

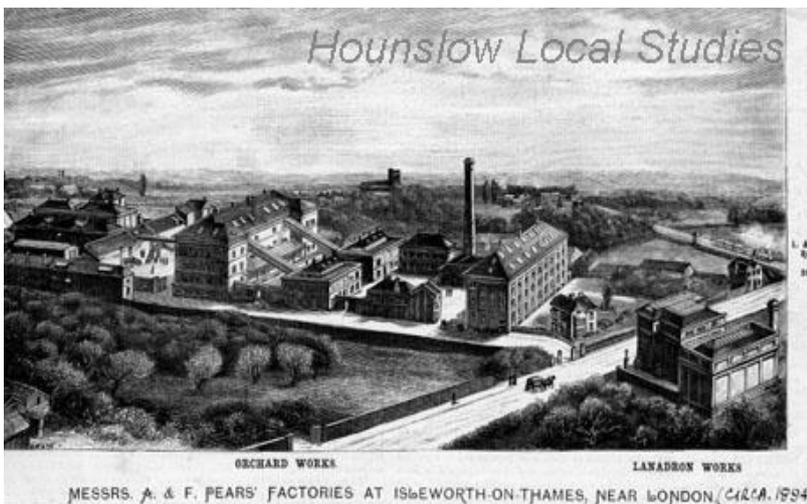
George Samuel Holmes



George Samuel Holmes was born in Peterborough, Northamptonshire. His parents were Annie Jane Rhodes and William Holmes, a bricklayer. They married in St Mary's Church, Peterborough, on 24th October 1896.

George was the second child of a large family. Beatrice was born in 1897, George in 1898, Arthur in 1900, John in 1900, Annie in 1906, Horace in 1907, and Elsie in 1909. The 1911 census shows that Annie gave birth to eight children but two died. Both parents were born in Peterborough and continued to live there, at least until 1911.

George probably left school in 1911 when he was 14 years old. He decided to move south and found a job as a stable hand in the A and F. Pears Soap Factory in Isleworth (see below for a photo of the factory), using his middle name Samuel. However, he is listed as G. Holmes in the Middlesex Chronicle article on December 19th 1914, about the 44 Pears employees who had enlisted. At the outbreak of war, Lever Brothers were producing 135,000 tons of Pears Soap per year in Isleworth.



When war was declared in August 1914 many Pears Factory workers enlisted. Lever Brothers agreed to re-employ them on their return and to give allowances to their dependents while they were away. George Samuel Holmes enlisted in the Hounslow Recruitment Centre and served as Lance Corporal in the 1st Battalion Royal Fusiliers

(5814) and was sent to France on 28th December 1914.

Just ten weeks later on 9th March 1915, fighting in Armentieres, he was killed in action. He was buried in the Chapelle d' Armentieres Communal Cemetery.

He was posthumously awarded the Victory, British and Star medals. He was also commemorated in a Lever Brothers newsletter called "Bubbles" after the famous Pears Soap advertisement painted by John Everett Millais. This newsletter lists all the Pears employees who were killed in action, wounded or taken prisoner in World War 1; it describes George Samuel's death as one of the first of the Pears employees to be killed in action. George Samuel was also commemorated on the Pears Memorial in Isleworth. He appears too on the Peterborough Roll of Honour and is listed as HOLMES, GEORGE SAMUEL, 109 Palmerston Road, Woodston, 5814, Lance Corporal, 1st Royal Fusiliers. Killed in action, age unknown, on the 9.3.15 near Armentieres. No known next of kin. Buried in La Chapelle D'Armentieres Communal Cemetery, Grave E.4