

Pensioner Details
<i>Pensioner name:</i> Charles Belcher
<i>Person ID:</i> GC1002
<i>Your name:</i> Kath Boothman and Tony Dobbs
<i>U3A group:</i> SW
Part One: Birth and Family
1: When and where was your pensioner born?
Charles was born 1840 in Woodbridge in the parish of Withington, Gloucestershire (GRO Reference: 1840 J Quarter in NORTHLEACH Volume 11 Page 355) mother's maiden name Belcher.
2: Who were your pensioner's parents? Record any details you can find out about them here (e.g. occupation, religious affiliation, whether they could read or write)
<p>He was the illegitimate child of an agricultural labourer's daughter, Amy Belcher, then aged about 24. At his baptism on 23 August 1840 his mother was recorded as 'spinster'.</p> <p>(Baptism recorded on Ancestry Gloucestershire Archives; Gloucester, Gloucestershire; Gloucestershire Church of England Parish Registers; Reference Numbers: Gdr/V1/392). Later, on his marriage certificate, referenced below, his father is identified as Thomas Belcher, Labourer but no more details have been discovered.</p> <p>Charles' mother Amy Belcher was baptised in Woodbridge, Withington on 31st December 1815. Her father was a labourer William Belcher and mother Sarah (Gloucestershire Archives; Gloucester, Gloucestershire; Gloucestershire Church of England Parish Registers; Reference Numbers: P374 in 1/5). William and Sarah appear later in Charles' story when he is staying with them in 1851(ref2).</p> <p>Amy married Thomas Matthews, labourer, on June 18th 1849 in Withington parish church. Amy made her mark but Matthew signed his name. Robert Belcher (signed) and Mary Ann Belcher (mark) were witnesses. Thomas's father was recorded as John but the space for Amy's father was blank (Gloucestershire Archives; Gloucester, Gloucestershire; Gloucestershire Church of England Parish Registers; Reference Numbers: Gdr/V1/429)</p> <p>In 1861 Amy Matthews (ag lab) 46 was living with Thomas Matthews (ag lab) 56 in Withington with children Jane 16(ag lab), Ann 10, Joseph 6 and William 1 (Class: RG 9; Piece: 1788; Folio: 18; Page: 8)</p> <p>In 1871 Amy Matthews is a widow still living in Withington with Joseph Mathews son ag lab and Mary Ann Belcher niece 8 (The National Archives; Kew, London, England; 1871 England Census; Class: RG10; Piece: 2651; Folio: 84; Page: 10).</p> <p>Amy Matthews was buried in Withington in January 1878 (Gloucestershire Archives; Gloucester, Gloucestershire; Gloucestershire Church of England Parish Registers; Reference Number: P374 in 1/15).</p>
3: Did your pensioner have any siblings? What were their names, and how old were they in relation to your pensioner? Use this space to record anything else you have found out about them (e.g. occupation, later life)

The picture is very confused – the Belchers of Withington were evidently a large extended family, all agricultural labourers, many of them having the same Christian names. It seems likely that Charles had no direct siblings but probably several half siblings.

In the 1841 census there is a Mary Belcher in the same household, age 2 when Charles is 1 (ref1). However, The only record of a Mary being born in Withington around the correct time is for a Mary Ann Hillier Belcher, mother Elizabeth, spinster (GRO Reference: 1838 S Quarter in NORTHLEACH Volume 11 Page 350), baptism record (Gloucestershire Archives; Gloucester, Gloucestershire; Gloucestershire Church of England Parish Registers; Reference Numbers: Gdr/V1/384). If this is the correct person she is not a sibling of Charles.

In 1851 Charles is 10, living with grandparents, and there is a granddaughter Amy, 12 (b Withington) (ref2). It is possible that Amy and Mary are the same person but I cannot find a birth record for an Amy Belcher in Withington. So I conclude she is not a sibling of Charles either.

After her marriage to Thomas Matthews Amy has at least 4 children so these would be half siblings to Charles all considerably younger than Charles and never living in the same property as Charles at census times.

Part Two: Marriage and children/ boarders

1: Did your pensioner marry? What was their spouse's name, and when and where did they marry them? Use this space to record any extra details you can find out about their spouse (e.g. when/where they were born, their occupation). **Note:** You can also use this space to record any details about people your pensioner boarded with.

For the census of 1861 Charles is living in Weymouth, in the barracks of the 1st battalion 11th Foot Regiment. He is 21 and a Private (Class: RG 9; Piece: 1350; Folio: 138; Page: 8). His service number might have been 728 but this has not been confirmed (<https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/namesearch/?FirstName=charles&Surname=belcher&RecordType=NotSelected&RecordDateStartYear=1700&RecordDateEndYear=2021&Step=1&ReceivedGallantryAward=False>) This battalion appears to have been mostly on Home duties in the period Charles was serving based on this quote '*The 1st battalion returned from New South Wales in 1858, and in 1860 was at Aldershot. The home depot was at Fermoy*' (<https://www.theoriginalrecord.com/database/search/decade/187>)

There does not appear to be a record for Charles in 1871, possibly because he is still in service and maybe in Ireland, Fermoy. I have not been able to locate any record of his discharge from the army.

Charles married Harriet Wakefield on 1 Nov 1874 in Northleach, Glos. Harriet was born in Fairford, Glos. on June 5th 1857 to Thomas, a carpenter, and his wife Jane, maiden name Harris (GRO Reference: 1857 J Quarter in CIRENCESTER Volume 06A Page 304). Her baptism, aged 6 on December 25th 1863, is recorded in Fairford (Gloucestershire Archives; Gloucester, Gloucestershire; Gloucestershire Church of England Parish Registers; Reference Numbers: Gdr/V1/482). Banns for William and Harriet's wedding (Gloucestershire Archives; Gloucester, Gloucestershire; Gloucestershire Church of England Parish Registers; Reference Numbers: P231 in 1/19). Harriet was 17 at the time of the wedding although on the marriage certificate she is noted as 19 and Charles as 28 (it seems his actual age would be 34). Both signed their names and her father Thomas is described as Wheelwright and Charles' father, identified as Thomas Belcher (!) is a labourer (Gloucestershire Archives; Gloucester, Gloucestershire; Gloucestershire Church of England Parish Registers; Reference Numbers: Gdr/V1/502).

In 1871 Harriet 13, is living with her father Thomas Wakefield, carpenter 74, mother Jane 13, sister Mary 11 in Fairford (The National Archives; Kew, London, England; 1871 England Census; Class: RG10; Piece: 2648; Folio: 82; Page: 34)

Harriet died at Westbury-on-Severn in 1893. She was living at Stantway an area of Westbury on Severn and was buried on February 3rd in Westbury parish church, recorded as 'Wife of the postman'. (Gloucestershire Archives; Gloucester, Gloucestershire; Gloucestershire Church of England Parish Registers; Reference Number: P354 in 1/17).

2: Did your pensioner have any children? What were their names, and when they were born? Use this space to record any extra details you can find out about them (e.g. occupation, where they lived later in life)

Charles and Harriet had 4 children, two daughters Annie Maria (b. 1875) and Amy Jane (b. 1877) and two sons, George (b. 1879) and Frederick James (b1890). The first three were born in Northleach, Gloucestershire and Frederick was born in Newnham.

Annie Maria Belcher was baptised on 25th July 1875 (Gloucestershire Archives; Gloucester, Gloucestershire; Gloucestershire Church of England Parish Registers; Reference Numbers: P231 in 1/9). She married Charles Bullock on 6th June 1892 in Westbury on Severn, he was a Labourer. Charles, Letter Carrier, was a witness and signed his name as did all others. The other witness was her sister (?) Jane Belcher (Gloucestershire Archives; Gloucester, Gloucestershire; Gloucestershire Church of England Parish Registers; Reference Numbers: P354 in 1/19). In the 1911 census Annie and Charles Bullock are still living in Westbury. They have 5 children living with them but record a total of 9 children 1 of whom had died (The National Archives of the UK (TNA); Kew, Surrey, England; Census Returns of England and Wales, 1911).

Amy Jane Belcher birth registration in Northleach in 1877 (FreeBMD. England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2006.). She marries Francis Hubert Hogg on 26th December 1898 in Westbury (Gloucestershire Archives; Gloucester, Gloucestershire; Gloucestershire Church of England Parish Registers; Reference Numbers: P354 in 1/19). Francis is an Engineer living in Aston but born in Stonehouse, Gloucestershire. Our postman is a witness (Post messenger) as is her brother, probably, George Belcher. Both sign their names though Charles' is not as neat as it was on Annie's certificate two years previously. In 1901 Hubert and Amy are living in Aston, Warwickshire (Class: RG13; Piece: 2886; Folio: 121; Page: 27). In 1920 Amy and Francis (as Hodges) are in Pennsylvania with a son and two daughters (Year: 1920; Census Place: Greenville Ward 6, Mercer, Pennsylvania; Roll: T625_1603; Page: 9A; Enumeration District: 50). They appear to have immigrated in 1908 (from details in Year: 1910; Census Place: Greenville Ward 6, Mercer, Pennsylvania; Roll: T624_1374; Page: 4A; Enumeration District: 0149; FHL microfilm: 1375387). She appears to have arrived in New York from Southampton on 26th September 1907 (Year: 1907; Arrival: New York, New York, USA; Microfilm Serial: T715, 1897-1957; Line: 25; Page Number: 242). Amy Jane as Jennie Hodge died in 1956 (Ancestry.com. U.S., Find a Grave Index, 1600s-Current [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012.).

George Thomas Charles Belcher was baptised on 31st August 1879 in Northleach (Gloucestershire Archives; Gloucester, Gloucestershire; Gloucestershire Church of England Parish Registers;

Reference Numbers: P231 in 1/9). He is living with his parents for the censuses of 1881, 91 and 1901 (refs 5,6,7). In 1904, 23rd May he marries Florence Rosina Brobyn in Westbury on Severn (Gloucestershire Archives; Gloucester, Gloucestershire; Gloucestershire Church of England Parish Registers; Reference Numbers: P354 in 1/19). In 1911 George 30, deputy sexton is living with his wife Florence and daughter Phyllis 6 and two boarders in Westbury (The National Archives of the UK (TNA); Kew, Surrey, England; Census Returns of England and Wales, 1911). George dies on 18th February 1945 in Westbury on Severn (Ancestry.com. England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1995 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010.)

Frederick James Belcher was baptised on December 1st 1890 in Newnham, a parish of Westbury on Severn (Gloucestershire Archives; Gloucester, Gloucestershire; Gloucestershire Church of England Parish Registers; Reference Numbers: P228 in 1/11) . The entry is marked 'Private Baptism' with the extra note 'Received into the Church Jan 4th 1891'. He died aged 17 months on May 14th 1892 (Glos. C of E Burials 1813-1913, entry 355)

Part Three: Work

1: What occupation was your pensioner recorded as doing in census years? Please make sure to state clearly which year you are referring to

1841 – aged 1
1851 – aged 10, listed as 'grandson' in the house of his grandparents William and Sarah Belcher
1861 - he appears as a private in the Enumeration Book at the Weymouth Barracks, Dorset
1871 – no record found
1881 – Rural Postman
1891 – Post Messenger
1901 -- Rural Postman. He is a widower, his wife Harriet having died in January 1893.

In 1873 Charles was appointed Messenger 'Northleach to Coln Rogers' (British Postal Museum and Archive; Series: POST 58; Reference Number: 84). Coln Rogers is a parish about 4 miles from Northleach in Gloucestershire.

In 1874 Charles was appointed Messenger 'Northleach to Coln Rogers Cheltenham' (British Postal Museum and Archive; Series: POST 58; Reference Number: 86)

In August 1890 Charles was appointed as Postman in "Westbury on Severn to Bollow" (British Postal Museum and Archive; Series: POST 58; Reference Number: 91)

2: What occupations were people living with your pensioner (e.g. spouse, children, boarders) doing in the census years? Please make sure to state clearly which year you are referring to

1841 – There are 2 agricultural labourers, Charles’ grandfather William (65) and Richard Belcher (also 65). Also present are Charles’ mother Amy (25), Robert (15) and Mary(2). Charles is aged 1.

1851 – Charles’ grandfather William Belcher (75) is still an agricultural labourer. A girl Ann (12), who may or may not Charles’ sister, is also listed as agricultural labourer.

1861 - a large number of fellow- privates, presumably all army recruits

1871 – no record found. Possibly still on military service somewhere.

1881 – Charles and his wife Harriet are living only with their children Annie (6) a scholar, Amy (3) and George (1).

1891 - as before, only their own family. Son George (11) is a scholar, daughter Jane (ie Amy Jane)(13) is not. There is also a son Frederick (4 months).

1901 – Charles and his son George (22), a labourer, are in the same house as Alfred Allen (55) a stone mason, his wife and 2 children, and a boarder Richard Thomas (22), a basket maker. Charles and Alfred are both listed as ‘head’, implying two households sharing one dwelling, probably rented.

Part Four: Anything Else/Later Life

Please use this space to record anything else you have found out about your pensioner. For example: what do we know about their life after retirement?

Nothing known about his life after retirement. Charles died aged 64 at Westbury-on-Severn and was buried on March 14th 1907. (Glos C of E Burials 1813-1988) the cause of death was recorded as pneumonia, heart failure.

Part Five: Your Sources

Please use this space to record the sources you have used

Ancestry, notably Gloucestershire records: C of E Burials 1813-1988

C of E Baptisms, 1813-1913

C of E Marriages and Banns 1754-1938

1. 1841 census for Belcher family William 65, Amy 25, Robert 15, Mary 2 and Charles 1 Class: HO107; Piece: 351; Book: 19; Civil Parish: Withington; County: Gloucestershire; Enumeration District: 16; Folio: 16; Page: 2; Line: 22
2. 1851 census for Belcher (Belche) Charles with Grandparents William 74 ag lab, Sarah wife 55, Amy granddaughter 12, Charles grandson 10 Class: HO107; Piece: 1969; Folio: 295; Page: 13;
3. 1861 census Charles in Weymouth Barracks Class: RG 9; Piece: 1350; Folio: 138; Page: 8
4. 1871 census – not found
5. 1881 census Charles 34 Harriet 23 Annie 6 Amy 3 George 6 living in Northleach Class: RG11; Piece: 2559; Folio: 105; Page: 21
6. 1891 census living in Westbury on Severn Charles 46, Harriet 33, George 11, Jane 13 and Frederick 4 months. The National Archives of the UK (TNA); Kew, Surrey, England; Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891; Class: RG12; Piece: 2007; Folio: 26; Page: 1
7. 1901 census Charles 59 living with George 22 in Westbury on Severn Class: RG13; Piece: 2417; Folio: 6; Page: 4