



# George Arthur Widdowson

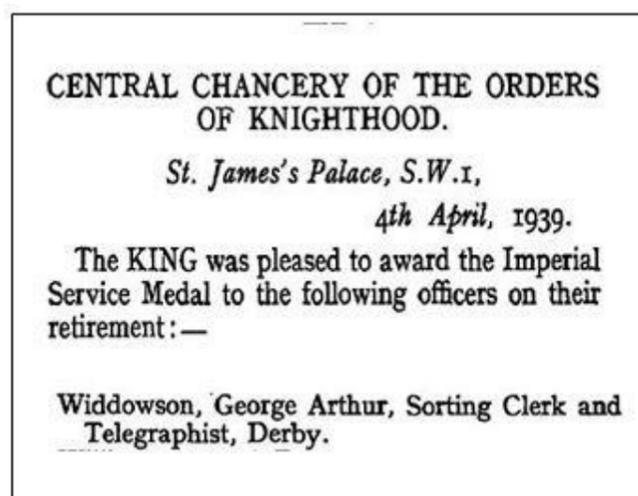
## 39 Bromley Street

George was 35 when war broke out. He had lived at 39 Bromley Street since 1910 – probably the house’s first occupant. He lived with his wife Gertrude, who he married in 1905 at St Chad’s Church, Derby. We are not sure whether they had any children – the 1911 census records that after six years of marriage none had been born. In the census that year statistics on births and infant mortality were collected for the first time.

In the 1911 census he is listed as working for the General Post Office as a “Postal Telegraphist”. His job would be to send telegraphic messages between offices. These telegrams were then printed out and personally delivered by a messenger, often a boy on a bicycle. Telegrams were used to send urgent messages long distances in the days before telephones were widely available. Records held by the British Postal Museum & Archive show that he started work in late October 1894 aged 15. It was an exciting time to work in telegraphy – at the end of the same year the Italian inventor Guglielmo Marconi began exploring the idea of building a telegraphy system based on the use of radio waves. Within two years the UK’s General Post Office was in talks with Marconi with a view to adopting a wireless telegraphy system.

We know that George was absent on naval or military service when the 1918 Register

of Electors was compiled. Unfortunately we have not been able to trace his military record or medal card – there were at least seven other men called George Widdowson who served. It is possible that as an experienced Telegraphist he was attached to a unit where his skills would be used.



Recorded in The London Gazette, 4 April 1939

By late 1919 George had returned to Derby and was back working in the Telegraph office. He lived in Bromley Street for the rest of his life. He retired in April 1939 and was awarded the Imperial Service Medal of the Home Civil Service on his retirement. George died in July 1944. Gertrude continued to live at 39 Bromley Street. According to local directories she was still living there in 1966. She died in 1973.

**If you have any information about George Widdowson Six Streets History would love to hear from you.**