



# Thame Remembers

## Chief Petty Officer John Austin Chapman



John Austin Chapman was the son of Hurrell George and Margaret Lester (nee Austin) Chapman, and was born in Wheatley in 1916. He attended Lord Williams's Grammar School in Thame between 1927 and 1932, leaving to become an apprentice at the Oxford Bus Company.

John enlisted in the Royal Navy in 1938, service number P/MX 55979, and was serving on the destroyer HMS Express as an Engine Room Artificer 4th Class (equivalent to Petty Officer) when it was one of the last to leave Dunkirk following the evacuation of the BEF in May/June 1940. On 31st August 1940, she left Immingham to lay a mine field off the coast of the Netherlands. During the night of 1st September, Express was damaged by a mine and 4 officers and 55 men were killed, and the destroyer HMS Ivanhoe sunk. John Chapman was Mentioned in Despatches for his "coolness and resource" during the action.

He was at home at Rosemary Cottage, Wheatley, when he died on 20th October 1942, leaving a wife, Hilda, and young son, who sadly was deaf and dumb. He is buried in Wheatley churchyard. John left £350 in his will.

He is remembered on the Wheatley War Memorial, and in Thame on the Lord Williams's School memorial board.



**The  
Thame Remembers Cross  
was delivered  
to his grave on  
31st August 2015  
by  
Andrea Kachellek  
Thame Resident**

