

## Arthur John Kidd



Arthur John was born in 1886 in Fletching in Sussex, the son of Arthur Kidd and Agnes Elizabeth nee Wren, and baptised on 28<sup>th</sup> March at Danehill Sussex. His father Arthur, was a cattleman by trade, and had been born in Rotherfield Sussex. They had married in 1885 but tragically, Agnes died in 1897. In 1891, Arthur John was living with his paternal grandparents at Tile Barn Cottage, Little Horsted in Sussex; his father meanwhile in 1891, a widower and in lodging, was living in Maidstone, Kent, employed as a stationary engine driver. In 1892, he married Margaret French, and they had a child Margaret Elizabeth born in 1893 in Finchley. His second wife died in 1899. From 1897-1907, Arthur John, his half sister, Margaret, and his father and aunt were living at Butts Cottages in Hanworth. In 1891, William Whiteley had purchased Butts and Glebe Farms, collectively called the Hanworth Farms, on the borders of Twickenham and Hanworth. His aim was to produce high quality fresh fruit and vegetables, jams and pickles, milk and fresh meat for sale in his store. Over the next five years, according to a Market Gardeners Factsheet: William Whiteley was applying scientific principles and up-to-date methods in his model farm. He converted the farms into an "integrated industrial enterprise", seeing them as "an exemplification of the factory system applied to agriculture". Houses were built for more than 400 permanent and temporary workers: two streets of cottages and several blocks of villas were provided for his permanent labourers.

In 1909, Arthur married Emma Bridgeman (aged 32) in Petersham Church, Ham in Surrey; he was 44 and a widower. By 1911, Arthur, Emma and Arthur John were living at Vale Farm Cottage, Petersham. Arthur John was aged 25 and a gardener; his father was a cowman on a dairy farm. On August 31st 1912 at St Alban's Church, Acton Green, Arthur John, aged 27, and by then a compositor, was living at 35 Montgomery Road, Acton. His father, Arthur, was a storekeeper and his new bride, Rosa was 30. Her father, George Henry Clarke, had worked as a furniture packer. By 1916, Arthur and Rosa had moved to 36 Steele Road in Isleworth; he was a printer and in 1916 they had a child: Kathleen Rosa Kidd, who was baptised at All Souls Church on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1916.

Very few of Arthur John's military records have survived. We know that he enlisted in Twickenham and served with the Royal Sussex Regiment, 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion with the regimental number of G/13908 and that he died of wounds on March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1918 and is honoured on the Pozieres Memorial in France and at All Souls Church, Haliburton Road, then Isleworth. . He was awarded the Victory and British medals. The war diaries of his battalion at the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of the Somme, on 21<sup>st</sup> March, record the action that Arthur John would have witnessed first hand: "Heavy bombardment commenced in the early hours" and on the 22<sup>nd</sup>: "The enemy attacked at 7am and were driven off...At about noon, the enemy made a strong attack on the HQ, occupied jointly with the 1<sup>st</sup> Herts, at the quarry north of St Emilie. They were repulsed. Orders were shortly received to retire to the Green Line. This movement was successfully carried out but A Company, with half of B Company, were cut off and annihilated. 4 officers and about 150 ORs were lost to the Battalion." It is likely that Arthur John was one of these men. The June 1918 edition of All Souls Parish Magazine explained that Arthur John Kidd of Steele Road had been reported missing. Later it was reported he was 'in a German hospital, so seriously wounded, there was no hope of recovery.' Arthur John's effects were passed to his widow, Rosa, who continued to live at 36 Steele Road (*see below for a 2018 photo of that property*) with their daughter. She married Robert James Wilson in Petersham Church on February 24th 1922, aged 39, and a widow; he was 34 and a labourer; by 1939 they were living in 47, Vicarage Road, Sunbury; he was a linesman for electric cables. Kathleen Rosa in 1938 was living in Hanwell, Springfield Road and later that year married George W Willis in Staines; she died in 2001 in Thanet with Dover. Arthur's father lived with his daughter, Margaret, after the death of his third wife, Emma. In 1919 Margaret had married Albert Peckham a poultry and dairy farmer; by 1939 they resided at Lapham Down. Margaret died in 1952 and Arthur Kidd in 1945 in Sussex.

