

## **Douglas Howard Morgan:** **Captain of the Felsted School Fire Brigade**

Douglas was born in July 1870 in Ryde, Isle of Wight and was baptised on 17<sup>th</sup> of that month at Holy Trinity Church, Ryde. His father was Thomas Morgan, a pork butcher, and his mother was Fanny Morgan, nee Bucknell. Douglas's grandmother, Elizabeth, was also living with the family. Ten years later, Thomas has now become a retired butcher at the age of 45yrs and Douglas is a boarder at the Diocesan School, situated at 8 Castle Road, Portsea, Portsmouth, Hampshire.

His father, Thomas, was shown in the 1891 census as a gentleman of independent means, but in October his father dies whilst he was living in Lewisham, south east London.

By 1895 Douglas has become an engineer and on the 18<sup>th</sup> July that year he marries Ethel Thurlow Lowe at St. Sepulchre Church, Holborn in the City of London. On the 18<sup>th</sup> December 1894 he joins the Masonic Lodge in Ryde and his occupation is shown as an engineer.

In 1901 Douglas has moved from Ryde and is shown in the Census of that year as living at 22 Clarence Street, Cheltenham and his occupation is a motor car engineer. He has no children but he and his wife does have a domestic servant, Elizabeth Turner, who is 35 years of age.

Ten years later, in 1911, he has again moved and has now changed his occupation becoming an engineering teacher at Felsted School, in Felsted, Essex. He is living at "The Limes", Felsted and, again, no children but they do have a domestic servant Sarah Chapman who is 39 years of age.

It is not known when he became Captain of the Felsted Fire Brigade, however as the Brigade was a school brigade it is possible that when he joined the school as an engineering teacher this role was also attached to his position.

One incident of note happened in 1911 when Douglas was captain of the Felsted Brigade. The Brigade attended, along with Braintree Volunteer Brigade under Captain Rudkin, a fire at Albert's farm which was owned by a Mr Scrivener and occupied by Mr Maclachlan. Both Brigades had taken water from a pond which was on the land of the complainant Mr Brock, who owned and occupied Bridge Farm, to fight the fire at the adjoining premises, which was a valuable property worth about £500. The pond had been emptied and owing to the great drought that summer had not been re-filled. This caused a considerable financial loss to Mr Brock who had to employ a boy to cart water from a brook to water his animals. Mr Brock was seeing for recompense of the money. After much legal argument, The Judge found for the defendants and also granted costs against Mr Brock for the case.

It is not known when Douglas left Felsted School and the Brigade, but by 1933 he and his wife had returned to Ryde on the Isle of Wight, and are living at "Winnal", West Hill Road, Ryde. His wife Ethel is taken into the Vectis Nursing Home, The Strand, Ryde where she dies on the 1st Nov 1933.

In 1936 Douglas became a resident at the Osboure Private Hotel situated in The Esplanade, Ryde, and on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1936 he dies at sea. As he nor his wife had any children, probate was granted to the Westminster Bank and to a Mr Ernest James Lowe, a jeweller. The effects were £17,879 19s 0d, which is the equivalent of around £1,280,000 today.

By David Hughes