

Andrew William Leach

A W Leach on the war memorial was difficult to identify, despite being also on the memorial at St John's, Isleworth. His only apparent connection with Isleworth is through his wife. He was born in Battersea in 1888, the son of Andrew William and Minnie Leach. Having the same names, the father may have been called Andrew and the son William to distinguish them (or vice versa), as there is some inconsistency in the names used in records.



Private A W Leach enlisted in the Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment) at Hounslow Barracks in July 1907, aged 18 years, 9 months. His address was 42 Carpenter St (later renamed Weybridge St), Battersea, and his occupation was glass blower. He joined the 2nd Battalion in India, where he must have spent over seven years. At the outbreak of World War One the battalion was in Calcutta, and they returned to England in December 1914, to Stockingford, near Birmingham, to mobilise for war.

On 18th January 1915 he married Lillie (Lily) Jane Rowe in Battersea. She had been born in Isleworth, and grew up at 6 Syon Cottages, Syon Lane; in 1911 (and perhaps earlier) she was a servant in Wandsworth, not far from Battersea, and perhaps they had met before he went to India. Sadly, it was a very short marriage. The battalion's war diary shows that he had only a few days leave for the wedding, and a few weekend leaves. In mid-March, Private Leach left England with his regiment, on the troopship SS Alaunia,

bound for Gallipoli, via Alexandria.

They landed on 25th April 1915 at X Beach, Cape Helles, in lighters from HMS

Implacable. Leach was killed on 1st May, less than a week later, during a night attack by 16,000 Turks. He is commemorated on the Helles Memorial, and was 26.

His widow moved back to Isleworth to live with her widowed mother, Sarah Rowe, in St John's Road, then Grainger Road, and by 1939 at 26 Kendall Road. Lily Jane Leach never remarried.

