

## James Nicholas Denton



James Nicholas's birth was registered in the September Quarter of 1894 in Hammersmith. His parents: James Nicholas Denton and Ellen Connell, both born in Hammersmith, had married in 1892, at St Peter's Church in Hammersmith. James Nicholas senior (1872-1954) was a wood paviour and mason by trade, and Ellen, born in 1870, a laundress. They lived in the Hammersmith area initially: at 74 Cardross Street by 1901, then at 14 Elric Street by 1911, moving afterwards to the Isleworth/Richmond area. By 1913, they are recorded at 108 St John's Road, Isleworth and 11 Percy Gardens and in 1914, at 70 Castle Road, Isleworth. *See below left for 2018 photographs of the St John's Road and below right Castle Road properties, which James Nicholas junior and his siblings would have lived in.*



James had two surviving sisters: Ellen Margaret, born in 1897 and Lilian Edith, born in 1903. He enlisted in Richmond on August 29<sup>th</sup> 2014, aged 20 and joining the Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment), 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, as a private, with the regimental number G/1886. Some of his service records have survived and we know that he was 5'6", weighed 126 lbs, had grey eyes, a florid complexion, brown hair and an operation scar; his recruitment register had B written on the spine. By 30<sup>th</sup> August 2015, James was in France. The Battalion had been involved in training at Home after the start of the war, it moved to Shoreham to join the 72nd Brigade of the 24th Division and then moved to Worthing. In April 1915 they returned to Shoreham and then to Blackdown, where they mobilised for war. On 30<sup>th</sup> August they landed at Boulogne, then concentrating on the area between Etaples and St Pol by 3<sup>rd</sup> September and then a few days later marched into the reserve for the British assault at Loos on 26<sup>th</sup> September, where they sustained very heavy losses. James was killed in action on this day.

Correspondence between Mrs Martin, the Leader of James's Young Men's Bible Class at Isleworth Mission Church, and Private J Rogers, 9th Platoon, C Company, 8th Battalion RWK, revealed his responding to her 'kind letter', and referring to a service by the Chaplain 'under shrapnel fire', and their placing a wooden cross on James's grave and some flowers too. This must have been some consolation to his family. James is commemorated on the Loos Memorial, and was also included in the Memorial Chapel at All Saints Church in Isleworth. On 25<sup>th</sup> November 1915, The Middlesex Chronicle reported on an evening Memorial Service held at the Mission Church, led by the Rev W. Marsh Rapson in front of a 'full' congregation. On 11th December 1915, a second report in the Chronicle refers to a memorial tablet erected in the Isleworth Mission Church in his memory and a 3<sup>rd</sup> report on 18th December: reported on the service, attended by James's parents and by Mrs Martin, the leader of the Young Men's Bible Class, to which he belonged formerly, and the unveiling of the plaque which commemorated his death at the Battle of Loos, aged 21. Mrs Martin had spoken in 'glowing terms' of the Christian character of the late Private Denton.



James's parents had moved to 13, St James's Cottages in Richmond by 1939 and both his sisters had married in the Richmond area after his death. Ellen married Henry George Parsons in 1920 and in 1939 they were living at 55 Darrell Road, Richmond with their family; Lilian wed Alfred Read in 1931, who had grown up very close by-at 25 Darrell Road.