



Peter Sidney Edwin McDonald

Peter was born into a family of women. He had four older sisters, Maggie, Jessie, Phillis, and Francis. His parents, Mary Ann Field and Peter McDonald were married in 1877 in Wandsworth. Peter's father was a Police Constable and his mother was a shop keeper who ran a general stores from their residential address at 43 London Road Isleworth. Peter was born in 1887. Interestingly, with the exception of the eldest daughter Maggie, the three younger girls and Peter were all baptised on the 13th February 1886 at St Anne's Church in Kew. Towards the end of that year Peter's father died (aged only 41). Thus it would appear that father and son never really knew each other.

Peter, who was working as a butcher, was 27 when he enlisted in London, having previously served three years as a volunteer with the 2nd Middlesex Regiment. On November 30th 1914 he was appointed to the 7th Battalion. Queens Own Cameron Highlanders. In January 1915 this Battalion came under the orders of 44th Brigade in 15th (Scottish) Division and after training at Liphook, Cirencester, Chisledon and Tidworth, they embarked for Boulogne, landing in France on 7th July 1915. Peter had just over **two months left** of his life. **He would be 'killed in action' in his first battle, on the first day of the Battle of Loos and his body would never be found.**

The Battle of Loos began on 25th September 1915. It was the first battle for Kitchener's New Army (which was made up of hundreds of hurriedly trained volunteers, territorials and reservists) - 75,000 men were at the ready! About 140 tons of chlorine gas was used by the British for the first time. Later, at several points along the front, the wind blew the gas back to the British trenches. There was a shortage of shells and troops moved forward into battle wearing flat caps carrying rifles with bayonets attached. **Enemy machine guns killed 8,500 men in a single day – Peter, was probably one of them.**

Eight years after losing her husband Peter's mother, Mary-Ann, married a widower by the name of George Grout. He died in 1914 just a year before Mary-Ann's son Peter was killed. It must have been a very difficult time for her. Mary-Ann died on June 9th 1917 in sad circumstances. At about 8.30pm a little girl in Isleworth went to buy some sweets in the local shop and the shop keeper said 'Oh dear, I do feel bad, I feel I'm going to die' and then she fell behind the counter. The Middlesex Chronicle reported that the deceased was a widow named Mary Ann Grout, aged 63, who kept a small general shop at 43 London Rd Isleworth. Her grandson Philip McDonald, who lived with her, said she was quite well when he last saw her before going up to bed at 8.20pm.

Philip was only 13 when his Grandmother died. Philip was also the son of Private Peter McDonald. In two years Philip had lost the two people who probably loved him most.

Peter Sidney McDonald is commemorated at the Loos Memorial and also at All Saints Church, Isleworth.



Lone Tree
Replanted in memory of those who lost their lives in the Battle of Loos 1915

