

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday January 2nd, 1946

My dear All,

We are a depleted gathering, Reg, Dot and family left us exactly at five a.m. on Thursday last year and safely arrived in Kroonstad the same evening at 6.30. They left again on Friday morning and a wire from them stated that they found everything in order when they reached Potgietersrus on Friday evening. The weather, when they left us, was perfect for travelling, not too hot or cold. We hope to get post in due course giving details of their trip. It is Monday evening, the last day of 1945 and no doubt you, as well as the rest of the family circle, are looking forward to a happier year beginning tomorrow. We are hoping to hear if Arthur is arriving in the next few days and if Douglas and Co will be coming down with Lynne who is due back at work on the 3rd.

On Saturday, baby Dan was rather upset in his tummy. Blodwen thinks it must have been caused by his eating a small portion of Xmas pudding. He did not show any temperature but in the evening, he was worse so the acting Railway doctor was called in about 9.30. He returned shortly afterwards with certain medicine and I am glad to say the trouble has practically stopped. Of course he, baby Dan, has been cutting more teeth. He has tried to take a few steps but one cannot say he is walking yet. Roy and Trevor are very keen on the new swimming bath in the Park. Trevor claims that he can swim. Roy goes into the big bath but Trevor should not do so unless his Dad is with him.

Since Dot and family returned home, the tent has been taken down and the three bigger children get a good deal of exercise by climbing and swinging on the vine trellis. I am afraid they are finding it rather dull as they miss their school chums. Trevor is anxious to get back to Uitenhage but Roy thinks Cradock is a better place than Uitenhage. He would like to live here. Baby Dan is very friendly and seems fond of coming to me. His crawling ability is marvellous for rapidity. We are both concerned about Joe's state of health. All the doctors that have examined him say there is nothing organically wrong with him yet he is falling off in weight and is evidently far from well. He is to be medically examined on Saturday when he gets home and we hope something will be done too improve his working conditions. There are no Railway workshops here or else he might get transferred here. He has interested himself in doing some jobs about the house. The blind cords needed attention. He has fitted the key to the front door etc. Unfortunately the garden boy has not turned up the last few days and our soak-away drain has got choked up. Being holidays, the full Municipal staff is not working so we have had to resort to other means of disposing of kitchen and other water. I could not have done it but Joe has. It is very awkward all the shops being closed for ten days.

Rev Karg preached his farewell sermon on Sunday night (it may be printed in the next quarterly news). After the service, a social was held in the Sunday School Hall and a presentation made to both Mr and Mrs Karg. Mr Kelly has resigned and has handed over his office to Uncle Gervase, but Mr Karg says this is subject to the confirmation of the next Committee meeting. Joe thinks I should give up the Treasurership. Uncle Gervase says he cannot do that sort of work. As you know, I have resigned from everything else and I shall feel that I am a very useless member of the community. However we shall see.

Tuesday morning. New Year's Day. Am up early and done some of the above typing. There was not a watch night service, the first time it has been missed for years. The weather over the holidays has been very erratic. Some days it seemed as though it could not help raining and yet not a drop has fallen here. The heat has been very trying, sometimes over 100 in the shade and others quite cool.

The servant from the Poplars came along one morning to say that the bedroom window in Alison's room was unlocked so Joe and I went along to investigate. We could not find anything wrong except that the nail used for fastening the two sashes had not been pushed home. One door was not fastened properly. They are due back on Sunday evening.

Mary was coming from Graaff Reinet on 3rd but phoned yesterday that she had postponed her return to about the eighth. They had a very jolly Xmas. Aunt Letty has kept well and interested in all that goes on, on the farm. The drought there is described as the worst in living memory.

Xmas cards continue to arrive. Mr Milne's housekeeper wrote saying he was 93 and was still interested in Cradock news. His sister was seriously burned last year and died.

Later. Mrs Saunders Senior has walked down to see us and have morning tea. Clifford is down with pneumonia and Dr wants him to go to hospital. May is nursing him. Joe and I went to the Poplars and found everything in order. No one was there. The children have been to the Baths again and seem to enjoy it more and more. There will not be any postal delivery today so I will close with the wish that 1946 will be a happier year to all than 1945 has been. Much love and best wishes to all and hoping to get good news of you all by next post.

Your loving

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday January 9th, 1946

My dear All,

At last we are back to normal conditions so far as our domestic life is concerned. Just Mom and I alone, all our visitors have returned home and I hope are safe and sound. It is practically four months since we were as we are today. It was the beginning of September when Mom went to Fish River whilst I went to Cape Town by car with Mr and Mrs Abbey. We both returned home on Monday morning September 23rd and the following evening I was down with pneumonia and pleurisy. Since then we have been more or less in the hands of members of the family. Nurse Enid perhaps had the most difficult week in nursing me when I was in the worst stage of the illness. Grace followed for a month and Douglas and Evelyn and Joe also came to the rescue during that period. Nurse Mary gave five weeks of her valuable time in assisting me towards recovery and Dorothy and family have spent a month here. Joe and family spent three weeks and left on Friday night, 4th instant. I am very devoutly thankful to all for their help and comfort. I have tried to be patient but I fear I was often far from what I ought to have been. Dr Scholtz was most attentive and by his skill, together with the expert nursing I received, and above all the mercy and help of a loving Heavenly Father, I have so far been restored to a measure of health I hardly expected to regain. In the words of one of our famous hymns "I cannot tell" why it has so happened but I accept the fact that here I am and I believe that there is still something for me to live for. At one stage I prayed to be relieved from further service and I hope that my longer sojourn here will not be time wasted. To each and all – including those who helped by their prayers and loving thoughts, I thank you.

Perhaps it may interest those who were not here during the recent Xmas season to know how we fixed up everybody. Reg unfortunately had to return to Vryburg almost immediately after he arrived. He was away about a week and on his return, went with the two boys to East London for a week. That change made their holiday well worthwhile. Reg and Dot and baby occupied the spare room, Joe and Norman and Alan, Roy and Trevor occupied the tent on the lawn whilst Blodwen, Merle and baby Dan had Pam's room. We all had breakfast and suppers together and we all went to the Premier for the midday meal. Each family paid for their share of the cost and the Proprietor benefitted to the tune of £20.

We had a surprise present on January 2nd. About 3.30 am I heard the cat mewing in the long passage and wishing to save anyone from being disturbed, I got up and put her out by the kitchen door. About breakfast time, Merle heard kittens mewing but could not trace where the noise came from. I had often seen the mother cat sitting on the electric stove (of course when it was cold) and looking up to the mantle shelf but had never seen her actually on the shelf. I at once suspected that she had climbed up onto the hot water cistern as we knew that rats had frequented there. Joe got the step ladder and sure enough, there she was with two perfectly white kittens. He brought them down and it was not long before she came down but would not use the ladder for her descent. She climbed down on to the mantle shelf and from there on to the electric stove – which was warm then – and on to the floor. This is her third batch. Her first was three, two perfectly black and one tabby, the second batch was three quite black and now only two, spotlessly white. They are all comfortably housed in her former cubbyhole under my carpenters bench and she is very proud of her babies.

We had a phone call from Lynne on Thursday evening from Queenstown. Rex had come down with her and is spending a week or so with her. They had a good time over the Xmas holidays but were disappointed that Arthur had not arrived in time. This morning we hear from Evelyn that Arthur did arrive in Durban on Wednesday 2nd but was taken to hospital from the ship. She did not state what was the matter. The Hudsons were going to Kimberley to meet their son, George, who has been with Arthur almost the whole period of the war. We gather from the conversation with Lynne that it is possible Douglas and Evelyn will bring Arthur down by car to Queenstown and come on here with both the boys. We hope this may materialise.

Mary returned to Cradock last evening (Sunday) with Ernest, Alison and Jeffrey. Mary is nursing Mrs Gluckman who has been paralysed for a couple of years or more. We have not seen her yet.

So far I have got since dinner time today (Monday). Visitors have called – Mrs Saunders Senior and her daughter, Eileen, and her baby who is about 2 years old. The child had a “germ” on its kidney and doctors say they cannot operate until she is older. Eileen took me up in her car to see Clifford who is suffering from pneumonia and pleurisy after an operation for hernia. He is getting on slowly he says.

Roena and her sister, Agatha, also called and Alison has also been. She says the country round Graaff Reinet is terribly dry. It is now past 7.30 pm. So I must say goodnight and will try to do another sheet tomorrow. Goodnight.

Tuesday morning, 8th. Mary called last evening about 8. She seems well. Is staying with her patient but we hope to see something of her daily. Have had interruptions so cannot add more except to say Joe sends a postcard. He is to be further examined this week for heart trouble etc. They found all in order on arrival home.

Lots of love to all,
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday January 11th, 1946

My dear All,

This letter must be reckoned as an Extra Edition. I quite intended doing another sheet on Wednesday but so many interruptions occurred, that it was quite impossible to catch the post. I did not finish telling of how we got on with all the family. The new swimming bath in the Park was a godsend so far as the children were concerned. Joe's boys were there morning and afternoon. They got very sunburnt – too much so I thought. It was amusing one evening whilst Blodwen was bathing Dan in our big bath, Roy came along as well. It was a study in dark brown and white. I hope they do not suffer any ill effects from sunbathing. Baby Dan gave all of us a fright one later afternoon. He was suddenly attacked with what we thought was convulsions. At any rate the symptoms exactly corresponded with those described in the medical book I have. I have never heard a child scream as he did, poor little chap. Blodwen was terrible scared and seemed upset. We phoned for the doctor and he advised treatment until he could come down. We got a spoonful of brandy from next door. When Dr came, he pronounced it as being an attack of colic. He went home and brought some medicine he had prepared. He had a fairly good night but he gave us all a nasty fright. Hope he does not have any further attacks. He has been cutting more teeth which might have been the cause of the trouble. Blodwen thinks that he had a taste of Xmas pudding the day before which was not suitable for him. Reg and Dot and family left promptly at five on Thursday and reach Kroonstad by 6.30 the same afternoon, quite a travel free of trouble. They got back home the next evening. The children were thrilled with the content of Mom's workbox and jewel case. We had trouble with our soak-away trap which had got blocked. Joe investigated the matter and found chicken bones, cans etc in the trap which had completely blocked the works. He managed to fix up temporary means and we got the Council to revert to the old system. Today (Thursday) it is in full working order again. The new hotplate soon got out of work, owing to fusing. This is also in course of being put right.

Owing to the excessive heat, we have been sending for our dinners – except on Sundays, and we have done without the maid on Sundays. We have had terrible heat some days but Wednesday and Thursday have been cool. A little rain has fallen, about ¼ inch. There was a big attendance in the D.R. Church on Wednesday morning for prayers for rain were offered. We are hoping for much more.

On Wednesday afternoon, we had a wire from Arthur from Vryburg announcing his arrival home quite fit. We are hoping to see him and Rex in due course. Rex is still in Queenstown so far as we know. Reg has not been up to concert pitch since his return home. Tonsillitis is the trouble but he is getting better, Dot says. The boys go to Pretoria for school next Monday. Alan is looking forward to it with great joy. Baby Joan will miss her brothers. They are both very fond of her.

Joe has been to his Dr since his return home. He thinks it is his heart that is giving him trouble. He has since been to an X-ray specialist and also a heart specialist. He will not know the results of these examinations for some time. He is giving Uncle Owen a hand with laying some extra pipes in his garden. Grace writes that there is no news about the transfer. The suspense is very trying. Aunt Eliza has decided not to engage the lady who was looking for a comfortable home in exchange for her services. David is getting nearer home but no word of when he will be coming. He is still in Italy. Ruth and John return from their holiday at Humewood on 15th. There is no word of Denis coming yet. Ruth has finished her duties at the Library and will devote as much time as possible to her writing. I am glad to say that Clifford Saunders is making progress. He has not gone back to hospital yet.

I measured the height of the hot water cistern where the cat deposited her kittens, it is eight feet from the floor. How she would have got down with them I don't know.

Our figs are coming on nicely but the birds are after them as well. We consumed 304 pints of milk during January according to the accounts. Some record I think. We were amused at Trevor one evening in the lounge. He was tired and before going off to sleep on the sofa behind the door,

he strapped himself round his waist to the rail of the sofa so that he should not roll off. Quite cute of him.

Grace writes that owing to the drought, they may have to sell their cows owing to the lack and high cost of foodstuff. The piano which Miss Hicks loaned to them has been sold. Jean especially misses it. There is no word about their transfer. It is very unsettling for everyone concerned.

Friday morning. I have had a few phone call congratulations. The post is late. The Saunders family have been down to morning tea. Hope to hear from Vryburg during the day. Thanks for all letters on reaching 82 not out. Am thankful to be able to accomplish as much as I do but I find walking is too much for me at present. We have had a little rain and hope for more. They had a severe hail storm at Queenstown recently. Mary is going to stay with Aunt Eliza for a while at the end of the month. We are not having any "celebrations" but perhaps some friends may drop in.

Thanks again for all loving messages and greetings,

Lots of love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday January 16th, 1946

My dear All,

I did not intend making any special reference to the anniversary of my birthday. We did not send any invitations to our friends or make any preparations in the way of cakes etc, but a paragraph in Thursday's Midland News evidently caught the eyes of some and during the afternoon, quite a number of relations and friends dropped in to offer their congratulations. The first phone call in the morning was from the Town Clerk who expressed the hope that I would see my way to joining the Council again at an early date. I have no ideas of doing so at present but I have not lost interest in the development of the town.

Aunt Kate (Grass Ridge) phoned quite early, Mary also and others. During the morning Mrs Saunders and two daughters called and had morning tea with us. Mrs Rainier and Mrs Bladen dropped in. In the afternoon Uncle Gervase, Rouena, Agatha, Ursula and Brian enjoyed eating figs on the lawn. Mrs Booth and her daughter and little Ann also came. Mrs Craig and Mrs Kelly came later and later still, Mr Kelly called. In the evening, Dulcie Moorcroft and little George spent some time with us. Telegrams also came, and letters too, so I was not forgotten by my friends. They all say I am looking very well considering my 82 years. For all these mercies, I am very thankful. I still feel very weak on my legs and get tired far too quickly to my liking. I try to be patient but there is so much I want to do and can't get it done. We are more and more getting back into the old ways of living. We have our early cup of coffee at any time between three and six a.m. Breakfast at about 7.30 to eight. Watering the garden in between whiles to 8. The garden boy arrives during the holidays about 8 and leaves about noon. He got the furrow water in on Saturday. I am typing this before breakfast on Tuesday. Yesterday, about dinner time, Lynne phoned to say that Rex was trying to get a lift over here but if he failed, he would come by the train and road motor service on Wednesday night. Shortly after that conversation, a wire came addressed to Rex which I opened. It was from Douglas saying Rex was to report at Tempe (near Bloemfontein) on the completion of his leave. The wire also stated that they had had a good rain at Theron's Rust. I at once phoned the message to Queenstown. We must now await developments. We understand Rex is taking up an appointment in connection with the Government Meat Scheme. He will learn grading of cattle etc at some abattoir. I do not know if it means that he is not taking up farming. Lynne thinks her parents and Arthur may come down after the children have gone back to boarding school.

Mr and Mrs Abbey, who motored me to Cape Town, are in town. We were surprised to see them at service on Sunday evening. They are going to live at Port Alfred and are on their way there now. Three sisters will be living together. They came back by car and took the same route as when we went to Cape Town last September.

The gentleman, Mr Bannatyne, who did the writing of the figures on the rainfall chart of mine, died suddenly Monday morning. He has been in delicate health for years. He occasionally took a service in the Methodist Church. I had a letter from him on Saturday dated 11th to which I replied the same day but I don't suppose he ever saw it as it would only have been delivered on Monday morning. He was very liberal and enclosed his cheque for £8.2.6d for church funds. I am wondering if it will be duly cashed. It was deposited in the bank on Monday morning. He helped Mr Thomas financially. The money was refunded by the Executor.

Dot reports two days of rain. I wish I could make a similar report. Ruth is back in Grahamstown. They have had a nice holiday at Humewood. Denis is getting nearer home and so is David. Had a long letter from Dick Brown's wife which I must answer as soon as I can. Hilda George sent me a note for the 11th. She says her daughter, Amy, was leaving yesterday for England to get married there.

Later. Aunt Jessie had dinner with us today. Neville brought her to town to do some shopping. She finds it difficult to get what she wants. We have not been able to get sugar for some time. A postcard from Joe this morning says he has got the X-ray report. It shows no sign of any early symptoms of TB and is quite normal. The heart report, Dr says, there is nothing to worry about either so it seems there is no one thing very wrong. There is a temporary job vacant outside

the smith's works in the engine stores. It will mean the loss of about £7 or £8 per month to him but he hopes something more suitable may turn up in the near future. All this was on a postcard, no doubt more news will follow.

There was a fair attendance at Mr Bannatyne's service. I did go to the cemetery. No further word from Rex so shall expect to see him tomorrow afternoon about five or six. There is a thunderstorm on but no rain. Every day it seems so near but it does not fall. Must try to get up to see Aunt Eliza this afternoon. Mary is doctoring her feet as corns are troubling her at present. I must also try to see Aunt Charlotte. Clifford Saunders is not so well. A something is affecting one of his legs and will have to stay in bed for some time yet.

Must stop now. Love to all,
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday January 23rd, 1946

My dear All,

It is Monday afternoon, baby Dan's first anniversary. Many happy returns of the day. We wonder if he is walking yet or only crawling as he was when here. It will be Jean's birthday this week and we hear that she is in doctor's hands with sinus trouble. A tooth has been extracted in the hope that it may provide some relief from the other trouble but in a card from Grace today, she thinks a specialist will have to be consulted. We are very sorry as it may interfere with her schooling for this quarter. Ted, too, is again on the sick list, is off duty for a fortnight. Was up on Saturday but evidently is not up to concert pitch. During the week I had occasion to see our local Postmaster about some other business and took the opportunity of asking him if he had heard anything about Ted's transfer. He replied no and did not think it would materialise. There was no vacancy here and it was not wise to bank on anything happening in that direction. It has occurred to me that in view of Ted some time, sooner or later, going on pension, if it would not be better for us to go to them than for them to come to us. You may remember when it was decided to leave Cape Town 11 years ago, we had intended settling in Kroonstad but on receiving a telegram from Ted on a certain Saturday stating that he had passed into the first grade in the Post Office "and this probably meant he would be transferred somewhere" we gave up the idea of going there. However we are not doing anything in the matter as we seem to be getting on under existing conditions fairly well but throw it out as a possible solution. There is one snag in the picture, however, which might have some bearing on the matter. Kroonstad is 1636 ft higher than Cradock. Potgietersrus is 1010 ft and Vryburg is 1058 higher than Cradock.

I am glad to say we are both keeping fairly well at present. We have had a little rain during the week and today it is nice and cool. Last Wednesday we had the pleasure of welcoming Rex. He arrived just about 5.30 p.m. He felt that he should get back home as soon as possible so as to save his people making a special journey into Vryburg to fetch him. He also wanted to see as much as possible of Kingsley and Cecily before they returned to school. I guess they are in the train as I am typing this letter, 3.30 pm. He arrived home on Friday noon. He left us by early train on Thursday morning. He had not previously booked his seat and the booking clerk refused to issue a ticket but when the train came in, we saw the Examiner and there was plenty of room. They would not issue a single ticket – he came down via Queenstown – so he had to take a return ticket which cost him £3 whereas a single military return ticket would only have cost him £1.10s.

Let me correct a misunderstanding regarding Mary's staying with Aunt Eliza. Aunt Eliza thought she was going to her permanently instead of which she is only going to her until the end of January when Mary is going to Bushman's River Mouth for two month's good rest. Mary finishes up at Mrs Gluckman's tonight.

Reg and Dot took the boys to boarding school last Monday. Alan has been looking forward to going for a whole year and seems very happy there. There are a number of other boys from Potgietersrus at the same boarding school. Little Joan will miss her big brothers tremendously. They are very fond of her. They have had good rains in Potgietersrus. Ruth and John are back in Grahamstown. They have news that Denis is on his way home. Grace also says David is also coming and does not think it will be long now. His return will, I hope, cheer Ted considerably.

Our new minister, Rev Ludlow arrived last Wednesday afternoon. Grace remembers them when on their honeymoon they had dinner with them at North End. They knew Ted's people when they lived in Winberg, Orange Free State. He preached at Fish River yesterday morning and in town last night. He is a fine speaker.

Those of you who have met Mrs Kissack when here will be sorry to hear that she has had a second stroke. One arm is paralysed. Clifford Saunders, too, is in a bad way. He had an op in the hospital some weeks ago and then came home where he contracted pneumonia and pleurisy. He was getting on nicely when a new complaint arose in his left leg which the Dr says will necessitate his keeping to his bed for several weeks. His sisters, Florrie, May and Eileen, have been nursing him. We saw him yesterday afternoon.

Rev Chatfield, formerly of Vryburg, was here when Rex arrived last Wednesday. They knew each other when Rex was at Bishops Hostel in Kimberley. He is now stationed at Springfontein, Orange Free State. He married a Cradock girl. We enjoyed a good chat about olden times in Vryburg. Rex has grown a good deal and looks well but is thin. He and I went to see Aunt Eliza in the short time he was here.

I have nearly finished answering my Xmas letters. Only about a dozen still to do. I must have received about 300 cards and letters, some very nice ones.

We hear that Olive has let her house at Walmer and is staying near the Sanatorium between Somerset East and Port Elizabeth. Miss Metcalf came to see us this a.m. She has been on holiday to Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth. She is often away from town. I have not referred to Joe's state of health. Specialist he has seen in Port Elizabeth say they cannot find anything organically wrong with him. I hope to hear more from him soon.

Love Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday January 30th, 1946

My dear All,

Today is the last Wednesday in the first month of the year, 1946. How quickly the time is passing. I am starting my letter on Monday afternoon so as to be ready to post on Tuesday. That will be the 28th anniversary of Douglas and Evelyn's Wedding Day. They must also be realising the flight of time.

On Saturday afternoon, just as I was going to see Ernest at his office, Wilfred Maskell called. He was on his way by car taking his daughter to the Training College at Grahamstown. He reports his Mother as being very well. We have not seen her for some years. He is returning via Somerset East to get his cattle which have been running there for some time but the shortage of water on the hired farm necessitates removing them.

As we came home from service yesterday morning, we were caught in a sharp shower and had to hasten for shelter at Mrs Booth's. The rain did not last long and we changed before going to the Premier for dinner. Whilst I think of it, let me correct a mis-statement I made recently. I said Rex had been to see Aunt Eliza, it was Neville who motored me up to see her. They had never seen each other before. Mary has been nursing Mrs Kissack who has had a second stroke recently. From all accounts, she is very bad and it is doubtful if she will recover. She will be greatly missed if she does pass away, she has always been full of good works.

Rev and Mrs Ludlow phoned to enquire if it would be convenient for them to call last Tuesday evening. We enjoyed their company. They are very sociable and friendly. Mrs Ludlow has joined the choir. He is likely to do a lot of good and the congregations will grow. They have no family with them, all are married. Rev Karg's family – two daughters and two sons, are boarding at the Premier Hotel. One son I should say is still on active service. You will be glad to know that Denis has returned. He phoned Ruth from Maritzburg last week. He has put on weight and is ten pounds heavier than he has ever been before. He and Dorothea are having a holiday in Natal before settling down in Grahamstown. I have written suggesting they break the journey here on their way south as it may be difficult to come and see us after they are settled down. Grace is going to have David home soon, then all our grandsons will be home. Rex surprised me by saying he had not fired a single shot at the enemy and he says that on the average, only one man in eight in the army has fired a shot.

We are glad to hear that good rains have fallen at Vryburg and I guess that Arthur is best ploughing for all he is worth. This no doubt will put off the anticipated visit here but we shall continue to look forward to it. Grace says that after two inches of rain, there was no appreciable difference in the flow in the river. People have been able to wade across it in places. Dot says Alan is quite happy at school. He has been appointed bell ringer, the same job Norman had at the same school. Alan was never late with his duty. George Hudson is home. A big tennis party was arranged as a reception for him.

Rev Ludlow has made a good impression at the Fish River service. They had dinner at Saltponds and they told Aunt Jessie they were coming to her again. Aunt Jessie replied "you haven't been asked". "Never mind about that", was his reply, "I'm coming". We are very sorry to hear that Jean, who had a birthday last week, has got sinus trouble and may have to see a specialist about it. I hope it will not interfere with her studies. Ted has gone back to office again though he is far from well.

Lynne writes that the glass that was broken during the hailstorm a fortnight ago has not been replaced in her room. The hotel is changing hands again and she expects that the boarding will go up to £9 per month. She has bought a bike now. 2.55 p.m. a wire has just come from Denis saying they are passing through tomorrow morning and hope to see us so it looks as though we shall not have the pleasure of having them with us even for a day.

Mom is trying her hand and her eyes in writing letters again. She finds that the effort makes hot and she has to rest. I do not know what to say about taking her to see Dr Stewart about having an operation. The weather today has been perfect – not too hot or too cold. I have not been out of

the house all day but have gone to see how Clifford is getting on. He has a clot of blood in his left leg and they are afraid of its shifting to the heart. My white kittens are growing nicely and have arrived at the playful stage.

Rev Ludlow was here a few minutes ago and tells me they had an uninvited visitor last evening whilst at church. Evidently some youngsters broke through a window and stole food from the pantry but no clothing was missing.

I am glad to say that I have now finished replying to all my Xmas letters. It has been a joy to me that so many have written expressing appreciation of the cards sent. We are expecting our friends, the Wests, back from their three month's holiday at the Cape. Mrs West called to see Aunt Emmie. Muriel and family have returned to Maritzburg after having an enjoyable holiday here and Cape Town. Aunt Emmie had not seen Muriel for six years.

Joe writes that he will be away from the furnace for three months. He has less work to do and he will lose his piece work pay – about £7–£8 per month. Dr took samples of his blood from his arm and also from a finger. Dr had great difficulty in getting blood to flow.

I see I am at the end of the paper. Dan can walk now. Merle has a new music teacher.

Lots of love to all, may add another sheet tomorrow. Dad

Extra Supplement, January 29th, 1946. Tuesday

Mom and I went over to the station this morning. The rain was nearly 45 minutes late. Their saloon was at the extreme end of the station and we did not have much time for conversation. We wanted them to break their journey and if in such a hurry to get to Grahamstown, to go on by tonight's train. Ruth, in her postcard to us, said they were due in Grahamstown on February 8th. However they thought it best to go on. Of course we were disappointed but they may come again later on. Both looked very well. Denis says he is ten pounds heavier than he has ever been.

Aunt Jessie had dinner with us today and Uncle Norman and Gladys are resting whilst I am typing.

Mary is still nursing Mrs Kissack. There is no improvement in her condition. We hear that while at Mrs Kissack's, she has had her bag and money stolen. This we hear from outside information. We have not seen Mary for over a week. Perhaps I may get a lift as far as Market Street this afternoon.

Rex Moys is also back from the front. He is staying at the Poplars. He resumes his duties at Healdtown on March 1st. We hope to hear of David's arrival soon. Our grapes are coming on but they are not as plentiful as last year. Mom thinks they are being stolen.

Joe is working again on the railway but not at the furnace. I will copy the part of his letter in my next.

Lots of love to all,
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday February 6th, 1946

My dear All,

It is Monday morning and Mom is 84 today. I greeted her at 12.30 am as we both happened to be awake. We had our early coffee at 3 am so we started the day early and well. At Mom's special request, I have not arranged any function for the day but no doubt some may remember the date and drop in. These anniversaries, especially as one gets older, calls up many recollections of the past and thoughts for the future. We have much to be thankful for past mercies and we must look into the future with confidence and trust. Each of our families have their problems.

Ruth has recently retired from her job at the Pubic Library. She has just had a nice holiday with John at Humewood and the great pleasure of welcoming Denis and Dorothea home. We were sorry they could not break their journey here but must look forward to seeing them later. We hope Denis will get settled down to his study for his MA degree.

Douglas has his anxieties too. Rex has gone to Johannesburg to learn the ins and outs of grading and evaluating in the meat industry. I do not think it is a permanent post but one that will qualify him for a good position. Arthur is busy ploughing with a tractor after good rains that have fallen in their district. We are hoping to see him and his parents before long. Lynne is very happy at her job and hopes to get a lift over here and of course wants to see Arthur who arrived a few days after she returned from her Xmas holidays. Evelyn, we hope, will come down when Douglas comes.

Grace has her anxieties too. Ted has been off sick for over a fortnight and Jean has nose trouble and may have to have an operation before long. She is still in school, now in Standard 8. She came top in Standard seven. David is expected to return from Egypt in February. Ted has not had any news about his application for a transfer here. Grace says she would not move Jean from school until the end of this year.

Joe perhaps gives the greatest cause for anxiety. He has been shifted from his furnace for three months and is doing more office and supervising work which is probably more congenial but has less money in it. This is what he said in a recent letter. "I have a week at my new job which is just about as opposite, as far as my former work is concerned, as it could possibly be. If anything, there is not enough to do to keep me fully occupied but so far that has not worried me unduly, although I prefer to be busy. I have to see the Dr again next week. On Monday he took a sample of blood from a vein in the arm and another from the tip of the finger of the right hand and allowed the blood to run into several short thin glass tubes open at each end. He had a lot of trouble to get this to flow as it seemed to coagulate very quickly, he also had to try several times to prick the skin and get any blood at all. At present I will not lose anything on my rate of pay but will lose about £7 to £8 on my piece work bonus. He has given me a certificate to be out of the smith's shop for three months and he will review the position after that. I am in an office and have a good deal of walking to do in connection with the making of engine spares in time for the engines when they are needed for assembling again. This brings me in contact with the supervisors in most of the departments in the works. Just now a number of new engines are being assembled so the repair work is rather quiet. No Dad, the wet weather will not affect my pay. The pay would be exactly the same if I worked at my trade in Cradock."

"Dan is walking now, seldom crawls. Dot wrote about Tilley's farm. I have not heard any price. I feel if I go in for farming, I must first get the stock and get someone to graze them for me and then when I have enough stock, make a break. The capital I have now is nowhere enough to think of buying a farm and stocking it. I don't suppose the Land Bank would consider an application for assistance as I am not a returned soldier." From the above you will see that his condition is far from satisfactory. We very sincerely hope that the three months change of work will show a great improvement in his general health

It is still Monday and during the day a number of letters have come to hand. Douglas, Evelyn, Grace, Reg and Dot as well as Norman and Alan have sent birthday greetings to Mom. Lynne was the first to phone. Rev and Mrs Ludlow came to morning tea. Mrs Saunders called

early and May came with Florrie's brother and took me to the bank and a few other places which saved me walking. I told Mr Ludlow that I wished his sermon last evening could have been heard by all the Delegates now attending the United Nations Organisation now sitting in London. With all their deliberations, I have not seen a single reference to the need of a turning to the source of world peace through the spirit of Christ's teaching. Until the way of the Cross is followed, there will be no lasting peace. There I have much cause for thankfulness that the Congress has accomplished as much as it has done and we should earnestly pray that the proceedings may develop in the true spirit. It is a cause for thankfulness that progress has been made as far as it has.

Candance has given notice to leave at the end of the month. She has been with us for a number of years. We had 35 points of rain at the weekend and there is water in the furrow. The garden boy is to lead water this afternoon but I don't think it wants it. Dr Scholtz had sent in his account for £15.13s. I quite expected it would have been £20.

Mrs Kissack is not making progress towards recovery. Mary is still nursing her. Mary has given up the idea of going to the coast and will stay a while with Aunt Eliza when she leaves Mrs Kissack. A Graaff Reinnet friend of the Biggs' had the misfortune to lose a child about three years old who was left playing, fell into a small pool of water and was drowned. She is going to the cottage that Mary was going to.

No one has made any encouraging comment on the suggested family holiday at East London. The only remark was that December or January would be more convenient than October owing to school holidays.

We have had telegrams from Aunt Rosa and Mrs Peagan congratulating Mom. No doubt we shall hear from Joe tomorrow. Dot says Joan misses Norman and Alan very much. The nurse girl plays hide and seek etc and Joan dances to her. Joe is sorry he could not get any cine films when baby Dan was crawling. It would have made an interesting picture. He seldom crawls now Joe says. Mrs Rainier and Mrs Mayhew have just called.

Tuesday 5th. Aunt Katie, Grass Ridge, phoned last evening wishing mom happy returns and reporting all well there. They had about half an inch of rain at the weekend but of course that is as nothing so far as filling the dam is concerned. She reports that Rev Evans, a former minister here during our residence at Vryburg, is coming to us on Saturday to spend a few days in town. We have met him when he was stationed at Sea Point. I have also travelled with him when I attended Conference at Maritzburg some years ago. He was the most popular minister Cradock had. He is on holiday staying with various friends at Fish River. He is stationed at Maritzburg at present.

Mrs Kissack still keeps about the same. Mary is still with her.

Our two white kittens are very playful. We missed them on Saturday evening but they were still here on Sunday morning. It appears they like getting right at the back of my work bench where we cannot get at them. We shall be giving them away soon.

I have a meeting to attend this evening so will close as may be having visitors from Fish River, it being Stock Fair day today.

Lots of love to all,

Dad

Douglas and Evelyn write that they cannot say when they will be coming down but they will come as soon as they can. Goodbye.

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday February 13th, 1946

My dear All,

Fortunately it is not often that I have to start my letter with a note of sadness but this week I am sorry to say that a very sad event has happened which has cast a gloom over us all. At this stage I cannot give all the details as I do not know them but so far it appears that on Saturday 2nd, Eric and Freda's son Pat was out shooting baboons on their farm Hollodene and about half an hour later, Eric found him lying in the veldt where he had evidently fallen and the gun had gone off inflicting a serious wound in one leg about the knee. No doubt Freda, being a trained nurse, was able to stop the bleeding and they both rushed him to the Vryburg Hospital. On Monday, Aunt Emmie was advised by telegram that Pat had been hurt seriously and was in the hospital. She wired to the farm for more information but got no reply, they were in town. On Friday, about dinner time, Mom and I were sitting down to dinner when Uncle Gervase came in with the wire announcing "Pat died peacefully during the night in no pain". We then had no knowledge as to what had happened. This Monday morning, just at dinner time, a note came from Douglas which says Pat fell and the gun went off and shattered his leg. On Thursday at 2 pm Doctor thought he could stand the amputation of the leg but at ten pm he passed away. He made a good fight for it but it was evidently too much for him. The funeral was at 11 on Friday morning 8th. On receipt of the first information, I at once wrote to Uncle Owen, Leslie and others as of course I did not know whom had been advised. Mary broke the news to Aunt Eliza. Aunt Emmie, I expect, will feel the sadness of the accident most keenly as Pat spent about two years with her at Rondebosch a few years ago. She loved him very much and he was a great help and comfort to her when she was living at Green Gate. We have of course written to Eric and Freda and hope they will be comforted in their great sorrow. Perhaps before this is posted, further details may come to hand.

On Saturday, Rev and Mrs Ludlow kindly offered us seats in their car to Fish River as it was their monthly tennis day. All the friends there who knew Eric and Freda were very sorry to hear of the tragedy. We had lunch at the Hall and a rattling good lunch it was. A sharp shower of rain fell during the afternoon which stopped their play – I guess about 20 points must have fallen. As we came back to town, we noticed that less and less had fallen and when I went to my rain gauge, not a drop had been registered. Very heavy rains have fallen both north and south of the town causing wash ways of considerable dimensions. Trains and posts have been delayed. Suppose our turn will come one of these days. We still have a fair supply of rainwater in our tanks. Everyone seemed well at Fish River. You will be sorry to hear that Clifford Saunders is making very slow progress. He is still confined to his bed at home. On Thursday his sister, May, took ill and doctor is attending her as well. Rev Evans and I were there Sunday afternoon and such a crowd of children and adults were there which I am sure was far too much for both patients, Florrie, Eileen and several young folk. There was talk of sending her to hospital.

I should have mentioned that Rev Evans returned with us from Fish River on Saturday afternoon. He took the morning service on Sunday. He was minister here just before we came back to Cradock in 1934 and was most beloved. He has been spending a week of his holiday at Grass Ridge and returns on Wednesday to spend a few days at Groenkloof. After service on Sunday evening, a dozen or more of the congregation spent the evening with him at the Parsonage. Ernest was amongst the number. He is stationed in Maritzburg. He enquired how Aunt Emmie was and was very sorry to hear of the tragedy of Pat.

We have disposed of one of the snow white kittens. Miss Metcalf's servants has taken it. The other is as playful as ever. Grace writes that Ted was a little better and was expecting to return to duty as soon as he felt fit enough. There is a possibility of his taking his pension before it is due. Pam has a birthday on 27th, the second anniversary of Mr Thomas' death. David is expected home soon. We shall be very glad when all our grandsons are safely home. Ernest Saunders and Kingsley are at the same school. Denis and his wife are settled in two rooms in Grahamstown and are settling down. Denis looks to take his diploma this year and his M.A. degree next year. Ruth

has had a touch of flu but is now free of anxiety about Denis. Olive has let her house at Walmer and is staying with her sister Hilda also at Walmer.

I notice the Controller of paper is asking correspondents to be careful in not using too much paper. I think some of my correspondents might economise by writing on both sides of their paper and it would also be a convenience to me, especially if they would write page two on the back of page one and page four on the back of page three instead of on the back of page one as so many do at present.

Mom has gone to her WA meeting this afternoon. Rev Evans is out also. He is going to the Poplars for supper and then they are all going to see David Copperfield at the pictures.

If I have time tomorrow, I may add another sheet but will see in the morning. We are both keeping well. Joe writes that Mr Theophilus (formerly of Vryburg) recommends Joe to get in touch with the Vaal Harts irrigation scheme. He thinks well of it and it might suit Joe. Goodbye for the present.

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday February 20th, 1946

My dear All,

We have had a little rain and a good deal of heat. We are hoping for more of the former and less of the latter. In any case, we hope we shall be spared the excessive quantities that have been recorded in some places. Dot says they have had 12¼ inches so far for January and February. In the Waterberg – not so very far from Potgietersrus – they have had much more and many farmers and school children have been marooned and have had to be supplied with food dropped from aeroplanes. Reg is having his brother George up on a visit. He was with Arthur nearly all through the war. He has recently returned from up north. Dot has sent us specimens of snaps taken during their visit at Xmas. They are not too good as the shade of the vines makes them a little dark. They are quite interesting all the same. Am sending them round for inspection. The last two days we have enjoyed eating green mealies from our own garden. They are small but quite nice.

We have enjoyed having Rev Evans with us. He returned by car late Friday with Uncle Norman and Dick. He took the service at Fish River on Sunday. Our next visitor will be a Mr H.R. Cocking, the Secretary of the South African Temperance Alliance. He used to be Postmaster at Taungs near Vryburg and stayed with us when he came to take services for the Congregational Church. He will address public meetings on Sunday and Monday and leave again on Tuesday morning. I met him when in Cape Town in September.

There is not much fresh news to give regarding Pat Fear's accident. A note from Evelyn, received on Monday, says Eric and Freda have been staying with them before returning to Hollodene. It will be a sad homecoming for them.

We are expecting Mr and Mrs West to return to Cradock this week. We do not know where they are going to stay but booked rooms provisionally at the Victoria Hotel where they stayed before. Mrs Kissack is making a wonderful recovery and is able to sit up and read a little. Mary is still with her. Mary has made a sort of shoe or slipper for Aunt Eliza's bad foot. I have not seen it but I understand it is a great comfort. Aunt Rouena was telling us about it. I think she assisted by supplying some of the material for the making from "what she happened to have".

On Saturday morning I went to look for the man who hired our garage when Grace, I think, was here. He paid each month in advance up to December. He phoned one day when I was out but Mom could not hear properly what was said – something about having lost the key. I called to see Clifford on my way and his nephew kindly motored me to the place. He had left his house to see me and I met him at the front gate. He has now paid up to the end of March but is not using the garage. Clifford is getting better slowly. Is still confined to his bed. To make matters worse, May has been laid up for about two weeks with sinus trouble and has had to be kept as quiet as possible which is almost impossible as there are so many young children about. Dr is attending her and says she will have to go to Port Elizabeth for an operation. She does not like it at all. Eileen, with her baby, is nursing both patients.

In the late afternoon, Mom and I walked up to see the improvements Uncle Gervase has made to the house he has bought from old Mr Hill, exactly opposite Fenner Moorcroft's house. Aunt Rouena gave me a dose of salvolaty as I was rather done in. After a while, Gervase motored all of us round to see Aunt Eliza but we only stayed a few minutes and Gervase took us back home. It was evidently too much walking for me.

Tuesday afternoon. I must hurry up and finish my letter. More details of Pat's terrible accident have come to hand from Aunt Emmie. She says that cars were sent every day from Kimberley with blood for transfusion for Pat. Dr closed his surgery in order to stay day and night with him. Nurses from Kimberley were in attendance and those who should have gone off duty at 7 pm stayed on hand most of the night. Strange to say, Pat did not suffer any pain. The leg was eventually amputated but the shock was too much for him. Aunt Emmie of course feels the loss most keenly as Pat stayed with her in Cape Town for about two years whilst attending school there. Uncle Owen was also upset with the news and had to have the Dr to attend him. There is talk of Eric and Freda going to Uitenhage for a change. Hope they will call here if they do go.

Joe does not seem to be improving in health. Blodwen has lost about 28 lbs since November and Dr wants her to get rid of another 20 or so. We are expecting to hear definitely very soon if and when they are likely to come here.

We are having a welcome social to Rev and Mrs Ludlow this evening. We hope to attend. Rev Ludlow phoned on Sunday afternoon that I was not to walk to church that evening as he would come and motor us. Very kind of him. Uncle Gervase brought us home.

Both Clifford and May are on the mend, am glad to say. Willie Saunders is up from Port Elizabeth on holiday. We hope to see something of him. Mrs Kissack is getting better so much so, that Mary thinks she will be able to leave her shortly. I phoned to Grace before six am one morning recently. Pam passed in honours in her Tech exam. David is expected home shortly. Harold has also done well. If they come here, I am to try and find a good position for her. She is getting £10 per month and cost of living allowance extra.

I have not been too grand this week but nothing serious.

Lots of love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
Wednesday February 27th, 1946
Evelyn's birthday

My dear All,

It is Tuesday morning and we have just said goodbye to Douglas, Evelyn and Arthur who are now on their way to Queenstown to spend a few days with Lynne. They intended having breakfast at Tarkastad, arriving at Queenstown for morning tea.

On Wednesday last, Douglas phoned to us from Kimberley saying they were on their way to us and would arrive sometime on Thursday evening. He did not say how they were travelling but I guessed they were coming by car and would arrive about six. They did almost to the minute. Their car was not in too good order so they had to travel slowly. It was a very hot day but we have hotter since they have been with us. For instance, Sunday it registered 106 and Monday 105 and by the feel of things today, is likely to be as hot but so far, 9 am, it is nice and cool. They had to send to Pot Elizabeth for some spare part for the car and they will have to travel cautiously in case of further trouble on the road. It has been very nice having them. I wired to Joe that they were here for the weekend hoping he might have been able to run up to see them but he was not able to do so. He, however, had a long confab over the phone which was the next best thing. In his last letter, he says there is an opening at Mafeking and he has been put down for it. No word yet if it will materialise or if it would be to his advantage to accept it.

Enid had supper with us last evening. She says Aunt Jessie lost herself in the garden at Saltpan's drift last week. Fortunately Mr Barnes was within her call and led her back to the house. She did not know where she was until she got inside. This is a nasty turn and makes us all feel that she should not be left alone. She is like someone else we know who also likes to be left alone against the wishes of us all. But what can one do?

Grace and Ted have both written stating that they may expect something definite about their transfer to Cradock. They think it may happen fairly soon. Of course it might be that the news when it does come, might be that it could not be arranged. However we must wait and see. We hope it will be that by the end of March, they may be here. If so, Jean will be left in Kroonstad to finish this year's schooling as it might be a great disadvantage to change her teachers now she is taking her matric exam. Pam is in a situation earning £13 per month, including cost of living allowance and I have been asked to look out for a good position for her here. We had a wire from Ted on Wednesday saying David had arrived by air and was safely home. So all our four grandsons are now back from the war. Arthur is looking wonderfully well, has grown taller than his father. Kingsley, by the way, is the tallest in the family (over 6 ft). Rex's address is College Mansions, Clifton Suburb, Johannesburg. So if any of you are in the Golden City, you should get in touch with him.

On Friday last, we had a surprise visit from Mrs Rautenbach, mother of the small child Dot took over for a couple of years in Potgietersrus. Little Anthony was with her and we quite enjoyed her visit. She is visiting her relations in the Tarkastad district before returning to Louis Trichardt where she is starting a dressmaking business. Anthony was quite at home. He was very fond of Auntie Hudson. Mrs Rautenbach was quite up to date in a smart pair of trousers etc. Incidentally she phoned after her visit to know if she had dropped one of her earrings – she hadn't. She was very appreciative of the kindness she had received at the hands of Reg and Dot and other friends there. Mrs Gibbons, an old friend of the Colletts at Fish River and Rooispruit. She was a Miss McEwan of Tarkastad and her daughter married Willie van Heerden Junior. Aunt Jessie and Enid were here the same day.

On Saturday, Aunt Emmie celebrated her 80th anniversary. The three remaining members of my generation are now over 80 years old. Mrs West called the same day and reported having seen her at Fish Hoek and reporting her as looking very well. Mr West we have not seen yet. They have taken a flat at Uncle Gervase's and will have their meals at the Victoria Hotel. Another surprise visitor was Willie Saunders who is now in the employ of the Barclays Bank in Port Elizabeth as

Superintendent of the native staff and has to see to the locking up of the books etc., a very responsible position.

Clifford and May are both getting better of their troubles. May is about again but Clifford is not up yet. They have had a large family gathering during the past two weeks and I fear it was a strain on Mrs Saunders Senior.

I forget if I mentioned that Mr Milne died in Glasgow at the age of 92. He lived with us here in our New Stockenstroom Street and Market Street homes for ten years. Yesterday, Monday, I had a letter from Mrs Bull at Simonstown telling of the death of an old friend of mine – her husband – who was Postmaster of Kimberley and used to visit us in Vryburg and help with services. He had a stroke. He was such a nice man. We have also had a card from Mrs (Rev) Sorrie who are going to live in Bedford for a time as they cannot find accommodation here. He was supplying a pulpit in Port Elizabeth for some months.

Dot reports lots of fruit and vegetables after the excessive rains that have fallen there. The country is looking beautiful.

Nearly 11 am, must close with lots of love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday March 6th, 1946

My dear All,

Tuesday morning instead of Monday afternoon finds me starting my weekly epistle. Not that either of us are sick or incapable but the fact is we are servantless. Candance gave notice at the beginning of February but we asked her to stay another month in the hope that plans for the transfer of the Kroonstad family to Cradock might have been decided upon so that Grace could make her own arrangements for the future. These plans have not yet materialised and until they do, either one way or the other, it seems we must carry on as best we can. I may mention that we are by no means the only ones who are in the same predicament. Mrs Ludlow for one, had a maid last month but is without this. Aunt Eliza is, I think, changing her Maggie. For the present we go round to the Premier for dinner instead of sending for it.

We had invited the Organising Secretary of the SATA, Mr Coking, to stay with us over the coming weekend as he is addressing a public meeting on the liquor question. Under the circumstances, we have arranged to have him put up at the Premier so as to save extra work for us. Sunday was harvest thanksgiving day. Rev Ludlow was very good at both services. The collections were also good, £26 odd in the morning and £29 at the evening and there is still more to follow. The Fish River Fete will be held on May 30th.

Mrs Kissack is able to sit out in a wheeled chair on her stoep for a while but it is doubtful if she is making any real progress towards recovery. Mary is still sleeping there at night and is arranging to occupy Mr Thomas' room for a while.

9 am. Phone from Lynne has just come through. Douglas and Evelyn are leaving by car this morning for Vryburg, Arthur is going down to East London with one of the Rickett boys and returns home via Queenstown to Vryburg later. Lynne said they tried to get through to us on Sunday night and again Monday but the line was so busy that after waiting an hour each time, they had to give it up. Lynne says she is going round with a hockey team to Bloemfontein, Kroonstad and other places but did not say when. They have evidently had a good time in Queenstown.

Late evening (Monday). We had a call from a Mr and Mrs Shoesmith and son. Mr Shoesmith was a prisoner of war in South West Africa with Douglas in the First Great War and would so much like to have seen him. They are living in town. A sister of his is staying with Miss Metcalf. The son is working in the Standard Bank here. Douglas called to see H.C. Debeurer when passing through Tarkastad. He is evidently in a very poor way, poor chap. Pam writes that if the transfer comes off, she would like to stay with Jean in Kroonstad to the end of her school year. I think I can get a suitable position for her here.

A letter from Ruth tells of her having come into one third of the silverware from her late Aunt, Mrs Holden, also some money. We are very pleased and congratulate her. Denis and Dorothea have settled down in their two rooms very comfortably. The heat has been very trying there she says. So it has been here.

Dot says their butchery business in which Reg was a partner has (or is) changing hands. The farm in which he has often visited is also going. Mrs Hudson Senior is on holiday at East London. Reg and Dot have both taken their tennis racquets in hand again. David Irons is looking to visit Durban. Dossie Dennison was very good to him on his way up north. We also hope to see something of him.

We have given away the other white kitten and the mother cat was very distressed at first. The Wests are back and settling down in Uncle Gervase's flat. They have their meals at the Victoria. They brought a nice dog with them from Cape Town. I don't know how they will manage with it in the flat. Mrs West has joined the choir.

I am sorry not to be able to finish the sheet this week, the servant problem is not the only cause but I am rather behind with my work. Hope you are all keeping well and that we shall have good news to report in due course. Much love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday March 13th, 1946

My dear All,

It is nearly noon on Tuesday. I have been waiting for a new supply of carbon paper as I noticed last week the sheets I was using were getting very poor. I hope you will have less trouble in reading these although I must say no one has complained lately. We are servantless and are getting rather tired of it but we have a prospect of a part-time girl who does washing for other people and says she will come and wash tomorrow. We shall wait and see.

We have had a postcard from Evelyn reporting her and Douglas' safe arrival home on Wednesday afternoon last. Douglas has lost 14 head of cattle at one farm through this new disease – lumpy shin sickness – it is to be hoped that a remedy or preventative will soon be found. Grace also reports the same sickness in Kroonstad but does not say that any of their stock is affected. Arthur has been spending a few days with Bobby Rickett at East London but expect he is home by now. Lynne says he had a good time with her and her friends – girls of course – in Queenstown.

As I was passing the house next door on my way up Kruger Lane, a young man standing at the front gate asked me if Douglas Butler was a relation of mine as he saw in the Midland News recently he was in town. This proved to be one of the Crosbie twins, relations of Evelyn's. He and his twin brother were both in the Navy and were torpedoed I think. He is employed on the South African Rail and Harbour's accounting department and is stationed here at present. We are asking him in and shall see if we can do anything for him. How small the world is! I think he said he (or his Brother) was in Kroonstad.

We have had rather a hectic few days with Mr Cocking and his meetings. As we had no servant, we decided to put him up at the Premier. He arrived about 10.30 Saturday night. He came to see us before service on Sunday morning and we had a good long chat. I discussed with him a matter which has been on my mind during and since my illness, the writing of an "open" letter for publication regarding the liquor question. He had been thinking on the same lines and I think before long it will take definite shape. His address in Church in the morning was very good. He took as his text for the children's address the word H.A.B.I.T. Taking the two last letters first in his hand, he pointed out that drink was "it" and it became a "bit" and could not easily be given up and eventually it became a "habit" with so many that it often became such a hold on people that it caused the ruin of so many. Beware of habits getting the mastery of you. He sat in the choir in the evening – a tenor. After service we were invited into the parsonage for a cup of tea. Mr Cocking and Mr and Mrs West were also invited. I am forgetting Uncle Gervase. He motored us all home about 10 p.m.

On Monday morning we had morning tea with Mrs van Rensburg, Deputy Mayor and she is also President of the W.C.T.U. when we arranged that she would be president at the evening meeting etc. At five I got a taxi and took Mr Cocking up to see Aunt Eliza. She had a variety of old temperance literature she wanted to give him and which he accepted. Mary was also there. She knew him when he was Postmaster in Graaff Reinet. He was greatly interested in the Boy Scouts movement at the time. Mr Stock also wanted to see him on the same interest. I invited him to come to his meeting in the evening but he did not do so. The evening meeting was well attended, the supper room being comfortably filled. Mr Cocking spoke for about an hour and a half, his arguments and facts being most convincing. Ernest, Alison and the Afrikaans reporter, Mr Theron, were all there. As a result, the local branch of the S.ATA will be resuscitated. The Midland News has been busy sending off press messages about the meeting so no doubt you will see some reference to it in your papers. He left by the 7 am train and is holding meetings at various towns on his way back to Cape Town.

Later. After dinner. A strange thing happened at dinner. A lady sitting next to me at the next table was speaking to another guest at her table and mentioned the name Potgietersrus. I naturally pricked up my ears and as she passed me I asked her if she came from there and was asked is Mrs Hudson my daughter? I was proud to acknowledge that she was. She is the newly appointed

Supervisor at the telephone exchange, Erasmus by name. That was the end of what may be many more conversations.

Lynne tells us that Kingsley has mumps. Next please. Joe says he has got a recurrent sickness which the Drs cannot understand. He has to go for further investigation when next it occurs. They also have servant trouble. They lost their little dog but still hope to find it. Their milk boy saw it at the other end of the town one morning. I had a visit on Saturday from a Government official named Kent who wanted information re the ancient history of the Warm Bath. I was able to show him photos of the old bath. Incidentally he was deeply interested in looking at a number of other photos. His job is to report on all mineral springs in the Union. Some task. It is surprising upon what subjects I am referred to. He was deeply interested in my rainfall records.

Aunt Jessie says she often suffers from giddy attacks but thinks nothing of them. I see the sheet is practically full and Mom wants to write a few lines to Evelyn so I must stop tickling the keys.

Goodbye, love to all
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday March 20th, 1946

My dear All,

Monday afternoon, very hot and still no rain. It is coming and we must learn to be patient. The thanksgiving service in the D.R. Church on Friday last was also used as a special service for rain for this and neighbouring districts which are suffering from drought conditions. Rev Ludlow, who gave the address, dwelt upon the argument frequently advanced by many "why should we pray? If the Almighty knows what we want, why ask him?" His address was splendid. So was his address on Sunday night taken from Isaiah 35 verse 7 revised version "the glowing sand (marginal reference says mirage) shall become a pool". He pointed out how many people followed the mirages of pleasure, wealth etc and how terribly disappointed they were in the end.

We are still without word of transfer from Kroonstad. I suppose the recent go slow strike may have upset the Department. It makes it very awkward for Grace and Ted especially. We were able last week to get an old maid to do some washing and she has promised to come again tomorrow (Tuesday) and we are trying to get her to come daily. She is mother of the boy Alfred, who attends to Aunt Eliza's pigeons every day.

My afternoon nap was disturbed at 2 pm by a railway man wanting to hire the garage for storing his furniture. He has just been transferred from Port Elizabeth and cannot get a house anywhere. He has his own house at Dispatch. This morning Uncle Gervase fetched up for morning tea at Mrs West's. They have a very comfortable flat and when the electric light and water is laid on, they will be set up. I do not know what rent they have to pay. Crosbie, who I mentioned last week, is paying £3 for his room next door. He gets his meals at Mrs Kruger's next door to us and is going to have a room there as well at the end of the month. Uncle Gervase took us home after morning tea round by Aunt Eliza's for a few minutes. Am very sorry to say that she had just read a letter from Aunt Emmie saying she had been knocked down by a motorcar by a lady driver just close to Auntie's home. She was going to meet Gladys who was taking her to Cape Town to see about trying one of these aids for deafness. Auntie had just emerged from behind a standing lorry and the driver of the car, of course, could not see her. Fortunately she was driving slowly or she might have been killed on the spot. As it so happened, she only got bruised on her chin, lip, knees and a pair of silk stockings spoilt. The lady was the Vice Principal of the Girls High School who of course did all she could for her. Dr was called in and says she must rest a while. Aunt continued her journey to Cape Town, which she should not have done, and we hope she will not be any the worse for the incident.

We got our post just before going to our dinner. There was a long letter from Mr Milne's housekeeper – ten pages – by airmail, over 2/- postage on it. She gives interesting details regarding our old friend. He left her and her husband £400 and some other relatives £1000, nothing for any South Africans. He had house property in Scotland. His body was cremated.

Tuesday morning. Last night we experienced one of the worst wind storms we have had for a long time. We sat out on the lawn for a while and went to bed early as Mom was tired. About ten, the wind rose to great violence, the blinds and curtains were blown ceiling height but it cooled the air considerably. This morning it is nice and fresh but no rain. We watched the lightning for some time in the south west and it seemed incessant but very far away. Our turn will come in due course.

Mom was troubled with a tummy upset one day last week so I gave her her breakfast in bed. She is not right yet. On Sunday she did not go to either service. The uncertainty of the Kroonstad move is unsettling. Yesterday, whilst resting just after dinner, a man came and hired the garage from April 1st to store his furniture.

We are anxious because we have not heard a word from Dot for more than a week. Shall wire if nothing comes today. We are also concerned about Joe. On Saturday morning we had a postcard from him saying the Medical Research Department had discovered that he had the dysentery germ in his system and he has to go to hospital for injections and observation. We hope he will soon be quite well again. Miss Metcalf came and spent Sunday evening with Mom. Mary

called and on Saturday we took a taxi to see how Clifford Saunders is getting on. He was sitting out on the stoep and is getting better slowly. May is in the country nursing a case. Florrie comes for the weekend on Fridays. Her two big boys have gone to University.

The pleasures of shopping: We ordered from Cull & Kew 6 bars of soap. They delivered 6 lbs of loose oats. Brains!!!

a.m. Maid just arrived, breakfast finished, bed made, watering done. Now for a day's work. Am afraid this new carbon paper is not much, if any, improvement on what I was using before. Tuesday is always a bad day for post. It looks as though it might rain today. Hope it does. We still have rainwater.

Later. Still no post yet. Washing is proceeding but it is a dull morning and it will not be possible to have the ironing done as well today. Hope you are all well, will start another sheet if any news of importance comes along.

Lots of love to all,
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday March 22nd, 1946

My dear All,

I have often been criticised, chaffed and even scolded for storing what has often been called rubbish. Here is a true story of a postcard.

I saw a paragraph in the East London Dispatch asking for the date of the introduction of the South African Airmail service. Someone had informed him that it was 1918 but he thought it was much earlier. I remembered whilst at Vryburg, receiving such a card from our then Member of Parliament but I could not remember the date but I knew I had saved the card and had it in one of my 12 albums of curious pictures, photographs etc. As these are all indexed, I had no difficulty in putting my hand on the identical page so I naturally sent a line to the East London Dispatch giving full details of the date of the postmark etc. This was published in their paper in full on March 16th and on Tuesday following, I received a long interesting letter from John Shingler at East London saying he was interested as he had given up his position in the electrical business he had been in before the war (and which he had gone back to on his return) and had started on his own as a stamp collector. Una was helping him and he saw good prospects. Their son John, now in Standard Three, was also very keen. If I still had the card, he would be pleased to give me £10 (ten pounds) for it. I had suggested in my note to the Editor that if his correspondent wanted the postcard, he could make me a good offer for it. I do not know who the original correspondent is so I have told Shingler that I will give him time to make an offer. I am waiting until the end of the week for a reply but if it does not come, then John will have the card. I have mentioned the details rather fully so that you may see that everything is not rubbish because it is old. I used to collect first issues of Newspapers and have sold some at good prices. I think I shall now try to sell the dozen scrap books which I am sure contain some very interesting and valuable pictures. Shingler said in his letter that £10 was the catalogue price of the postcard before the war so I guess he stands to make a good deal on it. He is welcome to the profit.

It is Friday morning 22nd. Have just rung up Grace (7.30). Had some difficulty in getting her as evidently there are two 60s on the exchange and they kept on putting me through to the Railway 60. Grace phoned last evening suggesting that we go at once to them owing to the servant difficulty. She says it is the best time of the year for them and we should get away. Mom has had the strain of my illness and all this bother in not having a maid and the Post Office not having made up its mind about Ted's transfer, that it all pointed in the direction of our going to them. However, I have booked seats provisionally for April 6th but do not think it will materialise. For one thing, Joe is in Uitenhage Hospital probably for the next six weeks with dysentery and we might go there. Grace offered to send David down to help us on the train but that is not necessary. The fast train leaves here about 11 p.m. and gets to Kroonstad at mid-day on Sunday without having to change anywhere. However we will see as we get nearer the time. We have had over 30 points of rain during the night. The last few days have been decidedly cold and warm clothing has been brought into use. Grace says Jean is down with flu but expects she will be up in a day or so. Ted is still working.

Joe went into Uitenhage Hospital on Monday. Dr Ruth tells Blodwen she has had the same trouble and it takes about six weeks to get rid of the germ. Joe says the children pass the hospital every day on their way to school so they see him and take the paper. He has a bed on the stoep and does not suffer much pain. Blodwen's brother is going to them for his holiday from April 1st so Blodwen will not be alone in the house. Eric and Freda are to spend a few days in Uitenhage next month and one day here on their way back to Vryburg. Mary is staying at Aunt Eliza's now so we can help with sleeping accommodation.

Have just had a look at the rain gauge. We had 34 points during the night and since 8.30 another 32 points and it is only just 10 am so we may have more before the day is out. Grace said this morning they had also had good rains. We have just phoned birthday greetings to Mr and Mrs Stock. The rain is a nice birthday present for them. Have put on my cardigan this morning as it is

so damp and cold. Shall be wanting fires soon if it continues like this. But we may have a spell of hot weather again.

On 31st of this month, David will be 20 years old, and Reg and Dot will have been married 20 years and Joe and Blodwen married for 14 years. I have just been looking at the group of the family we had taken at Vryburg on 23rd February 1912 when the family was complete, what changes since then. Harold was 19, Douglas 17, Grace 13, Joe 11, Dot 7, Mom 50 and me 48.

Later. A letter from Dot which should have arrived last week but was posted in a “window” envelope without any address has come from the returned letter office. Hence my anxiety at not having heard from her for so long. Had a nice rain since typing the above. This letter is an extra, extra edition.

Lots of love to all,
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday March 27th, 1946

My dear All,

I am very late in starting my letter. I have been making up the Church books for the Quarterly Meeting which is to be held on April 3rd at Fish River and have had to close the books before the end of the month so as to get them audited, not only so but the quarterly News sheet has to be got out before the end of the month. I cannot add up columns of figures as quickly or as correctly as I used to so everything takes longer to prepare. However, I have just finished it and sent the boy along with it to Ernest so that the printers can get a move on.

It is Tuesday afternoon. Naps are over and it is a nice afternoon for a walk. We have had 114 points of rain during the past seven days – for which we are very thankful. Port Elizabeth had 2 inches in an hour which has disorganised rail traffic for several days. Post is being delayed and generally traffic and posts are in a muddle, but we get used to such things in South Africa. We have had a few postcards from Joe, written on the stoep of the hospital. He seems bright and is seeing quite a number of visitors. He hopes to be up by the time Eric and Freda visit Uitenhage but it is doubtful. In any case, Blodwen will have her brother to stay with her as he is coming up for three weeks holiday.

This (Tuesday) morning, we had a visit from Mrs Haldane from Potgietersrus and her friend, Mrs Meaker. Dot has frequently mentioned Mrs Haldane whose son has married Col. Collett's younger son. He was a P.O.W. until December. The Haldanes have been farming about 25 miles from Potgietersrus and think the world of Reg and Dot – quite right that they should, I say. Mrs Haldane has come down from Middelburg to consult the oculist. She says she has wonderful sight but lately her eyes have been troubling her. Mrs Meaker is sister-in-law of Mrs Piper who lived at Dagga Boer and married Rev Piper. Of course we knew the Meakers when they lived at Dagga Boer. There were about 15 in the family. She was a Miss Orr. They were very interested in looking at the family tree and other things. Mrs Haldane was sorry not to have seen Reg and Dot when they were here at Xmas. They have travelled down by car – a Vauxhall – and speak most highly of its qualities. They called a little before dinner.

We have not been to the Premier since Sunday, Mom prefers having it at home. The girl gets it for us and there is always something for her. We do get a better service if we do go round there. We have no news to report from Kroonstad. We have given up the idea of going there at present. The maid we got last week is giving good service and the wash girl comes on Tuesdays. Washing and ironing was all done and put away before dinner. We solved the mystery of not hearing from Dot the week before last. She posted to us in a "window" envelope but put the address in the inside instead of facing outwards. Consequently the letter was sent to the dead letter office where it was opened and the officials opening it of course found where it should have gone, we got it but it was nearly two weeks old. They are all well there. Suppose the boys will be home for the short holidays soon.

Douglas is in Johannesburg again. He has not had any more losses from lumpy skin sickness since his return. Arthur was still at Queenstown when Evelyn last wrote. Kingsley was out of quarantine and will be home soon for the holidays. Mrs Saunders and "little Willies" daughter have called. Am glad to say Clifford is at last getting better, is not able to walk properly but manages with the aid of a crutch or stick. He had been able to do a number of repairing jobs about the house but cannot do much standing. May is all right again and is taking cases. Our garden boy is more fond of playing football than working. He sends notes now and then that there is a match tomorrow, he will not be able to come to work so sends his brother. The brother Mom thinks is the better man of the two. Mary came to see us on Sunday afternoon and we walked as far as the park and swimming bath.

I only started this after dinner or after tea and don't like to miss the post so will close and get a move on. Write to Joe as you have opportunity. When people are sick, they appreciate letters more than at any other time.

So goodbye and lots of love to all, Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday April 3rd, 1946

My dear All,

We had a very delightful trip to Uncle Bertie's farm, Spelmanskop, last Wednesday. Rev and Mrs Ludlow kindly offered us a seat so as to show them the road as they had not paid them an official visit so far. The weather was fine and we had no difficulty in finding the farm. The last time we were there was years ago when Grace and some of the children were here on a visit. We called there on our way back from visiting Uncle Norman at Katkop. I remember Grace drove part of the way home. Of course we had morning tea and dinner there and a nap afterwards. They have made a number of improvements since our last visit. They have a good water supply near the house, having struck a good borehole. They have also built on some more rooms and generally done up the house. The beautiful large mulberry tree in the garden was blown down last year when it was full of fruit. Less than half of the tree is still standing and the question is how to save the wood that has fallen as they want to make furniture from it. I have written to the Forestry to find out how best to preserve it. Fortunately no one was hurt when it fell – in fact they were away from home when it happened. Of course they have their own electric light, wireless etc and they are very comfortable. Aunt Annie does not appear at all well, blood pressure and perhaps rheumatism may be the cause. She moves about quite slowly. May and Iris are just as lively and busy as usual. The shearers start work on April 1st and it will take them a month to shear all their sheep, I understand, about a couple of thousand. Iris does all the classing of the wool, some job. We all enjoyed the dinner, best Karroo mutton, home-grown tomatoes, cream, fruit etc, etc. After a rest, we had tea and had intended going to see Sonny and his wife and child. May phoned and found that Sonny was not at home and his wife, whom we have not met yet, was suffering from a bad headache so it was decided not to go there this time. Coming back, we crossed at Baroda over to the National road but took the wrong road before crossing the railway. We were home before six.

After attending the evening service on Thursday, Uncle Gervase and the Wests came home with us and stayed until about ten. There was an encouraging number present at service. We are going to Fish River just after dinner on Wednesday this week to hold the quarterly meeting there. Quite an innovation and shall be back again about six. Mom will go as well and wants to see Aunt Agnes as she has not been to her home at the station yet.

Mrs and Mrs Carson are being transferred to Chief Warder at Johannesburg gaol about the end of this month. Mrs Carson is secretary of the W.A. Mary came to see us on Sunday afternoon and after evening service, went in to the parsonage to have evening tea. We also went in. They are very hospitable. He came with his motor and took us to church in the evening. In the morning I went to see Aunt Eliza. Am sorry to say Aunt Eliza had an attack of sciatica recently which gave her considerable pain. It is fortunate Mary was sleeping there and was able to render appropriate relief. Another proof of the necessity of someone being on the spot. Mary is not going away at present. Mrs Kissack is slowly getting better. A married sister has come to her aid from Rhodesia and has relieved Mary of her duties.

Joe is getting on nicely in hospital, the injection part of the remedy is finished and the second stage may take a few weeks. Blodwen and the children go to see him daily. Blodwen has reduced her weight by over 40 lbs since November. Eric and Freda and the children arrived at Cape Town last Wednesday which happened to be the hottest day Cape Town has had this summer. Joe says it was so cold recently at Uitenhage that he was glad to have three blankets on his bed during the day one day last week. Eric and Freda and children are due here for three days about 17th. Freda will stay with Aunt Rouena, Eric at Aunt Eliza's and the children I am not sure about. Have offered accommodation here if necessary.

Nothing has yet been decided about Ted's transfer. Rev Ludlow knows the ex Minister of Posts and wrote him a personal note on the matter but of course he cannot do anything as it does not come under his jurisdiction now. All the family seem to approve of our going to Kroonstad until the transfer is settled but we feel that as we have a servant now, there is not the immediate need to go away. If it should so happen that Ted is not going to be transferred, the position will be altered.

Dot says they could probably meet us in Johannesburg by car and Douglas says the same if we were at Kroonstad. We are both keeping pretty well at present.

We are glad to hear that Aunt Emmie is getting over her accident. It is a wonder she was not more seriously injured.

We had a nice shower of rain first thing this morning which helps to bring up the total for March. It is nice to see how quickly the veldt responds to the showers we have had. Our tanks are not full yet.

It is 5 p.m. Tuesday. Shall be busy in the morning getting off 250 copies of the Methodist News. Have the wrappers already addressed but they must be posted before noon. Our grapes and figs are quite finished for this year. They have not been as good as last.

Lots of love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday April 10th, 1946

My dear All,

Monday afternoon and still no news from Kroonstad about the transfer. One almost begins to feel that it is not going to come off but suppose that as we have all exercised so much patience over the matter, we can still add patience to patience and wait. All good things come to those who wait.

Miss Loscombe came to see us on Saturday evening after her three weeks holiday at East London regarding their maid. It appears that they had only given her a holiday and expected her to return to work for her. The maid definitely engaged herself to us but of course we would not stand in her way of returning. However the maid had seen her that afternoon and promised to bring another girl to her today. She had definitely told us a story as she said Miss Loscombe was paying her 16/- a month whereas she was only getting 10/-. She only worked from about 8 am to about ten. She comes to us about eight and stays until about 1.30, or as soon as she has washed up the dinner things. She is back at work this morning and hope she will stay.

We had a nice trip to Fish River last Wednesday afternoon. We were home again just before six. They gave us tea and there was a nice attendance, larger than what we have in town sometimes. I suppose I must tell you of something that happened the same evening. We were both tired and decided to go to bed early. Mom had her bath and was in bed just by eight o'clock. I asked her to listen in case the telephone rang as we always expect it to do after or about nine (it is half rates then) as we are always expecting to have a ring about then. I followed for my bath and sure enough, the bell did ting, continuously for some time. We are often confused as to which bell rings as our front door and back door bells are attached to the same circuit. I at once hopped out of the bath and slipped on my dressing gown and went to the phone. No one answered. As it had taken a little while before I reached the phone, I rang up the exchange and asked if anyone had rung. They said no, so I then went to the front door and there was no one there. The same at the kitchen door. So I went back to finish my bath. Then the bell rang again so I hopped out the second time but did not try the phone. No one was at either door so I concluded someone must be playing an April Fool's joke so gave up the bath and went to bed. At ten pm. Someone was knocking at the front door. I switched on the stoep light. I heard people talking. There were two men wanting sleeping accommodation and had mistaken our house for Terblanche who lives next door. One of the men recognised me and addressed me by name. I do not know who he was. They both had luggage with them and they had evidently just arrived by the up train. We were not disturbed after that. I am glad to say I did not catch cold or am any the worse for the experience. It would have been awkward if Mom had been alone.

A postcard from Joe this (Monday) morning says he had to go back to hospital this morning for the concluding ten days treatment. Eric and Freda arrived on last Monday. Blodwen's brother, Billy, had arrived before that but unfortunately has had some heart attacks which necessitated calling in a Doctor. He had had to be called in again and eventually the ambulance was sent to take him to hospital. We judge he is seriously ill. They have wired to his people at Cape Town and it is possible another brother will come if he can get away. He was staying with Blodwen for three weeks whilst Joe was in hospital. We hope he will soon be better.

Ruth writes that she has taken on the job of Secretary to the Red Cross Society in Grahamstown which is only a half day job and is well paid for. Denis and Dorothea are contemplating coming to a guest farm in this district during the long holidays so as to get more proficient in Afrikaans. They look to spend some time with us as well. We shall look forward to their visit.

Dot says they have been to the farm for the last time. The boys were coming home for short holidays and again for Easter. Both are keen on sports but Norman cannot play football on account of his back being weak. David is back at his job in Johannesburg. He is staying at the YMCA as well as Harold. You can make a note of their address: Tabona House, 49 Robinson House Belgravia, Johannesburg. Rex Butler's address is College Mansions, Clifton Suburb, Johannesburg.

I saw in the last Stellander a Silver Wedding notice of Miss Wild who used to work for me at Vryburg. I saw her once at Wolsley Station on my way to Cape Town. Nice letter from Cecily says Rex's address is 40 Ameshoff Street, Clifton so will you please change what I have typed five lines above. Saturday night was cold, only seven degrees above freezing. Delightful weather since.

Mom is going to her WA meeting presently. All the members are supposed to say something for one minute each. The President of the Conference, Rev Mears, is to be here on Thursday evening. Vincent Crosbie's young lady, Miss Raals, is coming down from Vryburg shortly and Mom suggests we put her up here and she can have meals with him next door at Mrs Kruger's. We do not know exactly when exactly she is coming.

Lots of love to all,
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday April 17th, 1946

My dear All,

Monday afternoon and as this is Easter week, we are sure to have our postal arrangements upset but as I generally post my letter on Tuesday (in spite of the fact I date them as Wednesday) I hope you may receive them in reasonable time. Last week I told you of the incident about the bath, this week's excitement is quite different. On Friday afternoon, I received a phone call to say that four visitors were coming to have afternoon tea with us but no names were mentioned. I could not spot the voice although I knew the tone. I asked if they were important people and should I put up the flags and spread the carpet etc. "Oh yes, do all that but be quick." My first thought was that it might be some of Harry Collett's girls. However Mom got busy and got the best tea-set out whilst I put one flag over the veranda rail and the other over the flower pot. To our surprise, in walked Jim and Hilda and their son, Jim the third, and M.R. Mennell, all from Louisvale. They had phoned from the Poplars. There, too, they were up to nonsense. They got little Jim – aged twelve – to get out of the car and knock at the door and ask if his parents could get a night's lodging. Alison said no, she had had a very busy week with the Show etc and was far too tired to do anything. At last, Hilda and Jim appeared on the scene and everything was fixed up. However to continue the joke, Jim junior was sent across to Ernest who was still working. He made a similar request and Ernest gave the same excuse. Then the little chap said to Ernest, "you don't know me do you?" "No, who are you?" "James Butler junior." I think this sort of thing runs in our family. I have heard of similar jokes. Joe and Dot boarded a train between Vryburg and Kimberley once when Mom was going to Kimberley and they sprung a surprise on her when the train was on its way. Of course, we were very pleased to see Jim and Co. They could not stay long as they had others to see and had to be off by six a.m. for a long trip to Xopa, Natal, to see Dan and Josie Biggs. They expect to be in Grahamstown before Easter to take their two daughters to Graaff Reinet for Easter and I suppose, back to Grahamstown and then home. He has a few days leave before being discharged from the army. He did not forget to send a message to Douglas for what he tried to do for him in Vryburg. Mr Stock called whilst they were here so he and Mr Mennell had a good chat whilst we were busy talking to Jim and Hilda. Jim junior is a nice bright lad, he wanted to come and live with us when he was quite small and we were on a visit there. He is in Standard five.

We received a wire from Joe at eleven this morning "coming as soon as possible, have wired Kroonstad, suggest you both come with me." We are awaiting further developments. If we don't get a wire from Kroonstad this afternoon, will phone them about nine this evening. Evidently they have not had any news re transfer so it seems to us that it is better to await some definite news, either they are or are not going to transfer him. Joe can stay here as long as he likes. Evidently his Dr has given permission for him to travel. Eric and Freda and children are expected this evening. Freda and twins are to stay at Uncle Gervase's, Eric and Peter at Aunt Eliza's. Mary is at Market Street. Of course we hope to see something of the visitors. We offered to put any of them up but we are not to have that pleasure. We are glad to hear that Blodwen's brother is getting better. He has been sharing the same ward with Joe.

Jean has not been well for some little time, her throat has been the trouble. She needs a change. Denis informs us that we may be qualified for being great grandparents before the end of the year. Good luck to them. Douglas says Arthur has been busy getting a tennis court fixed up at the farm. He offers to fetch us from Kroonstad if and when we go there.

We had Vincent Crosbie in to supper Sunday night. He is going to Port Elizabeth for Easter. His young lady will not be coming down before October. Of course, Dot's boys have been home for short holidays and are expected for Easter as well. Baby Joan is still as sweet and attractive as ever, if not more so. We are glad to hear that Eric has not had any attacks of asthma for the past five years. Evidently the Vryburg climate has done him a lot of good.

The visit of the President on Thursday was very hurried but successful as far as it went. We all should like to have seen more of him.

Am glad to say both of us are keeping very well. The weather has been delightful and so say all the rest of the family. The maid is still giving satisfaction. There is not enough work for her to do. We still send round for our dinners except on Sundays when we go to the Premier.

Uncle Gervase and Mary often drop in to see how we are getting on. Mrs West is now book-keeper at Watsons, the chemists. The garden boy still comes about three pm. Mom has gone to see Aunt Charlotte this afternoon. I do not like to leave the house in case the phone may ring. Must now write to Joe. I must say that Reg and Dot have also expressed their willingness to fetch us from Kroonstad if we decide to go. We will let you know as soon as anything is decided.

I have accumulated a supply of Rev R. Barr's weekly letters to his congregation and friends. I think he issues 6000 every week. I have found them very helpful and I hope you will all read them and pass them on to someone else to read. They are very practical.

5.30 p.m. Rev Ludlow has just brought Mom back from seeing Aunt Charlotte and informs me that Harry McLeod passed away yesterday.

Love to all,
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday April 24th, 1946

My dear All,

For the last two or more weeks, I have had to record something unusual having happened. This week what happened might have been even more serious than others. I had been up town in the morning and on my return, as I was crossing Beeren Street towards Kruger's Lane, I noticed a car approaching from the direction of the Premier Hotel and it turned down the lane. By the time I had reached the lane, he had arrived at his house and as I proceeded to walk close to the walled side of the lane, I noticed that the car was returning backwards towards me. The driver kept close to the wall. I held up my hands but whether he saw me or not, I do not know. However he continued to approach me and only by a very quick movement I managed to get on the other side of the lane where there was just room for him to pass me. Had I not been very quick, he would have been on top of me and by this time, I might have been in my grave. I shouted to him as he passed me but he took no notice. I reported the matter to the police but do not know if they will take any action in the matter. I saw the party yesterday as we went to dinner. He was sitting in his car outside his house in the lane. He said he has been parking there for eight years and dared me to take any action in the matter. Of course the lane is not a thoroughfare, there is a barrier across the lane further down. However I am approaching the Town Council at its next meeting to put a barrier at each end of the lane so as to prevent motorists from entering the lane. It is quite unsafe for vehicle traffic. Mom was nearly knocked down by a cyclist turning the corner some time ago and I got the Council to erect sight boards "cycling not allowed".

Joe arrived on Wednesday night and Eric and family left on Thursday morning. He went to see them off. Am glad to say Joe is looking better than I expected but he evidently needs as much rest as he can possibly get. He came to service with us on Good Friday at 7.30 a.m. He was hoping we would go with him to Kroonstad but Mom said I must see Dr first so Joe and I went to him and he was firm after examining me that it was not wise to go as Kroonstad is over 1000 feet higher than Cradock. Of course I am disappointed and it seems I may never see the children's homes again. The weather the last week or two has been perfect and both Douglas and Dot have written saying they would come to Kroonstad and motor us to their homes. It would be foolish to attempt going in spite of his advice. If were nearer the coast or at a lower altitude than the family was, it would be different. However perhaps one of these days I may take the risk and go.

On Good Friday morning, I went to see Aunt Charlotte. A letter arrived from nieces in Australia for her which I read to her. Her memory of them is very clear. I still have to answer them for her. I have to arrange finances for her.

Joe saw Clifford Saunders. He is now able to drive their motorcar and gets about with the aid of a walking stick. He also complains of getting tired if he does much walking. On Saturday afternoon, he came along and took Mom and Joe with his sisters, Mrs Hall and May, to watch two Rugby football matches. Rhodes University beat Cradock by 9 points to nil. I did not go. In the evening, Rev Ludlow came along to see Joe. Ernest also dropped in and discussed some points with Joe about one of his machines which needed repairs. Mrs Hall and May also came. Mr Ludlow had family prayers with us which was very nice. He says he will see to taking money (church collections) to the bank for me in future and relieve me of some other duties. Yesterday (Easter Sunday) service was held at nine so as to allow him time to get to Fish River for their monthly service. I should have said that Joe was undecided what to do, whether to go on to Kroonstad or direct to Douglas. However he went to the station about 10.15 pm, Saturday on the off chance of being able to get a seat on the fast train and if not able, would come back and go straight to Vryburg this Monday morning. He did not come back so no doubt he is with Grace and family. They are having a tennis tournament there today in aid of church funds. It is a perfect day here and I hope they are having the same there.

We phoned to Eric to find out what his plans were and it is probable they will join the same train at Kimberley tomorrow (Tuesday) morning at Kimberley for Vryburg. It is possible Douglas may be in Kimberley as the children have to be back at school that morning. In any case, Freda was

going to break her journey there as Peter has also to be at school Tuesday. Mrs West has asked us if we know of furnished rooms for some more friends from Cape Town who would like to come here to avoid the Cape winter. Of course we cannot do anything until we know what is going to happen regarding Ted's transfer. It is now five months since he put in his application for transfer. Today is bank holiday so this morning I walked up to see Aunt Eliza. I find it is easier going right along New Stockenström Street (our old home) and then up Cross Street as it avoids the rather steeper climb past the Victoria Hotel. I walked there and back, before dinner. Aunt Eliza has lent Mom one of her ear trumpets and I hope she will make good use of it. It is getting increasingly difficult for her to hear what is said. Neville Collett wants to buy my writing desk. I am thinking of bringing the table from the spare room to take its place. It is rather too large but may do.

We had a visit from one of Lynne's girlfriends last week, Miss (am sorry I have forgotten her name for the moment). She says they are a very happy crowd of girls. She is in the Bank there.

Our maid has not turned up today (Monday). The boy came this morning. Suppose being a holiday, she thought she might as well have one too. She is a quick worker.

Dot has had plasterers in the house for some time doing repairs. The outside of the house has still to be done. She was expecting to have ten in the house for Easter.

Arthur has been fixing up the tennis court lately, using the same poles and wire they had at Scholtzfontein. I expect he is playing in Kimberley in the Griqualand West tennis tournament today. Hope he wins.

Grace was expecting both her boys home for Easter, hope to hear how they got on with their tournament. Joe was leaving Kroonstad this afternoon so as to get to Kimberley on Tuesday morning in time to catch the Vryburg train.

Jean is quite well again. Hope her recent illness will not affect her prospects of passing her matric at the end of the year. Grace says they had car trouble when they went to bio recently. The car would not start but they managed to get a lift home with one of their neighbours. Pam has got a rise of £2.10.0d per month so must be doing very well. Congratulations Pam. I recently had a postcard from Grace which has been three months in coming.

Tuesday afternoon. The only post this morning was a postcard from Dot. She was expecting Reg and the boys home for the Easter holidays. All were well. Hope to hear from Joe how he got on at Kroonstad and if he met Douglas in Kimberley. Little Ann Booth called to say goodbye. Her Dad and step mother have come from Durban to fetch her. Old Mrs Booth will miss her grandchild very much and Miss Booth has acted mother to her for so long. We shall also miss her. She loved to come and have a swing.

The police phoned to say that the man in the lane, who nearly ran over me, has gone to Bloemfontein for good. I am going to ask the Town Council to put the barriers at both ends of the lane.

Weather is perfect again today. It was not far from freezing last night. The maid did not turn up yesterday but came this morning. Says she had toothache. Washing was all done this morning and put away before dinner.

Mom is just going to her W.A. meeting. Have not seen Rev Ludlow since Friday evening when he was here. I am afraid that I have got somewhat mixed up in some of my dates of recent happenings but it does not matter much, the facts are the same. We are going to shift the dining room table round as we always do in the winter so as to enjoy the fire. We have not started fires yet but it will not be long when we do. It nearly froze last night.

No more for this week, unless I have a special edition later on. Hope all are well at all the various homes to which my letter goes. We do live for our letters and like to hear from each home at least once every week. Hope it is not a burden on anyone to write.

Lots of love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday May 1st, 1946

My dear All,

There is no startling headline for this week's letter unless it is to say that I have sold the writing table I bought on Mr Thomas' sale to Neville Collett for more than I gave for it and I am now getting Mr Muller to alter the smaller table that I have used on the back stoep to take its place. He is working at it as I am writing this and I hope it won't be long before it is finished. He is putting drawers each side for my papers.

We had a postcard from Joe dated Tuesday from Pudimoe but it only reached us on Saturday. It is Monday afternoon now. He had not got as far as Douglas but was at Maude and Mike Meyers until he could get to Grass Ridge. He had a very uncomfortable journey from Kroonstad on Monday. The train was so full he had to stand in the corridor with about 30 or 40 other passengers, all the way to Bloemfontein, about five hours journey. Some were sitting on the floor and others on their luggage. Eric and Freda stayed over in Kimberley. He has had nearly two weeks of his leave but I expect he will be able to get a further extension if he requires it. We have not heard how his brother-in-law is getting on in Uitenhage nor how Blodwen and the children are. A nice letter from Pam this morning gives details for what they did over the Easter weekend. David and Harold were home but had to return on Monday. Joe left the same afternoon. Rainfall on Sunday but they managed to play tennis and other games which together with a good cold lunch, they raised about £15 for church funds. About 30 to 40 sat down to lunch – adults and as many children as well. Grace must have had her hands full cooking for that lot.

Have I told you that one of Eric's twins is working at the Northern News and the other is at the Government Deeds Office. They go home for the weekends. Ruth writes that she had a surprise visits from Helen and Madge Masson recently. Madge lost her husband last August. She is working at the Mafeking Hospital. Helen evidently is not married. Nellie Goodchild also called to see her. She is living at Cape Town. We should like to see them if they come this way.

Aunt Eliza has invited Mr and Mrs Ludlow and ourselves to afternoon tea on Tuesday afternoon. She is to have her best tea-set out for the occasion. I understand the set has been carefully stowed away for some years and is to be used for the first time. The Ludlows are looking forward to the event with interest. They have taken a great fancy to Aunt Eliza. Of course Mary will be there. We were asked in to tea after service last evening. He was along this morning to take the church money to the bank for me. Last Saturday 27th April was the 59th anniversary of my leaving London for Cradock. Originally I came out for two years! Now it is 59.

The cup Harold won at the Maribogo sports meeting in 1916 has gone to Ruth who has given it to Denis. I am sure he will take care of it for his father's sake. We shall be interested in hearing how Arthur got on in the tennis tournament in Kimberley. He won his first round. The tennis court he has been making at Grass Ridge is now finished. They have had more rain on the farm and the lumpy sickness seems to have stopped. Am sorry to hear of the death of Mr Neville. I do not remember having met him but have often heard his name mentioned by the younger people. So you have decided not to invite Rev Hawton. Quite a number of ministers change from one denomination to another. You may remember the Rev Methodist minister who was driving a car in Grahamstown when Ruth was shot through the windscreen. He has joined the Congregational Church and is in Uitenhage now. We bought a few avocado pears last week at 2d each. They were quite black outside but were alright inside. I have never seen such small ones. Dot writes cheerfully as usual. Reg's sister, Trixie, and family were with them for Easter and their own boys were also home. Trixie's husband is a great singer and gave solos at both services. Dot says the rationing of bread (half a loaf) per day etc made it very awkward when there is a crowd to provide for. Tomatoes 1/6 pound, one cake of soap a week etc. Their next stunt is a bazaar in August to raise funds for furnishing the manse they are building.

Vincent Crosbie went to Port Elizabeth for Easter. His brother passed through this morning to Vryburg. Miss Ralls won't be coming down before about October. We have offered to put her up for sleeping. Vincent has given me the address of a party in Port Elizabeth who deals in these

hearing aids. I am going to write and see if one would be of any use for Mom. I am going to send back to the grandsons all the letters they wrote to us during the war. They may be interested in reading them again and keeping them for future reference. I do not expect to have much time for writing tomorrow so will not add more this afternoon.

Tuesday morning, 30th. Vincent Crosbie dropped in last evening for a chat. His brother has been transferred to the station at Vryburg so no doubt some of you will be seeing more of him. Tuesday is a bad day for post for us but still we may hear something from Vryburg. Our post is delivered very late, generally about dinner time. I notice mails are to be carried by air service as far as possible so perhaps there may be some improvement in the service.

Lots of love to everybody for this week.

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday May 8th, 1946

My dear All,

It is Monday morning, 6th, and Joe returned from Vryburg about midnight on Saturday and spent yesterday (Sunday) with us and will be leaving for Uitenhage tonight. He spent three days with us on his way north and about 26 hours with Grace and Ted and family on Easter Sunday and part of Monday and back by train for Vryburg via Bloemfontein on Monday afternoon. The train was so crowded that he and about 20 other passengers had to stand all the way in the corridor for five hours as the train was so full. He just managed to catch the train for Kimberley just as it was pulling out of the station. From there, he met Eric and Freda who were staying over for the day putting little Peter to boarding school. Joe got off at Pudimoe and slept at Maude and Mike Meyers and later went on to Eric and Freda's with whom he spent about three days and then to Douglas and Evelyn's on the Tuesday. Douglas, Evelyn, Arthur and Joe travelled on Friday by lorry to Kimberley where Douglas had business to see to and of course to see Kingsley, and Cecily to see whilst Arthur was down to play in his tennis tournament on Saturday. They phoned us up on Friday night saying Joe would be leaving by the train Saturday morning and should arrive about ten 30 pm that evening. However we found out that the train was reported over an hour late so had our baths and went to bed, leaving the hall light on and the front door unlocked. He arrived at 10 minutes to midnight. We talked a while and Joe had a warm bath and went to bed. Joe reports all well at the various homes except Ted, who seems far from well.

You will be interested in knowing that after waiting five months since he sent in his application for a transfer to Cradock and getting no satisfactory reply either way, Ted has informed the Department that he withdraws his application and so the whole matter of his coming to Cradock is now off. It has been a long period of anxious suspense, also lots of plans have been considered and we were looking forward to having at least one of the family with us. What with the disappointment of not being allowed to travel north, even on a visit, and now what was looked forward to as a most promising arrangement from all sides is dashed to the ground. At least as one door has been shut to us, another way has seemed to open. The Wests have a relation, Mrs Bowley, of Observatory who is anxious to get away from the terrible winter of Cape Town and would like to find a flat or somewhere she and her her children, a girl of nine, a boy of seven and a baby of one, could stay. Mrs West has combed Cradock from end to end without success. I thought we might supply the needful and Joe strongly supports the idea of dividing the house into two flats, we retaining the two front rooms and bathroom and partitioning the long passage at the bathroom door and spare room. Then making the window in Pam's room into a door for the back portion of the house and converting the small pantry into a bathroom. This would provide a separate entrance to whoever had the back half of the house whilst we would have sufficient room for ourselves. We should dispose of some of our furniture that we should not need. However up to the present, Mom does not like the idea of having to share the house so the matter stops there.

We shall be interested in hearing how Dot celebrated her birthday yesterday – 41 and still going strong. Keep it up. May she see many more anniversaries. The tennis fete at Grace's on Easter Monday was a great success. They raised about £15 for Church funds. Since typing the above, a letter has come from Ted stating that he is seriously thinking of tendering his resignation from the Post Office and trying to find a job in Kroonstad and taking his pension. The Department writes regretting that it has not been able to comply with his request for a transfer but offers to keep the application open in case it could be arranged in the future. I don't think Ted will renew the application again. Joe will have to see his Dr as soon as he gets back before he can resume work. He is certainly looking much better and has put on a few pounds in weight. I think I told you that Blodwen has lost over 40 pounds in weight since November. Talking of losing pounds, a lady near here, whilst walking down Kruger's Lane last week, was assaulted in daylight and robbed of £35 from her bag. Another was robbed near Cull & Kews shop.

We are using the front room much more now than we have done before and I am thinking of bringing my writing desk and all my papers etc in here. As I am writing (Monday evening) we have

the fire burning and the room is nice and warm and is well lighted. We may even bring in the dining room table here and take out all the leaves – there are eight of them – and make much more use of the room. Joe has gone up to Market Street to say goodbye to Aunt Eliza and Mary. He has been doing a few jobs for Aunt Eliza. The roof of her house leaks very much but he has not been able to improve matters as his stay is short.

We have had about 15 inches of rain so far this month. The first day's rain fell and we were getting rather tired of it. Joe says it rained all the way on Saturday from Modder River. We had our first fire for this season on Friday night in the lounge. The temperature last night was only three degrees above freezing. Our tanks are now full and we never have been quite out of rainwater. We have enough to last us now for a couple of years I guess.

Whilst I think of it, does anyone know where the cookery book published by the late Mrs Glasson and given by her to Mom is? Mom thinks she has lent it to someone but cannot remember to whom. I do not think it is likely she is going to start cooking again.

Last week, I think it was Wednesday, we received letters from each home by the same post. Keep it up. Having sold my writing desk, I am having the table that has stood on the back stoep for years adapted to my requirements by Mr Muller. Consequently my correspondence is all in arrear. Please excuse me if I have not answered your recent letters but will do so as soon as the table is finished. I am doing this in the lounge under difficulties.

I must not forget to record the pleasant afternoon tea we had at Market Street last Tuesday. Rev Ludlow called for us. Mary was of course there and the best china tea-set was used for the first time for many years I believe. They certainly make very nice tea and we all enjoyed the afternoon. Mr Ludlow, being Irish, is of course very entertaining. Mrs Ludlow is also good company. They were very interested in looking at some of the curiosities, of which the house is full. The gingerbread was up to its usual good standard. Mr Ludlow had family worship before leaving. He spoke right into Aunt Eliza's ear trumpet and in consequent, she heard every word. They were very interested, especially in my parents' wedding certificate, beautifully written on real parchment. He had never seen anything like it before. We are often invited to the manse after the Sunday evening service. Yesterday evening, Alison asked the Saunders and ourselves to come to them after service. Clifford drove us in his car. Am glad to say Clifford is getting better but still has to take great care of his leg. Today he has taken Mrs Saunders to Fish River for a couple of days. He has offered to address the wrappers for me for the next issue of the Methodist News which will be out this month instead of June.

Tuesday morning, 7th. Joe got away last evening. Train was up to time and by now he is safely at home I guess. We find he left his specs behind and I guess he is missing them sadly, am posting them today. We shall be interested in hearing the doctor's report on his condition. There is no doubt that a change of work would be most beneficial for him. He suggested at one time that taxi driving appears a remunerative business and he is quite competent to drive any car.

My table is now being repainted and I hope by tomorrow it will be fit for me to write at and it will take me some time to get straight again. It is a bright nice frosty morning. Was up at six as usual but it is dark at that hour. The temperature was only three degrees above freezing during the night. Tonight the Census has to be taken all over the Union. The Government is very inquisitive in the manner of questions they ask.

Lynne wrote a very interesting letter about her Easter trip. There were a number of different families of Butlers and none of them related to each other. Evidently Butlers are quite a common lot, there being so many of them!

I had a very nicely written letter from dear old Rev Hornabrook recently. I had written to him asking if he could recognise who some of the ministers were in a group taken at the first Conference in 1883. He was able to supply some names. His writing is still quite good and he is only 96 years old.

Messrs Metcalf & Co have written again asking if I will not sell the house and I have replied that we are not doing so at present.

Dot tells of some of Joan's little tricks. She is so interesting Dot wishes she could stay as she is. She is a great favourite with everyone. I wonder when we shall see her again.

Neville and Nancy came for the table on Saturday afternoon. It was raining but they fixed it up on the back of their car and covered it with sacks. Hope it arrived home safely. Godfrey has moved to the farm Junction View as they do not care for Glen Alfa. Keith finds it too quiet at Uncle Dudley's and has got a situation at Dunnel Ebdon Co, Port Elizabeth, in their Engineering Department. He is a born engineer I understand. Dick, the youngest of Uncle Norman's boys, is going to Glen Alfa. Ethnie is at the Provincial Hospital in Port Elizabeth and has started her training as a nurse so Uncle Norman and Aunt Gladys are alone at Katkop.

A postcard has just come (noon) from Evelyn from Kimberley dated Sunday. They were just leaving by car for home, sleeping at Maude and Mike's Sunday night. Arthur won his match on Saturday but lost his game on Monday. He was beaten by another Butler. Kingsley and Cecily were both well and of course pleased to see their parents. The sheet is nearly filled and news has run dry so I had better stop before you scold me for taking up so much of your time in reading my scrappy letter. It is longer than usual which perhaps you will forgive me.

Lots of love to each and all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday May 15th, 1946

My dear All,

It is Monday afternoon and the day is marked as the first frost and ice this season. We had warning of it when we went to service last evening. The day is also marked as the arrival of another pair of kittens, this time quite black ones. The last pair were perfectly white. They are quite comfortable on the back stoep at the end of my cupboard in which I keep my picture scrap books. I have got Mr Muller to give the bookcase a coat of paint and varnish. Another event has been the making of my desk into a writing table in place of the one I bought on Mr Thomas' sale. Muller has made quite a good job of it and I have now "moved" into it and I think it will be convenient. He has made all seven drawers out of wood "that I happened to have". He has not been able to get locks for the same except at a very high price. The old kitchen table on which our electric stove formerly stood and which was burnt on the top, he has fixed up a fresh top and that is now on the back stoep. We have not done anything with regard to letting any rooms or giving shelter to anyone.

The Sunday School anniversary was held yesterday and was voted as big a success as former ones. Uncle Gervase's little Hope sang very sweetly. Rev Mr Ludlow was in fine form. The collections for three services amounted to £16.10.11d., a little less than last year's effort.

Joe reports that Dr is satisfied with the improvement in his health after three weeks rest. He did not examine him but said he could go to work last Friday but he was to report at once if he found it too much for him. He put on nine pounds in weight during the three weeks. We do hope he will continue to improve. We wish we could report favourable progress in Ted's case. The long delay on the part of the Department has been very disappointing and naturally tends to depress one. We have not heard if he is going to take his pension before it is due, but it seems likely he may do so.

Dot says her birthday was well remembered. Quite a number of letters, presents and visitors to greet her. She mentions having come in contact with the wife of Dodie Masson. He was a great friend of our boys in Vryburg days. He is now Manager of Standard Bank at Que Que in Rhodesia.

I had occasion to send a telegram to the YMCA at Cape Town this morning on the occasion of their 80th annual meeting. They have now appointed two new Secretaries, trained men, and I understand their salaries will be over £1200 a year between them. The debt on the Headquarters which was purchased before I left Cape Town has been almost entirely wiped out so they are evidently in a good financial position. There is a nice photo of Louis Botha House in the last copy of "Manhood". Mr Haddow, who has been doing honorary secretarial work since I left, is now retiring. Speaking of telegrams, I found copies of seven wires which were dispatched when I was ill last year to different members of the family and which I knew nothing about. I am wondering if they were paid for out of my money as I had no handling of finance during that anxious time. I wish to pay if you will let me know.

Joe took his four pictures back with him that have been hanging in the lounge for some years. Two of them were those fine photos (enlargements) of moon effects. The other two were seascapes. Whilst he was on holiday, he played tennis for the first time for six years. Arthur went to Kimberley twice to play in the Griqualand Tennis Tournament. He won some points but unfortunately lost the finals to another player, also named Butler. Lynne mentioned recently when on the Easter holiday meeting five other Butlers. It would seem that Butlers are getting far too common. There are no less than five families of Butlers in Cradock, Ernest's, Aunt Eliza, ours and two Coloured, one a tailor and the other a painter. Pam is doing very well in Kroonstad. She has had a rise recently and is now earning £15.17.2d per month and also gets 20% discount off her purchases. She has not decided what to do for her holiday. We give her a very hearty invitation to come here and if Jean could come as well, it would be nice for us. It would probably be about the end of the year. Pam has interested herself in Sunday School and Guild activities as well as the choir.

We were pleased to hear that Eric was quite free from asthma whilst at Cape Town. He was badly affected with it when he was living at the Cape. We saw very little of Eric and Freda and

children when here. One of the twins is working at my old place, Northern News and the other is in the Government Deeds Office.

Arthur has made an excellent tennis court at the farm. Rex may be home again from Johannesburg where he has been making a study of grading of meat etc. We hear there is a prospect of the two boys hiring a farm in the Transvaal and going in for mealie cultivation on a big scale. Evelyn says they are able to get post by road motor service on two days a week. They send a boy on horseback to the nearest halt – a few miles distance – and he is back about breakfast time. They are generally in Vryburg on Fridays.

Rev Douglas' son, Roderick, who has purchased Aunt Letty's house in Bree Street, is staying at the Premier. They cannot get possession of the house yet. Mrs Douglas is more or less an invalid. One daughter is a trained nurse and the other is taking a commercial course locally. One son was killed in the war and another son is Minister at the Interdenominational Church at Camps Bay. I think one of the sons was a friend of Rex. By the way, Grace expressed the hope that Rex would take a run down to Kroonstad for a weekend or some time that would be convenient to him. We are glad to hear he is doing so well in Johannesburg.

Aunt Eliza has lent Mom one of her ear trumpets and Mom says it is some help to her. I had a letter from a Port Elizabeth firm about the hearing aid but he has not any in stock at present but will communicate when they arrive.

Tuesday 14th. A number of snaps of Dot's baby are travelling round and I am sure you will be interested in them. We have also seen some snaps of Christine's little one.

We are expecting a call from Olive in the near future. We understand she is going to stay at the Poplars.

Mrs Kissack is making some progress towards recovery, is able to lift her arm to her head but is not able to walk at all. Her sister-in-law from Rhodesia is living with her and her sister, Miss Inge.

When Joe left, Mom found a pair of specs in his room and thought they were his. I sent them off by first post to him but they came back the next day. They were mine which I put in Joe's room with a lot of other things from my desk during the changeover to the one Muller has fixed up for me.

Later. Just received post – 12.30. Letter from Lynne saying she is playing Hockey at East London on Saturday and is looking to spend the weekend of 25th with us. She is bringing a friend with her. We are very pleased at the prospect. On re-reading Lynne's letter, I see it was last Saturday she was going to East London. A card from Beryl also came, thanking us for birthday greetings. She says Joe is looking much better. They are all well there.

A card from Leslie Collett's wife also acknowledging birthday greetings. Their new baby is a source of joy to them all. We also had a card from Uncle Jack's brother, Jim, a day or two ago saying all well there and thanking for good wishes received. Aunt Emmie sends a postcard full of news from her end of the world. The weather has been atrocious there. She is not making any changes in her abode at present and all seems well.

Mrs Rainier and Mary looked in this morning to see that we are alright and whilst they were here, Neville Collett brought some eggs from Aunt Jessie for me to sell on her account. He also brought us a few green mealies which we have tried as desert without any ill effects. It did not actually freeze last night here but it did on the farm. However, mittens, scarves and cardigans have been brought into use. The days are getting very short but in about month's time, we shall be looking forward to passing the shortest day of the year. Neville tells me that one of the drawers of the desk he took out from here on Saturday got lost on the journey. They were all locked except one which rested on the floor of the desk. That one was safe. He is having a new one made. I am about settled in my desk (figuratively) and when the paint is drier, it will be OK.

It is now time to do my duty and rest awhile so I will say goodbye for this week, hoping all the various families are well and flourishing.

Much love to each and all,
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday May 22nd, 1946

My dear All,

(Monday afternoon, 20th). This day next week will commemorate the 59th anniversary of my arrival in Cradock. No guns will be fired in honour of the event and no doubt the day will pass on as the same as most others. It does remind one, however, that I am getting on in years and gives me a reminder that I must "count my blessings". I admit that I have much to be thankful for. I am deeply thankful for all the love and attention paid to me as I am conscious that I am not worthy of it.

I was asking the postman recently, when he came about the Census forms, if the airmail service would make any difference to our postal arrangements. He said it would and that we should probably find that letters would reach us and you about 24 hours quicker than at present. So I have not noticed any change in the arrival of post from any of you. He tells me that post from here goes by the evening mail train to Port Elizabeth and catches the airmail from there the next morning and should be in Kroonstad and Johannesburg that morning. I do not know how it will affect Vryburg but no doubt Cape Town should get letters much quicker than at present. You might let me know. So far letters posted in Kroonstad and Potgietersrus on Monday generally arrive on Wednesday morning.

The Census passed off without incident. I do think a lot of questions were unnecessary. According to some remarks in newspapers and others, considerable difficulty was caused to Non-Europeans in answering them. One man for instance asked the enumerator if he could not answer them in ink instead of in "duplicate". A party who is working on the Municipal waterworks extension has hired the garage for four or five months in which to store his furniture as he cannot get a house.

Joe writes that he has lost over three pounds in weight since he returned to work. He has to go to see the Specialist again in Port Elizabeth and we are anxious to hear his report. Otherwise the rest of the family seem well. We are hoping Lynne will be able to come over at the weekend this week. One of her friends who called on us recently will come with her. Mr Stock is going over to Queenstown to play bowls but that is no good so far as giving a lift. It is just the wrong way. I have returned the letters written by the four grandsons during the war to them thinking they may like to treasure them for future reference.

We had an interesting letter from Mrs Chatterton who was staying for some time at the Premier Hotel. She is related to Ted. We saw a good deal of her in those days and she would have liked to stay in Cradock but having her own house in Pretoria, she went back. She has recently been staying with relatives in Harrismith. Olive has been in town for a few days and is staying at the Poplars. Her car has been giving trouble and the Garage cannot get the necessary parts for replacement. She is going to visit around in the Fish River area shortly. It was service at Fish River yesterday and Aunt Jessie had trouble with the organ, it would only sound one note so at last they had to sing without any accompaniment. Uncle Gervase took Mr Ludlow out as the Minister's car was out of commission. The Ludlows have kindly offered us seats for the Fish River Fete on 10th. This will be the 30th they have held. They do not expect to do as well as recent years owing to the severe drought they have experienced. We have had some nice showers the last few days and I think our tanks are full. We have had to give our garden boy notice as the neighbour on the top side of the garden came down last week complaining that the boy was stealing her oranges. There is very little work in the garden now except gathering up leaves so we can do without him for the present at any rate.

We are sorry to hear that Leslie Hudson's son, about four years old has cracked his elbow and it has been set in plaster. Hope it will soon get alright again. Eric has been busy on Census work, what a job - over a 20 mile area.

We went to see Mrs A.J. Cook, Mrs West's sister, on Saturday. She has greatly improved in health since she arrived and her husband Rev A.J. Cook, would like to come and settle here for good. He is acting minister at Fish Hoek at present. Getting a house is their problem. They would

like ours if it were in the upper part of town. We are both keeping well, the weather has been quite nice, have had some refreshing showers. I drink plenty of thick milk, with a little sugar in it.

I think each of you have referred to the extra length of my recent dear alls. They do not seem to tire you unduly. I am sad that Grace has servant troubles again. Who hasn't? Our girl still is giving satisfaction on the whole. She is hoping the boys will be down for the long weekend. Mr Kirkman has sold his chemists business lock, stock and barrel, including his house. I am sorry he has left as he has been a very useful public man. A Cathcart chemist has bought him out. He has gone for a six months holiday at the coast. Mom has gone to her W.A. meeting this afternoon. We had some rain yesterday so she did not go to service. Mary and Olive and Uncle Gervase came in after service. (So much for this afternoon.)

Tuesday morning. Letter from Lynne and also a phone message says that she is not able to get a lift over for the weekend but hopes to come over in June so that is something to look forward to. Letter from Joe also this morning says that Drs are still puzzled over his case. He is to continue weighing and reporting but no big change is apparent. It was quite cold first thing a.m.

Love from Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday May 29th, 1946

My dear All,

Monday afternoon, a glorious day. We have just come in from our afternoon nap on the lawn. We had the shelter of my umbrella as the sun was really hot. It will soon be cold but the house is cold compared with the beautiful still day. Really our winter weather is as near perfect as anyone could wish it to be. The thermometer just touched freezing point last night and it was quite nippy first thing when I got up (6 a.m.).

The event of the past week was an unannounced and official visit from Aunt Eliza. According to my visitors' book, the last time there was such a visit, official or unofficial so far as that goes, was Bank Holiday, October 2nd 1944. Mary had knowledge of the contemplated visit but kept the secret. Needless to say we were very pleased to see her in her state chair. Of course she did not alight but inspected every room in the house and it seems to get more and more beautiful every time she sees it. The date of her previous visit was December 8th, 1943 when Mr Thomas brought her down. This visit, Empire Day, May 24th, coincided with the arrival of Mr Thomas at 29 Market Street just 12 years ago. Mary accompanied her on this occasion and the boy, Alfred, did the necessary pushing. They visited the cemetery and inspected the headstone which Aunt Eliza had had erected over Mr Thomas' grave and also inspected the site where she and we two will be laid to rest when the time comes. This is just in front of brother James' plot. She had not seen her piano since it came back from Mr Cook and which some day will belong to Eric. Thereby hangs another story.

Lynne phoned and wrote saying she was sorry her plans for spending the weekend with us had fallen through as the car was unprocurable. She still hopes to come sometime in July. When we heard that she could not come, I had the offer of a seat in a car with some of our local bowlers who were going over to Queenstown to draw the floating trophy from them. I hoped to give Lynne a surprise visit but it so happened that on Wednesday, Mom had one of her tummy upsets, similar to what she had in Uitenhage a few years ago so of course I did not go. Mary fortunately came to the rescue and after three days in bed, she is now practically herself again but has to be careful what she eats and drinks. Olive and Mary have been very helpful and I hope there will not be any recurrence of the trouble. Lynne phoned this morning saying the hockey match they were going to play at Kroonstad this week has fallen through owing to the failure of the Kroonstad-ites being able to find accommodation for the players. She is disappointed in not being able to see Grace and company. She will be playing in Bloemfontein. Evelyn writes that she is disappointed in not being able to go over there to see her. Douglas' car is out of commission for the time being. Rev and Mrs Ludlow went to Queenstown to see the local Minister there and called on Lynne and they had a few words together. The Ludlows have kindly offered to take us out to the Fish River Fete on Thursday morning, this will be the 30th fete and has brought into the church funds during the past 29 years an average of £191.19.2d per annum. We do not expect such a good result this year owing to the severe drought the country has experienced. Nevertheless, whatever amount is raised will be very welcome. Olive is taking Mary out. Clifford Saunders will be going out with his people and no doubt there will be the usual crowd there.

You will be interested in knowing that at last we have arranged with Mrs Mayhew to come and stay with us. She is a widow, her husband was 2nd in Command in a Fire Brigade. She has two brothers, married, living in England. She is a member of the Methodist Church, a good musician and we have had her in view. She teaches in the Sunday School and I hope the arrangement will work to the satisfaction of all concerned. She will come in on Saturday June 1st.

Olive took Mary and us for a spin in her car as far as Hales Owen yesterday afternoon. It was a perfect day and we all enjoyed the outing. She has not any definite plans for her future. She is going to visit at Fish River later on. She has not been very well since she has been in Cradock this time.

Tuesday morning 28th. I am sorry I was not able to be with Mom when Mrs Mayhew was here yesterday afternoon. There were so many interruptions. I had to get through to a business firm

just as she arrived. There was considerable delay in getting through. Then the party who had hired the garage arrived with two lorry loads of furniture to be stored and Olive, who had her car in the garage, had not taken the car out and was not to be found at the Poplars so I had not the key. I was about to break the padlock when I found a key amongst my reserve stock which caused much delay. However the men at last got everything packed away and by that time, the conversation between Mom and Mrs Mayhew was satisfactorily settled. So the 59th anniversary of my arrival in Cradock was celebrated by fixing up an arrangement which I hope will satisfy everyone. Time alone will prove that. Olive came along later and stayed to supper. She had quite forgotten about the garage being wanted. The men had pulled her car into the street. It was quite safe. I might have mentioned that whilst on our little spin in Olive's car, a good train passed us with over 30 motorcars going north. They appeared to be quite new.

The veldt looked quite nice and green in parts but no doubt has suffered through the drought. The afternoons are so nice that sometimes we take our nap in the deck chairs on the lawn. It is necessary to use our umbrellas to keep off the direct heat of the sun.

Aunt Rosa is at Durban for three months. One of her sons has sold his farm and she is staying with him as the children are at school there. She has written to Aunt Jessie for her 86th birthday on Wednesday. She is charmed with the scenery of Natal. She motored all the way, taking it in easy stages.

Ted writes that they are all trying to persuade Grace to take a good rest and go to Dot. He suggest that Dot goes back with David and Harold at the end of this month and stays there for the whole of June. Ted has his holiday in July, I think. Dot backs up the suggestion as the rest and change is very necessary. She hopes Reg may be able to take the family to Vryburg for the school holidays, the boys are always so fond of farm life, like all our children were. Then perhaps she might be able to get to Bloemfontein and come down here. It will be nice if it works out that way. It is very good news to her that Ted is so much better and to use the old familiar saying is "full of beans". Keep it up we say. Ted says that David has applied for a transfer to Kroonstad in the Civil Service and it will be nice for the family to be nearer together. Pam is better and Jean has done exceptionally well in the recent school exams. She got 100% in Maths and 95% in arithmetic. That is good going. Ted is taking advantage of the boom in property by offering the plot for sale. The nearness to the new gold rush at Odendaalsrus has sent the price of land up to very high prices. We hear there is not any room in hotels or boarding houses to be had. If they do sell, they would buy a town property and so be nearer to work.

Ruth is thrilled with the result of their gardening after the nice rains.

Una Shingler's friend, Emily Miles, is on a visit to Douglas and Evelyn for a few days. Kingsley suggests that Arthur has more important business in Kimberley at present than playing tennis. We have met Miss Miles once, she came over with Lynne.

We are hoping to hear fresh and better news from Joe. I think I told you that he had had to see the specialist again. They have had a rearrangement of the Railway doctors. Joe has a new one now and he is quite puzzled and is going to watch any developments. He has to watch his weight.

In a letter from Eric, he says he will never take on the Census job again. Freda went with him on his rounds, opening gates – hundreds of them. The twins are settling down to their jobs in Vryburg, play tennis twice a week and go to football matches etc. They are able to get home for weekends occasionally. Aunt Emmie says she has practically got over her accident when she was knocked down by a motorcar. She is trying one of these aids to hearing and says the instrument does help except when there a number of people speaking at the same time.

I am having a little trouble with the top plate my dentist made me. It feels as though there was an old stump still left in the jaw. I have taken to use the old plate with the new bottom one and they work well. The new one seems to make me lisp a bit.

Later. Mom has her breakfast in bed but is up now the sun is nice and warm on the back stoep. I am finding, or making, time to do a number of jobs that have been waiting attention. I find I have hundreds of more pictures that I want to paste into scrap albums. I am seriously thinking of giving my scrap books to the Marsh Memorial Homes at Rondebosch.

I was surprised and pleased to see Mr and Mrs Abbey in church on Sunday morning. They are coming to see us before they move on. They are here for a week. Their home is at Port Alfred.

Dinner time and no post yet. Tuesday is generally a bad day for post. We have not noticed any improvement in the time of arrivals of mails since the introduction of the airmail system. 3.30 p.m. No post today. It is very seldom that nothing comes for us.

Lots of love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday June 5th, 1946

My dear All,

Two events of the week will I expect interest you. The Fish River Fete was a great success. The weather was as perfect as anyone could wish for, it was not too cold or windy, nice and warm in the sun and the supply of foodstuffs was much greater than was expected. We had been told not to expect any springboks as they had all died through the drought or were too poor in condition to be worth troubling to shoot. The fact was that there were 29 bucks for sale and many of them were very fine specimens. Of course there were no cakes or rusks and such like for sale or bread for dinner but the lunch, which is always a great feature, was quite up to the usual standard. Aunt Kate says there must have been fully 200 sat down to lunch – in three relays. The lunches alone brought in about £30. I have already banked £297.6.1d and there is still more to come in. Last year was a record £330 and no one, except a few very optimistic folk, including Aunt Kate, expected such a good result. Fish River folk are really wonderful. Rev and Mrs Ludlow called for us exactly at nine and we were home again about 4.30. Aunt Jessie unfortunately came over giddy and had to lie down on the floor for some time but was alright before we left. We spent a couple of £s as we have started housekeeping again. We got a leg of springbok, some pork and vegetables which will last us a few days. Of course this is the first fete since the boys returned from the war and everyone was happy. A tennis match was on between Cradock and Fish River, Cradock won. The usual sports for the children always pleases the kiddies. The Magistrate opened the Fete and the Mayor of course was there.

The other item of news is the engaging of Mrs Mayhew in the house. She came along on Friday afternoon and had a talk with Mom and we hope the arrangement will prove satisfactory. I was unable to join in the conversation as there were frequent interruptions that afternoon. She came down on Saturday morning, has brought her sewing machine and some of her belongings. She is keeping on her rooms in Frere Street and I think she will be comfortable. She is fond of music and plays very nicely – so far as I can judge not being musical myself. She is interested and I hope Mom will let her have a free hand in managing the cooking etc. I still get up early and see to getting the breakfast. We have now had three dinners home made and still have some of Fish River stuff on hand. Fish River Station is 389 feet higher than Cradock. While I think of it, Aunt Kate and Uncle Dudley are going to Joan's wedding at Johannesburg next Tuesday morning. The wedding is on Saturday afternoon. They will be passing Kroonstad early Wednesday morning and returning by the 9 p.m. from Johannesburg so will not be able to see any of the folk there either way. They are sorry. Aunt Kate was in this morning (Monday) and brought us three eggs and ½ lb of butter. Mom and Mr Mayhew have gone to the Women's meeting. Mom has to provide the tea today. Mary also looked in whilst Kate was here. I am sorry to say Mom is evidently suffering from something like varicose veins above her left knee. It is very sore and she says if it is not easier by the morning, I shall take her to see Dr Scholtz. I expect he will prescribe complete rest. She has been staying in bed till after breakfast for the past ten days or more but it does not get better.

A letter from Joe this morning dated last Thursday makes no mention of his health. I fear it is not too good. Leslie and wife are expected at Uncle Owen's on a short visit. Frank Tilley took Joe and three children to the Springs by car which they much enjoyed. Blodwen's brother is still with them, is not well enough to return to work yet.

We were looking for our mincing machine to mince some of the buck but can't find it anywhere. Mom thinks the maid may have taken it but she denies having seen it since she has been working here. I have an idea that we lent it to someone but cannot think to whom. I generally make a note of anything like that. We hope it will turn up. We were pleased to see Mr and Mrs Abbey in church yesterday. They are on a visit to her sister, Mrs Kew. They are very comfortable at Port Alfred. Have met Mrs Fincham and Mrs Walser and Miss Stops there. Mrs Kissack had a setback last week but has rallied again. Miss May Trollip of Daggaboer is in hospital. Mom wants to go and see her. She is a very old friend of ours. Leslie and Gwen and family are at Potgietersrus with Reg and Dot on holiday. Grace says her copy of the last dear all only reached her on Saturday.

They were all posted on Tuesday afternoon. I wonder if this has anything to do with the new idea of expediting the mails by aeroplane? We are very glad she was able to report Ted as being very much better. They have started fires there. They have not had frost yet. We are having a fire in the lounge every evening. Have not had one in the dining room this winter yet. We find it very comfortable in the front room as it is well lit and the fire does not consume as much wood and coal as in the dining room. We have let the garage to a party for storing his furniture for three or four months.

Ernest and Alison have been to Healdtown for the long weekend. Olive is on a visit to Uncle Gervase and Aunt Rouena. Rouena is going to her daughter, Barbara, shortly. Clifford and his mother were at the Fish River Fete.

Love to all,
Dad

My dear All,

I know you will be anxious to know more about Mom's trouble. Yesterday afternoon I took her by taxi to Dr Scholtz. The veins have been troubling her for about a fortnight but as she has been resting as much as possible, he did not send her to bed but after examination, applied a pad of soft material and fixed same with an elastic plasters round about two thirds of her leg so as to keep it in its place. There are quite a number of clots in the vein and it is very sore to the touch. He says she must keep the leg up as much as possible. She may walk but not too much. If it does not improve soon, she must see him again. The plaster must stay on for about a fortnight. I hope there will not be any further trouble with it.

Mrs Mayhew is settling in quite nicely. During the morning she takes her knitting into the kitchen and washes the pots as necessary. Mom still has her breakfast in bed but goes into the kitchen during the morning more than I think she should. Mrs Mayhew seems to cook very nicely, makes cold salads as required for cold meats. We are still using up some of the meat we got at Fish River Fete last week. In the evenings, we all sit in the lounge and enjoy the fire. I read the news and Mrs Mayhew generally plays the piano. One evening she played – all from memory – a number of popular pieces and Mom guessed the titles of almost all of them correctly. Last evening, Vincent Crosbie came in and enjoyed a cup of cocoa with us. We have reading together and generally get to bed by nine to half past. Hot water bottles are in use. We had a very cold snap on Monday and the weather has been dull ever since.

I have been able to get through quite a number of jobs that have been waiting for a very long time. I have stuck into my writing album all the odd cuttings that have accumulated during recent years. I have some very nice quotations in my book. I have also been looking through the old family photographs that I keep in the rack near the piano and put the dates and names of them. By the way, I want each of the family to have a copy of the family groups taken in England. I will have them cut down in size, they have the names of your aunts and uncles and of course my parents and should be of interest to you. There is till months of work I want to do in connection with my scrap books and family photos in the albums I made. I want to make quite a number more books of general interest. Joe has suggested sending them later on to some school or orphanage where I am sure they would be of educational value. Perhaps the Marsh Memorial Homes at Rondebosch would appreciate them. There are a lot of titles to be written yet.

Letters came yesterday from Grace and Dot. Grace has given up the idea of going to Potgietersrus for her holiday. Jean would like to go to Johannesburg for hers. Ted, I think, has a month's holiday in July. Leslie and Gwen Hudson and family have been spending some time with Dot and Reg and enjoyed the change.

Some of you may remember Miss Gertie Wild who worked for me in Northern News. I had a letter from her recently. She celebrated her Silver Wedding a short time ago. She says she has not been to Vryburg since and doubts if there is anyone there now who she would know. I noticed in the Northern News that du Toit, the baker, died recently. He was a nice old man.

Grace says both her boys were home for the long weekend. The weather was perfect as it was here. No news about David's application re transfer to Kroonstad. No frost there yet. Pam tried her hand at rowing on the river. The oar slipped out of its socket and she went sprawling backwards. Apparently no serious harm was caused. One of her little Sunday school boys said he liked his Sunday School teacher "because she had such nice knees"!

Dot says they had a grand time with the boys home for the long weekend. Gwen Hudson's little boy of five, who damaged his left elbow and has it in a sling, is very sweet with baby Joan. The school holidays begin in three weeks so the boys will soon be back home again. They are all hoping to go to the farms at Vryburg. No further news of the possibility of Dot and baby coming on here afterwards. Mr Hudson and Trixie and family are going to East London for Xmas. Baby Joan is to compete in a baby show. She is sure to win a 1st prize. She has started to talk now.

No word from Uitenhage but hope Joe is no worse but better. He would still like some interest in farming. Blodwen's brother is still with them. He is better but not able to work yet.

Aunt Emmie writes that the aid for hearing is some help but has not decided on getting one of the machines yet. Mom is finding the ear trumpet Aunt Eliza lent her is a great help. She uses it when I am reading to her. Aunt Emmie says she is over the effects of her recent accident but not over the effects of the shock. She is trying to find someone who will stay with her or take her about when necessary.

I have not been up to Market Street for some time but now that Mary is away, I must make a plan to go and see Aunt Eliza. Am glad to say she is keeping well. Mom went to see Miss May Trollip of Daggaboer who is in the hospital. She had a fall some time ago in her home and has not been well for some time. She is an old friend of the family. Mrs Kissack is still lingering on.

Lots of love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday June 12th, 1946

My dear All,

(Monday afternoon). You will be anxious to know how Mom is getting on since my special edition. She has been up and about more than she should have been and today she is spending all day in bed and I hope the entire rest will do her good. The leg was swelling below where Dr had applied the bandages and if it is not easier by tomorrow, I shall get him to come down and see her again. Naturally she does not like staying in bed but no doubt it will be the quickest in the end. We are very glad we have Mrs Mayhew as she is quite good at cooking and looks after the kitchen nicely. The maid comes very late in the morning – past eight – when the breakfast is finished. I suppose she has a couple of miles walk before she gets here and these cold mornings, one cannot expect too much from them. I have taken over the cooking of the porridge etc and of course we still have our early coffee in the bedroom. We are getting on very well with Mrs Mayhew. She plays to us every evening and we have reading together. She is learning to play halma. She does a lot of knitting and I have given her an order for a couple of pairs of socks. This a.m. she went to the Park and bought some vegetables for 2/- which will last us a few days. Mom realises now that she must take care of herself. I am typing this alongside her bed. Mrs Mayhew is going up to the hospital to see one of the church ladies who has to lie on her back for a month owing to a bad heart. May Trollip is still there. Mrs Kissack is still very bad but every now and then, seems to rally. I met her sister on Saturday afternoon at Aunt Eliza's. I had not been to Market Street for some time as Mary was in constant touch with us but as she has gone to Walmer for a week or so, I felt I should go up. Am glad to say Aunt Eliza is keeping alright, very busy as usual. Mrs ?urie's son sleeps at 29 Market Street every evening whilst Mary is away. Mary has taken on the Secretaryship of the local Red Cross Society and she is very interested in it. Mom says I must tell you that Mrs Mayhew makes pumpkin fritters very nicely and barley water etc. We have finished all the provisions we got at Fish River Fete and we are going to try and get a fowl every week for Sunday's dinner from Mrs Jordaan who used to supply us before. At present she has none ready for killing. Mentioning the word killing reminds me that I must tell you that we have sent our cat and her kittens to "sleep". They were getting rather a nuisance and Mom wanted them out of the way so the Chemist did the needful and they are now buried at the top of the garden where Mom hopes to plant a nice fruit tree later on. I miss the cat and kittens very much. The mother was very knowing. As soon as I unlocked the kitchen door, she would come running in for a drink of milk. At night time I think she would go round to each of the windows in the hopes of finding one sufficiently open for her to get into the house. We certainly have been very free of mice and rats since we had the cat although we never saw her catch one.

On Saturday I listened in to the Victory parade from about 10.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. It came over very clearly but it was a pity that rain fell during the march. At least two representatives were there from Cradock.

Last week, Ruth sent me a Grahamstown paper where it was stated that Denis had been mentioned in dispatches "for gallantry and distinguished services". We have congratulated him and Ruth. I do not know if it gives any extra promotion or advancement. The church had a jumble sale on Saturday and raised about £30. They are going to engage a Bible-woman to work in the Location I think. We sent a few things – my green umbrella amongst other items. Mrs Ludlow is a good organiser and gets the women busy. They have started a junior choir in the church. Mr Ludlow calls every Monday morning for banking church money. The Fete brought in exactly £300.

Amongst my photos, I have spare copies of Grandpa and Grandma Collett if any of you have not one, I shall be pleased to send one if the stock holds out. Amongst my newspaper cuttings I found one giving the date of the presentation of the entre dish by Norma Rickett in Vryburg years ago. I am going to have the dish replated as someone put the dish in the oven years ago and spoilt it. There are some other things that required doing as well. The following is a good record taken from the Eastern Province Herald: Naboomspruit, Mrs Vorster who died here this week is reported to have left 11 children, 136 grandchildren and 72 great grandchildren.

Douglas, Evelyn, Arthur and Miss Miles all went to Mafeking for a day and night. Arthur was playing tennis. They did not mention if they saw Madge Masson. Miss Miles has returned to Queenstown. Grace has decided not to go to Potgietersrus in July. We are hoping she will come here but that is not much of a change. How about going to Uitenhage for a change near the coast? Joe does not say anything about his health. We hope no news is good news but we should like to know. Blodwen was singing at a wedding recently which was greatly appreciated.

Today, 10th, is Rex and Trevor's birthdays and later this month, Arthur and baby Charles will have their anniversary. Raymond has his also today. Aunt Emmie had the worst "turn" last week that she has ever had. She has got over the motor accident except that her nerves are still shaken up. I was working at the grate in the lounge this morning. It has never been erected correctly and I tried to make it right. I got a backache for my trouble.

Tuesday morning. On the back stoep, the warmest place in the house. Mom has had a good night and I have taken a portion of the adhesive bandage off. The swelling has not all disappeared but she is easier. I think the Dr had better see her today. We had a fire in the bedroom last night and had our evening meal there as well so as to be sociable. I read portions of the Herald and Midland aloud but my musical voice evidently sent her to sleep. My backache is much better this morning and there will not be any need for me to go to the Hospital as Mom thought I might have to do. We are getting on quite alright and I hope in a few days we shall be back to normal. Mrs Mayhew is managing very well. Dulcie Moorcroft came down yesterday afternoon to see Mom. She has reduced her weight a good deal in recent months.

You will be interested I expect to know that Uncle Gervase and Aunt Rouena are grandparents now. Their daughter, Barbara, has a son born on Saturday last. Great rejoicings. Rouena is going to Johannesburg a day or so before the schools break up. Hope will go with her.

News came to hand yesterday of the death of one of my old friends who used to belong to my young men's class, Jerry Hartley. He has been living at Humansdorp for years and was very popular. His father was Town Clerk here in my younger days. There was a large family, three sons and a number of girls. Jerry married one of the Miss Garlands of Cape Town. They were living here for some years. I have some of her paintings in my writing album.

It is washing day and the old woman came about 8.30 and some things are already on the line at 9.15. A mighty cold job. The thermometer just touched freezing point but the maximum for yesterday was only 60, which was 12 degrees lower than the day before.

We are wondering what Grace and Dot are going to do about their holidays. The latest news we had was that Grace was not going to Potgietersrus but was needing a holiday but did not care about going to Natal. Needless to say she would be very welcome here but she must choose for herself. Dot was hoping that all of them could go to Vryburg farms in July and perhaps she and baby could come here via Bloemfontein. It would be very nice if it so happened. We must wait and see. Lynne, too, was hoping to get across for a weekend. We have not seen anything of the Saunders the last few days but the last report was that Clifford was getting on slowly.

Later. A letter from Denis thanks us for the congratulations on the honour he has received. He does not know yet what it was for but expects the "citation" will follow in due course. He says their intended visit in the June holidays to a farm in this district is off as the place is fully booked up with visitors. He has written to Douglas to know if they can go there for a time and come to us on their way back to Grahamstown about July 16th. We shall hear in due course.

1.10 p.m. Dr has just been and has removed the bandages he put on and replaced them with more adhesive bandages. He says Mom better stay in bed a few days more so as to rest the leg as much as possible. She is enjoying her food. Mrs Mayhew does everything very nicely for her. I have been up to town this morning. Everyone is complaining of the cold but there was no ice on the birds' bath this morning. I dreamt about kittens last night. I do miss them.

Must now listen to the 1.15 news and then have a rest. Goodbye, lots of love to all. Hope for lots of letters tomorrow (Wednesday).

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday June 19th, 1946

My dear All,

Mom has spent all last week in bed but is up again today and will be going to the annual meeting of the Women's Auxiliary in a few minutes with Mrs Mayhew. Clifford Saunders is coming to take them as Mom must not walk. I expect Dr will come tomorrow to see if the leg must be bandaged again, the swelling has not disappeared yet. The week in bed has been beneficial but she feels weak. We have had a fire in her room each day and we have our supper with her in her room and spend the evening there.

Yesterday, Sunday, Mrs Ludlow called. Florrie Hall and Clifford, Vincent Crosbie and Uncle Gervase came after service in the evening. He was telling us some of his experiences in Kenya etc. Mrs Mayhew is very attentive, she cooks very well and we leave things to her. She made some nice brawn from pigs trotters. Her scones are also very nice. She is always ready to play the piano whenever we ask her. She is learning to play halma too.

Did I tell you that Barbara has a son and Aunt Rouena and Hope are going up to see her this week. Leslie and Gwen Hudson have returned from Potgietersrus to Vryburg. Dot has enquired about trains from there to here so it looks as though she is still contemplating paying us a visit. Grace is not inclined to take a holiday but Ted wants her to as he will be on holiday for July and so will be able to look after things at home. Ted tells of the rapid developments in Kroonstad. Hundreds of new houses are to be erected. They are only about 30 miles from Odendaalsrus where the wonderful discovery of gold has been made. A new Post Office has been opened in what will be a new suburb. Business is evidently booming there.

Douglas and Evelyn have invited Dennis and wife to visit them early in July. They will come to us on their way back to Grahamstown. Lynne phoned on Saturday morning that she hopes to be able to pay us a visit this weekend but we must not bank on it coming off, it all depends on a car being available. She looks to go home in July when Rex will be back for good from Johannesburg. Arthur and baby Charles have birthdays next Sunday. Sooner or later, Arthur may be settling at Therons Rust. The Postmaster here tells me that only letters for Johannesburg and north thereof are sent by airmail. Dot says it has not made any difference to the receipt of my dear alls so far as they are concerned. By the way, the Postmaster here tells me it is definitely decided to give us a new Post Office here, a £30 000 pounder. It will be nearer the CHM on a vacant piece of ground. Joe has not written for a while and we do not know how he is getting on. His last letter said he had been out with the children to the Springs with two of Joyce Tilly's children in their car and quite enjoyed the outing. He misses his car very much. He says they are all well at Cuyler Street. Blodwen was singing at a recent wedding. He does not mention his health.

During the past week, I have been able to get on with quite a number of jobs that I have been wanting to do for ages. I have turned out a lot of Town Council reports etc which supplies me with more scrap paper than I am likely to use in the next ten years or more. This has given me much more room. I have also started sorting out more pictures and photographs. The pictures will take a lot of sorting and trimming and eventually sticking into albums. The books that I have done total over 3000 and I have about 700 family photos in albums. I find I have a number of duplicates and when I have finished looking through them, I propose sending a box full round to the family, starting with Douglas, for each to take what they would like. I am averse to throwing them away or burning them. I am sure that some will treasure them and pass them on. The family tree also requires a lot of attention. I feel that I shall never be able to get it up to date. The stress continues to grow and grow, there is no stopping it. But I hope each family will make their own additions on a separate sheet and so keep it as near as possible correct. It is quite correct up to 1932 when my brother Willie compiled it from information that I had collected. Do not think that this list comprises all I want to do. I often say with Cecil Rhodes "so much to do, so little done." The native boy at Tiger Kloof Institution once said "time is few". I am glad to say I am keeping pretty well. I get very tired at times and find I cannot keep on at one job too long. Nevertheless I have much to be thankful for.

Mary was here this (Monday) morning. She is looking much better for her change to Walmer. Am sorry she did not manage to get out to see the Uitenhage folk. On Friday, Saturday and today we received no letters. Quite an exceptional experience for us. Aunt Eliza is keeping well I am glad to say. Mom and Mrs Mayhew are back from their meeting. 14 ladies were present, quite a good number for them. I think at the end of this quarter, I shall be able to report a credit balance of about £1100 apart from the value of property and furniture. If there is no post from any of you in the morning, I probably shall not do another sheet. Perhaps I have been giving you too much lately. I do not want to weary you.

Tuesday. Letter from Joe says Blodwen and her brother, who has been so ill, left on Saturday by the fast train for Cape Town. Merle, Trevor and baby have gone with them. Joe and Roy are staying at home but will get their mid-day meal nearby. They will be away about two weeks. Joe makes no mention of his health. Mom was up to dinner today and is feeling better. Mary looked in for a few minutes this morning. Hope for more letters tomorrow.

Lots of love to all,
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday June 26th, 1946

My dear All,

It is Monday afternoon and I have just returned from attending a funeral service to the memory of Mrs Jacobson who died yesterday morning in the hospital from a heart attack. I think either Grace or Dot were here when she came to see us about coming to stay with us and help run the house. We considered that she was too old to be of much help so did not entertain the idea. She was an earnest worker in the W.A. and was very liberal in supporting church funds. I did not go to the cemetery. Mrs Mayhew knew her and she went. Mrs Kissack is still lingering but is very weak. Mary calls there very often.

Mom is getting on nicely. The plaster is gradually working off and the pain is not troublesome. We give her her breakfast in bed and she gets up to dinner. She has not been out for some time. Mary drops in frequently.

Tuesday morning. I was delayed yesterday by a visit from Mrs Brink of Pretoria. She is the late Sam Ebber's youngest daughter. He was Mayor here and organist in the church for many years. We were very interested in talking of old times. Of course she finds the town has altered a great deal since she lived here. She is a grandmother and her sons were in the war. They, like many others, were very interested in visiting the Holy Land when on leave but were greatly disappointed in finding so many of the sacred places were commercialised. For instance, before they could see the sepulchre where Christ laid, they had to pay 21/- each. The Jews must have made a fortune out of visitors. We showed her a number of photographs in which she was very interested. She is returning to her home on Wednesday.

We were disappointed in not having Lynne with us for the weekend. She phoned that the car her friend was looking to bring her over in was not available, but she hopes to come at the first opportunity that offers. She is looking to get her holiday in July. We have also had a letter from Rex in reply to my birthday greetings. He seems to have enjoyed and profited by his stay in Johannesburg. He is hoping to get home for good by the end of July when he and Arthur may start at Therons Rust. He says he has learned a lot in Johannesburg. He has not met either David or Harold Irons I am sorry to say. He often sees Trixie and her family. I see my old paper has got some new machinery. The typographs I installed many years ago have evidently served their day and are now superseded by a new sort of typesetting machine.

Denis and Dorothea are going to Douglas and Evelyn's for a fortnight and will break their journey here on the return trip. We shall be pleased to have them. There was an interesting account of Joan Collett's wedding in the Midland. Uncle Dudley and Aunt Kate returned last Wednesday.

Mr Stock's sister-in-law was buried in the family vault at St Stephens churchyard last Thursday. I was asked to be one of the pall bearers. It was a bitterly cold day and had I not been asked the day previously and accepted, I should not have attended. However I am glad to say I am none the worse for having done so. We have experienced a series of very cold days. Friday and Saturday we had ten degrees of frost and other days have been nearly as cold. The birdbath has been a block of ice frequently. Some days I have kept my dressing gown on all day and mittens as well. Now that we have passed the shortest day, we shall soon be looking for signs of Spring coming on.

Blodwen writes that she and the family will be returning on July 6th. She hopes to see Aunt Emmie. We had hoped that Joe and Roy would be able to come up and have Sunday dinner with us but they were not able. These cold mornings the servants do not come early, often past eight. This morning it was half past eight and we had all finished breakfast. Being school holidays, the garden boy has been coming in the morning about 8.30. We prefer having him in the afternoons. He does not do much except chopping wood for fires but we are getting very short of that. Coal sometimes we cannot get. It is washing day today. The maid we now have does all, including the ironing, by dinner time and is away for the rest of the week. She comes on Tuesdays now.

We are glad to see that Dot is still thinking of paying us a visit after her holiday at Madrid and Grass Ridge (Vryburg). They have a new garden swing which can be converted into an extra

bed when required! Joan has more teeth and is growing in wisdom and tricks daily. She and Leslie's little boy have been very sweet together.

Grace suggests we build a servant's room so that we should have constant help. There are difficulties in such a scheme. One is they will have visitors. With the introduction of the waterborne sewage scheme, we will no doubt build a servant's lavatory and bathroom. No word of her going on holiday anywhere. Ted will be home all July. She is still having her breakfast in bed. They have not had any offers for their plot yet. It is now 9 a.m. and it is nice in the sun on the back stoep but still very cold. The last week or two I have been able to fill in the titles where necessary to the pictures in the first six scrap books and it makes me feel that I am really getting on with some of the many jobs I am wanting to accomplish. Family photographs will have to follow on later.

After dinner. Mom is not too well. She had a good dinner and has come over queer. Aunt Jessie is here and is going out soon. No time for more now.

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday July 3rd, 1946

My dear All,

So we have passed the half of the year 1946. It seems that Xmas will soon be upon us. Mom has not gone to her W.A. meeting this afternoon as she thought the wind was too cold. Am glad to say that Dr has removed all the bandages from her leg but it would appear as though some rash or irritation is breaking out. If it does not disappear, shall have to let the Dr see it again. We are both taking a course of D.C.L. tablets which Dot recommended me to take. I asked Dr what he thought of them and he recommended both of us to take them for a month or two. So far I have not felt any ill effects and it is quite possible that they are doing me good. At any rate I hope so.

Guy Butler arrived by air from England last week. He managed to get a passage back with the Victory parade men. He has three months holiday from Oxford University and expects to be able to get a passage back by boat in time to resume his studies. His wife has not come with him. Jeffrey is also home and Rex Moys and wife and child. They are all staying at the Poplars. Denis and wife are at Douglas' for a couple of weeks. I did not go over to the station to see them as it was the late train they went by. They look to spend a few days with us on their return trip.

Blodwen is expected home about the end of this week. Joe and Roy have been getting their mid-day meals at a house nearby. Joe does not mention his health but we hope he is not going backwards. Douglas writes that Rex is still in Johannesburg and likes his job. He expects to be home for good about the end of this month. Of course Cecily and Kingsley are home for the holidays now. Kingsley hurt his ankle but can still play tennis. Cecily is very keen on music. Douglas says old Mrs Ambler is very ill in Maritzburg and Len has gone down to see her. She must be a good age. Grace has sent us some snaps to see. They are very interesting. They show the house and surroundings. Ted, I suppose, is on holiday all this month. Grace evidently is not too well as she has been having her breakfast in bed for some time past. She ought to go away for a change but evidently does not want to. Baby Charles has got a bicycle for his birthday. He cannot ride it yet but will soon learn. They had a severe frost recently, all their taps were frozen. Dot will be going with Reg and all the family to Madrid farm for the school holidays and I hope they will meet Denis and wife whilst there. Dot thinks she may postpone her trip here until August or even September as naturally she wants to have as much as possible of the boys' company during their holidays. They are going to Vryburg by car and Reg has to be back by July 23rd. They report that birds are eating the mealies off the cobs. It has been cold there as well as all over the Union. We have not registered more than ten degrees of frost so far. Wind has started today (July 1st). This, and August, are generally windy months. I have no less than four chaps on the top of thumb on the left hand and it is very awkward. I generally get them each winter.

I am sorry to hear that Aunt Emmie has had another experience. This time she was doing some cooking on a gas stove and wearing a woollen jersey. The jersey caught alight and she did not know it. Had it been a cotton garment, it would probably have flared up and the consequences might have been disastrous. The garment smouldered and left a big hole. Needless to say, it might have been worse. Joyce is going to a nursing home this month and other arrangements have to be made for someone to stay with Aunt Emmie.

I have been busy all the morning doing the Church books. The financial year closed on June 30th. I am glad to say everything is in order and we close the year with a thousand and sixty pounds in hand. I have completed doing the titles to my 6th scrap books. About a month ago I wrote to a firm in Cape Town asking if they could supply me with the missing numbers of bird pictures to complete the Tobacco book of Birds. They kindly sent over 100 and I only want four more to complete the book and I expect they will send these to me. They are very fine pictures. I now have their book of South African Flowers, their National Park book and the Birds. I still have hundreds of scraps I want to fix up when I get the time. I certainly am feeling more energetic than I have done for a long while. Dot will probably say that is the effect of the tablets I have been taking. Mom has gone down to see Mrs Stock instead of going to her W.A. Meeting. Mrs Mayhew was down to give a five minutes talk on some subject but that was not the reason why Mom did not

attend. Mrs Mayhew has just been with us for a month and she has been a great help. She seems quite contented and happy.

Mary looks in every now and then. She seems better for her trip to Port Elizabeth. Rev Ludlow still calls round every Monday morning for the money to bank. I don't think we have had one fire this winter in the dining room. We have our evening meal about five and directly after, go into the lounge and have a fire there and sit and read or have music and reading before going to bed. We generally have something hot to drink before retiring.

It is just five pm. Have typed this since three o'clock. Thanks for all letters received last week. Unless anything special in the way of news comes along, I don't expect to add more this week. Wednesday is always our best day for receiving letters. Goodbye everyone. Keep warm. Lots of love to all. Will use new sheets of carbon paper next week.

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday July 10th, 1946

My dear All,

Those of you who knew Mrs Kissack will be sorry to hear that she passed away to her reward early on Saturday morning and was laid to rest on Sunday afternoon. She had a stroke about Xmas time last year and never recovered although at times she rallied a little. She was conscious most of the time but never able to get up or take any exercise. Mary was in attendance for the greater part of her illness when her sister-in-law came and nursed her. She has been for years one of the foremost workers in the Methodist Church and will be greatly missed. We all attended the funeral on Sunday afternoon. Ernest was one of the pall bearers.

Denis and wife are at Grass Ridge, Vryburg and write to say they will be arriving here on Wednesday evening 16th. Denis shot a buck and is naturally proud of his accomplishment. Reg, Dot and family are also in the Vryburg area having gone to visit the old home. They will be sure to see Denis and wife before they leave. We are hoping they will stay longer than two days. Dot suggest coming to us later, say about August or September as she naturally wants to see as much as possible of her children in the school holidays.

Ted is now on holiday but is spending it at home. He is not too well unfortunately. Jean has gone to spend a week with some friends of Harold in Johannesburg. Charles has a little school chum staying with him for a few days. Pam will be the only one at home working. Lynne phoned on Saturday that she was going home the next day on holiday. She will have just a fortnight at home. Rex was also expecting to be home so the whole family will be together. I guess it is a long time since that happened. We are sorry to see by Douglas' last letter that Evelyn had not been well and had been overhauled by Doctor. Apparently rheumatism is the trouble. I can sympathise with anyone who has to contend with that complaint. I am thankful that I have been free of it for quite a long time now. Douglas says he has lost one beast from lumpy skin disease on Grass Ridge. I am glad to hear that there is a prospect of his having the telephone laid on in about two months time. Won't there be some talking. Not much from this end unless it be a night time call when half rates are charged. It certainly will be a great convenience.

Today (Monday) I received the missing four bird cards so have completed the 150 in the Bird book. They look very nice. Mrs Mayhew helped me putting in about 13 of them in one evening. I did the pasting whilst she stuck them in the book.

We expect that Blodwen and the three youngest children are back home by now. Am glad to hear that Blodwen saw Aunt Emmie. She says she has never seen Blodwen looking so well. Joe is still silent regarding his own health. It was Merle's birthday yesterday and Roy has his anniversary at the end of the month.

I am glad to say Mom's veins seem to be quite better now and the rash, whatever it was, is yielding to treatment of iodine. Tomorrow we are to have a visit from a married daughter of Mrs Henry Wood of Cape Town. Mrs Wood is an old friend of Mom's. Mrs Leslie (the daughter is married to a Mr Leslie and they are going to the Sudan as missionaries.) He gave an address in the Baptist Church last evening. I drove Mrs Wood to a wedding at Stellenbosch when a nephew was married there. The road was slippery after rain and the car went off the road but nothing serious happened.

Tuesday morning. Not quite so cold this morning but quite cold enough for me. Directly after breakfast, I sit on the back stoep and enjoy the sunshine. Mr Crosbie came in on Saturday evening and played halma. He is getting quite an expert at the game. We also had some music. Mrs Mayhew is giving us good service. We enjoyed her plum pudding on Sunday. She cooks the bulk of the dinner on Saturday and we have it cold on Sunday. I have not weighed lately but expect I am putting on weight. Am sorry to say Aunt Eliza seems to be suffering from rheumatism more than usual lately. We have made her an offer for her electric stove as one of the hot plates on our stove we have not been able to replace. We had to buy a new hot plate some months ago as the old one I bought on a sale years ago had given in.

8.35 a.m. the maid has just arrived! We have all finished breakfast long ago. The wash girl has arrived before her. I must finish my letter early as we are expecting visitors this afternoon.

Uncle Gervase had supper with us last evening. He was out at Fish River on Saturday when his car broke down and he could not get back to town. He was towed in yesterday. He is expecting his family back from up north, where they have been to see the grandchild, at the end of the week. He has bought a small farm at Baroda and is busy with that now. We hope to hear tomorrow that Evelyn is better of her rheumatism. It will be nice for them as all the family will be together for a while. Reg and Dot will also be there and Denis and Dee. No more now for this week. Lots of love to each and all from us both,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday July 17th, 1946

My dear All,

Monday morning on the back stoep where it is nice and warm. It just froze last night. Full moon. The days are appreciably lengthening. We still use the front room every evening and find it nicer than the dining room. I don't think we have had one fire in the dining room this winter. The fire grate in the lounge is much smaller and does not consume so much coal or wood. Mom generally gets up about nine after her breakfast.

We are hoping for news today or tomorrow as to when we may expect Denis and Dorothea. Douglas said in his last letter that they expected to leave by Tuesday's train. If they do, they will break their journey at Kimberley and come via Bloemfontein, leaving there about 11 pm and arriving here at 9.30 Wednesday morning. That will be nice for us but not so comfortable for them as it involves two changes. Douglas was expecting to take them over to Kuruman last week but as he was going by lorry, I hardly expect Dee would go. Reg, Dot and family all went over to Grass Ridge the Saturday previously and had a happy time together. We are sorry to hear that Evelyn is still suffering pains in her hands from rheumatism. I am very sorry for her as I shall never forget the agony I had when we lived in New Stockenstroom Street from that complaint. Lynne has arrived home safe and sound. Am glad for her to meet Dot and Co as well as Dennis and Dee. Aunt Eliza wants all to go to her one evening but it depends as to how long they are staying. Aunt Eliza has so many interesting things to show them that she could easily spend a whole day or more looking at her treasures. We hope they will stay over Sunday but from a former letter, Denis said they were giving us two days. Douglas and Evelyn had all their family together now, Rex is home for good. Douglas says he got two bucks at Theron's Rust and he has a licence to shoot two Kudus but has not got them yet. Douglas has been appointed to go to the Cape Province Agricultural Congress at East London but does not know the date yet. Hope he will be able to fit in a visit here. Perhaps a trip to the coast would be good for Evelyn too.

I find that my dear all for Kroonstad is sent by rail on Tuesday night's train to Port Elizabeth and from there it goes by airmail to Johannesburg the next day and then by rail down to Kroonstad. Grace says she gets it on Friday! Whereas if it went direct by rail, she would get it at least on Thursday. Such is the way of our progressive Post Office. Needless to say I have written to have the matter set right. Jean has been spending the school holiday with her brothers in Johannesburg. It will be a nice change for her. Ted was not too grand when she last wrote. No word of their having found a buyer for their plot yet.

Dot says the Metcalf family called on them at Potgietersrus on their way to the Victoria Falls. They travelled in two cars and had a caravan fully stocked with provisions etc. Unfortunately they had car trouble on route and were thinking of visiting the Donald Fraser Hospital where Mary was for three years or so and bring back Miss Wookey who was evidently relieving there.

Aunt Emmie writes that she had a call from Blodwen and children and says she has never seen Blodwen looking better. We have also heard from Blodwen since their return home. There was a breakdown along the line and their train arrived at Uitenhage in the middle of the night instead of the morning. Very awkward for the children. Joe and Roy seem to have managed alright but his health does not seem to be right yet. The Department is wanting him to go back to his forge again as so many of the staff have resigned from the Railway. He is consulting his Dr about it.

We had a call from Mr and Mrs Leslie, missionaries from the Sudan. Mrs Leslie is a daughter of Mrs Henry Wood, friends of ours at Cape Town. They are a very nice couple.

Later. We had a surprise visit from Florrie Biggs yesterday (Sunday) morning. Joan Butler also came with her. All of Ernest's family except Dorothy Murray, who now lives at Upington, were here to see Guy and Jeffrey. The old lady who lives at the Poplars for some years, Mrs Lanham Senior, died at Durban last week. The body was brought to Cradock and buried this Monday morning. Old Mrs Judd, Aunt Kate Dudley's stepmother, died in Grahamstown last Wednesday. Aunt Katie went down and returned this morning.

Mr Muller is finishing pruning the vines today. Hope we have a better crop than we had last year.

2 p.m. Telegram from Denis just received "arriving Wednesday morning, love 2." We do not know how long they are staying but shall keep them as long as possible. I shall not attempt another sheet this week.

Lots of love to each and all,
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday July 24th, 1946

My dear All,

It is Monday evening and shall not be able to do much as we spend our evenings in the lounge around the fire. Olive brought Aunt Jessie in about dinner time as she (Olive) wanted to have her car overhauled before going on a trip round the Fish River farms and next week she looks to go to Johannesburg to a friend of hers there who is to undergo an operation. Aunt Jessie had dinner with us and after dinner, Olive came along and spent some time here. Mary also called and later Mrs Allan (formerly Miss Holmden) was passing and had a chat. I had not seen her for years. She has promised to come along some evening and see us. (So far did I get last evening.)

It is now six a.m. Tuesday. The event of last week was the arrival of Denis and Dee on Wednesday morning. I did not go to the station, the train was up to time and we soon got down to talking. They had had a comfortable journey, coming via Kimberley and Bloemfontein. It is a quick journey and they did not have to change after leaving Kimberley. This is the first time Dee has been to the house. She seems very well and pleased with what she has seen. She is very quiet. They have both enjoyed their visit to Douglas and Evelyn. Denis said he did not think he had ever had a more enjoyable holiday. It was very nice all Douglas' family being home and Reg and Dot being able to come over and seeing them as well. They have been interested in looking through photographs of the family, specially those of Harold's time. The Kellys kindly took them for a motor spin all about town and entertained them to afternoon tea. One evening I took them to see Aunt Eliza and her curiosities. Mom did not go but stayed with Mrs Mayhew. Mary was of course there and did the showing of the various exhibits. We enjoyed Aunt's gingerbread etc and did not stay late. Denis showed us an old telescope that came from my old home in England that belonged to my father. It is not in proper working order so we took it to a local (Swiss) jeweller who was very interested in seeing it. Aunt Emmie had given it to Eric Fear who passed it on to Denis. I can remember my father showing it to us many years ago.

Aunt Jessie came in with Olive yesterday and had dinner with us. She seems quite well. Still plays the organ at Fish River service (five hymns last Sunday). There was a big congregation there and all were well. Aunt Kate (Dudley) we have not seen since the death of her stepmother. She always spent the summer months at Grass Ridge. Aunt Rouena is back from visiting her daughter Barbara who has not been well after the birth of her child. She stayed a week longer with her than was intended. Uncle Gervase spent an evening with us whilst Denis and Dee were with us. We enjoyed a game of halma. Mr Muller has been pruning our vines and we hope for better results this season. Grace has kindly sent me a cardigan she has knitted for me. It is beautifully warm and very nicely made. Reg and Dot and family were returning to Potgietersrus last Saturday. They have had a good holiday at Reg's old home which is not far from Grass Ridge. It was nice for the four grandsons to be playing tennis together. Rex is home for good now. All the family was together. Lynne returns to her work at Queenstown today. Yesterday afternoon whilst having our afternoon tea, Mom had a violent fit of coughing and swallowed a lot of wind. She had difficulty in regaining her breath. She was due at Mrs Ludlows to tea at four but was a little late. Mrs Mayhew went with her and Mr Ludlow motored her home. I hope Mom does not have any more such attacks. She does not forget the experience Dot had when she was young.

Joe writes that they have let their front room and also the garage. His Dr agrees that he should take a fortnight's trial at his old job as the Department wants him back. After a fortnight's test, he will be re-examined to see if he can stand it without injury. If not, what then? I have been chosen to attend the Synod at Port Elizabeth the second week in August. Have asked Joe to see if he can get accommodation for Mom and I at the same boarding house we stayed at some time ago. We could then go in by train each day from Uitenhage. I want Mom to have her eyes re-tested. They do seem to be better lately. She still uses Aunt Eliza's ear trumpet but not always. We all weighed at the chemist. Mom and Denis are the same weight - 148 lbs. I am still 143. They all saw Eric, Freda and family whilst at Grass Ridge. I had a nice letter from old Mr Sowden, he is 85

and still going strong. He stays with his daughter, Mrs Pearce, near Grace. He walks to town. After breakfast on the back stoep, no frost last night but quite cool.

I have practically decided to give up the treasurership of the church as the end of September when the officers are re-elected. I shall be sorry to do so for some things but I think it best for someone else to get into the way of doing the books etc. Am glad to say we are both keeping fit. We use the lounge every evening and get to bed about 9.

Much love to each and all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday July 31st, 1946

My dear All,

It seems as though there is nothing to write about except the weather this week. It is Monday afternoon and it is very cold but not so bad as last Saturday, then it was dreadful. I did not get warm all day. On Friday 26th, the maximum for the 24 hours was 66 and the minimum 40 and it dropped to 45 and 30 respectively the next day. The wind was so cold and no sunshine all day. Snow was reported on the mountains and on Sunday afternoon we walked up as far as Sprigg Street but did not see any on the hills. Today it is better and quite nice in the sun but the wind is still very nasty. It was referred to over the wireless as being one of the coldest days we have had. I am very thankful for the nice warm cardigan that Grace has made for me.

We had a nice letter from Dee since their return to Grahamstown. They have had a lift to Port Elizabeth since their return. Grace had a lift to Johannesburg during the week but we have not yet heard how she got on. She expected to return the same day. Pam says she may perhaps go there over the coming weekend. Ted's months holiday is nearly up and we hope his health has improved.

Lynne phoned on Thursday relating her experience on her way back from her holiday. She travelled by the Rhodesian express from Pudimoe and the train was late so missed the connection at Kimberley and had to wait all day in Kimberley and arrived in Queenstown on Wednesday night instead of the morning. She must have been "fed up". Am glad she was able to say her Mother was better of her rheumatism. She still hopes to get a lift over here before long. Mr Crosbie came in on Saturday evening for a game of halma and was glad to know that his young lady had met Lynne. He is looking to spend this long weekend with her in Bloemfontein.

Mom and Mrs Mayhew are at their women's meeting now. Mom's nose started bleeding just before she started. Mrs Saunders called for her in their car. Mrs Saunders says Clifford returned from Fish River where he has been for a week or so and was not too well. He is suffering from cramp in his legs now. Perhaps it is the effect of the cold weather we are having. We had a postcard from Dot reporting their safe arrival home after a most enjoyable holiday. It was so nice their meeting Denis and Dee. By today's post we received a nice leg of buck from Douglas. Many thanks. The venison I sent to Cape Town arrived safely. Gladys and Joyce both have written about it. Dudley says it is the best he has had since his return from the war. He has not been up to concert pitch lately having had a touch of fever again.

Tuesday 30th. Mary has just popped in, we had not seen her for a few days. Says Aunt Eliza is suffering a good deal of pain in her knees and hands from rheumatism lately. I know by my own experience how troublesome that complaint can be and hope a warmer weather comes on, she will be much easier. It is most fortunate that Mary is able to be with her. We are all waiting important news from Joyce Townshend.

There seems some counter opinion regarding our going to the Synod at Port Elizabeth. Mom says she would rather go to Katkop as Aunt Gladys says do go to see her. Others think the trip would be too much for me, that the cold weather we are having would upset me and so on. Now we have a postcard from Joe saying he has to go to hospital shortly. The Weavers cannot entertain us as they are expecting visitors. Joe can get accommodation at the boarding house we stayed at before and where we were comfortable. I feel that if Joe has to be in hospital, I ought to go if only to Uitenhage. I could then go to Port Elizabeth if the weather was suitable. We must decide something shortly one way or the other. There is no act of Parliament that I should go to Port Elizabeth. I don't suppose there will be many more occasions for me and they are gatherings when it is nice to meet with kindred spirits. Joe does not say if he has to undergo an operation or if he has gone back to the forge again. In any case, continue posting here.

I think I told you last week of the coughing bout Mom had after tea one afternoon. Am glad to say there has not been any repetition. I think a crumb or something must have gone down the wrong way.

Our hot plate has given us trouble again and at the moment is in the electrical man's hands. Our maid still comes very late in the mornings. Sometimes 8.30 after we have finished breakfast.

The days are getting appreciably longer. We enjoy sitting in the lounge every evening. I have had made two coal scuttles, just ordinary galvanised buckets painted black inside and brown outside with strips of aluminium paint. They look very nice, like wooden flowerpots.

Must stop now and get the envelopes ready. If I can get thinner paper for my letter, I will resume posting direct as before. I am enclosing envelopes for you to use in posting to us. Hope for good news from each and all. It is Roy's birthday tomorrow.

Love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
Saturday, August 3rd, 1946

My dear All,

As Uncle is in bed with a bad cold, I think the most helpful thing I can do for him is to write his Dear All. He would very much like it posted this afternoon so that you may all receive it on Tuesday. By that time I hope he will be very much better and be able to write to you himself. He puts the cold down to a haircut on Wednesday. On Thursday he had a "running cold" all day and did not go out but was very busy addressing and doing up his Methodist News. 240 copies from 4 p.m. onwards and Mr Ludlow posted them yesterday. Yesterday (Friday) morning he got up at 6.30 as usual and tried to get breakfast as usual but had to call Mrs Mayhew at 7 a.m. and went back to bed. When I came down at 12 o'clock, he had a very nasty cough and a pain low down in the chest, there was no temperature so I found a soothing cough mixture that had been prescribed for him by Dr Scholtz, put Thermogene wool on the chest and left him enjoying the very nice dinner Mrs Mayhew had prepared for him.

At about 5 p.m. I came down again and found the temperature had gone up to 99.8 so we decided to ask Dr Oosthuizen, Dr Scholtz' partner, to come down, which he did about 9 p.m. and sent three lots of pills immediately after, one a sleeping one and the others to be taken 4 hourly. Uncle asked Doctor when he might get up! He replied "if you were 22 instead of 82, you could get up tomorrow".

This morning I find the temperature 96.2, the cough less troublesome, the pulse better and the patient in a better condition generally except that he is low spirited. I feel sure this will soon pass over, however, and as Dr Scholtz has returned, we expect him to come and see Uncle this afternoon.

I have not referred to the letters received but you know they are always much appreciated.

Auntie and Uncle are preparing the envelopes so I will fold up this poor edition of the weekly issue and post them on my way home. Auntie is keeping up pluckily doing the many odd jobs and Mrs Mayhew is doing the cooking. It is a pity I cannot give you later news but Doctor is not likely to be down now till after five by which time the letters must be posted.

You will be glad to hear Aunt Eliza is better of her cold and the rheumatism has moved from the knees to the thigh.

My love and best wishes to you all,

Your loving cousin,
Mary

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday August 7th, 1946

My dear All,

It is Monday morning 11.30 and I am still in bed trying to type my usual letter but am doubtful how far I shall be able to get with it. It is bank holiday and a perfect day and I am sorry not to be up and about as usual. On Wednesday last I had my hair cut. It was a fine day but evidently the barber took too much off the top and evidently I caught a cold. I remember him asking me if I parted my hair so I asked him why a bald head was like heaven. He didn't know. So answered it myself, because it is a bright and shining place and there is no parting there.

Thursday, pocket handkerchiefs were in constant demand. Late in the afternoon, Ernest sent along the Church News for wrapping and posting much too late to be posted that day. However we finished them and on Friday morning Mr Ludlow took them to post and they were delivered in town on Saturday morning. I think I have sent a copy to each home. I wanted the Committee to agree to it being issued monthly instead of quarterly but they thought it would be too much work for me.

Dr Scholtz was out of town so we called in his partner, Dr Oosthuizen, who has attended me once or twice when I was ill last year. He came about nine p.m. and before ten I had three bottles of tablets to be taken every four hours for the three days and every six hours for some days after. I asked how long I was to stay in bed. He replied "if you were 22 instead of 82 I would say you could get up tomorrow". Dr returned to town on Saturday evening and overhauled me and confirmed the treatment and told me this morning that I must stay in bed until Wednesday and perhaps longer. I have evidently escaped the penicillin injection treatment this time for which I am very thankful. I told him I was disappointed in not being able to go to Port Elizabeth and to see Joe but he thinks travelling in this weather is too risk for me so I am debarred that pleasure. Blodwen wrote that they would do the best they could to make me comfortable but I have given up the idea of going at present at any rate. Mary has been very good in coming down to see how we are getting on and wrote a dear all on Saturday for me. I am sorry to say Aunt Eliza has been far from well recently. Rheumatism in her knees and wrists seem the most tender spots. We are all anxiously waiting for news from Joyce. Today, being a holiday, there is no post or telegrams available but I offered the use of our phone. Mary has suggested to Dot that as she is looking to pay us a visit about the end of August, she might come sooner. There is no real necessity but of course we shall be very pleased to see her. We are naturally concerned at the state of Ted's health. After his month's holiday and rest at home, he says he has no energy. It seems to me that he must seriously face the situation of taking his pension before it is really due. He has hopes of being able to get a good price for his plot owing to the boom in property due to the discovery of gold at Odendaalsrus about 30 miles from there. It seems to me that this or something similar will eventually materialise. Mrs Mayhew is very helpful and attentive. We certainly could not do without extra help. On Sunday morning the Salvation Army held their usual open air service in front and called for the usual contribution so Mom asked them in to see me. Two lady Captains run the Army here. They offered prayers for my recovery. It was very nice of them.

We are expecting a call from Uncle Owen. He went as far as Vryburg with their daughter, Joyce, whose husband has got a good billet in Rhodesia. She has gone to him. We expect Owen will call on his way back to Uitenhage. We are of course anxious about Joe. It looks as though he cannot go back to his heavy smiths work. His heart is in farming but that requires a lot of capital and experience. If he could strike a place where he could supervise farm machinery and the like in good order would be ideal. Uncle Jack celebrated his 90th anniversary yesterday. They had all their children and grandchildren. Mr and Mrs Ludlow went out as well. There were about 20 all told. Douglas is due to attend a Farmers Congress in East London soon but I do not know the date. Expect he will call here and Queenstown. Lynne still hopes to get a lift over some time soon. Vincent Crosbie is having the weekend with Miss Ralls in Bloemfontein, is due back tomorrow. I must stop now. I did not expect to be able to do so much. It is quite difficult sitting up in bed with pillows at my back and not being able to focus or read what I have written so please excuse mistakes.

Much love to each and all as though named. Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday August 14th, 1946

My dear All,

Monday morning again finds me on the back stoep trying to get a move on with my weekly letter. I am still a weakly man but am thankful to say I am feeling somewhat better than this time last week. I have had ups and downs and the doctor has left attending me. I have not ventured outside the house and still have breakfast in bed and other delicate attentions. All of you have been very good in writing and keeping us in touch with one another. Douglas and Evelyn phoned from Kimberley and Dot also phoned from Potgietersrus last Monday evening. I fear it must have been an expensive three minute call. It is 8/- from Kroonstad and that is only about half way to Potgietersrus. Mom and Mrs Mayhew did the talking. The reception was not too good but Dot says she heard that I was getting on nicely and was satisfied. She still is looking to come down for two or three weeks about the end of this month. It is such a long journey that we hope she will stay as long as possible. Reg says she must be back for Joan's birthday. Douglas is doubtful if he will be able to call here on his way to or from East London. I am not sure if his meetings are this month or September. Evelyn and Arthur may be going to visit Lynne and another in Queenstown at the same time. We hear that Uncle Owen was at Fish River yesterday (Sunday) but do not know if he is calling here. Uncle Gervase is in Port Elizabeth at the Synod, he went down on Friday morning by train. We should like to see him so as to have first hand news of Vryburg folk.

I wonder if all of you remembered last Friday (9th) was the 25th anniversary of dear Harold's passing. I am glad Douglas was able to take Denis and Dee over to Kuruman to see his grave. Ruth has sent us a snap of same, also a snap of her present home in Grahamstown. Am glad to say she is very happy in her Red Cross work there. Mary, here, too is busy in the same work here.

Joe is still in hospital, or was when we last heard from him. He writes cheerfully and hopes to be home soon. It would be nice if he could come up for a weekend whilst Dot is here. Vincent Crosbie says his young lady is coming on October 1st. She has a month's holiday. He is looking out for a house as they want to get married about March next. I think I have previously mentioned that Ted and Grace are looking for a house in town. They hope to sell their plot. Grace had a nice day in Johannesburg and saw her boys. They were back the same evening. David has been home for a few days with a sore hand. Have not heard anything further about his getting a transfer to Kroonstad. The new YMCA hostel where David and Harold are staying is evidently a very nice place. I see the YMCA in Pretoria have also bought a big place. Dot says they had severe frosts and have lost their pawpaws for the third year running. The boys and of course the rest of the family enjoyed their three weeks holiday on the farms in the Vryburg district. Norman finishes with school at the end of next year. I did not think he was so old! Joan is as sweet as ever and is most attractive. She misses the boys when they are away at school. Mr Watts has been out on a hunting trip again. It is three years since his son accidentally shot himself in the leg. This time there was no accident and very little game. Dot is having sewing meetings at her home for church funds.

Monday afternoon. Telegram just arrived for Dot from Reg "all arrived safely hope same your end." We must wait and see what this means. She might be here tonight or tomorrow. Mom and Mrs Mayhew will be going to the Women's Auxiliary meeting this afternoon. Mom did not go.

Tuesday morning. This is my earliest morning I have been up (9.30). Dot, baby and nurse girl arrived a few minutes ago, all well. I must go back a bit. We went to bed early and woke at 10 p.m. hearing Mrs Mayhew talking to someone on the phone. It turned out to be Grace telling us that Dot left by train at 4 p.m. and would arrive this morning. It now is known that Reg and family left Potgietersrus on Saturday morning by car, picking up the two boys in Pretoria and motoring all as far as Kroonstad. They had to wait a while in Pretoria as one of the boys was playing a football match. Reg and the boys returned on Sunday afternoon, dropping the boys at school again and he would have arrived home about midnight. Grace was entertaining one of the delegates attending Synod so Dot and baby stayed at Ernest Saunders. I may not have got all the information quite correctly but the fact remains that they are here. Dot had a compartment to themselves and the train

was up to time. I did not go to the station to meet them but waited at the glass door for them. The same taxi man that brought Denis and Dee over brought them but as he carries the mails, had to deliver that first. Evidently in getting the mails out, he had to put some of Dot's luggage on the ground and by accident, he ran over one of her suitcases and broke it to pieces. He has replaced it with a new case – rather an expensive trip for him.

I am told I must not write anymore but I must tell you that Aunt Eliza has gone stone deaf since the rheumatism has been so bad. Perhaps she will have her ears syringed to see if that will relieve the position. Mary of course is still with her. We hope to hear from Joe today. Have not seen anything of Uncle Owen so suppose has gone right through to Uitenhage. I hear they have had three inches of rain in Port Elizabeth. We could do with some here. It has been quite cold again at nights. We have fires every evening in the lounge and sometimes in our bedroom. Dot looks very well. Baby is getting too heavy for me to lift.

Love to all,
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday August 21st, 1946

My dear All,

I generally begin my letter on Mondays but this week it is Tuesday morning and I am sitting on the back stoep – 9.30 a.m. Things have been happening during the last week. As you know, Dot arrived last Tuesday morning. Reg brought her as far as Kroonstad by car on the Saturday and Reg and the boys returned on Sunday afternoon leaving the boys at school at Pretoria and he arrived back at Potgietersrus Sunday night. Then we had word from Douglas that he and Evelyn were coming by car and were due to arrive here some time on Saturday evening but we were not to wait up for them as they might sleep somewhere on route. We tried to get accommodation for them at the Masonic Hotel but the place was full so we tried at Mrs de Klerk's, at the Palms at the corner near the park and Dot was successful there in getting two nice rooms without board there. Instead of being late, they arrived just a few minutes before seven p.m. They left home at 7 a.m. and spent two hours in Kimberley with Kingsley and Cecily. So the 400 odd miles was covered in just under 12 hours. They did not hurry but the majority of the roads were in good condition so they were able to get along without any trouble. It was a nice day for motoring and they were not too tired.

Stop press message. Mary has called and reported that at last a wire has been received from Cape Town stating that Joyce has a son, born yesterday. Great rejoicing but some disappointment as a girl was desired.

To resume my story. We sat up till ten or so talking and planning. Douglas has to attend meetings in Port Elizabeth and not East London as at first thought. This is more convenient and gives him more time here. Arthur naturally wanted to get over to Queenstown so left by road motorbus on Monday morning as far as Tarkastad and caught the train from there, arriving about seven in the evening, a journey occupying nine hours which could easily be accomplished by car in three. Douglas left by train Monday night for Uitenhage and as I write, no doubt he is with Joe and Blodwen. His meetings begin this (Tuesday) evening about 8. He looks to return by train on Friday morning and then he and Evelyn will go by their car to Queenstown and spend a few days there, returning to Vryburg via Bloemfontein where he has some meetings to attend. They will pick up Arthur in Queenstown and get back to Vryburg early next week. Needless to say it has been a great pleasure to us to have so many of the family with us at the same time. We wish it could last longer. We advised Joe by postcard that they were here so on Saturday evening he phoned and we enjoyed a few minutes conversation with him. He came out of hospital last Tuesday but is not at work yet. He is still having treatment and it is doubtful if he will go back to the heavy work he has done for years past. We are hoping he may be able to take a run up here before long.

So far I have not said anything about the charms of baby Joan. She is a "proper" child. Very affectionate and well behaved. Her charms are great and here she is the favourite of all. I am surprised at the way she helps herself at table. She will be two years old next month. She sleeps well at night. We have not been disturbed once by her crying. Dot took her to see Aunt Eliza and told her that Dorothy Murray thought baby looked like her (Aunt Eliza). "Yes," said Aunt Eliza, "she is lovely"! She is quite clever in feeding herself at table.

Later. I generally post my letter on Tuesday afternoon but today I cannot. For one thing we have had the use of Douglas' car so Dot drove us to the Warm Bath and after spending a little time there, we crossed the river and came back on the Colesberg road. We called to see Uncle Gervase and Aunt Rouena. Gervase was out at his farm at Baroda. We also saw Mr West for a while. Evelyn went to see her old friend Mrs Radford. We wanted Mrs Mayhew to come with us but she went for a walk instead.

Monday evening we phoned to Grace and told her as much of the news as we could in the three minutes. Was glad to hear that Ted was much better and all the others well. She was surprised to hear that Douglas and Co were here. Dot has booked to leave here next Monday morning and Reg will meet her in Pretoria on Tuesday. She will pass Kroonstad during the night so will not see anyone there. Wednesday morning. Mom has not had a good night. Perhaps the motor ride yesterday was too much for her. We did not go more than ten miles if so much. She is staying

in bed at present. We played halma last evening and Mom won the game.

Just before supper, Guy and his wife called to see us. Douglas is giving them a lift as far as Queenstown when they go on Friday as Guy's wife has a brother not too far from there who will meet them in Queenstown. They are both going back to England when they can get a passage. Guy finishes his studies next June.

Blodwen writes that they have got rid of their boarder and have got a young married couple who get their meals out. They hope this will work better than having to prepare meals for a boarder. Joe is still in doctor's hands and we do hope he will be able to effect a proper cure of his complaint.

It is very nice having Evelyn and Dot with us and wish some of the family was living nearer to us. Mrs Mayhew is still here and I do not know what we should do without her help. We may have to make some fresh financial arrangements with her later on. My sheet is full and I cannot attempt another sheet this week. We have enjoyed having visitors with us and shall be very sorry when they have left.

Lots of love to all,
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday August 28th, 1946

My dear All,

Monday afternoon finds me again at the same old and pleasant job of typing my usual weekly letter to you all. Just before seven this morning, we said goodbye to Dot and baby. I had asked Vincent Crosbie to see them off at the station as I did not think it wise to go over myself. Clifford was here during the morning and said he was also there and they got off quite comfortably and had a compartment to themselves. We hope to hear in due course that Reg duly meets them tomorrow morning at Pretoria station where they will spend the rest of the day seeing Norman and Allan and then motor home in the evening. That we shall miss them goes without saying. She had such a happy way of calling us to meals, "tea time" she kept on calling. I was playing bo peep last evening with her. She was behind the door leading to the kitchen and she had such a nasty fall over the brick which is attached to the door to keep it from slamming. It was the biggest cry she has had since she has been here. She has been as good as gold, the way she feeds herself and drinks from her cup without spilling is clever. I think I could fill this sheet with news of her. One thing I must say, she does not approve of my beard, I suppose it tickles her too much.

Douglas returned from his Congress on Thursday morning. He spent last Tuesday with Joe at Uitenhage and went on to Port Elizabeth in the afternoon. He also saw Uncle Owen and family. All were well and busy in their garden. I understand they have to leave the place at the end of the year. Joe rang us on Saturday evening to know if he had returned and seemed very bright. He has not gone back to work yet and he thinks the treatment he is receiving from his new doctor is doing him good. Blodwen was with him at the call box where they had to wait for an hour before they could get through to us. We hope he may be able to come up here for a weekend or so before long. Dot says she thinks Grace may be coming to see us before long. Vincent Crosbie tells us his fiancé is coming for a month on October 1st. Did I tell you last week that the taxi man who brought her from the station had taken her luggage out of the car so as to get another passenger's luggage out and in backing the car, ran over one of her suitcases and smashed it to pieces. He bought her a new one, so he did not make any profit on that journey.

Mom is quite pleased with some daffodils she has grown in the garden. They have been greatly admired by all. Mary is sending some of our annt(?) blooms to Aunt Letty for her 90th birthday which will be celebrated on 29th. We have had some warm days lately. Yesterday it was 85 in the shade but during the night it dropped to three degrees above freezing. I guess we shall have frost yet. We have not had a fire in the lounge since last Thursday. It was such a nice evening last night that I ventured to go to church, the first time for more than a month. Mr Stock's sister-in-law, who died recently, left an estate valued at £48,000. She bequeathed £1225 to the Anglican Church for a new organ etc and £1000 to St Dunstan's Home for the Blind. I understand it is a very peculiar will. The Stocks are leaving their house in Bree Street and going to his own house next to the Hospital. They probably will not move before the end of the year.

We had a surprise visit of about half an hour's duration last week from George Wilkie and his wife. They were on their way home from Port Elizabeth and Adelaide where they had been to see one of their daughters who is engaged to a local party there. We had not seen them for years. They were very friendly. We asked them to stay to supper but like most farmers, they were in a hurry to get home. They are still on the same farm near Steynsburg.

It is not often we hear from Olive but a letter came this morning saying she and her friend, Mrs Jones, had had a delightful spin through the Game Reserve. They called to see Reg and Dot at Potgietersrus but of course Dot was here. However, Reg rose equal to the occasion and did them well. They were charmed with the scenery and spent three days on the top of the mountain at Magoebas Kloof. We called at the same place when Joe motored us to the Game Reserve years ago. A fruit farmer there lost £2000 owing to a severe frost destroying his pawpaw crop.

Mom and Mrs Mayhew are at the W.A. meeting this afternoon. It is a joint meeting of all the different women's associations in town. They expect about 50.

You will be sorry to hear that Dr Scholt's wife is dangerously ill. Special prayers were

offered in church last night. May Saunders has been staying with her the last few nights.

Aunt Eliza is no better. She is still stone deaf and the only way of talking to her is by writing. She has not had a doctor yet but I wish she would. Maude Miller, who has been so attentive to her for years past, celebrates her birthday today. I sent her a note thanking her for her kindness to Aunt Eliza. It is hard that she is so delicate herself. Mary keeps well and finds plenty to do. Her garden in the yard does her credit. News from Cape Town says that Joyce is getting on nicely. Suppose she will be going home soon.

A flying school has been started here. I am not entering as a pupil at present. The strong wind we had last week shifted one of my wireless poles but Douglas was able to put it straight again.

Lots of love to all,
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday September 4th, 1946

My dear All,

I know you will be sorry to hear that Mrs Mayhew expressed the wish to Douglas and Dot whilst they were here that she would like to go back to her own room each day after dinner and to sleep there. No reason was given when we spoke to her about it and we did not wish to oppose her in the matter nor did we wish her to leave. We tried to make her feel at home with us and treated her as one of the family. She was very reserved and spent a good deal of her time in her room. Every afternoon she was free and generally went for a walk. However, she promised to come down every morning and see to the cooking of our dinner and has same with us, returning directly afterwards. This means that we get our own breakfast and suppers.

I have yielded to the request so often made by one and another to get up later so I am trying to oblige. I now rise a few minutes before seven and slip on my dressing gown and set the machinery going for breakfast. I get the seven o'clock news at the same time and go back and rest till about 5 minutes to eight. By that time the water is boiling and I get the 8 o'clock news and get the paper a bit earlier than that. The maid did not arrive this Monday morning until 8.15 which is about her regular time now. Our breakfast is over by then. We must wait and see how this plan works and if necessary we can go back to the Premier for our dinner! I think we shall find it cheaper to do that.

Tuesday morning. I was interrupted yesterday by a very interesting visit from Frank Wilmot and his wife. Frank was one of my old Sunday School boys here about 40 years ago. His wife was a daughter of Rev Allsop and was bridesmaid to Rev Samuel Clark's daughter who married Rev Larrington the second minister here in Rev Clarke's time. We enjoyed a good talk on past history. His brother was running a shop at Dwaal years ago. He is also coming down on a visit before long. Frank's sister used to work for me at Midland House. She is now Mrs Every. Frank was very sorry to have missed meeting Douglas.

Douglas phoned from Queenstown saying he had a nasty cold. We detected it by his speech. He and Evelyn were leaving for Bloemfontein on Sunday but he thought Arthur was staying in Queenstown for a dance on Friday. They are quite pleased at his engagement. Mrs Ina McLeod was here at the same time as the Wilmots and enjoyed meeting them again. She stayed to supper as her folk had come in to attend a wedding of a neighbour. They called for her about 11 p.m. We had quite a hot day yesterday (Monday) and during the night, four points of rain fell. There was a lot of thunder and lightning. Not a drop of rain fell during August.

We had a wire from Dot on Tuesday and this was followed by a card. They had had a comfortable journey up and one of the boys met her at Pretoria and of course Reg. Baby ran along the platform to meet her Daddy of course.

Grace says Jean has finished her 24 treatments in hospital and she hopes the nose trouble will be a thing of the past. They hope it will be permanent now. Harold was 19 on September 1st. He thinks he may be able to get a transfer to Kroonstad when he has finished his third year of apprenticeship. He hopes to pass his matric at the end of the year. So far as I know there has not been any buyers for Ted's property yet. The market seems very high there owing to the gold boom not far from Kroonstad.

Last evening here was a meeting of the Boy Scout Association. As it was a very mild evening, I attended. Vincent Crosbie accompanied me as far as the Town Hall. I was able to get rid of the duties I have had for the past few years of being Secretary and Chairman. The magistrate was elected Chairman, the Acting Scoutmaster is Secretary and I retained the office of Treasurer. This will not involve much labour as the Secretary will collect the subscriptions.

Aunt Letty had a very happy birthday. She had a number of letter and telegrams as well as visitors and flowers. She is keeping wonderfully well. I forget if I mentioned last week that the average age of the ten members still living of that generation is 78 years. The youngest (Uncle Dudley) is 68. Some record – probably a world record.

Nothing from Joe so far. I hope he may be able to come up for the long weekend at the end

of the month. They were all well when last we heard.

I am glad to say that on Saturday when I visited Aunt Eliza's I found that her hearing had improved as she could hear me with the aid of her trumpet. Mary of course is still with her. Aunt Emmie is expecting Joyce home with her new baby. He is getting on quite nicely. Uncle Jack and Aunt Gladys have just called. Gladys will stay to dinner. No post arrived yet so will close with love to each and all,

Dad

Later. Letters from Joe, Dot and Ruth just to hand.

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday September 11th, 1946

My dear All,

I am a day late in beginning my letter this week. It is Tuesday morning and the sun is shining brightly into the dining room. My den is snug in a few minutes, and when it is a little bit warmer, shall adjourn to the back stoep where it will be warmer still.

We have not heard yet of the arrival of Douglas and family back in Vryburg. Douglas left Queenstown about a week before Evelyn and Arthur as there was a big dance on and Arthur wanted to be on the spot. They were leaving by car via Bloemfontein last Saturday morning and hoped to reach Grass Ridge the same evening. Possibly we shall hear from them before posting this. They did not have time to revisit Rockcliff when they were at East London. We are hoping to see Arthur's young lady when she and Lynne can get a lift over from Queenstown. May it be soon. Evelyn writes in high praise of the beauty of Queenstown and its surroundings.

Ted and Pam took a hurried trip to Johannesburg on the occasion of Harold's 19th birthday. It was a surprise visit and all enjoyed it except perhaps Grace, who went in by car at about 2.30 a.m. to meet them at the station. The last report on Ted's health was that he was better. They had not had enquiries re the sale of their plot. Grace entertained one of the delegates at the recent Synod held in Kroonstad.

Dot was amused when she arrived at Pretoria and Joan ran to meet Reg and the boys on the platform exclaiming "look at my teeth". Potgietersrus folk are going to lose Mrs Gordon Amm who has sold her furniture etc and will live at East London with a sister. Mr Amm died some years ago. Her piano fetched £139 on the sale. Must have been some piano! Dot took some of the old family photographs I referred to in a recent letter. I have also sent some to Mrs Bull Metcalf but she writes that she has already got one that I sent and is suggesting sending same to Ruth. It was a photo of Rosenblaat and De Beers staff in which she and Harold appear. (I think Ruth has one already.) I sent a couple of the croquet party taken at Mrs Francis' home in Vry Street many years ago. I still have quite a number to get rid of.

Joe and Blodwen have got rid of the man and child who had their front room and have now taken a young married couple who get their meals out. They find they are less trouble than the former party who had the room. Joe is still under treatment. He says he has a pain in his back like toothache! This reminds me of something which happened to a young couple we know. The mere man woke up during the night and felt something biting his back and on investigating the cause, found that his wife's false teeth was the cause of the trouble! I notice that some of our Wisteria is in flower on the north side of the house. The Jasmine too has been a sight for some weeks. I am going to cut it down and let it start afresh. It has got far too heavy. I forgot to mention that Ruth has now got the phone installed. The number is Grahamstown 886. Make a note of it. Their garden is keeping them supplied with fresh vegetables. That's more than we can say. Ruth has sent us a snap of the home in Kuruman which is interesting.

Recently I sent the entre dish which the Vryburg Sunday School gave me in 1918 after ten years as Superintendent to be re-silvered as someone had placed the dish in the oven and spoilt it. It has now come back and looks very nice indeed. We also sent the silver tray Mom had from Grass Ridge to be re-silvered and that too looks quite new.

We had a letter from Mrs Sorrie enquiring how we are and wishing they were back in Cradock. They do not care for Bedford. He hopes to get a fresh appointment shortly. Yesterday I wrote to Dr Brodziak, our former doctor in Vryburg. I see he has retired from practice after 38 years' practice there. He was given a farewell function before leaving. Mr Galloway, who often comes to see me, has decided to go back to Scotland next month on six months holiday. He is a great help to the church and Sunday School.

Nothing further has transpired re taking Vincent Crosbie as a boarder. I do not think we can undertake the feeding part of the programme. Mrs Mayhew only comes about ten and the servant girl is generally late (this morning we had finished our breakfast about 7.30 and she arrived at 20 to nine). We do not mind letting him have the room but we cannot do the meals as well.

Later. Aunt Jessie came in this morning for the Stock Fair, not that she has any on the sale or is buying anything but she likes to take the opportunity of a trip when it offers. She has brought in another six dozen eggs. The price of same is now down to 1/4d dozen. We have paid as much as 3/6d. Butter we have not been able to get for a week past. I think this is the first time we have not been able to get any. Of course rice, biscuits, flour, soap and some other things are unobtainable.

Mrs Mayhew still comes about ten a.m. and cooks the dinner and leaves directly after. Mary looked in for a few minutes this morning. Aunt is about the same. Hearing slightly improved to what it was. Joyce Townshend is safely home again and all well at Cape Town. Lots of rain there but none here.

Mom broke one of the sides of her glasses on Sunday but I managed to get it fixed up yesterday. We are both keeping fairly well. My nose still is a trouble first thing in the morning.

Lots of love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday September 18th, 1946

My dear All,

The remainder of this month and practically the whole of the next is more or less crowded with anniversaries. This week we are invited to spend the afternoon and evening at 29 Market Street with Aunt Eliza on her 87th birthday. The next day Joe will be 45 and little Hope (Uncle Gervase's adopted daughter) will be 12, I think. Dot's Joan will be 2 on 22nd. Next month, Douglas, Grace and Ernest follow each other within a day or so.

I am writing this on Monday afternoon, one of those disagreeable days when it is too nasty and windy to put our nose outside the door. I am glad that I have not to go out. It is hot and dusty and yet last week we had frost on two succeeding nights. Some trees are in blossom and most others are showing signs of revival. The Wisteria is a grand sight and Mom has been giving numerous bunches away. The Virginia Creeper over the tanks is still dormant as also the vines. Rain is very badly wanted.

Douglas and Evelyn and Arthur got home last week. Douglas by train and Evelyn and Arthur by car. They were three weeks away from home. Lynne phoned that she and Emmie hoped to get over shortly. It would be nice if they do so for the long weekend. Joe does not think he should come as he is back at work on a new job and increased pay. The job is urgent and although he would only lose a Saturday morning's time, he feels that as he has been off work so long, he should stay. We shall see. We have decided not to entertain the idea of boarding Vincent Crosbie but are standing to our offer to sleep his young lady, who Lynne knows and says she is very nice. He has made arrangements for her meals next door. Mrs Mayhew still comes daily and cooks dinner and is away directly afterwards. She did not come to dinner or to service yesterday as she was suffering from deafness.

Ted and Pam enjoyed their jaunt to Johannesburg but Ted, especially, was very tired after it. Jean is laid up again and fears she may miss her exams this term. She will be very sorry to lose her place in school. She has done quite well so far. Mrs Moir, Ted's relation, is getting married again at the end of the year in Cape Town. Rev and Mrs Sorrie would like to come back to Cradock. They do not like Bedford.

Today (16th) is Eric and Freda's Wedding Anniversary. Reg and Dot went for the weekend to Pretoria for a school function in which the boys were taking part. They got home about ten p.m. Sunday night. They do knock about. The two boys are evidently musically inclined. Norman is learning to play the clarinet and Alan the cello. There is an orchestra at the school. I think I told you that Norman looks to leave school next year.

Uncle Bertie and Aunt Annie are celebrating their Golden Wedding (October 20th) at Spelmanskop. It being the regular preaching Sunday, the service will be there instead of at Fish River. I don't suppose we shall be able to go as we have no car. We very seldom see any of them. They are in and out of town so quickly. Their only son has sold his farm and is living on Spelmanskop. They have built a new house. Of course you know he married again after divorcing his first wife.

This time last year I was on my way back from Cape Town and spent Joe's birthday at Uitenhage. I shall not forget the long tedious time that followed. I realise how near I was to the gates of death. I have had a nasty cold and running nose for some time now but today it does seem better. Clifford Saunders took me by car Sunday afternoon to see Aunt Eliza. Am glad to say her hearing now is about as good as it was before she went stone deaf. She is as busy as ever. Aunt Emmie writes that Joyce and baby are getting on first rate. Mary had an accident recently. A stepladder in Aunt Eliza's outside room fell and damaged her nose. It might have been very serious. Joe had hung up the ladder but her garden boy had altered it, consequently it was no fault of Joe's. Mrs Saunders and May are leaving tonight for a fortnight holiday at East London. They both need a change. Clifford will be alone but we shall have him as often as possible.

Our friend, Mr Galloway has at last got a passage to England and leaves by the Carnarvon Castle about the middle of October. He looks to be away six months. We shall miss his calls. He

has gone to Queenstown today to see his wife who has been in a mental home there for some years.

I shall be placing my order for the usual 450 Xmas cards shortly. It takes quite a long time addressing them all. I do the addressing of the wrappers for the 250 quarterly church news sheets.

We have had to get rid of our garden boy this week. He was so unreliable and came so late and left so early that he was more nuisance than he was worth. The garden is a trial.

We hope you are all keeping well, we are always looking out for your letters. I hope the time will never come that we cannot read or write.

Lots of love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday September 24th, 1946

My dear All,

Post has just come – Monday noon 23rd – and has brought brighter news regarding Joe's health than we have had for a long while, therefore I am giving it first place in this week's letter. He does not say much about the actual work he is doing but evidently it is a new departure that is being introduced at the various workshops. At present he is on trial at the job but I guess he will be able to manage it. If successful, he will have a staff under him and an office etc. He feels quite pleased at the prospect and hopes it lasts. He still has 15 years to go before he goes on pension. No one came to see him on his birthday, Uncle Owen and Aunt Kate and Beryl were expected but as they did not turn up, he went along next day and found them suffering from bad colds. They have been experiencing the same heat as we have had and a letter from Evelyn by the same post also reports heat and no rain. We have had it from 95 and 97 and today it is hotter still. Roy has enjoyed a trip to Port Elizabeth with some scouts and returned by the last train – about midnight. I wonder if he will be able to see the Royal party as Scouts from all over the Eastern Province, including Cradock will be there. He says he hopes to come up for the long weekend. Re his pension mentioned above. It is fifteen years before he retires. Blodwen writes hopefully now that Joe is feeling better. Joe's back is much better since Dr has been working on his spine. Merle is in Port Elizabeth this afternoon playing in the Eisteddfod. Blodwen of course is with her and hopes she wins a medal there. Roy is wanted at Cape Town for Xmas holidays if an escort can be found. The rest of the family may come here. Blodwen has lost over sixty-one pounds in weight since the reducing treatment began and Dr wants her to reduce another 15 lbs and then stop. She is feeling so much better. The children have done well in their exams so far. Joe had a wire from Douglas and a letter from Dot on his birthday.

It is just a year ago today that I returned from Uitenhage after my trip to Cape Town when I took so ill and nearly passed out. I am thankful that I am much better than I was then but still have a running nose and for a while, I have been troubled with sciatica or lumbago, I don't know which, perhaps both. It nearly lets me fall sometimes.

We had a very nice evening tea at Aunt Eliza's last Wednesday. We went in state by taxi and returned about 9.30. The same plates as we used in my old home in London were brought into service – the old fashioned willow pattern and other articles in use in those long off days were recognised. Of course there was some of the famous gingerbread on the table and there was plenty to eat as though there was no war on or shortage of supplies. (We have not been able to get butter for a fortnight).

I looked through a box full of old pictures which perhaps my father cut out of old Illustrated London News of sixty or more years ago. They are of no real value or interest in these days but Auntie is saving them for future reference. Whilst at Market Street, a lady called with Maude Miller to say goodbye. She is related to the Millers, a Miss Sothcote. Her father I knew many years ago. He was proposed for membership in the Good Templers Lodge. I was deputed to visit him and report. I did so, and had supper with him and his wife. His daughter tells me that he never broke his pledge. He was a Warder at the gaol and was used to his drops. He died at Fort Beaufort. I was very pleased to meet her. She was not born when I visited him. May and Iris were here on Saturday afternoon and discussed the forthcoming Golden Wedding. We hope to be there.

Tuesday morning. Rev Ludlow called and has promised to convey us to Spelmanskop on October 22nd. So that is that. We hope it will be a fine day. We had thought of arranging a few days trip into the country. Clifford has very kindly offered to take us but on further consideration and the sudden heat and my not feeling too grand, we have decided to put it off. His mother and May are at East London so he is free. The heat yesterday reached 99 in the shade. We are sorry to hear that Jean was unable to take her exams as she was not well enough. We have suggested that she comes to us for say three months for a complete change. Have not had time to get a reply. I have placed my order for Xmas cards. Hope to get delivery in November.

Dot entertained Mrs Gordon Amm to morning tea and she slept at Dot's for the first time in

her life. She is going to live in East London now. Her husband died last year. Baby Joan was very scared of the big animals at the Pretoria Zoo when they took her there on the last visit. Hope she had a happy birthday on Sunday.

We have changed the position of the dressing table in our bedroom. It now stands near the bay window opposite the washstand and has a much better light than before. `

The Ludlows have their married daughter, husband and five grandchildren staying at the parsonage for a few weeks. The youngest is only two months old. Evelyn writes that although the veldt is so dry, her garden is coming on nicely. They are needing rain like everyone else. We must not forget that Douglas and Grace have their birthdays early next month. I do not think of any more news so will ring off as Douglas often says.

Lots of love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday October 2nd, 1946

My dear All,

Many happy returns of the day to Grace today and to Douglas on 4th and Kingsley on 12th. May all have everything that is good for them on their respective anniversaries. I have already written personal letters to each except Kingsley but there is still time for that.

The news of the week from Douglas (received today, Monday) is that the drought is still serious and that unless rain falls very soon, he will have to reduce some of his stock so as to save grazing. Arthur and Rex are both buying stock and I suppose they will be occupying one or other of Douglas' farms. By the way, I notice in the Stellander to hand this morning the official notice of Arthur's engagement. I thought the young lady was Emily Miles but according to the paper she is Mills. Perhaps it is a typographical error? We are hoping that Lynne and Emily may be able to get over for the long weekend. Joe says he hopes to come. We are glad to hear that Evelyn is keeping fit. No doubt her garden is suffering owing to the drought. A postcard from Grace also this morning reports Ted as "full of beans" and Jean better and back at school and we are not to worry about her. We had suggested that she might come to us for a while. Mary reports that Aunt Eliza seems to be getting stronger and able to get about the house easier as the weather is getting warmer. There is talk of her paying us another visit during the weekend. I hope it comes off.

Tomorrow (Tuesday) a Mr Pilling, a buyer of antiques who advertised in the Midland News is coming to see me. I answered his advertisement. I do not expect anything will transpire but I offered some old books and Dr Holub's books and pictures. Aunt Eliza suggested my writing to him but she does not want to see him this time. I thought that he might get a good haul from her stock in Market Street.

Dot wrote last week – we only got her letter on Thursday – saying that Alan and some other boys were in quarantine owing to an outbreak of diphtheria. If no further cases occurred, he would only be in for about eight days. It would hard lines if he misses the forthcoming holidays. I wonder if either of them witnessed the Currie Cup match on Saturday afternoon in Pretoria. I listened in to the last half hour of play. It must have been an exciting game. The Wisteria has been a wonderful sight. The flowers are about finished and the leaves are coming out in abundance. The vines and figs are showing up well too and flag lilies, and snapdragons have been a sight. The lily on the front stoep that belongs to Olive has flowered again and is one of the most wonderful flowers I have ever seen. I cannot think of its name but am told it grows wild in some parts of the country.

We have had some remarkable changes in weather during the month. The highest maximum has been 99 and the lowest 60. The minimum temperature has fluctuated from 27 to 56. I do not know if these changes, some of them very rapid, has affected my health but practically for the whole month I have been troubled with a running at the nose, just like a leaky tap. When I am in bed or lying down, it does not trouble me but as soon as I am up and moving about, it is just a constant bother. Talk about a baby having the sniffles, I certainly have it. I have started again taking DCL tablets today in the hope that may stop it. I have also been troubled with sciatica and lumbago at times but never sufficient to lay up for it. As the warmer weather comes to stay, it may improve, although we have had some very hot days. Mom keeps fairly well but suffers a good deal from backache when she does gardening or water-leading. I wish she would give it up. We have not had a boy for over a week now and when we had one, he was more bother than he was worth. The maid still comes so late, nearly half past eight this (Monday) morning. Mrs Mayhew still is with us and comes down about 10 or 10.30 and stays to dinner, though not always on Sundays. There has never been a cross word or any trouble that I know of. Vincent Crosbie comes in on Friday evenings as a rule. His fiancé is due to arrive on Wednesday morning, 9.30. She will sleep here and have her meals next door.

I forget if I have told you that Ted has been to Durban to see his Mother who has been ill. The latest report is that she is getting better. There is a lot of sickness about, coughs, etc. Still we have much to be thankful for. I am sorry to hear that the President of the Conference, who was here a few months ago, is ill in Bloemfontein with double pneumonia and will not be able to attend the

Conference which meets in East London this month.

The sudden death of Rev McGaher whilst conducting a Sunday School anniversary service in Port Elizabeth recently will make it difficult to fill his place. There will not be any change of minister here this year.

Tuesday morning. It was very cold last evening, we had a fire in the lounge and a hot water bottle when we went to bed.

I see Queenstown bowlers are coming over on Monday. I tried to get through to Lynne but after waiting at the phone for nearly an hour, gave it up and will try again this a.m. Joyce's baby is to be named Patrick Dudley. Vincent came in last evening. He made cocoa for us. No more for today. Aunt Jessie phoned that she is coming in as it is Stock Fair. Hope you are all well.

7.45, maid just arrived. The earliest she has been for a long time. Breakfast is ready.

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday October 9th, 1946

My dear All,

It is really October 7th and it is a Bank Holiday. I am alone in the house as after Joe and Merle left for Uitenhage, Mrs Saunders and Clifford called with the car and offered a seat to Fish River to see Aunt Jessie who has been ill in bed with a touch of pneumonia since last week. I expect Mom back shortly as the weather looks promising for rain. It is now 5.30 pm. The Council workmen are fixing up – or rather down – the water meter for this property in connection with the forthcoming sanitary scheme. It will probably be another nine months or more before the scheme is operating.

I must go back a bit with news. Joe wrote saying he and Merle were coming for the weekend. They arrived Saturday morning, the train was about an hour late. Am very glad to say Joe is looking very much better than we have seen him for a very long time. He is certainly much more his old jolly self and we hope he keeps it up. He is very happy in the job he has to do now. No manual labour but supervising work. There is a good deal of work attached to it, the getting of the proper blue prints of the various jobs and tool details therewith. Merle too is looking well but not fat. She is so fond of helping one and another and is always busy. She is very sweet and affectionate. She has been amusing herself in trimming – by a machine I have – old Xmas cards which will do for the younger generation to send to their friends. There are some very beautiful cards amongst them. Anyone wanting some, apply to me whilst I still have some to give away.

Well, the event of the week, if not of the year, was that Aunt Eliza had been looking forward to paying us a visit in state on bank holiday as her boy, Alfred, has a day off then and can wheel her down in her chair. However, as Joe had to return home to be in time to start work by 7 am on Tuesday, he decided to return by this (Monday's) train. Clifford called to see Joe on Sunday afternoon so motored Joe up to bring her down. Aunt agreed to coming down in Clifford's car instead of in her chair. Joe and Cliff, with Mary's assistance, got her into the car without much difficulty and she arrived in state and walked, with the assistance of Joe and Clifford round to the back of the house and during the afternoon, inspected all the rooms and expressed herself pleased with all she had seen. She said she had never sat in such a comfortable chair as the one I use that Uncle used to sit in and which Aunt Jessie gave me and I had repaired. So I have sent the chair up this morning "on loan" for the time-being. Joe and Mom and Mary lifted her down the front steps – only two of them – and she did not experience any difficulty in getting into the car for the homeward journey. I don't think anyone ever expected she would get in a car again. Now that she has managed it so easily, I hope she will do it again. It was a perfect afternoon and we all enjoyed it. Of course Auntie would not accept any refreshment. We had hoped that Merle would stay with us for the rest of the holidays, returning on Saturday, Joe promising to meet her at Zwartkops Station. Everything was so arranged but at the last moment, Mom was afraid that Merle might get homesick so off she went with her Daddy. We are very sorry the visit has been so short but it is possible all the family may come at Xmas (except Roy who is expecting to go to Cape Town for the long holidays). Joe has tried to book sleeping accommodation. They are due home about six this (Monday) evening.

Another item of news is that I have sold the dining room table for £25. A Port Elizabeth firm advertised for "antique" furniture but he came and looked at it and made me the offer. We have another expanding table in the workroom which we shall bring into the dining room. Joe has also bought the cupboard that I kept the pianola record in, he says it will do nicely for Merle.

Vincent Crosbie's young lady arrived on Wednesday morning last. They are both spending the weekend with his Aunts at Port Elizabeth and will be back tomorrow a.m. She works at the dairy in Vryburg and kindly bought us a pound of their butter. She is a bright girl and seems to be enjoying her holiday. She has her meals with him at the boarding house next door.

Douglas phoned us up from Kimberley last Thursday. He tried to get us the evening before but atmospherics were so bad, he gave it up. They were all well, children home for the holidays. It is Kingsley's birthday this week. They are needing rain badly and I hope they have had more than

we had, which was very acceptable 43 points. Harold was expected home for the weekend. Jean is well again and they have had some rain too. Grace had letters from all the brothers and sisters but rain was the most acceptable I guess. She loves her garden.

Dot has sent a few loofer seeds to try at the top of the garden. Dot was busy with a bazaar for church funds when she wrote. Hope they did well.

Mrs Mayhew has not turned up all day. I don't know why, perhaps being a holiday she thought she was not wanted. She did not come to dinner on Sunday either. Hope there is nothing wrong. I see my sheet is about full so must stop.

4.30 Mom is not back. Evidently there has not been any rain. Must do some watering at five p.m. My nose is still leaking but have taken some bicarbonate of soda and that has relieved it somewhat. It is alright at night.

Lots of love to all,
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday October 16th, 1946

My dear All,

(Monday morning). The best news is that we have had a beautiful rain over the weekend. It started on Saturday afternoon. Mom and I went for a walk round the block to the river to see if there was any water in the river but were too previous. We saw rain coming on so got home in time to avoid getting wet. It only amounted to 18 points but was a foretaste of more to follow. Sunday morning it was threatening and in the afternoon it came down properly, measuring 46 points this morning. It has all soaked into the ground. Unfortunately some hail accompanied it but there was not much wind at the time. The roses seem to have suffered more than the vines. Clifford came down later and told us that his car was in the street at the time and some of the hail had sharp points and punctured the tent so he has got to get it mended. The stones we had were the size of marbles. No windows were damaged. We may get some more today. Mary was here in the afternoon.

Miss Metcalf called on Saturday afternoon and says she is alone in that big house at night and wants to come and sleep here again. A Major and Mrs Morton have been in the house for about two months whilst she has been away, they are now at the Premier so she may be along some evenings. I expect she will be away again soon. She stayed and had supper with us on Saturday as it was raining. Neither of us went to service last evening as it was so wet and in addition, my voice was leaving me. This morning it has quite gone. It is quite a long time since this happened. My leaky nose has been a little better but has not dried up yet.

Aunt Emmie has made some very interesting extracts from "Jim's Journal". Joe read them when here over last weekend. So far I have typed six copies of six pages (same size as this sheet) and there are about four more sheets to do. Miss Ralls did one and a half and Mary did some whilst I read it to her. It is very slow work doing it alone.

Blodwen and family want to get on to a farm for a fortnight during the Xmas holidays. Am trying to get the accommodation they require. Roy will be going to Cape Town, probably if an escort can be found for him. They are concerned at the action of a neighbour who has sold his house near them to a Chinaman and they are not nice neighbours. There is a family of six children and they and other European neighbours do not know what to do about it. Trevor will have to have his tonsils removed next month probably. Merle wrote a nice letter after her return home. I am sorry she did not stay longer.

Mom went to her W.A. meeting last Tuesday but the next day she was very giddy but got over it in a day or two. Mrs Ludlow sent her a beautiful bunch of poppies.

We have not heard how Douglas spent his birthday. Rain has fallen in Vryburg and Kroonstad, much to their rejoicing. We were very sorry that Lynne could not manage to get across for the weekend and she also lost the opportunity of playing in some match as she was feeling pretty sure she would not be in Queenstown. Better luck another time. It was a brainwave on the part of Joe, Clifford and Mary to arrange to bring Aunt Eliza here last Sunday afternoon by car. She thoroughly enjoyed the outing. They drove her all over the town, including the new extension etc. Joe said he had never been as far as the bottom of Bree Street. The next day, her boy, Alfred, took her in her chair to see some of her friends. Altogether she had a wonderful time.

I phone every morning and sometimes in the evening as well, to find out how Aunt Jessie is getting on. The news this a.m. was that she had had rather a better night. Rheumatism has been the greatest trouble. She has been able to sit up for half an hour or so some days. Enid does night duty and Nancy, Neville's wife, does day duty. There are others who are ready on hand if needed. There is no chance of her attending the Golden Wedding at Spelmanskop next Sunday. We are still looking to go with Rev and Mrs Ludlow and return the same day.

Grace says Harold came down for the long weekend. He is only! 6ft 4 inches now. I wonder when he is going to stop. He returned to Johannesburg on Sunday. Rain stopped them having a picnic on Bank Holiday. They seem very pleased with the new candidate for the ministry there. I think he is a RAF man from Overseas. Grace misses her piano but for all that, they managed very well with their singsong as all their voices blended very well apparently. Her garden

seems to be flourishing after the rains they have had.

Dot says they had a quiet weekend holiday at home. The boys were home for school holidays and they all enjoyed doing odd jobs about the house. Reg had been to some hospital conference and the Matron also went but took ill on the way. Jean has a toy telephone which amuses her greatly. Did I tell you I have sold the dining room table for £25. It went to Port Elizabeth last week. Joe has bought the teak cabinet in which I kept the pianola records.

11 a.m. Telegram just to hand from Grace congratulating us on passing our 55th anniversary and informing us that Ted's mother died yesterday. She has been living in Harrismith for some while. Dot's church bazaar realised close on £250. They do know how to raise money there.

I have not burdened you with more than one sheet for a long while but I thought the following particulars regarding longevity of the Collett family may be worth keeping. As you know, there are still ten out of a family of twelve still living. By the end of September 1946 -

Aunt Lettie	was	90 years and	1 month,	was married for	41 years
Aunt Jessie	"	86	" 4 months,		
Mother	"	84	" 8 "	"	55 years
Aunt Rosa	"	81	" 7 "	"	45 "
Uncle Owen	"	79	" 6 "	"	52 "
Aunt Agnes	"	77	" 9 "	"	46 "
Uncle Bertie	"	75	" 4 "	"	50 "
Uncle Gervase	"	72	" 5 "	"	33 "
Uncle Norman	"	69	" 5 "	"	30 "
Uncle Dudley	"	<u>68</u>	" 2 "	"	26 "
		<u>785</u>	" 7 "		
Average		78 years and	5 months		

Uncle Herbert died when he was 79 years and 4 months

Uncle Walter died at the age of 88 years and 2 months. He was married for 50 years and 5 months.

I am pretty sure that this is a world record.

Tuesday morning. During yesterday afternoon we had calls from Mary, Miss Loscombe and Miss de Villiers who brought greetings and good wishes. I do not think they all knew the reason as we had not made the event public (except that Mary of course knew). We also had telegrams from Douglas and Evelyn and Reg and Dot and family. It was all very kind of them all and we greatly appreciate it. I went to bed very early as my voice had practically gone. Am glad to say it is a little stronger this morning. I took some of my old medicine left over from the last year's illness.

Mary and I did another foolscap sheet of Aunt Emmie's notes from "Jim's Journal". There will be about ten pages by the time it is finished. I am doing six copies, five will go to Aunt Emmie and one I shall send round for the family to read. I am sure you will find it very interesting. Miss Ralls did the first page.

You will be sorry to hear that my friend, Mr Stock, is far from well, he and his wife are going to Port Elizabeth this week to undergo a month's electrical treatment. He is feeling anxious about himself. He has recently been to specialists in Johannesburg without any satisfactory result. I hear there is to be a big sale of his sister-in-law's furniture etc in November. The estate was valued at over £46,000. The family willed the property in Bree Street to the local hospital board for a convalescent home but I doubt if it will ever be used for that purpose as it is too far from the management of the present board. A new hospital is contemplated near Rocklands towards the first Krantz.

Miss Ralls and Vincent Crosbie seems to be enjoying themselves. We leave the front door open (unlocked) in the evenings and they come in and out as they please. I understand they are looking to get married about Easter next.

I must remind you of Ruth's birthday on 20th. Her address is 4 Worcester Street, Grahamstown. I noticed the engagement announced in last Midland News of Jeffrey Butler to Miss de la Haarp. They are both at Rhodes University at present.

Mrs Mayhew was not well on Sunday and Monday but has come this morning. It is

awkward her not sleeping in. Mom is so deaf and now with my voice gone, it is awkward with the phone but my voice is certainly a bit stronger this morning. Every morning I phone to Fish River to enquire how Aunt Jessie is. She did not have a good night last night, the rheumatism is causing her a lot of pain. She is still confined to her bed most of the time.

A letter from Aunt Rosa this morning. She has spent four months with her son in Durban and is glad to get home again. She does not say if she will be at Uncle Bertie's Golden Wedding on Sunday. Aunt Jessie of course won't be able to go. An interesting letter from Miss Rose Ensor, New South Wales, says they are experiencing a very severe drought there. Thousands of sheep are being lost. In some parts of Australia the snow is eighty feet deep and as it thaws the rivers overflow their banks. I must not stop for more. I hope I have not wearied you.

Lots of love to each and all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday October 23rd, 1946

My dear All,

I feel that I must begin early this week as the Golden Wedding yesterday will be of interest to you all, I expect. However I must try to do it justice, if I can. It is just 9.30 Monday morning. Rev Ludlow has just called for the Church money for the Bank so I am free to write until the next interruption occurs. Let me say that no formal invitations were issued, everything was quite informal, everyone was welcome and everything passed off most satisfactorily. Mr Ludlow called for Alison, Mom and I punctually at 9 and we arrived at Spelmanskop exactly at 10 a.m. A few cars passed us on the way out. By 10.30, tea was served and tongues were let loose. The large lounge was used as a reception room with chairs all round and the piano in one corner and a table with wedding cake and presents in another corner. They had the advantage of the use of Sonny's furniture as well as their own and everything looked very nice. There were plenty of seats on the stoep and small tables and chairs were dotted about on the lawn under the shade of a beautiful acacia tree. A new house is being built near the garden as Sonny has sold his farm and has come to manage the old home. Of course, May and Iris are at home and Dulcie and family are often out there. Well I cannot enumerate all who were present but we were pleased to see Harry Collett and his brother, Ted, from Middelburg there. Each of Uncle Bertie's brothers and sisters' families were represented except Aunt Rosa and Uncle Owen. None of their children were there. Mary represented Aunt Letty, George Collett represented Uncle Walter's family. Aunt Jessie, of course could not be there. Aunt Agnes and Enid stayed with Aunt Jessie. Uncle Jack was present and Winnie and her little girl. Some of Uncle Bertie's family are in South West Africa and some of the grandchildren are away at school. Uncle Gervase and Rouena, Hope and two girls and Hugo, who are staying with Uncle Gervase, Norman and Gladys and as many as possible of their family and of course, Uncle Dudley and Aunt Kate and Joan and her husband. There were over sixty all told. We all assembled in the lounge for service at 11. Books had been brought from Fish River and town. Rev Ludlow gave a very fine address from Psalm 143, v.5 "I remember the days of old". It was very appropriate and touching. Some were moved to tears. It was also applicable to us as we had just passed our 55th Anniversary. The collection amounted to £8.17.6d. The hymns were 607, 813, 76, 873. One of the Hugo girls sang the song Blodwen sang at our Golden Wedding "I'll walk beside you" very sweetly. I must return the music which Blodwen lent for the occasion. We sat down to dinner in relays, the old people first and then three or more relays. Social chat followed on the lawn. Mom and I had a little nap in one of the spare rooms. I must not attempt to describe the dinner. It was all cold except potatoes. Everything was delicious and as I remarked before leaving, it reflected most creditably on May, Iris and Sonny's wife. Mr Lidbetter was engaged to take some photos of the immediate family. He took a lot of time in arranging them. Hope they turn out a success.

During last week I received a letter from Mom's cousin, Rose Ensor. The family used to farm in this district years ago. Uncle James and Uncle Norman visited them when they went to Australia many years ago. Harry and Ted Collett also are related and they were most interested in reading the letter. They had left South Africa before I arrived so I have never met them but they are evidently a very fine family. I said a few words at the close of the proceedings and as Mr Ludlow had another service to take and Alison wanted to get back as soon as possible, we were the first to leave. We arrived home at 4.30. The day was the hottest we have had this season, 95 in the shade.

Of course a good deal more could be said but I think (or hope) I have said enough to satisfy your curiosity as to how the day passed off. I must also write to the Ensors as they will be interested. Mom was too tired to go to service in the evening.

I have phoned this morning to hear how Aunt Jessie is. Nancy, who takes day duty, says she is getting better but later on may need a trained nurse. The rheumatic pains are the most trouble at present. I should have mentioned that Clifford Saunders took his mother, two sisters and Mary out in his car. Aunt Eliza was quite content to be left alone for the time.

Mrs Mayhew is 50 today. We are not having any celebration.

On Saturday I commenced addressing the envelopes for my Xmas cards. I shall thus be able to take my time over the job.

On Friday I finished typing the extracts from my brother Jim's journal which Aunt Emmie has compiled from his three bound volumes. I will post my copy to Grace with this week's dear all and she must send it to Dot and Dot to Douglas. Joe read it, when here, in the rough (before I typed it) and said he was very interested in it. I hope you will please take care of it as it has been a pretty big job typing it. By the by, where is the letter I sent round from Dr Brodziak some weeks ago? It has evidently got hung up somewhere as it has not reached me again and I have not replied to it. It is nearly dinnertime. I have just brought in the stoep chairs as it looks as though we are going to get a storm. I hope it comes. Perhaps I will try to do another sheet later on. I have made heaps of mistakes in this one this morning.

Tuesday morning. The best news this morning is that since I wrote yesterday, we have had 113 points of rain up to 7 this morning. More may fall between now and 8.30 which is the official time for recording for the previous 24 hours. This rain will be of great value to farmers in the district. We noticed in going to Spelmanskop that the veldt needed rain badly. Fruit trees and crops generally should greatly benefit.

Uncle Bertie wanted to know the following particulars regarding his Father and I may as well pass it on to you. He was born 27/11/1826, was married 19/7/1854 at the age of 28, his Golden Wedding was celebrated at Grass Ridge on 19/7/1904 at the age of 78 and he died on 10/8/1908 aged 82.

Grace says Ted's mother was 83 when she died. I notice in my old birthday book in Ted's writing "January 9th I M Irons with the year '84". They have a good deal of rain but are afraid of hailstorms as their fruit trees are loaded. Baby Charles has been troubled with tonsils and spent three days in bed.

Aunt Rosa has spent four months in Durban and is back home at Dwaal. She had not heard of Aunt Jessie's illness. She did not come down for Uncle Bertie's Golden Wedding. In fact no one was there from that branch of the family or from Uncle Owen's.

On 15th, Evelyn wrote that Douglas was not well, tummy trouble and Dr was treating him. No later news yet. Had met Aunt Kate and Thera and family at Maude and Mike's. All well. Garden at Grass Ridge must be a sight by Evelyn's description. I wonder if I shall ever see it. It was not laid out when we were last there.

Last week we received a long letter from Rose Ensor, Australia. I think I have referred to it before but some of the items of news may interest you. Here they are: "Last January I went for a long holiday to Queensland. I came home in the middle of May after visiting all my relations up there. Queensland is very dry. We are experiencing a bad drought in most parts of New South Wales. Most of the farmers have not sown their wheat yet. In the north west of this State, millions of sheep and thousands of cattle are starving. In the mountainous parts in the south there have been terrible snow storms. They say some of the valleys have as much as 80 feet of snow banked up and people are dreading the time when the snow thaws and floods all the rivers running down from there. We in our little home are very comfortable and are able to get nearly all we wish for. I am very thankful that all your four grandsons returned safely from the war. I wonder how many Colletts did not return (*I have not heard of any not returning. Dad*)."

Dot says she has been down to see us four times since the Golden Wedding. I did not think it was so often but not too often for us. She is making no plans for Xmas except to stay at home this year for a change. I am trying to get Joe and family fixed up on a farm but so far without success. I am now trying to get Wilkie of the Steynsberg district to take them. Norman weighs 123 lbs and Alan only 81. The boys have made a rocking horse for baby Joan during the last school holidays, much to her delight.

Aunt Jessie from what we hear is making some progress. The last was she was sitting up reading. Has been out a little. Aunt Agnes and Enid stayed with her on Sunday so that the others could go to the Golden Wedding. Last week I lost my voice for a few days. My leaky nose still gives trouble but it might be worse.

The following is the list of wedding anniversaries as supplied by The Wanderer in the Cape Argus. "First is called the cotton, 2nd paper, 3rd leather, 4th fruit and flowers, 5th wooden, 6th sugar, 7th woollen, 10th tin, 12th silk and fine linen, 15th crystal, 20th china, 25th silver, 30th pearl, 40th ruby, 50th Golden, 60th Diamond." Now you know what to look forward to.

Mrs Peart of Vryburg passed through to Port Elizabeth last night. Vincent and Miss Ralls went over to see her. We did not go but sent greetings to her.

Douglas says he has been feeding a lorry load of green barley every day since their return from Queenstown to their cattle. They are now feeding dry stuff as all the green is finished.

Later. Spelmanskop has had over two inches of rain. We are likely to have more as the weather is still threatening.

Last week we had such a nice letter from Jean. Amongst other things she asks if I have any silver leaves from Cape Town. I did have a few but cannot find any now. Perhaps Aunt Emmie may be able to send me a few. They are very pleased with the new young minister who has come from England as a candidate for the ministry. He plays tennis at the Plot and is good with young people. Vryburg is having a new minister in November too.

Aunt Gladys Norman says there is a marked improvement in Aunt Jessie. She can now help herself and is taking more interest in things, reads the paper etc. I must stop now as I see the sheet is about full. No letters from the family today so hope for a good post tomorrow.

Lots of love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday October 30th, 1946

My dear All,

You will be glad to know that Aunt Jessie was so far better on Sunday afternoon when I phoned that she was able to be in the dining room reading. She did not come to the phone but Mr Barnes said Enid was having an easier time on night duty. Of course she is not able to get about yet but she is freer from pain and now we hope it won't be long before she will be able to come to town. We are all concerned about her staying at Saltpansdrift without any other woman except servants about the place. But of course there are a number of nieces, some of them trained nurses, close at hand, besides sisters and sisters-in-law nearby. Aunt Kate Dudley has often asked her to come and live at Grass Ridge where she could have her old room and do just what she liked. This does not appeal to her. She, like most old people, likes to retain her independence. However we must wait and see.

I am also glad to say that my leaking nose is today (Monday) behaving much better though not back to normal. Miss Ralls, who is leaving tonight, has just made me a present of four Irish linen handkerchiefs so perhaps there will be a decided improvement, I hope so. The slightest change in weather conditions seems to affect it. Mom has also received a present from Miss Ralls but I will not mention it by name. She has not given us any trouble, has been out most evenings, is a great smoker and has had a lazy time.

Denis Mahon took the morning service here yesterday and told us after Church that his brother, who married Uncle Owen's daughter, Thera, has been to Vryburg visiting Eric, Freda and Maude and Mike found on their return to Johannesburg that their home had been burgled to such an extent that they had to borrow some clothing and bedding. He says it has been the most expensive holiday they have ever had. Wonder if the police will ever be able to trace any of the things.

Mrs Mayhew was away for a day last week sick and does not come to dinner on Sundays. Miss Metcalf asked us two to dinner with her for Sunday. She has been sleeping here the last few nights and will continue doing so for some time until she takes her next jaunt. She finds it very lonely in that big house and besides, it is not right for her to be alone at night, no servants sleep in.

We had a very nice post last week, letters from each home. Douglas was not up to concert pitch but subsequent letters make no reference to his health. They had had a little rain but hoped for more. Evelyn was busy with her gardening which gives her much pleasure. We have never seen it, but still hope to do so some day. Grace, too, is in love with her garden. Kroonstad had good rains and I am glad for her to be rewarded by getting a lot of pleasure out of it. Ted went to Durban to his mother's funeral. All his brothers were present. He only had about twelve hours there. His mother was 82. Grace has two native boys busy ploughing with four donkeys and a single plough, which must be rather slow work but the results may be satisfactory, especially if they get more rain. The young man who is a candidate for the ministry is very popular and doing good work. I see their regular minister is to be the President of the Conference next year.

Tuesday morning. Miss Ralls left last night for Vryburg. She seems to have enjoyed her holiday. Miss Bessie Metcalf has been sleeping here since last Thursday. We generally have some refreshment before retiring and we give her early coffee in the morning. Last week there was an A.C.V.V. Congress here and calling at the Post Office to see the Supervisor of the telephone exchange on the cause of so much delay in attending to telephone calls. Miss van de Reit of Vryburg recognised my voice. Her brother used to work for me. Her old father who was practically stone deaf, is still living. We were pleased to meet. The world is very small. The Supervisor at the exchange comes from Potgietersrus but was away on holiday when Dot was down. Dot said in her last they had had no rain to shout about. Hope they have had more by now. My voice has returned and is practically back to normal. I am dosing myself with glucose again. Leslie Hudson and family are going to the Strand for December and may return via Port Elizabeth and Cradock. We shall be so glad to see them. Joe and Blodwen do not want to go further north than Cradock for their holiday. Am trying to see if they can be fixed up at the Warm Baths. The lessee at the Baths is building some rondavels for letting purposes. In any case, they can come to us if no

other plan can be found. I am getting on nicely with the addressing of my Xmas cards. They will be ready in plenty of time this year.

Later. The Cradock Methodist News was delivered about ten this a.m. so Mom has helped in the folding of same and I have folded and wrapped 250 for post first thing in the morning. Of course, I had the wrappers addressed beforehand. A dassie has been about the front garden all the morning and sometimes comes into the lounge. He is very quick so have to keep all doors and windows shut.

No post this morning except one from Mr Stock from Walmer. He does not appear to be improving. Quarterly meeting this evening. No time for more.

Lots of love to all,

Don't forget Blodwen's birthday on 4th,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday November 6th, 1946

My dear All,

Monday afternoon. Blodwen's birthday. I hope it is not quite as hot in Uitenhage as it is here, although from all accounts, that is much hotter than Cradock. It has been over 90 in the shade the last few days. Mom says it is too hot for her to go to the Women's meeting this afternoon. She was not well all day Sunday. On Saturday at dinner time she came over giddy and had to leave the table. She had a dose of salvolaty etc but has not felt up to much since.

On Saturday a phone message came from Lynne and about 5.40, she and her friend, McDougall, arrived by car. Their visit was like the proverbial visit of the angels – short and sweet. They left again at 4.10 p.m. Sunday. We were very pleased to see them and made the most of the time. Mr McDougall knew a war friend, Stephenson, at the Bank and stayed with him most of the few hours they were here. Saturday evening, Mary came along and later Miss Metcalf came to sleep as usual. Vincent Crosbie also spent the evening with us. Lynne is looking well but thinner than usual. Very bright and full of fun as usual and we were very pleased to see her. She accompanied me to morning service and Uncle Gervase took her up afterwards to see Aunt Eliza and then home to dinner. He (Mr McDougall) came to afternoon tea. He went with his friend to the Warm Baths in the morning so we really did not see much of him. We were sorry to hear that she had her watch and ring stolen from her room in Queenstown recently. Talking of burglaries, I think I mentioned last week the experience Thera and her husband had when they got home from Vryburg and found the house had been robbed. They reckon about £400 worth of stuff has gone.

Mrs George Wilkie has written offering to take Joe and family for their holiday free of charge but asks that they bring some extra sugar and soap. We have not heard yet if they will accept the offer. I hope they do. Silkworms are all the rage in Uitenhage, the children have all got them in all stages about the house. I wonder what they will do with them if they go away. At the Warm Bath, the charge for guests is only £4/4/- per week for children and over ten for adults. So it would work out pretty expensive. Grace says they have had nice rains. She has been appointed Secretary to the Church Quarterly meeting, the first lady they have ever had in that position. Jean is evidently studying too hard for her exams. I suggest they send her to Rocklands as a boarder for next year when she looks to take her matric. Baby Charles got 100% in his scripture exam recently. Keep it up Charles. Ted writes that he has finished ploughing and planting. Farmers are expecting a big wheat crop. He says his Mother was quite blind before her death. She was able to read her Brail Bible but was very tired and seemed ready to answer the call. David is hoping to go to Rhodes University next year. They would like to get Harold transferred to Kroonstad but have not been able to manage it.

Tuesday morning. We had a boy for part of two days last week but it was not a success, he only wanted 4/- a day. Now we have one who came yesterday at 14/- per week plus his food. He came at 7 am, the first time for years I think one has come so early. The man who has had our garage for some months has now bought a house so has removed his furniture. The new Stationmaster wants to hire it but I am waiting to know if Joe and family are coming to us for Xmas as we can make use of the garage in that case. Aunt Jessie may be coming in on Friday. Am glad to say she is much better but needs someone to be with her. She wants to see Dr again. Nancy will probably stay the night with her in either the spare room or Pam's room. Miss Metcalf is going away again shortly.

I have finished addressing all my Xmas card envelopes. The Overseas ones will go by the next mail and the South African ones about the middle of December. Xmas will soon be here now. Lynne told me that the new owner of Rockcliff, East London, has married Arthur's fiancée's sister. How I should love to be at the sea again. Mr and Mrs Stock are still at Humewood. He does not seem to be getting better. I think he will be home soon.

Mrs Saunders and Clifford were here yesterday afternoon. Mrs Saunders went to the W.A. Meeting and called for Mom but she did not want to go. Clifford has been offered the job of taking care of the new swimming bath – selling the tickets from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. He is going to try it and

see how he likes it but doubt if he will stick it for long. He would rather be on a farm.

Douglas says their new minister arrives after the 10th. Has bought a new motorcar and that will involve the Church in a pretty heavy debt. The funny thing about the Vryburg congregation is that almost all the members and supporters reside in the country, very few in the town itself.

I think each branch of the family has some important office in the various churches. Douglas is Chairman of the Congregational Church, Grace is Secretary to the Methodist Church in Kroonstad, Joe is Society Steward in Uitenhage and Dot is or has been President of the W.A. in Potgietersrus, all, including the wives and husbands and children are interested in church work.

My sheet is nearly full and I do not feel equal to tackling a second page so will stop.

Lots of love to each and all as though named.

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday November 13th, 1946

My dear All,

The past week has been a trying one as Mom has been in bed practically all the time. The adhesive plaster Dr put on last Monday is still in its place and I am glad to say the pain in the affected part has lessened though not entirely gone. She has been a good patient and the rest has no doubt done her good. She is still shaky, has not been out anywhere but quite a number of friends have been to see her. Dr has not been again, he could not find anything really wrong. Mom thinks a change might do us both good and suggests that we each go in different directions. I do not know how this would work and it will need further consideration. The weather is getting increasingly hot and it would be difficult to decide on a cooler spot unless it were at the coast. Besides that, accommodation costs, judging by enquiries we have made for Joe and family, are tremendously high. If we did go separately, I guess each would be anxious and worrying how the other was getting on.

Mrs Mayhew told us at dinnertime today (Monday) that she is leaving at the end of the month and will be returning to Port Elizabeth early in the New Year. I have been expecting something of this sort to happen, although nothing has been said about it. This will open fresh problems as to our plans for the future as regards cooking, meals etc. We could, no doubt, make a plan to send for our dinners from the Premier as before. We must wait and see.

I think I have already told you that Joe and family had arranged to go to a farm rest house from December 16th, near Kendrew in the Graaff Reinet district, about 20 miles south of Graaff Reinet. They may also come to us for four days in the New Year but that is not definite. I do not know if they would come direct here from Kendrew, via Graaff Reinet and Rosmead or if they would go home to Uitenhage first. There is plenty of time to decide such details. The charges at the guest farm are much more reasonable than other places we have tried. £2/10/- a week for adults as against £4/4/-.

Grace says she has been very interested in reading the typed extracts from Uncle Jim's journal. I think it is now in Dot's hands. She reports the death of old Mrs Penny whom we knew of when in Vryburg and also the death of a Mrs Mullins, formerly of Cradock.

I have finished addressing all the envelopes for Xmas cards but shall not post yet a while. The Overseas ones went last week.

On Friday, Nancy phoned that Aunt Jessie wanted to come in the next day but as Mom was still laid up, we put them off till tomorrow (Tuesday) when we hope to be able to fix her up. It will be necessary for someone to sleep in her room in case of need. I am going up town presently to see what plan can be made. Aunt Kate (Owen) arrived in town Sunday morning or Saturday evening at Gervase's. I met her at the Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph in the afternoon. We are expecting her along this evening. She goes on to Uitenhage on Tuesday or Wednesday. Maude Meyers did not come with her on account of the serious drought in the Vryburg district.

Dot reports lots of changes in the way of new shops etc. We shan't know the place if ever I see it again. They are experiencing excessive heat there. We have had it over 90 several times. Mrs Haldane, who called to see us, must have a lovely home about 25 miles from Dot. She spent a day there recently, but such a road to get there.

Tuesday morning. For months past the Railways and the Municipality have been doing a lot of blasting and now they start their work before five a.m. which disturbs our early morning sleep. Not mine so much as Mom's as I am generally awake early. However it is quite light at 5 so I often get up quite early. Mom gets up after she has had her breakfast. The maid is coming a little earlier now but not early enough to get the breakfast etc. Miss Metcalf is leaving on Thursday morning by train so will not sleep here again until she returns from Basutoland about the end of the month. We hope to see Mary sometime today as it is her birthday. Kate Owen may also come down. Yesterday was the hottest day, 99 in the shade. There is a cool breeze this morning so evidently there has been some rain down country. Wish we could get some of it. Last week we were able to get a dozen 1 pound bottles of honey from Frank Short. We are very glad of it. Butter is still in

very short supply. Lynne kindly brought us a lb of Emily Miles which is very good quality.

Later. Neville and Nancy brought Aunt Jessie in about 10 this morning. She is very thin and weak and will see Dr Scholtz some time today. He will come here to see her. Nancy will stay for a day or so. They talk of returning next Friday but that will depend on what the Dr says. They are very dry on the farm. I fancy Aunt Kate Owen must have gone on to Uitenhage. We saw her for a minute or two on Sunday afternoon. Mom is up and about today – after breakfast in bed. Hope she does not get over done. I don't think she will. Will add a line after dinner.

4.45. Dr has not come yet so I must leave any details for the next edition. My nose has been rather troublesome again, I don't know why but it might be worse. No more time so will close, with love to all and wondering what the next excitement will be.

Yours lovingly,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday November 20th, 1946

My dear All,

Monday afternoon. Mrs Mayhew has not turned up again today or last Saturday. She complained on Friday of not feeling very well. We have not taken any steps to fill her place and do not think it worthwhile trying. Blodwen suggests that some member of the family should live with us and no doubt that would be the most suitable plan, and she kindly offers to do what she can but we quite realise that it is quite impossible at present at any rate for any one of the family to do so, much as they might be willing to. Each has their own homes and families to look after. We are not stranded or in dire need of help. Mary is fully occupied at Aunt Eliza's and could not possibly look after two establishments nor could we fit in to Market Street, if it were suggested or thought desirable nor would Aunt Eliza ever think of shifting from there to here, however much it was considered feasible. When we have heard the various comments from members of the family, we shall no doubt fix up for our mid-day meal to be fetched from the Premier as before and get on the same arrangement as before and hope for the best. The garden boy we have had for the past fortnight has not turned up this morning. He has done a lot of cleaning up, chopped wood and done a number of jobs but is far too an expensive hand for our work, 14/- per week plus his food. There is nothing in the garden to warrant the expense. If we could get a boy such as we had when we went to Rockcliff, who did all the housework in the morning and gardening in the afternoon, it might be worth it. Such boys are scarce.

Mom, I am glad to say, is much better but not too strong. Aunt Jessie spent Tuesday and Wednesday nights with us, also Nancy. Wednesday afternoon Dr drew some fluid from her lungs and ordered her to hospital for further observation and treatment. Neville came in on Thursday morning and by 10 a.m. she was safely there. Ernest and Alison kindly took Nancy to the bio on Wednesday night and she was not home till just on 11. We went to bed but stayed awake in case of need. We both got up to help Jessie just before Nancy returned. Am glad to say she is getting on nicely but Dr may have to operate so she is likely to be there for a few days – a week probably or more. We went up to see her Sunday afternoon. She does not like the town water so we keep her supplied from our tanks, using our large thermos flask. She is in the public ward as no private one was available. I also took the opportunity of seeing Aunt Charlotte, who is quite blind, and also Aunt Eliza. Clifford Saunders kindly took us by car. Mr and Mrs West called on us on Saturday afternoon – Saturday is now our public half holiday. They are looking to go away for a few days at Xmas. They have his son and wife and their first grandson with them. We have not seen the baby or its parents yet. They never regret having come to Cradock. Miss Metcalf has gone to Basutoland for a while. Before leaving she kindly presented each of us with nice silk handkerchiefs. Miss Metcalf slept here for about a fortnight.

I don't think I told you of a visit from an uninvited guest. An opposite neighbour has a dassie and it was running about in our front garden causing some excitement amongst servants and children. Eventually it came into the house two or three times. It got behind the piano and we think must have got on top of it as well. At last we managed to chase it out by the drawing room window but it came back again. We have not seen it since.

Another strange thing happened. Our friends, the Campbells, at the Premier have a budgerigar, very tame and talks quite distinctly. It was sitting on Mr Campbell's hand and Mrs Campbell had just gone out. The window was open and the bird flew out. The window was often left open. Mr Campbell saw it fly in the direction of our garden and came to look for it but without success. I was up early the next morning but could find no trace of the bird. He advertised in the Midland News and three days later, the bird was restored having been found feeding with some fowls at a farm at Scanlen, three miles south of the town. The bird's wing had been previously cut so it could not fly too well. Rather wonderful was it not.

Tuesday morning, early on the back stoep. A lovely morning. The fire is lit and breakfast is cooking. The wash-girl will be here soon and the regular work of the day will be in full swing. Mrs Mayhew did not turn up on Sunday or Monday. She was not too well she said.

Douglas writes that the phone has been laid on to the house but not connected up with the exchange yet so of course he cannot use it. Vryburg, so far as telephones are concerned, comes under the Transvaal directory and in the 1945 edition, I see his name and number is recorded as 1311 and yet he has not the use of it. He has promised to ring us up when connected. I see the fee for three minutes conversation between Vryburg and Port Elizabeth is 8/3d and Cradock to Port Elizabeth is 2/6d so the charge for Vryburg to us should be 5/9d and may be worth it in case of an emergency. However, it will be a great convenience when wanted. Some rain has fallen and they are all set ready for ploughing when the rain does come. He has an armoured car, two tractors and three spans of oxen so he evidently intends to get a move on. May he be successful and have a good harvest. He has trucked sixty oxen to Johannesburg for slaughtering. Grass Ridge house, inside and out is being repainted. Some job. Emily Miles is there on a visit at present. Do not know if she will be there for Xmas. Lynne is hoping to get home for the holidays. From the end of this month, Vincent Crosbie tells me there is to be a great addition in the number of trains. Four each day will pass here for the north and also four for the south. I hope to get a new timetable today, not that I am thinking of travelling but it is nice to keep up to date.

Dot reports 82 points of rain recently but much more is wanted. She has been very interested in reading Jim's Journal and has sent it on to the next on the list. She wonders how long he stayed in England. I think it was only a few months on each occasion. His Dr said that South Africa had done such wonders for him that he advised him to return. His companion was his old schoolfellow, Robert Wilkie, but he never returned to the old country. It was his son who offered to have Joe and family for the school holidays as his guest.

Talking of ancient history, Aunt Eliza recently sent me a batch of some old letters I had written in 1894 and later ones about Harold and Douglas when they were quite small. I may send them on as the younger generation may like to see what we thought of them!

Reg, Dot and Mrs Watts have been down to Johannesburg on various items of the moment. When Dot was here, her suitcase was smashed by the taxi driver and her glasses were in the case so she has been working without specs ever since. Now she is having her eyes tested for a new pair. She and Mrs Watts have the nice job of selecting toys and presents for the Sunday School children's Xmas party. Reg has official business with the Government re hospitals etc and an additional (if not the most important and certainly the most attractive) is to see the two boys who are doing so well at school.

Grace says Ted and baby Charles have not been well, coughing etc. She was afraid of croup. Jean was in better form and is studying very hard. The car was also giving trouble. Charles sent us a crayon sketch of an elephant he has done whilst laid up. The colouring was certainly original. A friend of theirs who had left Kroonstad for Port Elizabeth and Grace had given an introduction to us, but he did not call, died in Port Elizabeth a week after he commenced work there. Very sad. Grace writes that she is willing to come here if necessary. David will be home about 14th December and of course holidays are on. We should be very sorry to upset their plans, at the same time it is very good of Grace to offer.

Dinner time. No post for us at all. Tuesdays are generally a poor day for post. More tomorrow. Mrs Mayhew is here now. She has not been well last few days.

No news from Grahamstown yet but hope to hear that all is well there. Clifford took us up by car last evening to see Aunt Jessie. Dr is taking fluid away from her lung each day. She is comfortable and I hope will not have to stay very much longer.

My nose still gives me trouble at times. This morning I had to keep three hankies in use but otherwise am keeping fairly well. I do hope no one will be over anxious about our future, things will straighten out in time.

Mrs Saunders has gone to her daughter in Middelburg and may be away for some weeks yet. Her grand-daughter, Selwyn's wife, has just had another baby here the last week.

Los of love to all from

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday November 27th, 1946

My dear All,

The event of the past week is that Mom and I are promoted to the high degree of being great grandparents. A son was born to Denis and Dorothea at 4.30 on Friday morning, November 22nd. Ruth rang me up on the phone at 6.45 a.m. giving the glad news of his safe arrival by natural means. We understand he is to be named Anthony Ryall, quite a pretty name, quite fresh to our generation. Needless to say, Ruth was very pleased and we were honoured by being the first to be notified of the event. We hope and pray that the welcome little stranger will grow up to be a bright and useful ornament in his day and generation. Now you great uncles and aunts, you must welcome him and his parents.

Another item of good news is that today (Monday 25th) we have had a beautiful rain measuring, as I write, (3 p.m.) just half an inch. It is still very cloudy and I expect more before the day is over. I do hope that Bechuanaland, Graaff Reinet and other sorely distressed districts are also being similarly blessed. A postcard from Frank Short this morning refers to the terrible condition the country is in up there.

Aunt Jessie is still in hospital, on Saturday afternoon she was moved into a private ward that had become vacant. Dr also took an X-ray and wants to remove a portion – about an inch – of one of her ribs. I went specially to see him about having an “op” considering her age (87) and the fact that she has been ill for over six weeks. He did not consider the op as serious and would not give her chloroform but a local anaesthetic. About an inch of the rib would be removed. I told him I did not think she could stand it. This morning, Enid phoned in saying that all the brothers and sisters at Fish River were against having the operation and she said she was coming in to see Dr and talk the matter over with him – Dr. I expect the rain has delayed her. Mary has just dropped in. I went into the men’s ward yesterday and saw Nessie Dodd’s son who has had his appendix out recently. He had three years service in the war but only got as far as Durban. He has settled down to farming at Mortimer. Mr and Mrs Dodd come to see us occasionally.

Tuesday morning. I stopped typing yesterday as Mom finds it annoys her. She has not been at all well during the day but hope she will be better today. Mary came along in the afternoon and stayed some time with us. Enid did not come to see us but she saw Dr and explained the position regarding Aunt Jessie to her. Enid said that all the brothers and sisters were quite opposed to her being operated on and Dr said of course he would not oppose their wishes but pointed out that he considered it necessary, so about 8.30 this a.m. the operation will be performed. It is not seven a.m. yet. Of course we shall be on hand and trust all will go well. Rain continued more or less all day and so far 111 points have been recorded. Still more to follow I think. I am trying to keep Mom in bed all day today. The garden boy has left and Mrs Mayhew does not come very day and it seems not worthwhile trying to get anyone else to take her place. Have arranged with the Premier to start meals on 1st. (It is very difficult to type, it means jumping up every few minutes, so please excuse me.)

Later. The wash-girl arrived about 8 and Mabel after that. Mom had breakfast in bed but is out and about in the kitchen (much against my wishes) and it is nearly 8.30 and we expect Aunt Jessie is prepared for her op. Mary intends to be there on hand. She came down after we had gone to bed, about 8.30 to give us the latest news of her. Clifford kindly brought her and took her back.

11 a.m. Tuesday. Have phoned to the hospital and the operation is over. We shall go up this afternoon to see how Auntie is getting on. Uncle Gervase came down about ten and had tea with us. Mrs Mayhew is also here. A letter has just come from Evelyn saying how dry and windy it has been there. Arthur has his young lady there for a visit. Lynne writes that she expects to go to East London for a week at Xmas so evidently she is not able to get home to Vryburg. Douglas and Rex had gone to Johannesburg on business. A nice letter from Mrs Garnett, congratulating us on the birth of our first great grandchild. Also a letter from Dr Fox, Johannesburg, on my handing over Friends’ work to Mary. Uncle Walter’s daughter, Hilda, writes from Walmer that she does not enjoy good health. It was her birthday quite recently. Olive is still in, or near Johannesburg. Kate

Dudley has just rung up to know how Aunt Jessie is. Enid is in town but has not been down here yet. Grass Ridge did not have nearly as much rains as we did yesterday.

In a month from today (26th) Xmas will be behind us. Mom is not at all well but I hope she will improve now Aunt Jessie's op is over. I hope all the grandchildren who have been sitting for their various exams are doing well. I know it is an anxious time both for parents and pupils. You can only do your best.

I see my sheet is nearly filled and I do not feel equal to starting another. I will send postcards as occasion may arise should there be any fresh developments. Please excuse all mistakes and disjointed items of news as it is most difficult to concentrate with messages over the phone and constant interruptions going on. My poor old nose has been leaking all the morning. The wash girl has finished her job although she started late. Mom has been resting most of the time since she got up after breakfast.

Lots of love to each and all,
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday December 4th 1946

My dear All,

I have to report that Mom is no worse but if anything, is a little better than when I wrote last week. She has no inclination to go anywhere except to see Aunt Jessie, which we do almost every day. We started to walk up on Saturday evening but only got as far as the taxi rank in front of the Dutch Reform Church when we took a taxi. Aunt Jessie is not at all happy there and I have put in a complaint of inattention to the Board, also drawing attention to the presence of a big dog about the premises which has already bitten Aunt Rouena and Florrie Hall. She is suffering a good deal of pain and discomfort, but that is only to be expected. There is a lack of sympathetic attention there. Mary has sat up a couple of nights with her as they seem short staffed. We understand that she is likely to be there for some weeks still. Being in a private ward, we can go and see her at any time.

You will be interested in knowing that Uncle Norman's son, Godfrey, is now the proud father of a daughter, born last Friday. Mom will be going to see her in a day or so. We have received a number of congratulations upon being great grandparents and some Xmas greetings have already arrived. The first was from Cyril Brown at Cape Town. Greetings also came from Mr Galloway who is now home in Scotland with his sisters. He said the journey in the Carnarvon was not too bad. There was plenty of food, they had to line up for a tray and then get their rations. The ship called at St Helena, Lost Palmas and Ascension. At 4.30 p.m. he says it is almost dark.

I wrote the above before supper (Monday) and Mom was going up to see Aunt Jessie by taxi when a knock at the door and a ring and who should it be but Len Ambler. I am afraid we made him late for his dinner but he did not mind. He is here on official business and leaves for East London on Friday. He has promised to spend Thursday evening here. He is as jolly as ever. He tells us that he is engaged (daughter to a Mr Purdon). He had seen the announcement of the birth of Anthony Ryall. Of course he enquired after all the family and was glad to know that Douglas and Evelyn were all well. We had a very nice post just at dinner time.

I made a silly mistake in putting the birth notice of Anthony in the Midland News by omitting to say if it was a boy or girl. However it was made right in the next issue.

Tuesday 6 a.m. Mom went by taxi to see Aunt Jessie about 7 after Len Ambler had gone to the Vic for dinner. Clifford called about 7.30 for her but went to fetch her about 8. May stayed with me for the while. She is at the Palms where she had Godfrey's wife and another case to look after. Clifford went to Middelburg on Sunday with Florrie to fetch their mother but she was not well enough to travel so they are going this weekend again as she wants to come home. Mary dropped in after Mom had returned and Clifford took her to see Aunt Jessie and then took her to Market Street.

Did I mention that since the new train service came into force, we sometimes get our post about an hour or half hour earlier than we used to but we are always much later than Market Street. Rev Karg's son is to be married on Saturday. We shall probably attend. His people are coming up for the occasion and his father will marry them.

Aunt Rouena and Florrie Hall were bitten by the Matron's dog at the hospital recently. Neither case was serious but they got a fright. Leslie Hudson and family look to call on us about January 4th on their way home from the Strand where they are going for a change. Mrs Legg is at Potgietersrus and is as young as ever at 70. Still plays tennis etc. We are looking forward to Pam and David's visit in February. We do not understand if David has resigned from the Civil Service as it appears he is going to Rhodes University. We had a cold snap towards the end of November and had our last fire for the season on November 21st. In November 1942 and 1943, we also had fires about the same date. Douglas and Evelyn have had their house redecorated inside and out which must have caused quite an upheaval. They expect to spend Xmas at home. Have not heard if Lynne will be able to go home or come to us. Arthur's fiancé has been spending a holiday there. Baby Joan gave Reg and Dot a fright recently as they thought she had croup but evidently it passed off without anything seriously happening. They too are spending Xmas at home.

We are issuing a special Xmas number of our Methodist News. They will be posted

sometime next week, my Xmas cards will also be posted at the same time. A few cards have already been received. I have handed over the Rainfall Charts to the Municipality and asked them to keep them up to date in future.

Mrs Mayhew left us on Saturday and we went to the Premier for Sunday's dinner. We are sending the maid round for our dinners each day except on Sundays and it is working as before. The Manager and his wife, Mr and Mrs Bradfield, left the Premier at short notice last week.

Douglas has had about an inch of rain and they are all busy ploughing. They take it in turns to get meals. Mom is taking phosphorous tablets daily whilst I have resumed taking DCL tablets. We hope for good results. My nose still gives trouble at times but not all the time. Have let the garage to the Government Soil Erosion Department, Mr C. van Heerden, who was at school with Guy, who is in charge locally.

Must close now with love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday December 11th, 1946

My dear All,

You may have seen in the newspapers that at the Licensing Court, the application for a liquor licence for Hales Owen Holiday Resort was refused and the Court also decided to prohibit the sale of liquors to Coloured customers at all on Saturdays. This is a decided victory to the temperance cause.

It is Monday afternoon and Mom and I have been up to the hospital to see Aunt Jessie. She has been sitting up for a little while in an easy chair Uncle Gervase sent up for her. The tube has now been withdrawn but she is still suffering a good deal of pain. Of course it will be some time before she will be able to get about and it opens another problem of how she is to manage when she is fit to be moved. Una Brown, Harvey's daughter, has had her tonsils and appendix removed but she will be going home very soon. She is not sitting for matric but will take up nursing. Her Dad and Mom and the little girl had supper with us one evening last week.

Grace writes that they are having a full house during the holidays. David and Harold will be home about 16th and are bringing visitors, one is Rev Holden's son from Johannesburg. Mr Holden was recently at Potgietersrus and stayed with Dot. I should think he would be a fine man for Cradock if we wanted a change in the future. Jean is also having a girlfriend. Jean thinks she has done well in her exams, I hope so. She has worked very hard and has been handicapped by being ill during the year. Grace hopes we do not walk to the hospital and back. Clifford is very good in taking us up when he has the chance but he is at the swimming bath from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. unless he puts someone in his place. The taxi costs 3/- each time if we both go up and walk back. Ted does not seem well but Charles has got over his cold.

Reg and Dot are having Xmas at home this year. Last year they were all here as well as Joe and the boys. Douglas too is looking to stay at home but Lynne does not think she will be able to go home. The Miles are arranging for a holiday at East London and if she cannot get to Vryburg, she will go to East London. We understand Roy is going to Cape Town to his Aunts and Joe, Blodwen and the rest of the family are due at Kendrew this day next week (16th). They return to Uitenhage and may come on here for New Year. Leslie, Gwen and children look to arrive by car from Cape Town on the evening of January 4th and leave for Vryburg early Sunday morning 5th. We are sorry they are rushing their visit. Vincent Crosbie would like to meet them as Gwen used to teach him in the baby class at Vryburg. By the way, he is meeting his fiancé in Bloemfontein at the New Year. They are looking to get married at Easter in Vryburg, of course.

Mr Lidbetter is desirous of selling out. He feels he has had enough of work. I have obtained particulars as to what he wants and am sending it on to Joe as there was a suggestion, when he was not in such good health as he is now, that he might take up photography, which as we all know, he is very good.

Tuesday morning. Yesterday afternoon we went by taxi to see how Aunt Jessie is getting on, and considering her age, she is doing as well as can be expected. Clifford motored me to the annual meeting of the Red Cross Society but we did not stop to the end as Mom was alone. I find we can post in the pillar box up to 4.30 pm now and still catch the mail. It used to be closed at four. This will save many a walk to the main office which closes at 5.30 p.m.

Ruth writes that Dee and baby are getting on famously. They will be out of hospital on Thursday and spend a week with Ruth before going to their own rooms in High Street. I wonder when we shall have the chance of seeing him. The Bishop is still in Grahamstown and baby Anthony is to be christened in the Cathedral on 15th. They all go to the Kowie for February. Dee and Anthony have been inundated with flower, presents etc. Later. Letter just received from Denis saying the christening took place last Sunday, baby slept all through the service. They are spending February at the Kowie. Baby has blue eyes, Dee's features, Denis head, hair not showing signs of curling yet, is putting on weight and is generally doing well.

About ourselves, things are going much the same as usual. The maid gets our dinners every day – except Sundays – and we get our own breakfast and supper. The girl comes a little earlier

than she did but we had finished our breakfast before she arrived this morning. There is very little use in watering in the garden, it is very swaak(?). Figs are ripening but I do not care for them and of course may not climb the trees. Mom does not care about going anywhere except to see Aunt Jessie. Oh yes, we both went to young Karg's wedding on Saturday afternoon. The bride looked very pretty. Rev Karg and all their family were there. My nose does not trouble quite so much but I wish it did not trouble at all. Christmas cards are beginning to come. Posted all the South African ones on Monday. I want to send something for the grandchildren as soon as I can manage it. I am a very slow worker these days.

Lots of love to all,
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday December 18th, 1946

My dear All,

I was just looking at the almanac and am staggered to see that there is only one more Wednesday in this year. The time is passing so quickly it seems impossible to keep pace with it. As usual, I am commencing my letter on Monday so as to be in time. Monday afternoon, Dingaans Day, and a public holiday. Not that holidays make any difference to us. We try to get to the hospital every day to see Aunt Jessie. Am sorry to say she does not seem to be making any progress towards recovery. We are all sorry she ever had the operation. She has suffered great pain and it seems she has frequent injections of drug to ease her. The tube has been removed and one day she was lifted into a wheeled chair and taken onto the stoep but she soon wanted to get back into bed. She cannot speak coherently. She has many visitors but cannot talk to them. Dr Scholtz has gone on his annual holiday but his partner is also good. Mom is waiting for a taxi so will add later news when she comes back. Uncle Gervase is coming to supper this evening and no doubt we shall go up again. Aunt Rouena has gone to Port Elizabeth with Hope but will be back in about ten days time. She is expecting Barbara and Roslin about 28th and other visitors so they will be full up.

We expect Joe and family, excepting Roy who has gone to Cape Town, are at Kendrew. They were due there this morning. Their address is c/o Mrs van der Berg, Brand Kraal, Kendrew. Joe does not entertain the idea of buying Mr Lidbetter's business as he is satisfied with his new job in the South African Railways workshops.

In Saturday's Midland News, I saw an advert for full time secretary to the Cradock Hospital, salary £350 + £25-£475 and certain allowances. I have sent a copy of the advertisement to Reg, thinking it might attract him. He has had some years experience in Potgietersrus. No doubt we shall hear in due course. Needless to say it would be very nice from our point of view but I can quite understand it would be a big wrench to get away from their present activities etc.

Grace and Ted celebrated their 22nd anniversary of their wedding day on 10th. By now I think they have David and Harold with some friends home for Xmas.

Douglas had another half inch of rain last week. They have been very busy ploughing and planting and we all hope they reap a rich harvest. The drought has been so severe that they have not had any cream to send away for the last four months. I hear that Eric and Freda have not had milk or butter for a long while. Mrs Metcalf, Douglas's neighbour, has a baby and Freda has been helping there. Miss Metcalf was quite pleased to hear the news. Miss Metcalf slept here several nights whilst her people were away. She is nervous being alone in that big house. Uncle Gervase has been elected Captain of the Bowling Club. He is a very keen player. He is all alone at the moment but will have a house full before the end of the year. We have had a phone message from Lynne, she is going to East London with the Miles if she cannot go home for Xmas. Emily also phoned after she got back from Vryburg. Dot has sent a nice parcel for us for Xmas, which I am sure we do not deserve. Mrs Mayhew made us a large Xmas pudding before she left. Now we have two. Aunt Eliza has sent her croquet set to Nesbetts Avalon and I have sent our hit a pin game.

Tuesday morning 6 a.m. Things are happening quickly. Mom returned from seeing Aunt Jessie with Mary. Jessie was certainly worse, she could not swallow anything, consequently hope for recovery was diminishing and plans had to be made for the immediate future. Uncle Gervase came to supper and we decided that he and I would stay by Jessie until about ten when Mary would take over. We motored Mom to stay with Dulcie as I could not leave her alone for the evening. Dulcie and Mary had been with Jessie during the afternoon. It was thought that she could not last through the night and plans were made for phoning and wiring etc. Dr came whilst we were there and he could give no encouragement as to recovery. He did not think the end was just yet. Her heart was standing up to the strain wonderfully well. Of course the drugs they were giving her made her delirious but she was not suffering much pain. She had been able to take some nourishment. She was restless and her groaning and moaning was pitiful. Her hands were quite warm but she could not talk. I read the lines on the back of my Xmas card but I doubt if she grasped what I said. She frequently asked "where is Emma?" but Dr said it was useless to fetch

Mom from Moorcrofts. About nine, two nurses attended to Jessie and evidently gave her another injection as she became quite quiet and appeared to be sleeping. Then Gervase and I went to fetch Mom. Fenner has been to Fish River and brought word that Nancy had had a mishap and was laid up. Aunt Kate Dudley had just lost her brother. Una Brown had had a return of a haemorrhage which Enid had managed to stop, so altogether things are not bright. Mom, of course, was very tired and went straight to bed. Since writing the above, I have phoned to the hospital and Jessie is about the same, was quiet till about 4 a.m. and is about the same as she was yesterday.

At about 6.30 last evening, whilst we were having supper, Douglas phoned from Grass Ridge (Vryburg) so at last they have been connected up. They are all well. Evelyn and Cecily spoke and I told them the latest about Aunt Jessie. It was very nice to hear their voices. Mary has since phoned. Uncle Gervase stayed at the hospital practically all night, called Mary about 5 this a.m. which practically confirms what I have already written. Have asked the Hospital to keep me informed of any change for the worst. A big dance on behalf of the tennis club at Fish River has been arranged for the next week but I should think it would be cancelled under the circumstances.

We had a surprise visit on Saturday evening from Josie Biggs and her Dr son who has the appointment at Umtata Hospital for the next six months. Their second daughter was with them and the eldest with her baby was at the Poplars. They are all on their way home to their new farm in Natal. 7.45 stop for breakfast. Maid just arrived. Have rung up the Poplars to give the latest news regarding Aunt Jessie.

Mr Stock called during the time Mom was at the hospital yesterday afternoon. He is still far from well – he is suffering from nerves and lack of faith. They have now left Bree Street and are in the house he bought next door to the Hospital. Mrs West came to call on us but as Mr Stock's dog was in possession of the front doormat and Mrs West had her dog with her and expected a fight between the two dogs, thought it best not to attempt to come in.

Our figs are very nice this season but rather dry. There is water in the furrow. Our old boy, John, has repainted the front railings and they look all the better for the attention. They were beginning to show signs of rust.

All the house – outside walls – need repairing the plaster and re-colour washing but it is an expensive time for such jobs at present.

We have had a nice letter from Mrs Jones, formerly of Vryburg. She has sent us a copy of their Golden Wedding photograph. We do not recognise many of the family.

If any of you have spare copies of Bechuanaland, Basutoland or Swaziland stamps, my nephew in London would like to get some. He is a keen collector.

Ernest has phoned about nine a.m. asking if there is anything they can do to help. As a matter of fact, Alison had to go to bed yesterday and is not able to do anything for herself today.

So far did I get just after breakfast when who should appear but Rosa Maskell who had travelled by car from Dwaal at 4 a.m. to come and see Jessie. Her son brought her as far as Uncle Norman's and he brought her here. She will stay with us for the present. We soon took her up to see Jessie, who I am sorry to say did not recognise her. We left her there with Winnie and Harvey Brown whilst Norman and I went to interview Dr Oosthuizen. He very kindly told us what I have already recorded. He says she may linger on for some time yet but her strength is certainly lessening. It is impossible to say how long she will last. Annie Bertie and her girls, Dudley and others are in. She had a fairly good night but is still unconscious. Norman and I saw the undertakers and have made more or less all arrangements for eventualities. She will be buried by the side of Herbert at Fish River. Rosa is looking very well, has got very stout. The dance at Fish River on Friday has been cancelled but the children's Xmas party on Friday will be held as arranged. Ernest and Alison are going to Bushmans River on Friday night. Norman is coming to see me at 3.30 so I must close. Am sorry I cannot send more cheerful news but I am sure you will all be sorry, yet anxious to know all you can about Aunt Jessie who has always been so kind to one and all.

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday (Christmas Day) December 25th, 1946

My dear All,

It is Monday afternoon and I do not know where to begin. I am late in starting and so much has happened since my last letter. The post was only delivered after 2 p.m. and have just finished opening 48 cards and 1? letters and I notice the machine is not working satisfactorily. However I must press on or I shall not be able to post tomorrow afternoon as I usually do. You know by this time that Aunt Jessie has passed away and she was laid to rest in the plot next to Uncle Herbert at Fish River. Uncle Owen came up on Saturday night and left again by the same train at 7 p.m. Each of the families were represented. Aunt Letty would have come but there was not an aeroplane available to bring her. However she will come later. Mary was of course there. Aunt Rosa stayed with us and we all went in Uncle Gervase's car. The service was held in the Memorial Hall, all the pews were brought up from the church and the organ as well. There were over 100 present and Rev Ludlow gave a fine address. Mom and I headed the procession from the hall to the grave as being the eldest. There were over 30 wreaths. We sent one from the family including the grandchildren, and the in-laws. Gladys kindly supplied tea for the older members of the congregation. Two of Aunt Rosa's sons motored down and returned directly afterwards.

Saturday was a very busy day. I generally wake about 3 a.m. but on Saturday I was wide awake at 1.30 and at 1.40 I heard the phone ring and at once guessed that Aunt Jessie had passed away. From then onwards it was a matter of phoning to one and another the news. Uncle Norman was the first to be notified but could not be roused. Evidently his bedroom is far away from the phone. I rang Mr Barnes and he could not raise him. I got in touch with Enid and she phoned to a number. I tried to get in touch with Rev Weavers but he, too, was difficult but at last got him and he promised to let Uncle Owen know. He offered to let Joe know but I told him he was away at Kendrew. I tried in vain to get in touch with the Eastern Province Herald with a view to getting the death notice in Saturday's issue but without success. I tried them again in the evening so as to get it in on Monday's paper but the man at the other end said they refused to take phone orders as they had been let down so often. So I have posted the instructions by today's post and the notice will appear in Wednesday's issue – if they publish on Xmas Day. However there were over 100 relations and friends at the service. I understand from Uncle Norman that he is the sole Executor and sole heir in the estate. All the Attorneys are closed for the holidays and reopen about January 6th.

To go back somewhat, we, that is Uncle Norman and I, had an interview with Dr Oosthuizen – Dr Scholtz being away on holiday, as to the desirability of continuing with the injections and artificial feeding. He said there was no possibility of her recovery but naturally tried to sustain life. I phoned to all the members of the family that I could reach and with one accord, all agreed that it was useless to prolong the agony as she had been unconscious for several days. Dr said her heart, blood pressure etc were wonderfully strong considering her age – 86 and seven months. Her hands were constantly moving but her groanings and shoutings at times were distressing as one was so helpless and could do nothing for her. She did not speak for days nor open her eyes. She spent most of her time on her back, mouth wide open and eyes closed, it was pitiful to see her. Now she is at rest. No one could wish her back again. At the close of the committal service, at the request of the relatives, I said a few words of thanks to the friends and those who had come to show their respect and sympathy.

Letters from nearly all the family circle report preparations being made for Xmas. Lynne is not going home but to East London. Joe and family return to Uitenhage on December 31st and he starts work on January 3rd so is not coming to pay us a visit – another disappointment. Reg – who had a birthday yesterday – is going to the Haenertsburg Mountains for a few days, the Watts go with them and camp out. Reg does not entertain applying for the position of Secretary to the Cradock Hospital Board - another disappointment. We have asked Mrs Mayhew to have Xmas dinner with us at the Premier. Rosa of course will be with us. We are still expecting Leslie Hudson and family on January 4th and hope they will stay longer than one night. I have not been able to do

justice to my letter but will try to do better next time. By the time this reaches you, Xmas will be behind us. I hope you will have had a happy Xmas and that the New Year will bring happiness and greater peace than the world has at present. We know not what awaits us, so be prepared. Mom is taking phosphorine – sometimes – not as regularly as she should. Perhaps she will return to Dwaal with Aunt Rosa but nothing is settled.

Well, I am about finished and so is the paper, so I will close wishing you all of the best for the New Year. We shall be all alone except that Rosa may stay a day or two after Xmas.

Lots of love to each and all from

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
Tuesday December 30th, 1946

My dear All,

I suppose I should in order to be consistent, date this letter as Wednesday January 1st 1947 but I do not feel like that, time is passing far too quickly for my liking and I think that as I usually post on Tuesday afternoons in the hope that you may receive the letters as early as possible, start the year by dating as Tuesday instead of Wednesday. I do not think I have missed a single week throughout the year that is just drawing to a close but this I can check when I come to do up my file copy for 1946. I do not know why I have always kept a copy of what I have written but perhaps habit is second nature. I don't suppose I shall ever have the time or inclination to re-read them but there they are, stored away at the back of my filing cabinet. It is now Monday afternoon, Mom is still napping and I can get going without disturbing her. I am sorry to say she is far from well. The last few days she has complained of a lump about where young folk have their appendix removed but as old people do not get such fashionable complaints, we are wondering what may be the cause. On Mary's suggestion, we are trying a few doses of Epsom Salts – which we are often told is such a wonderful medicine and if priced at 20/- per ounce, instead of a few pence, would be more frequently in use. Dr Scholtz is away on holiday but on his return, he may be consulted.

Christmas has come and gone. We had a very quiet time and enjoyed Aunt Rosa's company. We had previously asked Mrs Mayhew to have Xmas dinner with us at the Premier Hotel. We could not help thinking of last year when we filled more than one table. The dinner was on the same lines as last, a printed menu and we did justice to the good things provided. Many tables were empty, so many boarders being away this year. Both Mrs Mayhew and Mrs Rainier came down at five to listen to the Kings speech, which came over as clearly as if he was speaking in the dining room. In the afternoon we taxied up to see Aunt Charlotte at the Old Peoples Home and took her a present from one of her nieces who lives in Somerset East. Of course she could not see it but was pleased to handle it. It consisted of two slabs of fruit cake, a packet of sweets and some chocolate. Aunt Rosa took her some oranges and Mom some flowers and a slab of chocolate. Mary was also there with flowers. The old lady was quite excited and before it was really time to leave, she asked to be put back in her room to rest. How thankful we all should be for our eyesight. Poor soul, she can only distinguish light from darkness. She is over 90 and her memory is wonderfully clear. It is years since she has met Aunt Rosa but she could tell all her history as it were. We walked back, Mom and Aunt Rosa branching off to the Saunders and I hurried back to Dundas Street so as not to keep the visitors waiting for the Royal speech. They were sitting out on the lawn when I arrived. Talking about eyesight. We were sitting on the lawn one evening and mosquitoes were bothering me and in brushing one aside, I knocked off my glasses, fortunately they fell on the grass but I had bent the frame so much that I could not see properly. Fortunately Mr Bergman was in town and after suffering the inconvenience for a day, he put matters right.

You will be sorry to hear that Aunt Eliza has had another fall. This time in her passage, the cup she was carrying to her room fell and of course was broken. She managed to crawl into her room – she could not get up – and the cup had cut her wrist. Mary was away at the time and she probably was on the floor for an hour or more. She has got over the shock very well. We are invited to supper for New Year's day and to spend the evening.

On Xmas Day we went to service at 7.30 am. And the collection for the Marsh Memorial Homes amounted to £5/8/9d. Mr Ludlow also had service at Fish River at 10.30 the same morning and their collection was £5/6/3d. So far I have counted over 260 Xmas cards received. Quite a number of letters have also come expressing great appreciation of same.

We hear from Grace that Pam has secured a post at the Land Bank in Kroonstad and starts there on February 1st. She was doing very well as typist at a store but evidently this new position is more remunerative. There is a possibility of her coming here for a holiday – which we hope will materialise – and Mom returning with her. All the family was at home at Kroonstad and they and their visitors evidently has a good time. At Vryburg the family was complete with the exception of Lynne who was – and still is – at East London. We hear that Arthur is busy at Therons Rust. We

have not heard when the wedding is to be but do not expect it will be long delayed. They have had some rain but not enough. Dot and family were looking to spend a day or so on Haenertsburg and the Watts family might go with them. There is some of the finest scenery in South Arica in that area. We were there when we went to the Game Reserve.

I have not referred to Aunt Jessie's affairs. Uncle Norman has not been in town since, I expect he is waiting for the Attorneys to open after the holidays. We have some of her things here but we have not been informed what is likely to happen to Saltpansdrift. All I understand is that everything goes to Uncle Norman. I see my sheet is full. I may or I may not tackle another.

Joe and Blodwen and family have had a nice holiday at Kendrew. Roy was not with them, having gone to Cape Town to his Aunts. They describe the rest farm at Kendrew as being an ideal spot for a quiet rest. They have been to Graaff Reinet a couple of times where Joe was examined by a local doctor with, I hope, satisfactory results. They are due back at Uitenhage about 4 a.m. tomorrow. Blodwen suggest that if Mom should go north for a change, I should go to them. At present they have a spare room as the party who occupied it has now left. Perhaps something may materialise.

Hilda, Jim Butler's wife, has turned her hand to making soap and is making a success of it. Have ordered some for our own use. I wonder if Jim will stand for Parliament.

Douglas reports having had some rain but not enough. 3.36 in eight months, three of which – June, July and August – were quite dry. Kingsley has been to Cape Town to play in the Griqualand West cricket team. I have listened in as often as possible to hear that he had made a century but so far, have not heard his name mentioned. The Griquas were playing at Queenstown so the wireless said. It was nice hearing voices over the phone from Grass Ridge, Vryburg. Cicely said she could hear me quite well. It is nice to feel we are so close to each other.

Vincent is spending the New Year holiday in Vryburg. He looks to get married at Easter.

I wonder if Joe ever meets Jimmy Armstrong. He is a turner in the Ryl workshops, Malcolm is a wireless operator at the Airways in Port Elizabeth and Cynthia is at Spilhaus & Co. The old folk are still at the Addo Game Reserve. If I do go to Uitenhage, I should try to pay them a visit and see the famous elephants there.

Mrs Southall of Vryburg writes asking what cured me of rheumatism as she is suffering so with it. Some job that.

Dr Reinecke writes thanking me for sending remittance for the dentals he fixed up for me last year. He never sent an account but he promised to put the set in at cost. He thanks me for remitting what he said would be approximately the cost, £4 or £5. Now he says the cost was £8/8/- so I must send another £3/3/-. He writes a pitiful letter of domestic trouble. I am truly sorry for the man.

Miss van der Walt who was typist at the YMCA writes from Brits. She has been in bad health ever since she was married. In this connection, I received a letter from an Attorney near Saldana Bay asking if I knew a Mr Dent whose Will I and Miss van der Walt had witnessed whilst at the YMCA some years ago. On my suggestion, he had left the residue of his estate to be divided equally between the Salvation Army and Louis Botha House. This will had been written across "cancelled" but not signed. They asked if I knew if Mr Dent had made another will. I did not. I sent the correspondence on to Mr Haddow, Chairman of the Louis Botha House Committee. I have heard nothing further about it.

Grace says they had 12 to dinner on Sunday before Xmas and Monday they had a picnic at the river. All enjoyed themselves. She hopes Pam will come here for her holiday but she was planning to go to Johannesburg. No doubt we shall hear in good time. We are still expecting Leslie Hudson and family on Saturday and hope they will stay longer than one night.

We have not seen a rat in the house since June 1944 and mice have been scarce too. We caught one in a trap in March last and the one before that was in June 1943. However on Sunday morning I found one alive in our bath which was empty. I think it must have fallen from the ceiling. It will not trouble us again. We have been very free of vermin in spite of the fact that we have not a cat.

Tuesday December 31st, 1946, 6 a.m. It looks as though I am trying to make the best of the old year but it is not that, but I want to get this letter finished as soon as possible as there are other matters to be seen to today. There will be a watch night service at 11.15 but I do not expect either of us will attend. I am glad to say Mom is feeling easier this morning and we are not calling in Dr at present. She is getting very thin but perhaps that is natural. Last evening Clifford took us up to see Barbara and her husband and baby. Baby was asleep so did not see him but of course he is a wonderful child. His mother will bring him down. Barbara is looking very well. Her husband was not in, having gone to the chemist for some medicine for Uncle Gervase who has tummy trouble. Hope he will soon be better.

The South African Railways have for months past been blasting at the Station for ballast and start operations at 4.30 a.m. Hence it is quite easy to be awake early. Uncle Owen is moving this week, his new address is 5 Harper Street, Uitenhage.

My last word for the year is one of thankfulness for all mercies bestowed upon us as a family during the years that are past and praying for a continuance for the year now coming. It is sure to bring some changes with it, of which we know nothing – for which we all should be thankful – but it is for all to be prepared. Wishing you all the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

Yours with deep affection to all,
Dad