

William Edward Clifford



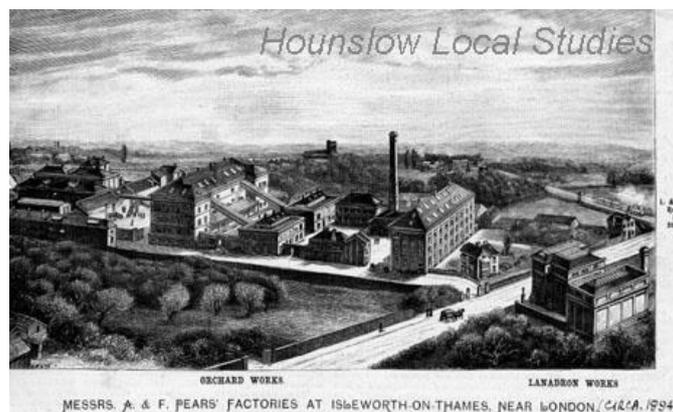
Pte. W. CLIFFORD

Henry Clifford was a widower with two children when he married Mary Elizabeth Liddicote in Perranarworthal Cornwall in 1875. Their second child, William Edward Clifford (b.1881), was three months old when the family settled at 3 Inverness Cottages, Inverness Road in the Parish of Isleworth (now in Hounslow). Henry was a gardener. Ten years later the family moved to Manor Road in Isleworth, very near the Isleworth Kidd's Flour Mill where Henry was working as a millwright - maintaining the mill machinery. By 1901 the Clifford family had moved again, this time to Midsummer Villas on the Staines Road. William was now 20 years



old and working as a soap warehouseman at the Pears factory (see right). Sisters Edith, Ethel and Gertrude were all employed at Pears too - as soap packers.

In spring 1903, William married a local girl, Edith Millie Cranstone (1879-1942) in Kensington. By 1911 they had moved to 17 Aylett Road Isleworth with their children Henry (7), Constance (6) and little Edith (4). The children's maternal grandparents John and Sarah Cranstone were also living in the house, as well as 26 year old Louise Cranstone (a soap packer), Edith's sister.



There are no surviving service records for William. However, his story was published in a staff pamphlet called "Bubbles" produced 'from the House of A & F Pears Ltd' in Issue 2 in July 1918.

"Pte. William Clifford, 39 (Missing), Royal Fusiliers (" C " Dept. Orchard No. 1). He enlisted 28th August 1915 in the 8th Middlesex Regt., afterwards transferred to the Royal Fusiliers. News received when at Picardy, 16th April 1918, that there were only "One officer, Clifford, and another left." Clifford and his comrade were then working their "Lewis" guns, cool and confident. On the 30th April 1918 the Commanding Officer wrote: "It is with much regret that I have to inform you that your husband was reported missing in the recent fighting. Your husband will be badly missed both by officers and men, as he had won the respect of all. He was an excellent soldier, and is a real loss to the Platoon. Please accept my heartfelt sympathy for you in your sad bereavement. I can only hope that you will soon receive news of him."

William's children were 14, 13 and 11 when they lost their father. In 1930, his son Henry married Lizzie Simmonds and, together with his mother (Edith), moved to Swale in Kent where they can be found on 1939 Register. Constance also married in 1930 and she and her husband Thomas Kelland can be found on the Electoral Registers for Kent. It seems their sister Edith Frances preferred to be called Frances Edith! She was still living in Aylett Road in 1932. Sadly, their father's body was never found. William was 'assumed' to have died on 24th April 1918. He is commemorated on the Pozieres Memorial, panel 19-21 and also on the Pears Memorial.

