

THE BLOCKADE OF GERMANY

Part of the naval strategy of World War One was to operate a naval blockade of German North Sea and other neutral ports to ensure that war materials and food did not reach Germany. Because the English Channel was under the control of the Royal Navy operating from Portsmouth and Dover, the Belgian ports of Zeebrugge, Ostend and Antwerp, although under German occupation, were not able to be relied upon for merchant shipping. The North Sea port of Hamburg was a more important destination for strategic war materials into Germany.

The Admiralty set up a blockade of the northern passage between Scotland and Iceland and this was patrolled by ships brought into service for this purpose from November 2, 1914. One such was SS Hilary, a cargo and passenger liner built in 1908 to operate on the Europe/South America route. She was converted into an Armed Merchant Cruiser by the addition of six 6" guns and renamed HMS Hilary. She was one of 60 merchant ships converted to Armed Merchant Cruisers during the war. She was commissioned in December 1914 with a new ship's company which included Able Seaman Thomas Davis.

HMS Hilary was employed patrolling the area south of the Faroe Islands, intercepting all cargo vessels and examining cargoes. Sometimes a boarding party might examine papers and decide that further investigation was

needed and the ship was instructed to proceed to Kirkwall in the Orkneys. It was not unusual to intercept and board as many as three ships in a working day. For the boarding party in those northern waters life was strenuous, cold and damp.



COMMEMORATING THE DEATH OF THOMAS POUNDER DAVIS

Born: 8 April 1876 in Dawlish

Died: 19 April 1916, in Edinburgh aged 40



Able Seaman, HMS Hilary



Dawlish World War One Project 1914-1918 / 2014-2018
Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Dawlish Town Council



Welcome to this Act of Commemoration.

Dawlish Town Council and Churches Together in Dawlish and District are commemorating the death in the service of the nation of every Dawlish person who was killed as a result of enemy action during the First World War.

Today we remember the death of Thomas Pounder Davis who was recalled to service at the start of the war, and saw action. He was taken ill aboard his ship, and died on 19th April 1916 in hospital in Edinburgh.



After the First World War, it was decided that a single town War Memorial would be erected close to the parish church, and no church would have its own War Memorial. In keeping with this decision, these Acts of Commemoration take place in the town centre churches without regard to the denomination of the person they commemorate and they are led by the minister or pastor of the host church. The same Order of Service is used at each service.

There will be opportunity to talk to the leader of the service afterwards when light refreshments will be served.

Please join in the words which are in heavy type

You are invited to take a reproduction of John's Gospel which was given to every service person during the First World War. Light refreshments will be available after the service.

Churches Together in Dawlish & District
28 High Street, Dawlish, EX7 9HP

THOMAS POUNDER DAVIS

Thomas Davis was the third of six children of the first marriage of John George Davis (1853 -) to Frances Ann Cox Pearce (1851 – 1881) in June 1871 Francis died in 1881, possibly after giving birth to twins. John Davis then married Mary Ann Evans (1858 – 1900) in June 1882 and there were four more children, the eldest of whom was Frederick Albert Davis (1883-1914. another Dawlish War Casualty, on 1 November 1914.

The family lived in 6 Church Street, and Manor Cottages Dawlish where John Davis was a joiner.

After leaving school, Tom was an errand boy. At the age of 15 he joined the Royal Navy as a Boy Seaman when he was sent to the Boy Seaman's training ship HMS Impregnable and at the age of 18 he signed on for "12 years" and served on various ships, being rated Able Seaman after three years. On 30 March 1905 he moved to the Royal Fleet Reserve following a six month period in the Barracks at Devonport (HMS Vivid). Tom returned to Dawlish to be a gardener. In September 1906 he married Frances Lily Steer Leaman (1885-1937) and they lived in Dawlish with four children, Beatrice, Edith Mary, THomas William and Frederick.

The Royal Fleet Reserve was established to provide a reserve of trained men for service in His Majesty's Fleet in time of emergency. Tom received a retainer of 6d. a day, and he would have received a gratuity of £50 at 40 years of age had the War not recalled him to service.

He re-enrolled with the R.F.R. in August 1910. On the outbreak of war he was called up for service and he was sent to HMS Endymion. In December 1914 he joined HMS Hilary, an Armed Merchant Cruiser. He was recorded ill on 1st April 1916 and died in Edinburgh Royal Infirmary on 19th April 1916, "from disease".

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
for thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory
for ever and ever.
AMEN.**

The Blessing

God grant to the living grace,
to the departed rest,
to the Church, the Queen,
the Commonwealth and all the world
peace and concord:

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face toward you
and give you peace.

Amen.

THE ORDER OF SERVICE

Introduction

We have gathered today as part of our commemoration of those Dawlish people who were caught up in the courageous but tragic events of the First World War.

We remember those who were killed in action,

those who were maimed and those whose minds were disfigured by conflict,

the bereaved and the lost and those who lived in darkness,

the families which were shattered,

and all who held in silence the unspeakable memories of warfare.

In particular today on the 100th anniversary of his death we remember Thomas POUnder Davis who died while in the service of his country.

Prayer

**Almighty God, the Lord of all,
today we pause to remember with gratitude**

the life and death of Thomas Davis

**knowing that he was, is and always will be
known and loved by you.**

**We thank you for his willingness to fight for our country
even if necessary to the point of death.**

**And today we remember his family and friends
who grieved at his death**

and whose lives were never the same.

Amen.

We hear about the life and death of Thomas Davis

Reading Romans 8:31-39

What, then, shall we say? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

please stand

A prayer of Commemoration

We remember before God Thomas Davis

Lord, have mercy

Today we commit Thomas Davis to the love of God

We give thanks for his life, and grieve at his death

May he rest in peace

and rise in glory.

He shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;

age shall not weary him, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning,

we will remember him.

We will remember him.

A candle may be lit or a bouquet may be placed before the pieta.

A time of silence

We remain standing

The Commitment to all those who died in the service of the nation.

Lord God, Father of all,

in thankfulness for Thomas Davis

and in his memory

we pledge ourselves

to bring comfort to the sad, the lonely and the distressed;

to bring relief to all who are in need

and to serve you and to work for peace.

Keep us ever mindful of the struggles

and achievements of former generations

and so make us grateful

now and in the days to come. Amen

O Lord, our maker and our strength,

from whose love in Christ we can never be parted

either by death or life:

Look in mercy on those for whom we pray this day,

and grant us your protection and peace,

that we may be saved in body and soul,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

As we ask for deliverance from the forces of destruction

and for peace in our time and in our lives

we pray together: