

Names on Steep War Memorial: William Applebee

92594 Boy 2nd Class William George APPLEBEE

Died of Illness 29th Oct 1918

William Applebee is the youngest of the names on Steep War Memorial. He was a boy seaman second class. He was born on 14th October 1901, probably at Langrish, the second son of cowman Henry Applebee and his wife Martha, who had four children in all. William attended Steep School between 1913 and 1915 and was a member of the choir at Steep church. He left school to become a 'cow boy' but later became a carman – probably a miller's carman, delivering wheat by horse and cart. He was 5 feet 8 inches tall with a fair complexion, blue eyes and brown hair.

William joined the Royal Navy on 11th September 1918 as a Boy 2nd Class and was sent to the training establishment H.M.S. Impregnable. He was taken ill a few weeks later and died barely two weeks after his seventeenth birthday at the R.N. hospital, East Stonehouse, Devonport. Cause of death was stated as Empyema – likely appendicitis.

The church registers record that William Applebee's burial service took place at Steep church just nine days before the 1918 armistice. In 1929 the Applebees were recorded as living at Oakhurst Cottages, Steep. William and his parents are buried in Steep churchyard.

With thanks for additional research information provided by David Erskine-Hill and Johnny Kerr and to Lou Romans of Steep School.

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