

The Letters of Arthur George Angell

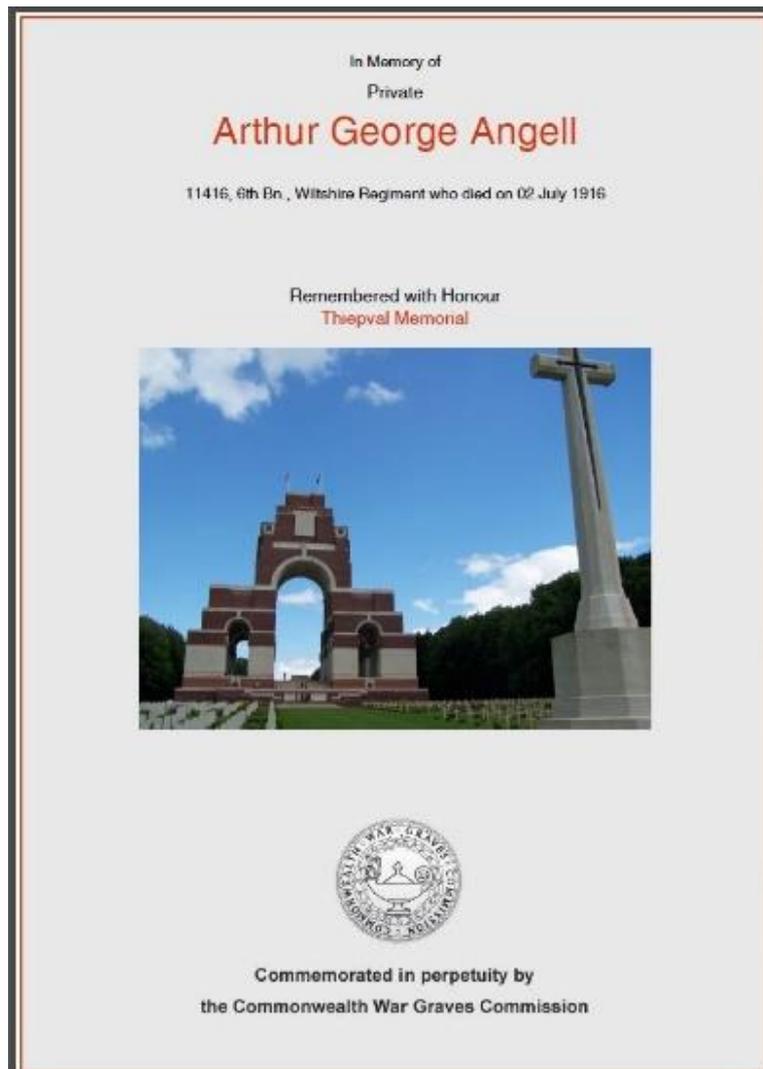
Born 1886 – Died 2 July 1916

Private
ANGELL, ARTHUR GEORGE

Service Number 11416

Died 02/07/1916

6th Bn.
Wiltshire Regiment



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1. Introduction

Arthur George Angell
Born 1886 in Malmesbury, Wiltshire, UK
Occupation in peacetime: Butcher's clerk
Joined 6th Bn Wiltshires in 1915
Service number: 11416
Rank: Private
Died 2 July 1916 aged 30 near Lochnagar Crater in Battle of the Somme
Remembered on Thiepval Memorial Pier & Face 13A

Arthur George Angell was born in 1886 in Malmesbury, Wiltshire.

Arthur George Angell	
England and Wales Birth Registration Index, 1837-2008	
Name:	Arthur George Angell
Event Type:	Birth Registration
Registration Quarter:	Jan-Feb-Mar
Registration Year:	1886
Registration District:	Malmesbury
County:	Wiltshire
Event Place:	Malmesbury, Wiltshire, England
Volume:	5A
Page:	59
Affiliate Line Number:	166

His father was Jacob Angell, who appears in the 1891 census as a 'Borough Inspector'. His mother, Bessie Angell, was a 'School Mistress', and is worthy of an entire article dedicated to her, as are other members of the family. My grandfather, Charles Bernard Angell, was born in 1891.

Jacob Angell
England and Wales Census, 1891

Tools

Name:	Jacob Angell
Event Type:	Census
Event Date:	1891
County:	Wiltshire
Parish:	St Paul Malmesbury
Ecclesiastical Parish:	ST PAUL MALMESBURY
Registration District:	Malmesbury
Residence Note:	Ingram Street
Gender:	Male
Age:	41
Marital Status:	Married
Occupation:	Bor Inspector Ins Of ?
Relationship to Head of Household:	Head
Birth Year (Estimated):	1850
Birthplace:	Malmesbury, Wiltshire, England
Page Number:	34
Registration Number:	RG12
Piece/Folio:	1590/ 20

Household	Role	Sex	Age	Birthplace
Jacob Angell	Head	Male	41	Malmesbury, Wiltshire, England
Bessie Angell	Wife	Female	41	Malmesbury, Wiltshire, England
Jessie Angell	Daughter	Female	18	Malmesbury, Wiltshire, England
James E Angell	Son	Male	10	Malmesbury, Wiltshire, England
Charlotte J Angell	Daughter	Female	6	Malmesbury, Wiltshire, England
Arthur G Angell	Son	Male	5	Malmesbury, Wiltshire, England
Ernest W Angell	Son	Male	2	Malmesbury, Wiltshire, England
Charles B Angell	Son	Male	0	Malmesbury, Wiltshire, England

In the 1901 census and also in 1911, the last census currently available, Arthur George is listed as a 'Butcher's Assistant', unmarried and still living at home in Malmesbury.

 **Arthur George Angell**
England and Wales Census, 1911

Name	Arthur George Angell
Event Type	Census
Event Date	1911
Event Place	Westport St Mary Within, Malmesbury, Wiltshire, England
County	Wiltshire
Parish	Westport St Mary Within
Sub-District	Malmesbury Western
Registration District	Malmesbury
Gender	Male
Age	25
Marital Status	SINGLE
Occupation	BUTCHER'S ASSISTANT
Birth Year (Estimated)	1886
Birthplace	Malmesbury, Wiltshire

In the third quarter of 1913 he married Rosa Jane Adelaide Nelly Gale. He refers to her often in his letters, asking his brother, Charles, to look after her if anything happens to him. It seems that his family did not approve of Rosa.

He is inaccurately recorded as Arthur C Angell, not Arthur G Angell, in the Marriage Registration.

Arthur C Angell		Tools
England and Wales Marriage Registration Index, 1837-2005		
Name:	Arthur C Angell	
Event Type:	Marriage	
Registration Quarter:	Jul-Aug-Sep	
Registration Year:	1913	
Registration District:	Malmesbury	
County:	Wiltshire	
Event Place:	Malmesbury, Wiltshire, England	
Spouse Name (available after 1911):	Gale	
Volume:	5A	
Page:	125	
Affiliate Line Number:	39	

Rosa J A N Gale		Tools
England and Wales Marriage Registration Index, 1837-2005		
Name:	Rosa J A N Gale	
Event Type:	Marriage	
Registration Quarter:	Jul-Aug-Sep	
Registration Year:	1913	
Registration District:	Malmesbury	
County:	Wiltshire	
Event Place:	Malmesbury, Wiltshire, England	
Spouse Name (available after 1911):	Angell	
Volume:	5A	
Page:	125	
Affiliate Line Number:	107	

In 1915 Arthur George joined 6th Bn Wiltshires with the rank of private and, after training, was sent to the front. He wrote many letters to his family and friends. His letters are stored by Lisa Burdless-Kelly and were transcribed into manuscript form by Susan Ord, both of whom are my cousins, and great-nieces of Arthur George.

Many of the letters are to his younger brother, Charles Bernard Angell, my grandfather, then a teacher in Co. Durham. Evidently Charles Bernard also wants to join up, and Arthur George does his best to dissuade him. School teaching was a 'reserved' occupation and there was no need for Charles to join the forces. but he did so and fought with the East Yorkshire Regiment. He was captured by the Germans near Termonde (Dendermonde), Belgium on 25 April 1918 and was imprisoned at Wynschote, Belgium. He survived and returned home to Co. Durham after the war.

There is also a letter from William Angell, whose family emigrated to New Zealand. He and his brothers returned to Europe and fought in the Dardanelles and elsewhere. I have told their story in 'The Angel Brothers in the First World War', available on the Wessex WFA website here: <http://wessexwfa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/The-Angel-Brothers-in-the-First-World-War.pdf>.

Although he was not usually able to provide details of his whereabouts, the regimental history of the Wiltshires sometimes provides background information about the movements of Arthur George's battalion and I have added this in a section preceding the letters. I have not edited the letters at all. They provide a very vivid impression of life in the trenches and I felt it would be intrusive to add notes.

Arthur George died on 2 July 1916 aged 30 near Lochnagar Crater on the second day of the Battle of the Somme.

He is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial Pier & Face 13A, where I have been several times to honour his memory. His body has never been found so he has no grave.

In the autumn of 2008, close to Armistice Day, I visited the Lochnagar Crater together with several friends and the Director of the Flanders Fields Museum in Ypres, Piet Chielens. With the details I had given him about Arthur George's regiment and battalion, Piet was able to trace his probable position during the battle, at the top of a hill. We made our way there and I laid a wreath of dark red roses, with a card reading 'In memory of Arthur George Angell from his loving family in England'. Just where I laid the wreath, we could see the remnants of more flowers, laid in the not too distant past, evidence that these soldiers who died for their country are not forgotten. The friends who were with me that day still remember our trip to Lochnagar Crater.

We will remember them.



Lochnagar Crater, near La Boisselle, Somme, France.

Arthur George Angell was killed at the top of the hill overlooking the crater.

2. Background Information from Regimental Records

Date of letter or other event	Details from Regimental history
15 July 1915	Preparing to leave Andover.
10 August 1915	Halt. Training LBG
8 September 1915	Reference to having been in trenches a fortnight before. According to regimental history, this would have been near Bray, France.
6 October 1915	Cambrin, France, repairing trenches
11 November 1915	Location: Le Touret, France. In billets at Le Touret. Working parties were required both day and night - about 300 daily. The weather was wet and a good deal of discomfort was experienced.
12 November 1915	Location: Le Touret, France. The Battalion relieved 9th Welch in IND 2b.
29 December 1915	Location: Croix Barbée, France. D Company and Headquarters of 16 th Welch attached to Battalion. Bombing practice and baths. Remarks: Bethune Combined Sheet
10 January 1916	Location: Le Touret, France. 10th - 13th Company training - bomb throwing and baths Remarks: Bethune Combine Sheet
31 January 1916	Location: Le Sart, France. Company training and baths. Lt.Col Remarks: MAP SHEET 36a
9 February 1916	Location: Le Sart, France. 8th - 10th Company drill Instruction for N.C.O's. Bombing practice with live bombs. Inter Company Football Tournament 'C' Coy wins. Capt. Smith and Lieut Garthwaite rejoined Battn 8th Feb 16.
21 February 1916	Location: Point du Hern, France. Cold day. Wire drill and Company drill. Remarks: MAP SHEET 36a
27 February 1916	Location: La Gorgue, France. Sunday. Church Parade. Remarks: MAP SHEET 36a
27 April 1916	Location: Quernes, France. Training as on previous 2 days Remarks; MAP SHEET HAZEBROUCK 5A
16 May 1916	Location:Flesselles, France. 15th - 20th Platoon training - special importance being given to training of Platoon Commanders. Attacking and consolidating trenches, night bombing. Parish wiring. Class for N.C.O's under regimental Sergt Major. Training of reserve machine gunners and signallers. In the afternoons regimental sports and boxing contests.

28 June 1916	Location: Albert, France. Wet all day. Operations postponed for 48 hours. Remarks LENS. SHEET 11
29 June 1916	Location: Albert, France. Finishing off preparations - inspections etc Remarks LENS. SHEET 11
30 June 1916	Location: Albert, France. All packs, kits etc sent back to Divisional Train - Battalion moved at 10p.m to preliminary position South of JUNO Bridge on the railway line Nr ALBERT. Walter Long Lt.Col. Commdg 6th Bn Wiltshire Regiment Remarks LENS. SHEET 11
1 July 1916	Location: Albert, France. At 7.30a.m Brigade moved up to position into TARA USNA Trenches - Orders were received to attack LA BOISSELLE from the South during that night which however did not take place. Remarks ALBERT COMBINED SHEET
2 July 1916	Location: Albert, France. At 1.30p.m orders were received to take up position in front line at 4p.m. At 4p.m Battalion advanced in open order and attacked German front line system of trenches just South of LA BOISSELLE. Two lines of trenches were taken and consolidated. Cheshires were on our right flank and Welch Fusiliers on our left. Our losses were Lt. Hunter, Lt's Allen, King and Biggs killed - Capt Tanner, Lt's Springette, Reid, Tynan and Capt Henry (R.A.M.C) wounded. Other ranks were 35 killed, 237 wounded and 35 missing. The night was spent in consolidating - no counter attack was made by the enemy. Remarks ALBERT COMBINED SHEET

3. The Letters of Arthur George Angell

Letter 1

On July 15th Arthur George was preparing to leave Andover after completing his training. He is writing to his brother, Charles Bernard Angell, a teacher in Co Durham.

11416 DCO 6th Wilts,

Rechaw Down,

Andover.

Thursday July 15, 1915

My Dear B,

Just a few lines to let you know we expect to go any minute now. I have been home since Sunday till last night and can tell you I feel pretty upset. I made my will and the Gov is going to take care of it, so if anything happens to me, may I ask you to do your best for my Darling wife. I should never have asked you lad if this hadn't happened but if you can afford it, will you send her a little of what I let you have when you went to Colledge? I have managed by hook or crook since I have been up to send and help her with the rent, but I know it will be impossible for me to do it now I am going abroad and 12/6 isn't much for her to do everything on. I hope old boy you won't be offended as I never meant asking you for it. I hope old boy you will be successful and get with Erin, it would be better than joining the army. I can't tell you my address because we don't know where we are going but I will drop you a line the first chance I get. Well brother I don't feel I can write any more. Don't let ma know I have made a will as she has never wanted me or Rosa like she ought since we have been married and I can't forget it. Cheer up old boy. Hope you are alright and that I shall see you again some day.

Your affec Brother,

George

Letter 2

3/11411 LGT (?),
14 Platoon DFO (?)
6 Wilts,
BEF.
10 Aug 1915

My Dear Mother & All,

Just a few lines to let you know I am keeping alright. I received your letters & paper & cigarettes quite safe yesterday. We have had much better weather than ??? ??? ??? and since we have been out here it is very ??? the farmers at home having such heavy storms. The crops out here look very well & they are busy harvesting. It is as well that you cannot picture our whereabouts at times. I can assure we have moved on again since I wrote last. Have been at our present destination since Friday I believe but I quite forget the days at times. We are at a farm & are sleeping in the farm & orchard. It is different to home, I can tell you but it's no good grumbling. We get plenty to eat. Everything is very dear. I have given 10d for some beans this morning that I could get for 3d at home. I also got some plums & I should say it was at the rate of 5" per lb. I see them advertised in the paper you sent me at 1' per lb. I have come across one or two Malmesbury lads. Dick Pike & E ??? came on Sunday & saw us. They are not many miles away from us at present but of course we don't know how long we shall be so near each other. Rosa told me Mary was down from London. It must seem very different to them to what the old times were. I suppose Charley will be off back to school end of week but no doubt I shall hear from one or the other when he goes. I heard from Erin. He told me he was getting no holiday for awhile. I am expecting to hear from him or Jesse today. C Bennett must have had quite an exciting time in the North Lea. I know the lad and he knows me. When you write again send U Tom's address & I will drop him a few lines the first chance I get. Now I must dry up and get to work. Remember me to everybody. Hope you are well.

Your loving son & Bro

George

I wonder if I shall come across Jack. You say he is still in hospital at Havre. We are some way from there.

Letter 3

During September Arthur George was on the front line near Bray in France.

3/11416 AGA
14 Platoon D Co
Officers Mess
6th Wilts
8 Sept 1915

My Dear Bro,

As I have an hour to spare I will try to scribble you a few lines. I received your letter & cigarettes yesterday. The lot before I received when I sent you the card but I didn't get the letter till 4 days afterwards. Well old boy I am glad to say I am keeping well. I am writing this in the trenches. We were in 2 days a fortnight ago then we came out & rested & moved on here. We have been in these since a week last Monday & I can tell you I shall be very glad to get out & have a look around again. One of my mates I was billeted with at Weston got wounded. He is in hospital at Boulogne & is going on alright. We lost about 20 killed & wounded when we were in for those 2 days but this time we have been lucky up to now, have had about 6 wounded. This is a hot corner we get plenty of shells & founts (?) & rifle grenades. We don't like the grenades. They are on you before you know where you are.

We had it wet for a couple of days last week & you should have seen us. It was too bad for words, up to our ankles in mud & water. Goodness knows what it will be like in the winter. We are badly off for water. It all has to be fetched about 4 miles in cans & jars so you can guess we get plenty to wash with. We have a swill & shave when we can spare the water. I do think differently to what you said in your letter & you would too if you only knew. The sights we see are cruck. We came through a place on our way here & every house was smashed. The church blown down & the graveyard upside down but the Crucifix was standing and looked as though it hadn't been touched. It was just the same as you have read in the paper. I had a letter from Rosa. She is alright & told me what you had sent. Thanks so much old boy. I don't mind a bit about myself but it's her I worry about. If it was only a bit different down Westport she wouldn't feel it as much but I try not to worry. I hope it won't be long before I am back & can come to see you all. If it is my luck I intend to have a scan round you all. I hear from Jesse or Rosa (?) every week also from Annie. It is getting cold now. Mornings we have to turn out at 3.30. Wouldn't hardly suit you would it. We have just been served out with a blanket & we can do with it. We have had nothing but our overcoats & sheets till now. It was a treat turning in these wet nights, wet through & up to our eyes in mud. Now I will dry up. Hoping you & the young lady are alright. Send some tobacco next time for change. Good luck old boy.

Millie has been with Rosa for a week again.

Your affect B

George

Letter 4

In October Arthur George was near Cambrai repairing trenches.

6.10.15

My Dear Bro,

I will try & scribble you a few lines if the B's don't stop me but they are busy on us just at present. By goodness lad we have had it rough lately. We have been in the trenches nearly six weeks now and the weather has been very trying at times. I received your letter and small box of tobacco of the 18th quite safely & the other night I had the box of cigs & tobacco you sent out of hand. Thanks so much old boy. The lighter so very handy. You are all most kind to me since I have been out here & I hope please God to be able to repay you. No doubt you have heard from Mother & had the news. Well lad we were in that lot a week last Saturday. Our Co was the only one out of our Regt to get in it & we suffered badly. We had 2 officers killed & 2 wounded and one of them has died since. By jove the mud etc is flying about. They have got us fixed but they will soon get tired. Cory (?) B James was the only Malmesbury lad to get killed. His was instant death. Was shot through the head as soon as he got outside our trench. W. Kaynes & A Strange are wounded but not serious. Had mothers letters yesterday. The first for nearly 3 weeks. The others must have got lost. She told me Erin was very poorly. I hope he is better by now but I guess he is run down. He has been working hard but one thing he gets well paid & we poor Ds don't. I hear from Rosa most days. She is alright & Beat and the boy have been staying with her for a bit. I think she intends going to Wales shortly & getting them to let Gladys come back with her for the winter. Thanks old boy for your kindness to her. I know I can trust you to see she doesn't want. I don't know when I shall post this as I have just been told we are going to be ??? tomorrow. Thank goodness for that. I will write to you as often as I can but you cannot form any idea of what it is like out here. You are doing your bit old boy where you are just as much as though you were out here so don't worry. Now I must wind up but I don't suppose I shall hand this in before Friday. Hope you are all keeping alright. Good luck to you & trust the wee lass is alright & that it won't be long before I can come to see you all. I had a nice box of peas from Uncle G. Tata old boy.

Your affec Bro,

George

Letter 5

Card

11.11.15

Dear Bro,

Just a line to let you know I am alright. We have had an awful rough time lately. The weather has been so bad. The mud comes up to our knees in the trenches. Have been expecting a line from you. I had a parcel & letter from Haswell. Remember what I told mother to tell you. You will find I am right. Don't be put off by anyone but stick it out. I have heard from Erin ??? letters. Kind regards to Haswell. Will write a letter shortly. Good luck Old Boy.

Your loving B

George

12 Nov 1915

My Darling Mother & ???,

It is Friday night but as I have a green envelope & am sending this to Rosa I thought I would scribble you a few lines too. Well Mum we came out of trenches on Sunday but we have had to come back in again today. I don't think we shall be in very long this time. That's if all's well. I think we go back for a rest & we deserve it. The trenches are worse I think than when we came out, but one blessing our Co. is in the Reserve trenches (that is the first lot) & not right up in the firing line. It was a sight to see the poor chaps come out today that we relieved. A good many had got stuck in the mud & they had to leave their boots in & come out barefooted. It is hard for you to realize it but the mud is up to our wrists & about as thick as pigs food. I had my usual from Barrow last night. Erin is better, Jesse said & gone back to work. I haven't heard from Charles. I keep thinking about him. I do hope he will be guided by what I have said. Jess said no Angell was at Kirton. I have never heard from ??? I see in paper W Rich is married again. I am writing this in my cookhouse but it's not like home. I am in water over my ankles but have a good fire. My health is keeping alright but don't know how much longer it will last. Now Goodnight Mum. Take care of yourselves. Kind regards to all friends.

Your loving Son & Bro

George

29 Dec 1915

Dear Kid,

Just a few lines in answer to yours of the 20th. I haven't received the fags yet, but the post is upside down but no doubt they will turn up alright. Well old boy I hope you made a good journey and enjoyed yourself. I saw quite a ??? You ??? & as you say it's a lot of money to pay for railway fare & especially so if you don't get a very enjoyable time at the end. I am sending this in a letter to Rosa as I know you will be down with her. Well old boy I spent Xmas in the trenches & if you could have seen me about 8 o'clock on Xmas morning. I was making my way as fast as possible through knee deep of mud & water to our Serg Major's place for my ration of rum. You know since I have been out here I am nearly a TT but I thought I must have a drink to keep Xmas up & I had some cigars Harold Cordey sent me 20 ??? alright. We came out Monday Eve but I guess before you get this we shall be back in again. You should see old Pete now. At present he is on guard in a ??? behind the Reserve trenches. We went into some trenches about a fortnight ago & we couldn't go up to the firing line by the communications trench as the water was too deep. So we had to wait till it was dark & go up over the top. Well the day we went in we got a ??? and of course old Pete must go & blue it & where we were going up at night we had to cross a lot of ditches. There were no planks to go over but they were all floating & as old Pete put his foot on one, ??? head he go into the ditch. He was a speck & all we could get out of him was he had lost his nerve. We got him out alright & up to the fire line & he had to stop like it till the next night. Of course he was well up the ??? He is a try & no mistake. Now old boy if you are called up get into something decent. Remember me to Erin. I hope you have had a good time. I will drop you a card as soon as I get the fags. Now tata old boy. Best of luck to you & hope the New Year will bring peace once more. I know you will look after my little girl while you are there. Pete wishes to be remembered to you. So long old boy.

From loving Bro George

Letter 8

10 January 1916

My Dear Bro,

Just a few lines in answer to your most welcome letter of the 4th. By gum you had a grand time. I only wish I could have been with you all. I should very much like to see the NE lads & perhaps I may yet. I am glad you saw my mate. He could tell you quite a lot. He is a nice chap & we always get on well. I haven't heard from him lately but I hear he has gone to the 8th. The parcel of cigarettes turned up the other night the same time as I got your letters. They were not sent off before the New Year. Well old boy I guess you are on your way back to Durham & stick there if you can is my tip. So ???'s finest has done it has he. No doubt I shall be hearing from him. He mustn't count his chickens yet. There's many a slip between the cup & the lip & I have possession yet & hope to retain it. Well old boy we spent Xmas, also New Year in the trenches. Came out last Tues night but I don't think we shall be out long. The weather has been better the last few days but it's in an awful state I can tell you. How is it all looking at home. You must write & tell me. I am glad you all went to Frapes Villas. Rosa told me all about it but a couple of letters she sent are lost & I didn't know J Green had been till I had a letter from mother. Now I must dry up. Take care of yourself lad & mind what you are doing. Kind regards to Edie & best of luck for yourself.

Your loving Bro

George

31 January 1916

Dear Kid,

I received your welcome letter this evening and was writing to Edie so am enclosing this with her letter. I also had a letter from Mother & she said you hadn't had your notice to present yourself so I conclude you won't go up on the 8th. I know you want to be gone but don't be in a hurry lad. I wish it was possible for me to do your share as well as my own. We are out at present for what we hope a nice rest, but I guess it's only to get us a bit ready for what is coming. We are right back from the firing line near a town. It's the same place as we were at the end of November where I had a bed to sleep on. Our Co. is not in the same billet as we were then so I haven't my bed this time. Still never mind it's better than the trenches. We have had much better weather lately. It's generally like it when we are out of trenches. When we were coming along the road the other day who should I meet but A Sealy of Fishy Reeves. They are out here with our Yeomanry, have been out here about 6 weeks. I had quite a long chat with them. It was a treat to meet someone I knew. Well old boy I am keeping fit & well, but I shall be glad to see Old England again. I don't know when I shall get my leave, they have been stopped for a bit, but we are expecting them to start again any day. Old Pete is about the same as ever. He carries on in the same old style. I haven't seen him today but will look him up tomorrow. Now old boy I must dry up & get to bed. Mind you get into something decent. I will kick your ass if you come out to the Wilts. Good luck kid. Let us know as soon as you are fixed up.

Your loving Bro

George

31 January 1916

Dear Miss Laws,

Just a few lines in answer to yours of 17th which I received while we were in the trenches. I am pleased to say we are now out for what we hope will be a nice long rest. We have had a very hard time since we landed out here last summer and the trenches this winter have been awful. I spent Xmas, also New Year in the trenches. It wasn't a very nice place as we were in water over our knees. Still never mind. I hope if all's well to spend the next under pleasanter & happier circumstances.

I had a letter from Charley today. He seems so keen to be off. I know he's no coward & would have come before if he could have had his own way but the lad doesn't know what he has to come to. If he comes out here I only hope it will be over before long & that he won't be needed.

You must cheer up & not get downhearted. My little girl did at first but she's a brick & I hope one day you will know her. Why don't you drop her a line. Charley would give you her address & she would be pleased to hear I think. Charley spent a good deal of his time when he was at Malmesbury at my place. My wife is very fond of him & would do anything for him. Some day perhaps you may meet us three pairs together & then you will understand why I & Charley are by ourselves.

We have had much better weather lately but at the time I received your letter it was awful rough. Yes I mean to come North if I get through this affair alright. By gum won't that be a day. I used to hear about sunny (remainder of letter missing)

Letter 11

Card

9 February 1916

Dear Kid,

Just a card to let you know I am alright & to wish you many Happy Returns. Have been expecting to hear from you so conclude you have not gone yet.

From AGA

Letter 12

Card

21 February 1916

Dear Kid,

Just received your ??? ??? parcel. No operation ??? Will explain when I write a letter but haven't time now. We are doing trenches. Cheer up old boy.

Sunday night 27 February 1916

My Dear Sister & Fred,

As I am now nice & comfortable & it is quiet I will try & scribble a few lines. You have had my ??? & no doubt have guessed where we have been. We were relieved Thurs eve and are back having a little rest. I have quite a nice billet, the best I have had since I have been out here & I am glad of it. We had some rough weather when we were up. More snow than I have seen for a long time & sharp frosts too. It wasn't half cold but there we suffed through & have forgotten it now. I heard from Mother & Rosa today & it seems you have had it the same. The snow has gone nicely today but it's a beastly mess everywhere but we are used to that now. I received your parcel safely. It was a treat. Thanks so much Sis. Your parcels seem to always come just right. I had it as we were off into the trenches & it came in very handy. Of course you have heard about Charl. I was so pleased. I got a letter from him the same time as your parcel & it did me the world of good. Poor kid. I'll do his bit & I trust he won't find much of his complaint. I know I am the Black Sheep but I'll do anything for our baby. He's my favourite. I always was a Rover but I guess this will finish me if I get through alright. I hear W. Angell is gone back to N.Z. unfit for further Active Service so I shan't be seeing him. I never heard from him. I say Sis do you know Rosie's birthday. It's somewhere in April but I'm blessed if I can remember the date. Find out & let me know when you write again. I heard from Erin the other week. I guess he is still busy. He must be earning money. I wonder how he would like it at 6" a day. Some people are lucky but I suppose mine is to come. Still never mind. I am alright & as fit as can be. We have been out here 32 weeks tomorrow. How the time flies. I don't know when I shall get my leave, it's such a slow job. Now I must dry up & get to (rest / post?). Trusting you are both alright. I am A1.

Your old worry,

George

In envelope to:

Mrs Crosthwaite (Matron),

1 Rampside Road,

Roose,

Barrow in Furness,

Lancashire,

England.

27/4 1916

Dear Charlie,

Just a few lines to let you know I am still knocking about. My luck was out with the passes. They stopped the day I was to have gone out. I suppose they will start again later on. I hope R let you know in time as it was no use your travelling all the way for nothing. We are having some lovely weather. At present it is real hot in the day. I hope you are getting the same as I guess you can do with it. I see by the papers the Germans have been quite busy all the way round. The blessed lot isn't over yet. Mother told me what you thought about doing. Don't get doing it lad. You would be in hospital in no time with what they infected you with & you would regret it. We are out of trenches and a good way back. It's more like home where we are now. A few hills etc so different to what it is up near the firing line. There it reminds me of the Fens. I don't think R will be going to the shop for a while yet. They can't get ??? ready for the Gov labour is so ???. I shouldn't wonder if it isn't towards July before she gets there. Now I must dry up. I hope you are alright & had a good time this Easter. Kind regards to Edie. Hope she is alright.

Your loving Bro

George

16-5-1916

My Dear Bro,

Just a few lines to let you know I am alright. I received yours about a fortnight ago. Glad you are alright & have been enjoying yourself. I guess you have been quite busy. I had a long letter from B Nouvall the other day. They were enquiring about you & Erin. They get but very little news from ??? now and they are pleased to hear from us. Jack is at home but they expect he will have to go again unless this new Bill. I see you will still be exempt & will not have to go up for inspection again. Have you heard that the third New Zealander has turned up. He is in France with his Regt and has been to London on leave and found Bessie out. I guess Ted must be here too or he wouldn't have known where to have gone to. He is a big fellow, over 6ft. Bessie said she sent me a photo of Ted. You can see who he belongs to. So you happened to spot that ditty of A Pike's. It wasn't bad was it. He is about to ??? He always was. We are still out of trenches. Have had quite a spell now. The weather has been very stormy but it's a ??? treat today. I only hope it will last. I had a letter from Mother yesterday. She said Erin had been on sick. He had injured his hand. Old Pete is still the same. He is often talking of you. I wish you could see him & hear him carrying on sometimes. Pete says wait till we 3 meet at Sunderland. We won't half give it a shaking. Well old boy I must dry up. Kind regards to Edie. Hope you are both alright. I have hopes I shall be in England before long so try & come down for a weekend if I do. Best of luck.

Your loving Bro

George

Letter 16

13-6-16

Card

Dear Kid,

I have arrived home at last ??? Malmesbury. Then off I go back next Tuesday. Do come down if you can but I must leave it to you. Pete asks to be remembered to you. He is the same. Take care of yourself.

Your loving Bro,

George

(Three weeks later Arthur George Angell was dead. He was killed on 2nd July 1916, the second day of the Battle of the Somme.)

Letter from (New Zealand) Cousin, Willie Angell to Charles Angell

2nd Military War Hospital

Holly Moor,

North Field,

Birmingham.

18-10-15

Dear Cousin,

You will be surprised to hear from me but I wrote to your mother and she was kind enough to give me your address and having nothing to do just now I thought I would scribble you a few lines. This is my first visit to England and I am glad to say I like it very much and hope to see a great deal of it before I leave. I don't know whether you knew that you had relatives in New Zealand. Your father was my father's brother. When the war began I enlisted and came to that nice little place called the Dardanelles and I can tell you we had quite a lively time there but I had the bad luck to get a piece of shrapnel in my right hand. It was thought at first that I should lose my right hand but I wouldn't let them take it off but they took one of my fingers the middle one but my hand is almost well. I expect to be out of the hospital in another week. I hope so at any rate as I am tired and sick of this life. I have never been shut up so long in my life but of course we get splendid treatment here but I would sooner be back in the firing line than be shut up here for weeks at a time. Some people came last week with a motor and took some of us for a drive. It was grand. I never enjoyed a ride so much before and I think England a very pretty place. Of course we didn't go far, only through Birmingham and North Field but it was nice. I have promised to go and see your mother when I get furlow. I am getting fourteen days. I should like to see you if I can. After that I suppose I shall very likely go to France. I would much sooner go to France than back to the Dardanelles. For one reason I want to see France and if I get there I shall be satisfied. I only had my finger taken off last Thursday, week tomorrow and my hand is rather stiff and a little painful at times but the stitches are making it sore. I have another brother wounded in Malta and another in the peninsular so you can see that there are three of us. Perhaps you will get tired of reading this scribble. I think I will close. Hoping you are in the best of health. Excuse my scribble. Wishing you will reply I remain yours Cousin,

Willie Angell

Private W Angell

16/550 Holly Moor

North Field

Birmingham

4. Postscript

The letters raise many more questions than can be answered here. We know almost nothing about Arthur George's brothers and sisters with the exception of our grandfather, Charles Bernard. Why did Charlotte (known as Lottie) end up in a convent in Saltash? Who are the other people referred to in the letters? Did Arthur George and Rosa have children?

I was however able to find out that Rosa married again, in 1920. Her second husband was Charles J Bailey, a neighbour in Malmesbury, who had survived the First World War. They had two children, Francis and Margaret. Rosa died in 1967. I wish I could have met her.

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