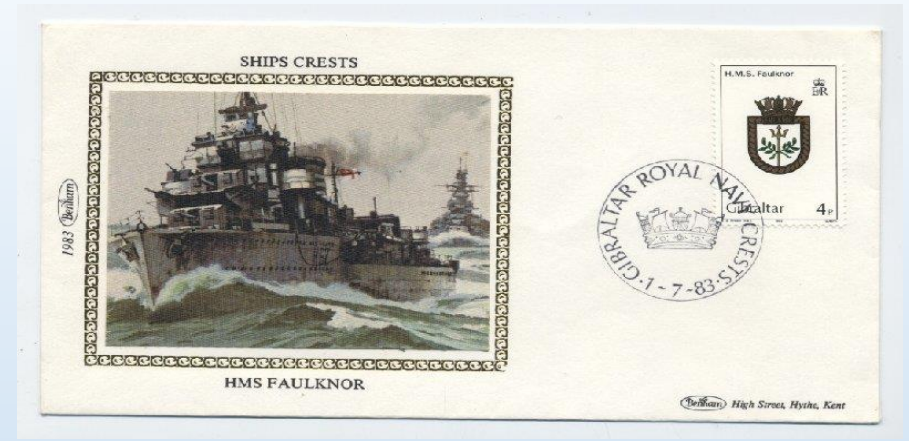
- Edmund had a brother John Edward Neville (no connection with Catisfield) who joined the Royal Artillery 7 Coast Regiment and was also in Singapore.
- It is quite possible that neither knew of the other's presence there.....
- John was taken captive and was amongst the 517 shipped to Ballali Island and perished there. See story on John Couzens.
- *Catisfield connection: Edmund Neville's wife lived in the war at 4 Rugby Cottages, Catisfield Road, with her mother Adelaide Maria Lewis.*

# John W Spanner

**Able Seaman John Woodman Spanner,**  
Royal Navy. [P/JX129498].

Died 28/11/1939. Cause of death listed as  
'lost overboard'. Aged 28.

- He was on HMS "Faulknor", a destroyer on patrol in the North Sea. At the time it was escorting HMS Nelson.
- John is remembered on Portsmouth Naval Memorial.
- *Catisfield connection: Husband of Gladys Rose Spanner of 'Lynton', Highlands Road. Gladys went on to re-marry to Robert S Millener in 1942 – who in turn died 1944 and is also on the Plaque!*



# Dennis Streten

- **Alfred Dennis Streten** was a civilian working for Lloyds Bank, and living at 89 Chatsworth Avenue, Cosham.
- There are two stories:
- The Air Raid of 5 Dec 1940 at c.20:20 was when 4 250kg bombs fell on Cosham hitting the cinema and nearby. He is listing as dying age 31 'at home'. However the nearest of the bombs fell at least 50m away and his death certificate says he died at QA Hospital that night.
- Second, as told by nephew Trevor, was he was visiting friends and there was a gas leak.
- *Catisfield connection: The Stretens owned and lived in Catisfield House.*
- *{Hants Telegraph 5/5/1944: "Mr. Alfred Mark Streten, aged 67, of Catisfleld House, died on Sunday after a long illness. He had been in failing health since his elder son. Mr. Dennis Streten, was killed in a Portsmouth air-raid in 1940"}.*

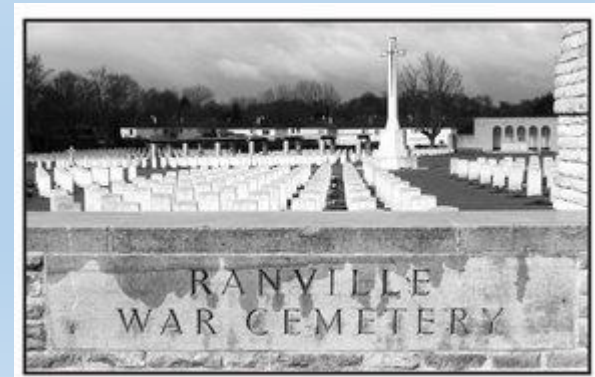
6.
Cause of Death.
Due
to
war
operations



# Alfred C Stone

- **Captain Charles Edward Stone** Royal Artillery Airlanding Light Regiment, (The Worcestershire Yeomanry) .
- He commanded F Troop of the 212th Battery in the operation to seize the bridges over the River Orne and Caen Canal at Bénouville and Ranville.
- He was wounded at 2330 on the 29<sup>th</sup> June 1944 at his forward Observation Post and died of wounds the next day, age 25.
- Buried: Ranville War Cemetery, France.

*Catisfield connection: Son of Engineer Captain Charles Edward (RN) OBE and Charlotte Stone. Resided at "Ligoniel", Highlands Road, Fareham,*



# John C Young.

- **Clement (John) Young** Merchant Navy.
- Died 8/5/1941 age 34.



- He was Master of the tug Irishman which was towing PERCY, a dumb barge laden with a crane crane-barge grab dredger, in Langstone Harbour.



Cont'd

# John C Young.

Cont'd

- Tug and barge suddenly struck a parachute mine, thought to have been laid the previous night.
- And only wreckage was left at Sword Sands – said to be still visible.
- He and his 4 crew were lost, as were the 3 on the barge.
- Commemorated on the Merchant Navy Memorial at Tower Hill in London



*Catisfield connection: Husband of Doris Minnie Young, of 40 Highlands Road.*



IN MEMORY OF  
SAMUEL R. MORTIMER,  
WHO GAVE THE LAND  
ON WHICH THIS  
WAR MEMORIAL HALL STANDS.

*This Hall perpetuates the memory of those  
men and women from Catisfield and District  
who lost their lives during the period of the  
Second World War.*

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JOHN. W. SPANNER.  
DENNIS. STREten.  
ALFRED. C. STONE.

JOHN. C. YOUNG.

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# Thank You.

**Please remember proudly  
these people from  
Catisfield who gave their  
Tomorrows.**

Any Comments, or if you can add new  
information, please contact  
[history@catisfield.com](mailto:history@catisfield.com)

*Doug*



- Supply Assistant Geoffrey David Berney RNVR
- Wren Driver Diana Sydney Biddlecombe RN
- Commander William Charles Bushell DSC RN
- Flying Officer John Weldon Butt RAFVR
- Lieutenant John Philip Couzens, Royal Artillery
- Lance Bombardier Edward Lionel Dominey, Royal Artillery
- Warrant Mechanician Moses William Evans, RN.
- Leading Aircraftsman William Henry Flood. RAFVR
- WO Class I Frederick Augustus Gates RSM, Royal Artillery
- Christina Emsie Gordon
- Temp Acting Gunner (T) Mr Harold Hargreaves WO RN
- Lieutenant (E) Frank McLeod RN,
- Petty Officer Robert Savitri Millener, RN
- Lieutenant Edward Graham Mortimer RNVR
- Private Edmund Charles Neville, Infantry
- Able Seaman John Woodman Spanner, RN
- Mr Alfred Dennis Streten
- Captain Charles Edward Stone Royal Artillery
- Clement (John) Young Merchant Navy