

Birket-Foster, AE

Arthur was the youngest child of six born to Myles Birket and Christina FOSTER nee Lorimer, who were married in Edinburgh 1881. He was born of 17 June 1893. Arthur's siblings were Myles Birket 1884, Dorothy Margaret 1885, John Lorimer 1886, Mabel Christine 1888 and Robert Spence 1891. All six children were born in Willesden Green. The children's father was a well-known composer of music and their grandfather, also named Myles Birket Foster (1825-1899) was a water colour artist of some regard.

In 1901 Arthur and his family were living at 121 Sinclair Road, Hammersmith. Towards the end of 1901, Christina Foster died aged 49. Following this sad event the Fosters moved to Bedford Park and were residing at 14 Woodstock Road.

The eldest sibling, Myles Birket III married Catherine Beatrice Trent in Fulham in 1907. He died in November 1918.

Arthur Edward joined Magdalen College School in 1906 for six terms, joining his brother Robert Spence there (1902-1910). Arthur was a member of the Debating Society. In 1908 after gaining his Junior Certificate, he left to work in London and became an engineer. When war broke out, he was an engineering apprentice for the North Eastern Marine Engineering Company and was studying at Chelsea Polytechnic.

Both Arthur and Robert served their country during the Great War, Robert being ultimately a Lieutenant with the Kings Africa Rifles, whilst Arthur served as a Second Lieutenant with the Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (KOYLI). He had enlisted aged 21 to the 18th (1st Public Schools) Battalion Royal Fusiliers on 3 September 1914 and saw service in France from November 1915 as Private in his Battalion's Machine Gun Section. He was wounded in March 1916 and in convalescence was admitted to 4th Officer Cadet Corps in Oxford. He was

commissioned 5th August 1916, and returned to France in November 1916 in his new unit. It was a cold and muddy winter in the Somme front line trenches. The Battalion alternated with a front line position at Morval and rear Billets and Camps at Guillemont and Carnoy. Fighting was sparse, other than occasional heavy shell bombardments. At the beginning of April 1917, they occupied front line positions in Havrincourt Wood with the intention of establishing a line of resistance from Metz-en-Couture to Bertincourt. The operation was constantly interrupted by sniper fire. Arthur was one of two officers who became casualties during the arduous construction work.

2nd Lieutenant Arthur Edward Foster was killed in action on 9th April 1917. He is buried at Neuville-Bourjonval British Cemetery, Neuville. Plot A .12.

Arthur's father, Myles Birket Foster II continued to live at 14 Woodstock Road for the remainder of his life, and died at the age of 70 in December 1922.

Robert Spence Foster, CMG, OBE remained a Bachelor and died at Charing Cross Hospital on 1st September 1947.

Dorothy Margaret, Arthur's elder sister, married [Geoffrey Bennock Strahan](#) in 1912. q.v.