

NAFD MEMBERS HELP MARK

100 ARMISTICE

Funeral directors cared for soldiers and communities at home throughout WWI, seeing the awful loss of life at first hand and the grief of families who mourned those who died.

Remembrance is always at the heart of the funeral directing profession, but Armistice Day is always a special day for funeral homes – many of which have been in business for generations – predating both world wars.



NAFD members across the UK commemorated Armistice

Day 100 in a variety of ways, including taking part in services of remembrance, poppy-themed activities and also through the now traditional window displays, many of them highlighting the stories of local soldiers. Here's just a small selection.

A tribute to both human and animal casualties

The tribute created by Arthur E Davey & Sons of Nailsea lies at the entrance to their premises. It is dedicated to all those personnel serving in the Army, Navy and Air Force and also commemorates the animals who gave their lives in the service of their country, but whose important role is often forgotten.

Co-op launches UK's first poppy hearse

In November, Co-op Funeralcare unveiled its first poppy hearse, transforming a Ford Cardinal with a showering of 100 poppies to mark the Centenary of the end of WW1.

The launch of the hearse was in response to an increased demand from its clients for alternative vehicles. Co-op Funeralcare has seen the number of requests for unique hearses in the last three years increase by a fifth (21%). Of the 100,000 funerals Co-op conducts each year, alternative hearses are now used for one in 100 funerals.

David Collingwood, Director of Funerals at the Co-op, commented: "Personalisation of funerals is something we're seeing more and more frequently. Families want to reflect the unique personalities and interests that their loved ones had whilst they were alive.

"We always aim to make our clients' wishes a reality and, with a decreasing

number of Brits wanting a traditional funeral, our growing fleet of alternative hearses is just one of the many ways that we can help do just that."

Camelford's roll of honour for World War I and II

Graeme Sutherland, funeral director at Arthur W Bryant Funeral Service in Camelford, has this year dedicated a memorial window display to the fallen heroes from Camelford of WW1 and WW II as a mark of respect to those who lost their lives during both conflicts.

The soldiers have their name, rank, battalion and, where possible, an extract taken from the Cornish and Devon Post newspaper. The soldiers' names have been placed onto a wooden cross, with a poppy attached, and placed in the Garden of Remembrance in the office window. It has taken Graeme several weeks to compile all the information that is proudly displayed at the Camelford branch.

Graeme said: I have enjoyed doing this and have learnt a great deal and so many interesting facts. We have had numerous passers-by stopping and reading the extracts and many comments on social media, including future generations of the soldiers getting in touch and thanking me for remembering their loved ones. One lady has asked for a copy of an extract about her uncle as her family are doing research over in New Zealand."

Graeme has over 20 years' experience within the funeral profession and joined Arthur W Bryant Funeral Service in September of last year after moving to Widemouth Bay with his Cornish wife.



Arthur E Davey & Sons' tribute commemorates the animals who also lost their lives



Co-op Funeralcare unveils its first poppy hearse



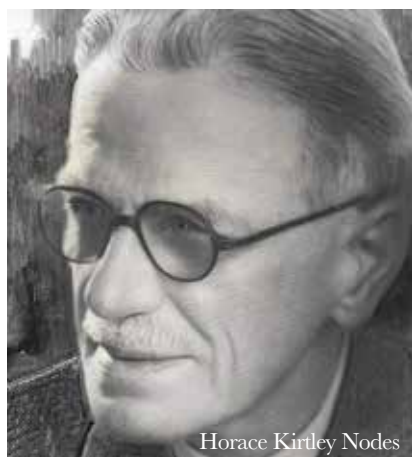
Arthur W Bryant Funeral Service in Camelford



BUA President's role in the grave of the Unknown Warrior

Over Armistice Day weekend, the late Horace Kirtley Nodes, who ran John Nodes Funeral Service in Ladbroke Grove, now owned by Funeral Partners, was remembered for his role in creating a coffin for an unidentified British soldier that now rests in the grave of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey.

Mr Nodes, who was President of the British Undertakers' Association at the time - which went on to become the



Horace Kirtley Nodes

NAFD - wanted to gift the casket to the nation and asked all Association members to donate one shilling to the appeal.

Mr Nodes accompanied the casket to France, where the remains of the soldier were placed inside. It was brought back to Westminster Abbey in a battle-scarred military ambulance on 11 November 1920.

More than one million people turned out to pay their respects. Afterwards, Mr Nodes received a letter from Sir Lionel Earle of HM Office of Works, praising him for his work.

The role of Mr Nodes was revealed when the funeral directing business, which is still in operation, conducted research for the centenary of the Armistice.

Regional Development Director for Funeral Partners, John Cheeseman, told the *Evening Standard*: "Mr Nodes was immensely proud of the family connection with the Unknown Warrior. He was passionate about serving the community and about the family's long tradition of military service."

Dignity funeral director commemorates Victoria Cross hero

A statue of WWI Victoria Cross winner Alfred Wilkinson, which was campaigned for by funeral director Paul Gardner, was unveiled in Leigh, Cheshire earlier this year.

In November, a giant poppy - created with the help of children from a local school - was laid at the First World War hero's grave in the memorial garden at Leigh Cemetery. Hundreds of poppies from different schools were also planted there by funeral director Paul and his nine-year-old son James.

Private Alfred Wilkinson won the Victoria Cross for the bravery he showed during the Battle of Selle in Marou in northern France in October 1918. He completed a daring mission across 'No Man's Land'. During the attack, four runners had been killed attempting to deliver a message to the supporting company. Private Wilkinson volunteered to relay the message and succeeded in that task despite the journey involving exposure to extremely heavy machine-gun and shell fire for 600 yards.



AW Lymn remembers family member lost at Ypres for Armistice Day

Arthur William Lymn
July 1, 1894 - May 11, 1915

Jennifer Lymn Percival of AW Lymn – The Family Funeral Service, in Nottinghamshire, who is the family historian, has helped a distant relative to trace the history of soldier Arthur William Lymn, who was killed in WWI and was the nephew and namesake of Arthur William Lymn who founded the family firm in 1907.

Jennifer was contacted by Matthew Fox, one of Arthur's direct descendants, who now lives in Canada and was writing a blog post about his family history that was published as part of Armistice Day 100.

Arthur William Lymn was born in 1894 in Nottingham, the second-eldest among six siblings. Within a couple of decades the Lymn name would gain some public profile in Nottingham with the launch in 1907, by Arthur's namesake and uncle, of the family casket-making and undertaking business.

According to the 1911 Census, Arthur was a butcher's "errand lad" and, by the time he joined the Sherwood Foresters in 1913, he was a fitter's labourer employed at the Trent Bridge car works. He married 19-year-old Sarah Lindley in the Fall of 1914.

His record reveals that he enlisted in the Territorial Force on 9 June 1913, standing 5' 7" and weighing 136 lbs. He was mobilised on 5 August 1914, having agreed to serve overseas, but served at home until 27 February 1915. The following day he travelled to France, never to return.



On 11 May 1915, Arthur William was killed in action just outside Ypres, Belgium. He suffered a bullet wound to the jaw and mouth and died from a haemorrhage at the 46th Division Field Ambulance. He qualified for the 1915 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal.

His war record captures, in detail, the personal effects that were returned to his wife, Sarah Lymn, by then a young mother, following his death. They were: a disc, two rings, a watch, a fountain pen, a crucifix, two pocket books, a prayer book, a dictionary, purse, knife, cigarette case and holder, scissors, letters, post cards, a bolt, a comb and a mirror.

Interestingly, the Canadian doctor and poet, John McCrae, wrote the famous poem *In Flanders Fields* just days before Arthur William was killed and close by as they both served in Flanders, outside Ypres. McCrae's good friend, whose death inspired the poem, perished on 2 May 1915 just a few miles away from where Arthur William would die.

Arthur was buried in Plot 2, Row A, Grave 1 in a churchyard in the Belgian village of Loker that is also home to 214 other war graves (a mix of British and Canadian soldiers) just outside Ypres.

In Flanders Fields

By John McCrae, May 1915

In Flanders Fields the poppies blow

Between the crosses, row on row

That mark our place; and in the sky

The larks, still bravely singing, fly

Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago

We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow.

Loved and were loved, and now we lie

In Flanders Fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe

To you from failing hands we throw

The torch; be yours to hold it high

If ye break faith with us who die

We shall not sleep, though poppies grow

In Flanders Fields.