

About Arthur to Dollie:

Dollie and Arthur pledged to love each other for ever, and never be separated. When war broke out Arthur, 21, was already in uniform – a Lieutenant in the Territorial Army – and about to leave for training camp.

By the end of August 1914 Arthur had been posted to Hampshire with his regiment, and after years of waiting the two young people were at long last engaged to be married, just a few days after Dollie's 21st birthday. There followed a few months training in the relative safety of Malta, but then Arthur found himself in the trenches of the Western front – facing and surviving the horrors of Neuve Chapelle, Aubers Ridge, Festubert, Loos, Gommecourt, Guillemont, Ginchy, Fleurs Courcellette and Transloy Ridge. In mid October 1916 a battle-weary Arthur was granted leave to come home and finally be married to his sweetheart.

During the time they were apart Arthur and Dollie wrote to each other almost daily. They lived for each others letters and when battle prevented writing Arthur would endeavour to send a field service post card to let Dollie know all was well.

But before that fateful August we have a glimpse of the two young lovers, separated for the summer of 1913, as Dollie visits family in France with Mater, and Arthur has his Territorial duties to perform

Arthur to Dollie Letters: June/July 1913

The Pater:	Arthur's father, Edward Agius
The Mater:	Arthur's mother, Marie Concetta Agius (nee Muscat)
Florence:	Possibly Florence, widow of Arthur's eldest brother, Edward Agius
Laura:	Arthur's older sister; widow of Hugh Burns
Marie:	Arthur's older sister; married to Frank Denaro and living in Malta
Daisy:	Arthur's older sister; unmarried and living at home in Hampstead
Joe:	Joseph Agius, Arthur's older brother; married, living in Hampstead
Maggie:	Margaret Agius, Arthur's sister in law; married to Joe
Connie:	Arthur's older sister; married to Harry King, living in Gibraltar
Harry:	Husband of Arthur's sister Connie, living in Gibraltar
Alfred:	Arthur's older brother; unmarried, in the Territorials with Arthur
Edgar:	Arthur's older brother, unmarried, working up north in the family business
Tancred:	Arthur's older brother, a monk of Downside Abbey (aka Dom Ambrose Agius)
Dick:	Richard, Arthur's youngest brother; still at Downside School
Judy P.:	Friend of Arthur's sister, Daisy
Margery B.:	Tennis playing friend of the family
[your] Mater:	Dollie's widowed mother, Madam Noel
Barbara:	possibly wife of Dollie's older brother, Auguste Noel
Amy	Dollie's older sister, married to Albert Cocquerel
Edouard:	Dollie's older brother; in the Territorials with Arthur
"E.V.":	Dollie's older brother - Emile Valentin, in the Territorials with Arthur
Yvonne:	Dollie's young niece, returning to France
Pulman:	Officer friend of Arthur and Dollie's in the Territorials
Wolter	Friend of Arthur's in the Territorials; about to marry Janet
Beresford	Clergyman and Arthur's fellow Officer in the Territorials
Moore, Livingston, Rochford, Moreing, Reeves, Gilbert	Territorial Army Officer friends of Arthur, Alfred & Edouard
Mrs Samuel, Mrs Moore and Moreing's brother:	Family of fellow Officers in the Territorials
Mlle [Flury]:	Mlle Flury, Arthur's French tutor
Stubbs:	Arthur's tailor
Fusedale:	Arthur's sergeant in the London regiment, Territorials
Jery:	Sergeant Major at the Chelsea Machine Gun course

Wednesday 11th June 1913

Dollie goes on holiday to France for three weeks with her Mother; Arthur is bereft:

Arthur to Dollie

Belsize Grove, NW.

I miss you so much – I don't know what I shall do until you come back to me. We stayed on the platform this morning until the train went out – how I wished that I was in it with you. Then we gradually moved off – the family were very friendly, asked after all my family and so on, **Barbara** sending special messages to **Alfred**. We split up. **Edouard** and I went along to a military tailor in Victoria Street to ask about some shirts, then we walked to Charing Cross and took a bus into the city. **Edouard** was very friendly ... **Connie and Daisy** are out to lunch – so I am going to Earls Court alone...

The Pater wrote again – there is some talk of his going on to Vienna, so perhaps it was as well we didn't ask **your Mater** to wait the three extra days till Saturday for him. **Joe and Maggie** come back on Friday.

Please excuse this paper – it is the best I could find – and the letter, but I am afraid I've not very much news and it's so difficult to express how lonely and wretched I feel without you. Oh, well darling, please remember me to your **Mother** and sister – how is Yvonne?

Thursday 12th June 1913

Arthur tries to fill the long, lonely hours with a visit to Earls Court. He admires the machine guns - at length:

Arthur to Dollie

Leadenhall Street, EC

Thanks so much for your letter and two post cards. I love to hear from you ... Please write as often as ever you can, you don't know how I look forward to the postman ... I am so glad to hear you were not ill on the boat.

Yesterday after I had written to you, I didn't know what to do, to stay at home, go to Earls Court or play tennis. I eventually went to Earls Court ... Just inside the entrance was a place where they are going to exhibit the Scott relics when the "Terra Nova" comes home. She is at the Scilly Islands at present. Meanwhile they have set out various relics, Arctic and Antarctic, chiefly of the Franklin expedition, rather tragic: if you remember they all died and here you have gloves, handkerchiefs, buttons, etc. They also shew [sic] a days rations, little heaps of sugar, tea, pemmican, butter and biscuit, not very much.

I then went into a place called the "Ducal Hall" in which there was an aeroplane armed with a Maxim; also a complete Royal Engineers Park. I then saw a diver at work, lifeboat and Military ferry: then into a building full of naval and military exhibits – I got a man at Vicker's stand to shew me over the new Maxim – it is really a marvellous little weapon, a very great improvement on ours. I didn't see much after that: ... some tiny models (about 3000) of the fleets of the world; shot at the new cinematograph target and went over Fort George, a military armoured post. They had some of Major Richardson's dogs, ripping animals, Airedales for sentry work, bloodhounds for ambulance, as they have the stronger scent. Then I left and got home about five. The others came in soon after.

Last night I amused myself clearing out some drawers; a terrible collection, including unused Christmas cards, two years old. After that we played bridge and then to bed. **Alfred** went out on his own. This morning I was very busy up West and didn't get lunch till about ten minutes to two. ... This evening **Daisy** wants to play tennis late. Some people who have been very kind to **Edgar** at Glasgow are coming in to tea... Meanwhile the family are very kind and sympathetic; but it's all no use for I want you ... So write soon and often and tell me all about yourself.

Friday 13th June 1913

Arthur is still wretched without Dollie. Brother Alfred tries to distract him with an evening outing to the new aerodrome at Hendon, but to no avail:

Arthur to Dollie

Leadenhall Street, EC
2pm

Thanks so much for your sweet letter which I received this morning – I look forward so much to hearing from you every day...

It was all right about your address; as I told you, I asked **Edouard**. I felt a bit anxious as to whether you would receive my first letter as he said he wasn't sure about the address he gave me. Luckily it was the right one. Please thank your **Mater** and sister for their kind messages: which, they may be sure, I heartily reciprocate. Tell **Yvonne** I thank her for her kiss: am I to take it? ...

I am feeling awful wretched without you, little girl, and last night felt absolutely miserable. I went up to tennis with **Daisy** but didn't stay long and came home before her. After dinner I sat alone in the garden and read your letters; thinking of you darling, longing for you...

Alfred went up to Hendon to see some flying by night. He took two girls with him and pressed me to go to look after one; naturally I refused. I stayed out in the garden till quite late, alone with my thoughts of you. Then the **Mater** came out, so I went in with her.

I have just had lunch with **Alfred** ... I am going to H.Q. Please forgive me the shortness of this letter darling, but I am in the office and it is difficult to write. Do you know, sweetheart, it is three long weeks to-day before I shall see you again...

Saturday 14th June 1913

**Still missing Dollie, Arthur tries to fill his time by trying his hand at DIY;
Territorial training is on the cards for Arthur and brother Alfred:**

Arthur to Dollie

Belsize Grove, N.W.

Thanks so much for your sweet letter: I do love to get them, day by day and hate that for tomorrow, being Sunday, I shall have to go without...

Last night I had **Mlle** [Flury, French tutor] at six, then something to eat at 7.0 ... I left for H.Q. at half past: I had a lot of matters to talk over with **Fusedale**, my sergeant, as I go to Chelsea on Monday, until July 15th: when please heaven, you will already have been home eleven days! **Alfred** is due to attend the school for the same period but I do not know if he will be able to. **Mater** tells me that the **Pater** is arriving in Paris to-day and is going to stay there one day i.e. Sunday, and leave on Monday morning. **Joe and Maggie** came home yesterday afternoon: they and **Connie** between them have taken a house at Westgate, but I do not know how long for.

This morning I went to church as usual. I felt quite at a loose end when I came out: I miss you awfully darling ... So this morning after Confession I bought some paint and painted a small pergola in the garden for the **Mater** – quite a job – it took me from eleven to a quarter to one to do half of it. I came in then and changed into flannels. **Daisy** and I are going up to tennis.

Tomorrow **Alfred** and I are going to a parade at Southfields. It is a rehearsal of the King's Review on the 5th... By the way **Wolter** is going to marry **Janet** at Old Brompton Parish Church. I believe that is what **Pulman** says...

I'm glad you're all well – please thank the **Mater** for her kind message. I'm sure I've felt much better since you ... drank my health at lunch. I am longing for your return: it is a beautiful afternoon but the sun doesn't seem half so bright when you're away...

Sunday 15th June 1913

Arthur and fellow Officers on Parade in Wimbledon; Territorial training in the heat of Southfields:

Arthur to Dollie

Belsize Grove N.W.

Thanks for your postcard which you timed alright for I got it last night safe and sound. To-day I did miss your usual letter: thank heaven it's six days before another Sunday; I prize your letters so much. Yesterday after I wrote I went to tennis with **Daisy**. We didn't get home until past eight thirty: **Daisy** had promised to play a set, which she didn't begin until after eight and, naturally, I waited for her. We had supper *a deux*. How I wished I had been alone with you dear.

Then I went upstairs and cleaned my kit, as today we had a Commanding Officers Parade at Wimbledon. We went to eight o'clock Mass at the Priory and Communion, brekker at a quarter to nine and then to HQ in time for Parade in the Cumberland Market at 10. Our numbers today are 1006, which is really jolly good. We entrained at Portland Road for Southfields and marched on to the Common. We spent the morning practising Ceremonial for the 5th, then lunch – sandwiches, ham, tongue and cheese, fruit, apples and bananas, and plenty of shandygaff. **Mrs Samuel, Mrs Moore and Moreing's brother** came and had lunch with us.

The afternoon we spent in strenuous Company training then home at five fifteen. It was a most glorious day but awfully hot and dusty. **Pulman** asked whether "Mme N. had left" so I told him. Then he wanted to know whether you had gone too. As to which, alas darling, I was only too well able to inform him...

Monday 16th June 1913

London is fiercely hot; Arthur begins a new Territorial training course. Marie, Daisy and Connie go to Windsor to see the King review the Household Brigade:

Arthur to Dollie

Leadenhall Street, E.C.

You may imagine how agreeably surprised I was to receive a double letter from you this morning. Thanks awfully – they were so welcome especially after yesterday's long blank...

I hope you are enjoying yourself over there in Paris so that you will be all the better for your sojourn abroad when you come back to me. I am feeling perfectly fit D.G. The weather today is fiercely hot as yesterday. The **Pater** wrote to the **Mater** and says it isn't nearly as hot in Paris – where you are... The **Pater** is due to arrive some time between this afternoon and tomorrow – exactly when, we don't yet know. One thing is certain, it is just about a week too late... I have every hope and confidence for what the future has in store for us – so you must get rid of all your fears...

I've told you, in my letter of yesterday, how we got on at Wimbledon. The practise was a great success and in the afternoon we got through a lot of very useful work. I go to Chelsea for the first time tonight – **Alfred** is due to come up too, but I don't think he intends to, as he doesn't expect to stay in town for another month. We are all looking forward to the review especially as our numbers are so strong – they were 1006 up to yesterday and only one officer short.

Today **Marie, Daisy and Connie** have gone to Windsor to see the King review the Household (Mounted) Brigade. They left early and had seats and a special train, so I suppose that they've got on all right...

Wolter is looking very excited about his wedding – rather naturally, I suppose. Have you heard from Jane? I don't know whether **Pulman** is to officiate as best man or not. I'm afraid I'm rather busy, darling and had better get back to my work, if you'll forgive the shortness of this letter ...

Tuesday 17th June 1913

London swelters in the heat as Arthur starts his Territorials machine gun course; an “intruder” on the lawn, and the Pater returns from Paris to a joyous reception from the family:

Arthur to Dollie

Leadenhall Street, E.C.

Thanks so much for your dear letter which greeted me this morning. I love to get them – but the interval between each goes so slowly – and there is such a length of time to be endured before we meet again – happy day, how I am longing for it to come.

Yesterday afternoon it simply sweltered. To-day if anything it is two or three degrees hotter. I left the office early yesterday, went up to the baths in Finchley Road and had a swim – the first this year! I had intended to get a new suit after, but it was a bit late as I wanted to get to the bank before it closed at four, so I gave **Stubbs** the go-by. When I got home after the bank, I cleaned my kit and packed it then down to [Mlle] **Flury** at half past four. I stopped French at a quarter past five and had some tea ... Then to Chelsea – I got there in good time and changed. Two or three men there I knew one, who was up in March with me, has been given the guns of his battalion.

The Commandant said our (i.e. the machine gun) course was much “stiffer” than the ordinary one, and one in which he would be very strict. Our hours are 7 – 9.30 on weekdays, Saturday afternoons and practically all Sunday (about 9 – 3): exam not at the end of the course but one a week. Failure to pass in any one, failed one the course. So there is plenty of work to be done! ! It is quite a big school. We are only four officers and 10 sergeants, but there is a fair number in for the ordinary course. Our job makes us black with oil and grease and the accommodation is rotten and only one basin - you may imagine, heat and dirt. I changed there last night – I had rung up **Jery** the Serg. Major and he had advised me to wear service dress the first night. Tonight I shall wear the overalls I had made: rather fortunately, as the canvas suits they generally obtain for one at the School are not forthcoming this time.

I got home last night at about half past ten – it was very hot. I had some sandwiches and then jumped into a bath. In the middle of it, **Alfred**, who had wandered in in pyjamas, said he saw a dark shadow on the lawn. We thought it might be a man ... unfortunately it was only a chair! So back into my bath. Then the telephone rang – it was the **Pater** from Charing Cross, where he had just arrived from Paris. We all sat and waited for him on the balcony over the front door, **Alfred** and I in pyjamas, **Mater** and the girls in night-gowns and dressing gowns, at any rate in lots of lace and billowy stuff. The dear old **Pater** finally turned up about twenty past eleven in great form and laden with presents for the children. The **Mater** was so pleased to see him again – she didn’t know what she was doing for joy – they are a priceless couple...

Wednesday 18th June 1913

The heat wave continues; a crowd is expected at Belsize Grove for tea; Arthur's brother Tancred is home from Cambridge; the Pater feels the heat:

Arthur to Dollie

Belsize Grove N.W.

Ever so many thanks for your sweet letter which arrived safe this morning. I can picture you before my eyes now in the dress with the mauve spots ... I am so glad you are well. I'm awfully envious of your **Mater and Sister** and **Yvonne** who live with you all day – every day I don't see you, every second I am away from you, is time wasted and lost beyond recovery. Thank heavens there is another gone since yesterday. I am a day nearer seeing you again...

Last night I went to Chelsea as usual – the work is very interesting, but it is very hard work. **Tancred** came last night and slept the night – he took his degree at Cambridge yesterday afternoon. He is looking very fit and is going to Germany and Rome at the end of this year...

Please excuse this paper – I am writing in the garden – this was the best I could find. The children are at the other end with their nurses – they are very sweet. Crowds are coming in to tea to-day I believe...

Pater is in bed to-day – not very well; I think it's only the effect of his journey. The heat was excessive and he has been doing a lot. The weather here is very hot too; the last two days it has been 81° and 83° in the shade – and the city is sweltering. This evening I am going to Chelsea. Last night I came home on the top of a No2 bus from Victoria to Swiss Cottage – how I longed for you – everywhere swarmed with couples, how I envied them all...

I think the review on the 5th July is to be in full dress, which will rather improve the show. The others are all going out on Saturday night. I shall probably go to **Joe and Maggie's** – the others are going to see "Bunty Pulls the Strings", which we three have already seen... Please thank the **Mater** and **Yvonne** for their kind wishes and bear my regards to Sister. Oh well, darling I hope you have a good time at Marly. Take care of yourself, darling...

Thursday 19th June 1913

Dollie is worried about Arthur and the machine guns; the Marconi Affair; Ascot, cats and cooks and Kings; brother Alfred is promoted:

Arthur to Dollie

Leadenhall Street, E.C.

2.0 pm

Let me make amends and answer your question about the guns – there is absolutely no fear darling, so you must not worry your dear little head any more, will you?...

There is a great stir at present over the Marconi affair. The debate on the Committee's report was opened last night. Sir Rufus Isaacs and Lloyd George both defended themselves – the strain of their speeches was much the same – “If we've done wrong we're very sorry and won't do it again – but we don't know that we've done wrong, perhaps we made a mistake but we acted openly and honestly” – which excuses the papers of today sum up in one word “BUNKUM!” which so far as I can discover, is about the truth and I think the public feel the same.

At present we are full of racing: Ascot is now on – today is the day of the Gold Cup. The horse show also opens today but the big day is to be the 26th when the King and Poincare are going in state. More news still: **Alfred** has been promoted to his Company and gets his third star – it was in the Gazette of Tuesday night last.

Yesterday crowds came in to tea: I sat in the garden most of the time, spent some time with the **Pater** who was in bed. He is up and well again today D.G. I went to Chelsea as usual... I got in at 10.30: the girls were out at a Cinema – “Quo Vadis”. Alfred had just shot a cat in the garden ... it was found dead by the gardener in the front garden this morning, and turned out to be the kitchen cat. Terrible panic. Cook in tears. Luckily the gardener buried it before Cook saw that it had been shot – she thinks that it was poisoned.

I didn't have time to get to **Stubbs** – I hope to get there to-day, if I can get away – I shall probably get a black coat and waistcoat, but I have not decided anything yet... This morning I have been in the Courts with **Alfred** – a case of the **Pater**'s which unfortunately was given against us – I don't know yet whether we will appeal.

To-night the **Mater** has several people coming in to dinner – I am glad I shall be out...

Thursday 19th June 1913

Sister Laura writes to cheer Arthur up; excitement at the Ascot Races; the French President is due to visit London:

Arthur to Dollie:

Belsize Grove, N.W.
Friday even. 10.45pm

Just a line to greet you at Marly. I hope you'll have arrived safe and sound by the time you get this. It's rather late, but I've only been back from Chelsea a few minutes, had something to eat and here I am.

The others have gone up but **Connie** is still here writing to **Harry**. They have only just come in from **Joe's**. **Laura** wrote to me tonight – as she says “because I hear that Dolly is going away and I am very sorry for you” – it's rather sweet of her isn't it? She wants to know how you are and sends you her love.

I'm afraid I've little or no news since I wrote this afternoon. I came home and had [Mlle] **Flury** as usual, then tea and off to Chelsea – the work is awfully interesting. **Daisy** has gone to Maidenhead for the weekend – to **Judy Pile**; her people have taken a house near there.

This Sunday is Ascot Sunday so there will be a terrific crowd up river. Have you heard yet of the madman who tried to stop the gold cup race at Ascot – he ran out at the leading horse with a revolver in his hand? He stopped the leading horse which fell and the jockey was thrown, luckily neither suffered serious injury. The man himself was nearly killed – he has been operated on – they trepanned him, his skull was fractured I think. It appears the Suffragette performance at the Derby started the idea in his brain, as he rushed out with a Suffragette flag.

Everyone is looking forward to the French President's visit on Tuesday. Wednesday is being kept as Alexandra Day...

Friday 20th June 1913

Arthur is still in trouble about the guns; the etiquette of writing to the future in-laws:

Arthur to Dollie

Leadenhall Street, E.C.

I am awfully sorry that I should ever have neglected to answer your questions for of the many times that I have read over your dear letters, I always devote one to making a list of what you've asked me to tell you: but in the future I promise never to miss an answer. As for the machine guns, little sweetheart, as I have already told you, they are quite safe – and naturally the more one knows about them the safer they are. So no more fears, please, especially now that I am up at the school...

I went to Chelsea as usual last night. The work is getting very interesting – but it is rather tiring as we are on our feet the whole time from 7 to 9.30 and the guns are a bit of a weight – 60lbs each. We get a break of five minutes, but nowhere to sit. We have an exam at the end of each week and must pass in all to get our certificates.

The **Mater** had a lot of people in last night – I arrived in at ten-thirty, had a huge feed of sandwiches, half a bowl of strawberries, an ice, biscuits and chocolates. A fearful mixture - but I've survived. Thence to bed. **Alfred** went to HQ last night for a lecture by the Adjutant and didn't get in until two o'clock. . It turns out that he didn't shoot the Cook's cat the other night: it was another – but by a strange coincidence, the Cook's cat was poisoned the same night – so the gardener says and he buried the animal.

This morning I came down here as usual. I've just had lunch with **Pater**, **Joe** and **Alfred**. The **Pater** is ever so much better – to-day is quite cool and we have had some rain – I hope you'll have it fine for your weekend at Marly. **Alfred** is probably going to Antwerp to-night, but not for long. I told **Joe** you had asked after his health – he looked very pleased – so “thank you” darling...

Darling, about writing to the **Mater** – I think she would be awfully pleased to get a letter from you – nor would it be “funny” for you to write to her. After all she is going to be your Mother in law D.V. But if you feel at all shy or nervous, do what you think best, but my advice is write her a letter – she will appreciate it very much.

As for the **Pater**, I wouldn't write to him the same time as the **Mater**. I think it would be best if you write to the **Mater** first and later send a post card to the girls. Leave the **Pater** at any rate for a few days. You see it might look strange if you wrote to him before the **Mater** – it is more natural that, being a girl – (and a most adorable darling girl) – you should write to my womenfolk first. Don't you think so? This is rather involved, but I'm sure you'll understand what I mean...

I am longing for you to come back to me. Fourteen more days, long weary days without you. But if the time is long and the pain of your absence bitter, what a glory of joy and happiness I have to look forward to...

Saturday 21st June 1913

Disaster! Dollie's mother wants to stay in France for another week – what can be done? Territorial's friend, Wolter, arranges a stag do:

Arthur to Dollie

Belsize Grove, N.W.

Thanks so much for your dear letter which came this morning. How did you get on lat night chez Maurice, in your little white satin shoes? I hope you enjoyed it...

Darling I don't much like the idea of your being away until the 11th – do you think you may have to – its such ages to wait: the 5th is long enough and more than enough. Does your **Mater** really want to stay? I shall be awfully disappointed, but if your **Mater** is going to grumble at you all day long for bringing her away, I suppose you'd better remain the extra week. Shall I write to her and persuade her to come as she promised? I have a small grain of comfort in that you are not going away again until we go to Camp.

I'm afraid news is a bit scanty. This afternoon when you go to Marly I shall be at Chelsea from half past two until half past four. To-morrow we go to Southfields. The others are going to the Horse Show this afternoon. I don't think the **Pater** will appeal in his case. I got a card from **Wolter** this morning, for diner at HQ on Thursday at 7pm. I sha'n't give up Chelsea for him – I may go on afterwards... I suppose he'll think it unfriendly if I don't put in an appearance.

This morning I went to Church and Confession as usual. I miss you awfully, darling. Please heaven, to-day fortnight we will be together again ...

The weather was quite showery yesterday – today started fine and hot, but it is rather overcast now – I hope it won't rain. How is it with you? Au revoir, little darling – take care of yourself, for you're most precious and worth everything to me.

Sunday 22nd June 1913

More Territorial training; the Horse Show is considered a flop; Alexandra Day; more anxiety about the Mater's holiday arrangements:

Arthur to Dollie

Belsize Grove, N.W.

It was awfully sweet of you to write me that card so late last night. I was so pleased to get it – the time is long enough between Saturday night and Monday morning. You must have been awfully tired, poor little sweet heart. Last night I went to bed early: this morning up at a quarter past six and to seven o'clock Mass, as I had to be at Southfields at half past nine. We spent the morning doing Mekometer work – I wonder if you know what a Mekometer is? It is an instrument for finding out how far away an object is. During the last half hour the Commandant shewed us various points about a horse, how to feed him, render him first aid, etc. Very interesting, but it was awfully hot...

The others went to the Horse Show yesterday afternoon, but didn't think it very good. Today the girls have gone to the Piles' at Maidenhead – an invitation which included me – but it's worse than useless doing a job by halves, so I stuck to my guns. The greater part of this afternoon, I am ashamed to say, I spent asleep on my back in the garden, woken up by tea and the children. **Florence** has just come in: the others are not yet back.

This week promises to be a busy one, as Poincare arrives on Tuesday. Wednesday is Alexandra Day – **Daisy** and **Marie** are going to sell flowers - I still have some from last year. Darling, has **Mother** decided about the 4th of July yet? I am all anxiety and trepidation lest she should keep you ...

Monday June 23rd 1913

Dollie's Mater has settled her holiday plans; Pater is off to Scotland to the Naval Architects; London is made ready to receive Poincare:

Arthur to Dollie

Leadenhall Street, E.C.

Thanks awfully for your two letters, which came alright with the morning postman. How I look forward to them, especially on Mondays, after Sunday's long interval ... So the **Mater** has decided on **Amy's** for the rest of July – I hope **Amy's** health is better than when you left. I am looking forward to taking charge of you at the Battalion sports, which are to be held on the 19th at Kensal Rise. If it's fine it ought to be rather good fun. By the way I'll find out **Laura's** address and let you have it. Darling, don't be shy of the **Mater** – just write naturally and be yourself - there is nothing half so sweet or lovable in the world.

Yesterday after I wrote to you, the **Pater** called me down to have a game of billiards – the first I've played for a long time ... Then we had supper – after supper and coffee I went into the garden with the dogs and played with them for a bit... I sat there until close on ten dreaming dreams, thinking of you across the water, wondering what you were doing. I went in finally, it was rather cool – the others were playing bridge; so I watched them for a bit and went to bed.

Marie and **Connie** came in from Maidenhead just after I had got to bed. I think they enjoyed themselves immensely. They took our Italian friend with them ... **Pater** and he go to Glasgow tomorrow for a few days with the Naval Architects, to which the **Pater** belongs.

This morning I went to the bank ... Holborn is a mass of flags raised across the road, as Poincare passes that way to the Guildhall on Wednesday. Banners ornamented with the badges of the City Companies, Mercers, Dyers and of all manners of handicraft guilds, hold the centre of the strings of flags. Some of their mottoes are very apt – for example that of the Scriveners runs "Litera scripta manet" i.e. "written letters remain". Flags of the "Tricolor" abound and mottoes of Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite, surmounted by the red Phrygian cap.

Wednesday is Alexandra Day – **Marie** and **Daisy** are selling. Today is the Prince of Wales' nineteenth birthday. Please remember me most kindly to your **Mother** and Sister. Tell [cousin] **Maurice** to be careful of my treasure, priced beyond all other treasures to me...

Tuesday 24th June 1913

**Arthur's first machine gun exam; spellbinding Torchlight Tattoo at Chelsea;
Poincare arrives - Vive la France!**

Arthur to Dollie

Leadenhall Street, E.C.

Thanks for your dear letter which arrived this morning with a welcome companion for the **Mater**. She was very pleased to get it, and everyone wanted to read it, **Pater** and all. **Pater** and I were a bit late for brekker, as we went to church at 8.0 so I didn't see her open it or hear what she said when she saw it among her other letters, but she was pleased that you wrote and hadn't forgotten her...

Yesterday I went to Chelsea in the evening as usual - we are going to have our first exam on Wednesday. The Guards are giving a torchlight tattoo in the grounds of Chelsea Hospital on the 26th and 27th, for the Hospital Funds. Last night they were rehearsing it in the barrack square at Chelsea - it was an extraordinarily impressive sight... It was a dark night with few stars ... Then suddenly there filed on four or five hundred men, all bearing smoking torches in their undress kit, (white jackets and blue trousers), that wound in and out in ordered confusion, till at length they collected and halted, in a solid phalanx of flame, with torches raised aloft. Then a hymn was played, with each note a torch was lowered, until with the last dying notes, all were rested, butt on the ground - it was very impressive, and I am sorry that I shall be unable to see it, when brought to perfection.

I got home feeling awfully hungry - the others were just going to bed. This morning **Alfred** arrived home from Antwerp, very fit. He had a good crossing.

I have [Mlle] **Flury** tonight, as she couldn't come yesterday. Then on to Chelsea. The work is intensely interesting, but my finger ends are very sore as a result. So I wear an old pair of gloves.

Everyone is very excited over the coming of Poincare - the newspapers print articles in French, Kipling has written a poem for the occasion and the streets present a very festive and gay appearance. Vive la France! I wish it was you due today at half past three and not the President, little darling. I am longing for the dawn of Friday week and you, sun of my eyes. The time does pass slowly. I suppose you have decided to remain at **Amy's** during July. Please remember me most kindly to your **Mater** and Sister. **Edith** often asks after **Yvonne**. ...

Wednesday 25th June 1913

Hurrah! Dollie will be back as planned; Alexandra Day; Ladies Day; Poincare has at last arrived - shame about the rain.

Arthur to Dollie

Belsize Grove, N.W.

Thanks awfully for your dear letter of yesterday. I'm glad you think the house at Farnborough will suit you, and that it has a tennis court. As to coming to Camp on Ladies Day, I shall look forward awfully to seeing you, if it can be managed ... By the way, if it can be managed, we shall try and arrange for **Dick** to spend 10 days in Camp with us, coming to us on the 7th August, when his O.T.C. Camp breaks up.

I am pleased that your **Mater** has apparently decided definitely to return on the 4th – only nine more days. Have you got sunburnt at all? You darling, I am longing to see you.

Last night I went to Chelsea as usual – I am getting on quite well – we probably have our first test tonight. On Saturday we are going to fire at Wormwood Scrubbs, which is great fun. **Alfred** was out at H.Q. when I got back. **Pater** and his friend left by the midnight train and this morning wired to say that he had arrived safe and that **Edgar** was very well. We expect him back on Friday or Saturday.

Today it is fearfully windy and it poured for about half an hour before lunch. It is Alexandra Day on about three times the scale that it was last year. There is also a great fete and battle of flowers at Hendon Aerodrome. **Marie, Connie and Florence** have gone off up there. The President came into the City today for lunch at the Guildhall – a very big affair. I went to the City as usual this morning and had a lot to do, as I had to go West on two matters. I intended to walk up along the route Poincare traverses to the City – but the crowds were terrific and it began to pour with rain, so I came home by tube.

Please excuse my writing. I am in my room and have a most ancient and dilapidated nib – also the weird collection of strange notepaper that I've written to you on – Mater hasn't got any foreign left in the house, so I do the best I can... Everyone asks me "What news from Paris" or "good news today" – "how is SHE" and apparently are very kind. **Alfred** is going to play tennis with **Edouard** on Saturday and wants to ask him back here on Sunday...

Thursday 26th June 1913

The machine gun exam is cancelled; Battle of the Flowers at Hendon; friend Wolter is to marry soon – if only it could be Arthur and Dollie's turn to wed!

Arthur to Dollie:

Belsize Grove, N.W.

I was sorry to read in your letter that you were not feeling very cheerful. I hope that you have shaken it off. ... you must not get discouraged – or what shall I do?

I hope you enjoyed yourself at St Cloud. If the weather kept fine, you must have had rather fun. Yesterday after I had written to you, I walked to Finchley – it did seem empty without you, darling – and bought some stamps and this notepaper. I hope you'll let it make amends for the strange papers I've used before. I came home and had tea with **Mater** and **Daisy**. The others were at Hendon for the "Battle of Flowers" which was rather a failure. Then I went with **Daisy** to the club – she was playing in a match against another club, which we won.

I left at ten to six for Chelsea. Our exam never came off – the Commandant didn't put in an appearance. Everyone was fearfully "jumpy" – I suppose we'll have it to-night. By the way, **Laura's** address is ... It is her birthday, I believe, on Saturday. This morning I went to the City as usual, had lunch with **Joe** and **Alfred**, bought an opera hat and went to the barber. **Wolter** rang up about to-night – he wants me to go on after Chelsea. He was in a state of fearful excitement – lucky fellow. I wish it were you and I to be married on Saturday ...

Mater began to ask me the other day if I'd be able to spend some time at Westgate with the others and **Dick** – so **Daisy** broke in and said "Don't make any arrangements – he'll want to spend some time with **Dollie**" – and seemed to think it quite settled that I should come down to visit you – if I may, may I?

There is not very much more news. I shall put my evening clothes in a bag and take them to H.Q. on my way to Chelsea, and if I feel inclined after Chelsea go back there and change. I haven't decided definitely...

Friday 27th June 1913

Disaster! The opportunity to talk to the Pater about their future has been lost - for now; Arthur thinks the machine gun exam went ok; Wolter's stag night; aviation pioneer Claude Grahame-White flies overhead:

Arthur to Dollie

Leadenhall Street, E.C.

I'm sorry you're not feeling very cheerful. I hope I shall see you often though you are at **Amy's** and I at Chelsea... With regard to the **Pater** – hadn't we settled that we were to wait until your return before I asked him, with the twofold idea that he should see first with his own eyes, the extent of my love for you, and because if he says "yes", it would be nicer if we were together and more convenient if your **Mater** was in town... I'm afraid that that opportunity has not come. The **Pater** was back but a few days when he lost a case in the courts: and he has been in Glasgow since Tuesday. But if darling, there is any alternative you want me to try, just tell me and I'll do just as you wish...

As regards plans for the summer, my plans depend on you ... The girls were very pleased to get the cards this morning – it was sweet of you to send them. I wrote a long letter to **E.V.** [Noel] this morning. I want to write to **your Mater** but I have so little time to myself. You may be sure that if I possibly can I shall be on the platform at Victoria...

Yesterday after I wrote to you, I shoved my evening things in a bag and took them to H.Q. Then on to Chelsea – we had our first exam. We were all very jumpy – they hav'n't told us the marks but I have reason to believe that I got 22 out of 25 – I hope so. While we were there an aeroplane flew over – it was Grahame-White coming from Paris to Putney.

After Chelsea I went on to **Wolter** at HQ. We are giving him a canteen. They were about a dozen, **Pulman, Moore, Livingston, Alfred, Edouard, Rochford, Moreing, Reeves** and one or two others. We went on to the Empire, then the Café Royal, then a place called the Cosmopolitan. I ... came away early with **Rochford: Edouard** left just before us and **Pulman** and **Wolter** soon after, about twenty past one... Alfred and some of the others stayed on – Alfred didn't get in till four. **Edouard** was most friendly – chaffed me about my "mail" and said that soon, he supposed, my address would be Orpington! **Moore** and **Gilbert** asked me about you.

I've just had lunch with **Joe** and **Alfred**. There is a children's party on at home this afternoon: it is very fine luckily. Tomorrow **Wolter** and **Janet** get married at half past twelve – I want to go and will try to manage it, but I have to be at Wormwood Scrubbs at five to two to shoot. **Alfred** is going to play tennis at the flat with **Edouard** and the twins. **Mater** says **Pater's** friend, S. wants to go to the Horse Show with me tomorrow night, but I don't know whether he'll be back from Glasgow, where he has gone with the **Pater**. **Alfred** is staying on to dinner at **Edouard's** and I believe **Pulman** is going too.

I can scarcely realise that today week you return, darling. It seems so good to be true ... I am sure your thoughts helped me at the exam ...

Saturday 28th June 1913

**Dollie continues to worry about their future; the Children's party at the Grove;
Wolter's wedding; firing at Wormwood Scrubs!**

Arthur to Dollie

Belsize Grove, N.W.

9.35am

Thanks very much for the letter and post card which arrived with it this morning. Darling, you must try and not worry – it certainly is a bit of an anxious time just at present but I trust and really do think that things will be alright. The **Pater** hasn't said anything definite... He has been away all this week and won't be back until late tonight...

I'm pleased you enjoyed yourself on Thursday night – but it was clumsy of your cousin to upset the wine over you. What a shame. I hope your dress won't be spoilt – I liked it.

The children's party here yesterday was a great success. The children are so sweet. Last night when I came in from Chelsea, I found the **Mater** and **Connie** alone, **Alf** was out till 3.30am and the girls had gone to a pit.

I'll have rather a rush this morning – I want to go to Confession, then **Stubbs**, then I want to go to the Church at 12.30 to see **Janet** and **Wolter**. No-one seems to know where Old Brompton Parish Church is. Lunch at 1 somewhere in the neighbourhood – then to Chelsea to get my kit and on to Wormwood Scrubs to shoot by five to two! This evening the others are going out – **Connie** and I are going to **Maggie's** to dinner.

Tomorrow we go to Wimbledon with the guns. I don't know how long we will be out there but hope to get back in time for some tennis here in the afternoon.

Darling, this time next week, what a glorious thought, you'll be back here in London with me. I am longing to be with you again. It seems years since you left, the time has gone slowly without you – and I've almost forgotten how to telephone...

Saturday June 28th 1913

Arthur has had a hectic day, but still finds time to write to Dollie after dinner at “the Joes”; Weddings and Wormwood Scrubbs:

Arthur to Dollie

Downside Crescent
9.45pm

Just a short little note to bid you good morning on Monday – I’ve had rather a strenuous time today. Confession this morning, then **Stubbs** then to Brompton Parish Church for **Wolter** and **Janet’s** wedding at 12.45. **Pulman** was best man; there were very few people in church. Janet’s mother, Dot and two men; Harold and Mrs Moore, Guy Livingston and his wife, Mrs Bear, and a few others – **Beresford** officiated.

Janet looked awfully sweet in a white coat and skirt, and a white straw hat with a big white ostrich feather – a bouquet of white carnations and lilies of the valley. The wedding went off well – it was a glorious day. They both looked very happy. I had to leave before they came out of church – had lunch of two sandwiches and chocolate, then to Chelsea, got my kit and to Wormwood Scrubbs by ten to two – a most terrific rush. I was shooting there until half past five – it was very hot – I got back at half past six, changed and came round here with **Connie** to dinner.

Daisy has been playing tennis, she has just come round. Tomorrow I go to Wimbledon with the guns – in the afternoon I hope to play tennis. **Edouard** is coming. I am looking forward to a post card ... I hope you are well and are taking care of yourself...

Sunday 29th June 1913

Arthur goes to Mass, an exhausting machine gun practise, and still finds energy to play tennis in the summer heat; only five more days till Dollie's return:

Arthur to Dollie

Belsize Grove, N.W.

I've just had rather a strenuous day – it has been blazing hot. This morning I got up at six fifteen and went to 7 Mass. I had brekker at eight, then to Wimbledon. We had the machine guns down and did a lot of hard work, mounting and dismounting them to suit the ground and keeping under cover. We were there from ten to twelve, so I didn't get home until one, had a bath and changed into tennis kit.

This afternoon **Margery Bellord** came in. We played tennis hard – **Edouard** went up river so couldn't come. We went on playing until 7 o'clock – then changed into a "smoker" and here we are. Supper has been put off until a quarter to eight. What have you been doing – I hate Sundays with no news from you – Thank Heaven this is the last you'll be away. Five days from now and we'll be together D.V. ...

Monday 30th June 1913

Cab strikes in Paris; the Mater's holiday plans fall through; Arthur may have to wait an extra day to see his beloved Dollie:

Arthur to Dollie

Leadenhall Street, E.C.

Thanks so much for your two dear letters. To think I can only expect three more – but then I shall have you, my darling, home here with me ... I am longing for your return.

I hope you were not shocked again at the Theatre as you were the first time. I read in the Telegraph of this morning about your cab strike. It seems to have been very complete, though brief... **Alfred** told me last night that “your house was off” – he was at **Edouard's** all Saturday afternoon and evening. I am sorry, it sounded rather nice from the description – better luck next time. I must try and find time to write to your **Mater** – I don't get much to myself with Chelsea on.

You may rest assured darling that I did not speak to any females last Thursday... **Gilbert and Moore** were very nice about you – **Moore** wanted to know how you were, if you were still away etc and was very pleased to hear that you will be back for the review.

We didn't do much after supper last night. **Alfred** and I strolled out behind the garden for a few minutes – it was a glorious night but very hot. The others played bridge; we went to bed at 10.10.

It is very hot again today. I've just had lunch with the **Pater** and the Manager of our Alexandria business. This evening Chelsea again and perhaps another exam. This morning I came to the City with **Joe** and **Alfred**. I am very disappointed that I shall not be able to meet you on Friday ...

Tuesday 1st July 1913

Arthur is anxious about Dollie's train from Paris; another exam on the guns and brother Alfred travels north on business; Territorial Camp is less than four weeks away:

Arthur to Dollie

Leadenhall Street, E.C.

Thanks so much for your sweet letter of this morning; and for your good wishes for the month. Good luck and happiness to you also – which is selfish really, for what you want, that want I also.

Darling, I've been looking up the timetables about your trains. By the Dieppe route there is only one train in the day; which leaves Paris (St Lazare) at 10 in the morning and arrives at Victoria at 6.10 in the evening. I have looked it up in both the June and July timetables – apparently the slower train which arrived at seven ceased running on June 24th. So, please heaven, I hope to see you on Friday at Victoria, if you're up to time, or within half an hour of it...

I am rather busy this morning and have to be in court as soon as I can get up there, so I hope you'll forgive me a short letter.

Last night I went to Chelsea as usual. We are to have another exam (our second) tonight. This morning **Alfred** went north to Newcastle – he will be back for camp in about three and a half weeks.

There is not very much news in town – the weather continues fine and hot... Has your purple and blue dress recovered from the glass of wine? How are you feeling little girl: I am longing for Friday – only three days more! I hope you'll have a good journey...

Wednesday 2nd July 1913

Exam success and tickets for the Review; Arthur is counting the hours to Dollie's return:

Arthur to Dollie

Belsize Grove, N.W.

Only until the day after to-morrow and I shall be with you again or if only for a few minutes at Victoria – I am feeling wildly elated – it seems too good to be true.

Your dear letter came safe and sound this morning: I'm sorry I wasn't able to let you have a letter on Monday morning. I thought that if I posted it on Saturday you would be bound to get it as I wished.

... I was in Court all day with a case that dates from 1903 – got in late – had [Mlle] **Flury**, tea and changed, as I was wearing a morning coat. Then off to Chelsea. We had an exam (the second of four). I did rather well D.G. and got, I think, 24 out of 25. When I came in I found the others were all at No.22 so I had something to eat and went to bed – the others came in soon after.

This morning I went to Court again – our case was adjourned at half past twelve. I came home to lunch. **Edouard** has just rung up – he was very friendly and wanted to know if I had a ticket for you for Saturday. We all applied for them in the middle of last month, **Alfred** for 6, I for 2. **Edouard** said he got his at HQ last night. I've just rung up HQ: they say the Adjutant has them, so I've just written to him and hope to get the tickets tomorrow.

I must go upstairs and overhaul my kit some time. Darling I'm feeling awfully excited about Friday – the time is sure to drag until then most awfully slowly... I am dying to see you again, little darling and feel absolutely incoherent when I think you'll be here within 50 hours. I hope you have a ripping journey...