

Charles Henry Steele

Stoker Petty Officer, Royal Navy. Joined the Navy at Devonport, September 4th, 1903. Served during the war on *H.M.S. Anchusa*. Killed in action off the North Coast of Ireland, July 16th, 1918. Awarded the 1914-15 Star, General Service and Victory Medals.



CHARLES STEELE WAS born in West Lavington in Wiltshire in 1884; his father William was a farm labourer and his mother was Sarah Anne Baker, also from West Lavington. By 1890 the family had moved to Corsham and in 1891 they were living at Byde Mill – Charles had two brothers, William and Albert, and three sisters, Eliza, Hannah, and Elsie. William continued to move with the availability of farm work and was in Easton with his family, including Charles, in 1901. Charles, then aged 17, was a milker on a dairy farm.

In 1903, at the age of 19, Charles joined the Navy and was immediately assigned to HMS *Vivid* as a Stoker. He continued to serve on various ships leading up to and during the war and he was a Petty Officer Stoker when he was transferred to HMS *Anchusa* in May 1917. HMS *Anchusa* was torpedoed and sunk by a U-boat off the coast of Northern Ireland on 26th July 1918. Charles was one of 78 men who lost their lives on that day. HMS *Anchusa* and her crew are remembered on the Naval Memorial on Plymouth Hoe.

Charles's parents were living in Pound Pill at the time of his death. His brother Albert Edward served in the Wiltshire Regiment, while William James was also a Stoker in the Navy.