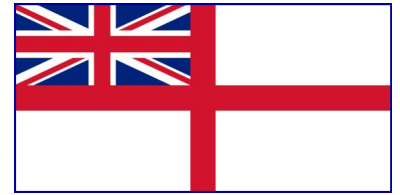# Thame Remembers

Steward 1st Class Fred Keene

Fred Keene was the second of seven children of Francis and Sarah Keene nee Archer and was born in Park Street, Thame, on the 3rd April 1893. In 1901 the family were living at 53 Park Street where Frank was employed as a domestic coachman.

Fred was employed as a house boy before enlisting with the Royal Navy as a boy servant L/2470 on the 22nd December 1910. He served initially on the shore establishment HMS Excellent and then served as a Steward 1st Class on HMS Minerva and then HMS Amethyst before being posted to the scout cruiser HMS Pathfinder on 1st October 1913.

On 5th September 1914, Pathfinder was serving with the Rosyth based 8th Destroyer Flotilla out on patrol from the Firth of Forth when at 15:45 the cruiser was hit by a single torpedo fired from the German submarine U-21. The torpedo hit the forward magazine causing it to explode and Pathfinder sank in four minutes. There were only 18 survivors, 250 of the crew, including Officer Steward 1st class Fred Keene went down with ship. Pathfinder was the first British warship sunk by a submarine in World War 1. The wreck site is now designated as a war grave and Fred Keene is commemorated with the rest of the crew on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial.

Fred's younger brother Jack Keene died in Belgium in 1917 serving with the Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry.

In Thame Fred's name is remembered on Thame war memorial and the memorial boards of All Saints and Christchurch.

The Thame Remembers Cross was delivered to Portsmouth Naval memorial on 14 June 2017 by Cllr Tom Wyse Mayor of Thame

AH May 2016