

David Belcher, nephew of Arthur Belcher
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I am the younger son of Arthur's youngest brother Aubrey, so never met my uncle. To my later regret I did not question his mother Annie (my grandmother) about Arthur for fear of upsetting her.

I did hear a few stories however. It has always amazed me that during the Great War the postal service was so efficient with soldiers receiving regular mail and parcels from home. My grandfather Joe worked for the Post Office and one day he and my grandmother were putting a package of goodies together for Arthur. One of the items was a safety razor (which I believe had been invented in 1904 by Mr Gillette). At that time the normal razor was a cut-throat. (The very look of them makes me shudder.) Joe, never having used a safety razor, decided to give it a test drive. He was delighted with the result - "A really smooth shave". Then Annie pointed out that he'd not fitted the blade. The subsequent effort was a disaster - plasters all round - different technique I suppose. The razor was duly despatched but sadly the ship carrying the parcel was intercepted by a 'U' Boat in the Channel and sunk.

In August 1993, I was spending the weekend with Dad (Aubrey). He was lying propped up in bed as I drew the curtains. He told me he had been thinking of Arthur and one of his last memories of him. It may have been spring 1916, a few days before the Battalion left for France. Arthur was sitting in the garden at 48 Chilswell Road enjoying a glass of homemade lemonade. I guess Dad (nicknamed Bon) was ten years old at the time and had probably been a little spoilt with both his brothers away serving in the army. Jealous of all the attention Arthur was getting from Joe and Annie, dad rudely demanded that he have the lemonade, to which Arthur with a smile acquiesced. After 77 years Dad was still upset about the incident and his behaviour. Dad died a month later.

I still have very fond memories of 48 Chilswell Road and the neighbours at 46 and 44. After she married my grandmother Annie devoted her time to looking after the family. She was an extraordinary woman and died aged 98 (going on 25).