

Oscar James Hines



On 20th September 1897, Oscar James Hines was born in Barnes, the only son of James and Sarah Hines. He had six sisters: Maud, born 1881, Alice, born 1884, Flora, born 1885, Katy, born 1887, Julia born 1889 and Rosie, born 1901.

His father James was born in 1853 in Barnes. In 1881 he married Sarah Elizabeth Paulyn . At that time Barnes was part of Surrey. James worked for the local Water Board as a sandwasher. The 1901 census shows the family living in 39 Lilian Road in Barnes, sharing with another couple, nine children and a lodger. By 1903 they had moved to 3 Woodlawn Road in Fulham and James registered Oscar as a pupil in Fulham Palace Road School. Oscar's sisters Maud, Alice, Kate and Julia were all working as domestic servants. By the time of the 1911 census, Flora, Oscar and Rosie were still living with their parents but their father James died in 1914, which may have dispersed the family unit. Oscar's whereabouts between 1911 and joining the army cannot be found but Oscar went to Shepherds Bush and enlisted in the artillery as a gunner with the Royal Field Regiment, sometime between 1914 and 1918.

The First World War has been described as an artillery war. The artillery was deployed close to the front line, responsible for the medium and heavy guns and Howitzers, firing high explosive shells. Prior to an infantry attack, the job of the artillery was to reduce the enemy's defences and then provide fire support during the assault. Despite the huge numbers of guns, shells and gunners these bombardments were not always successful. 58% of all casualties were caused by artillery fire.

Oscar was wounded in an attack and died of his wounds on 23rd April 1918. By this stage of the war there were effective anaesthetics and Casualty Clearing Stations situated near the front line to provide immediate surgery before transferring casualties to base hospitals but the horrific nature of the wounds and the prevalence of infections with no antibiotics meant that the death rate was high.

Gunner Oscar Hines was awarded the British, Victory and Star medals. He was buried in the Haringhe Military Cemetery in Belgium and his mother, Sarah, was his sole legatee. Why his name is on the Isleworth Memorial and also on the Memorial in St John's Church in Isleworth (*see right*) is unclear, although there are several Hines families living in the Isleworth area after the war, including a Kate Hines living in 62 South Street Isleworth. Perhaps this was Oscar's sister?

Sarah was living in Hammersmith when she died in 1928. Her daughter, Alice Celia Marion was living in that area too. Sadly, her husband, Alfred Ramus, who also served during the War and in the Highland Light Infantry, died when swimming near Deal, a few months after Oscar had met his fate in Belgium.

