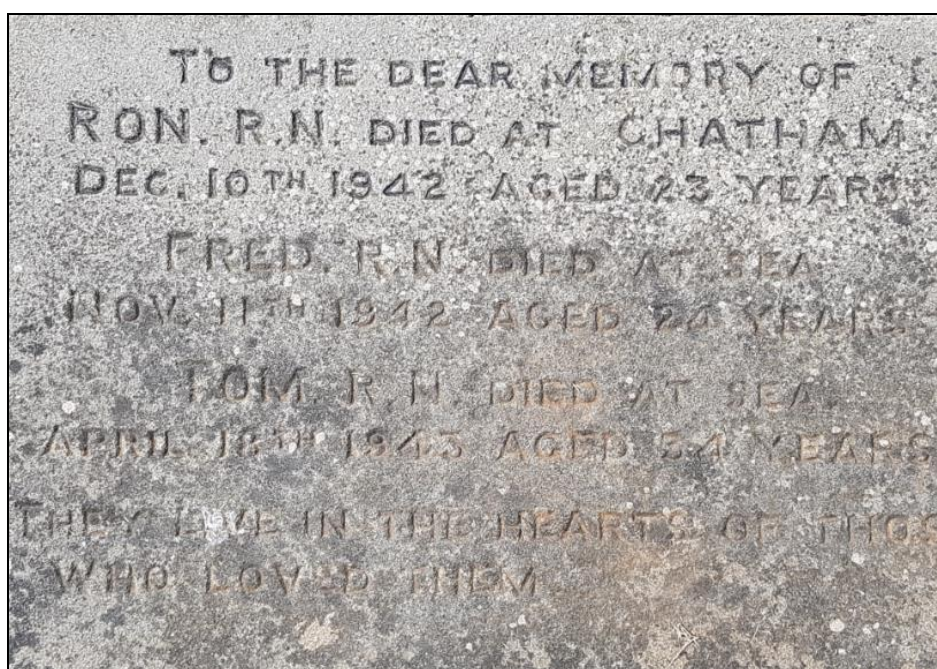


## Leading Writer Ronald Charles GRIFFIN

Service number P/MX 58761  
Royal Navy  
HMS Acute  
Died on 10 December 1942, aged 23

Ronald was born in Wells. He went to the Blue School and then worked as a clerk for the Wiltshire United Dairies. He joined the Royal Navy at the start of 1939, and served as a writer on a number of ships. He died in the Royal Naval Hospital, Chatham, from thyrotoxicosis and lymphoid hyperplasia and a collapsed lung. He is buried in Wells Cemetery.



The memorial to Ron and his cousins Fred and Tom on Ronald's grave in Wells Cemetery  
© Peter Trueman

Ronald was born in Wells on 8 October 1919, to Robert Charles Griffin and Fanny née James. He had three sisters: Betty, Mary and Pat. From 1919 until the early 1930s, his father was the publican at the New Inn at 60, St Thomas Street. After leaving the New Inn, the family lived at 31, St Thomas Street and were still there when the war started.

Ronald went to the Blue School and got his School Certificate in 1936. In 1937, he was working as a clerk for the Wiltshire United Dairies.

He joined the Royal Navy in January 1939, and that September he was back in Wells, on leave with his parents. Ronald was then a rating writer at the training establishment HMS Boscawen. On 1 March 1940, the *Wells Journal* published a letter from him thanking the 'kind ladies' who had sent him two parcels of socks and scarves.

The *Wells Journal* reported Ronald's death on 18 December 1942:

[Ronald died] at the Royal Naval Hospital, Chatham, on Thursday last at the early age of 23 years.

Ronald was an old Blue School boy. He was formerly employed at the Wilts United Dairies and he enlisted in the Royal Navy in January 1939 and at the time of his death was serving as a Petty Officer Writer.

He had seen much service at sea, having served on S.S. Manchester City and H.M.S. Algerine, a minesweeper, which was sunk in the recent North African campaign. At the time of his illness he was serving with H.M.S. Acute [an Algerine-Class Fleet Minesweeper].

He was a keen sportsman and had played rugby football and cricket for naval teams. He had also played cricket, soccer and table tennis for the Wilts United Dairies. He was a member of Toc H.

There was a large attendance at the funeral on Tuesday afternoon. The first part of the service was held in St. Thomas Church ... Six chums acted as bearers, two being pals in the Royal Navy and the others are serving in the Army Services.

It is most likely that Ronald left HMS Algerine before it was torpedoed on 15 November 1942.

In the Royal Navy, writers, or 'Scribes', performed all of the administrative and clerical duties on board a ship. When their ship went into action, they could also be utilised with damage control parties, for instance.

The cause of Ronald's death was thyrotoxicosis and lymphoid hyperplasia caused by an infection, which then resulted in a massive collapse of the lower lobe of his right lung.

Ronald is buried in Wells Cemetery in Section H. Row d/dd. Grave 3. He is also remembered on the rolls of honour at Wells Town Hall, Wells Blue School and Wells Cemetery. Two of his cousins, Frederick Jacobs and Walter 'Tom' James, are also on the Wells War Memorial and are named on Ron's gravestone.

We would like to thank Mark Culliford, Wells Cemetery Manager, for his help in finding Ronald's grave.