



34 Dundas Street  
Cradock  
Thursday January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

Well, here we are in our new home. So far we like it very much and hope we shall be very comfortable when we are properly settled in. We were delighted to have Joe and Blodwen and the children with us for a few days and they were a great help in many ways. I must go back a bit if I want to make the story of our trek more or less complete. We were uncertain up to the last as to when the lorries would be available to move us. On Wednesday afternoon 29<sup>th</sup>, about four, two lorries arrived. It took four loads to complete the removal – that is without reckoning the garden plants etc which we removed by handcart during the previous and subsequent days. We slept here on Wednesday and each day we are getting straighter. Fortunately we have moved into a larger house otherwise it would have been very difficult to accommodate all our goods and chattels. Mom still hopes to get some more plants etc from 53a before the new tenant takes possession. So far we have not heard from him and he has not put in an appearance. Ernest had the letting of the flat and is wondering if he is going to turn up.

We have had the drawing room repapered and now the front bedroom is being morelloed. The paper that is on the wall at present is too ugly for anything. The rooms do not need much attention except that we have put up picture rails in each room. We have bought a three piece Chesterfield suite for the best room and it looks very nice. The pictures are up too so that part of the house is to say finished. The dining room has not needed anything being done to it. Yesterday we got our wireless going again and the reception was quite good this morning for the seven o'clock news service. The new slow combustion stove we have installed in the kitchen is a great success. We light the stove two or three times a week in the afternoon and hot water is available in the sink and bathroom for thirty-six hours and more. We have shower bath and wash basin in the bathroom and if we can get a septic tank installed, will also have lavatory accommodation. We are building a linen press alongside of the bathroom which was unnecessary large. This we have never had before and it will be a great convenience. When I get time, I will send a plan of how we have arranged the furniture etc but the best plan will be for you to come and see it for yourselves. Joe was very good in fixing up many little jobs for me and we should have been pleased had it been possible for him to have stayed longer. We have an old man working in the garden and generally working about the place. Unfortunately Matilda

has again failed us this morning. She was alright yesterday and seems very interested in making the kitchen etc nice. Mom does not like the idea of her to sleep in.

Joe and Blodwen left about six thirty on Monday afternoon by train and we are glad to hear they arrived safely home. Uncle Gervase and Rouena and baby had dinner with us yesterday. They came in to attend a wedding of some Fish River friend. We had a nice shower during the day and the weather is decidedly cooler in consequence. The night before last I only needed a sheet over me sleeping out but last night I had a double blanket and rug. Last Sunday was the hottest day we have had. It registered 105 in the shade. We did not go to watch night service, we were too tired for that. I have not been able to write separate letters this week but thank you all for letters received. I will answer all in time. Glad to hear how you all spent Xmas and New Year. We have had a larger number of Xmas cards and letters than ever before. It will take me some time to answer them all.

We hear that Trixie is to be married in Vryburg instead of East London. Is this so? We were looking to go to East London for it but perhaps might do Vryburg instead. Next week we are expecting between 300 and 400 Boy Scouts here. There is to be an official welcome on the Market Square and several functions to attend during the eight days they will be here. I wrote asking the Governor General to attend as Chief Scout but he is not able to do so but sends a message of greeting instead. I expect to have to go to Port Elizabeth about 21st for a day or two but am not certain yet.

Am glad to hear the Eric had a good rain at Xmas time, hope Douglas was also favoured.

Aunt Eliza is keeping better but does not go out yet. She wants to see our place when we are settled in. Shall be glad when the tradesmen are out of the place.

Must close now with love to all. Am going up to office.

Dad

34 Dundas Street  
Cradock  
Thursday January 20<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

I have secured a supply of thinner paper but it is shorter than what I have been using for some time past so I shall have to be briefer in my letters. We have had a strenuous week in one way and another and I shall not be sorry when the Jamboree is over, so far as the extra work is involved. It is satisfactory to know, however, that they have had a very enjoyable time and they say it is the best jamboree they have ever held. We have not had so much to do with the actual organising of the event – a large and representative committee has done that. Alison has been at the head of the women's committee and has organised things very well. They have been very fortunate in having had fine weather but it has been the hottest experienced for years. For some days it has been over 100 in the shade. I am thankful we have a shower bath and make good use of it. One of Josie Bigg's boys was amongst the scouts from Uppington and he came to see us one evening. He did enjoy having a hot shower bath. This week has been our week for holding Council committee meetings and they have been numerous and important. I have another at ten this a.m. so must be brief. Then there has been public meetings re council matters.

Grace writes that Ted has put off his application for leave until the end of the year when he hopes to get two months and go to the coast. We are still looking to attend Trixie's wedding in Vryburg but have not definitely decided.

After dinner, I only have a few minutes and fear that I shall not be able to finish this sheet. Suffice it to say we are all well and are feeling the heat tremendously. Not that that is much satisfaction to any of you as no doubt you are doing the same. At the end of next week we expect to spend in Port Elizabeth. Aunt Kate Owen's sister will probably spend a few days with us. She is in Port Elizabeth at present.

Jeffrey has passed his J.C. examination and goes to Kingswood next week. We wonder what Douglas and Evelyn have decided about their boys. Grace writes that her children are glad the holidays are nearly over.

John is working well so far but Matilda has definitely left for the present at any rate.

I have had an invitation (official) to attend the opening of the new Groot Schuur Hospital at Cape Town on 31<sup>st</sup> but I do not think it worthwhile going from a Municipal point of view just for that. I hope to go to Cape Town about March or April for the Mayoral Conference. The date is not definitely fixed yet.

Please do not think we are too busy to receive and read your letters. They are eagerly looked for daily. I have nearly finished answering all your recent ones. Have still to reply to Reg and Dot's. Xmas letters will still have to wait, if any require answering.

Must stop as I am due back at office by three.

Lots of love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street  
Cradock  
Thursday January 27<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

It is Wednesday morning (early as usual) and I hope to get well on with my epistle before breakfast. The weeks are passing very rapidly – nearly one twelfth of the year gone already. One thing I have been able to accomplish is to get finished with answering all letters up to date. How far I shall be able to keep that up remains to be seen. Today would be my brother John's 87<sup>th</sup> birthday. Yesterday was Jean's 7<sup>th</sup>. The next birthday will be Mom's. I hope we shall duly celebrate it. Enid, Iris and May have promised to come in and assist.

I am sure you will all join in heartily congratulating Arthur, Lynne and Rex in all three of them passing their J.C. examination together. It is not often, if ever, that three members of one family all pass the same exam at the same time. Arthur will be 18 in June, Lynne was 16 last December and Rex will be 14 in June. I sent them a wire on receipt of the news.

The Jamboree is now a back number. I now have the job as Treasurer of squaring up the financial side of the event. I hope it turns out as successful as the social side was.

The court case against the Municipality over the damage done by the trees falling on Miss Phillip's roof during the great storm last March commenced on Monday in the local court. It is not likely to be over for a few days. I have not to give evidence but shall be glad when it is settled. I have attended court to hear at first hand the bulk of the evidence. Our monthly Council meeting last night, Tuesday, was not over until 10.30. We are having a good deal of trouble with one member of the staff and it may end in his being suspended whilst an enquiry is held.

I have now the date for the Mayoral Congress which is to be held at the Strand, near Cape Town. This will clash with our contemplated trip to Vryburg. Trixie's wedding is March 17<sup>th</sup> and the Congress is April 5<sup>th</sup>, the Cradock Show is March 23-24<sup>th</sup> and we have to meet the Minister of Railways then regarding the contemplated transfer of all the Railway staff from here to Cookhouse. If this should happen, it would mean the loss of business to a tremendous extent as there are something like two hundred railway employees resident here. May 6-7<sup>th</sup> is the Vryburg Show. This will take some thinking out to see what can be worked in and what left out.

We have had some terribly hot days during the past week. It seems to have been general all over the Union. Yesterday we had a little rain and last night was decidedly cool. One of our tanks is full and the new one about half. The party who has taken over our flat is buying the geyser and tank on the roof that I had put up. I had hoped he would have taken the electric stove but he does not want it.

Kate Dudley is still in hospital but expects to come out in a day or two. Aunt Agnes was in on Tuesday, and Enid, to see a doctor. She is not having an operation. They had dinner with us.

Our grapes and figs are delicious. We have given quite a lot away and there will be plenty for some time to come I expect (unless we have a hail storm). I forgot or rather did not have time to mention in my last letter that we had a visit from Aunt Eliza one afternoon. She hired a taxi for an hour and she and Miss Miller went to see the Jamboree camp and came on here. What she has written about the visit of course I do not know but we were pleased to have her and she seemed pleased to see over the house and garden. This is the first time she has been out of her house for several months. We are sorry to hear that Roy has had to have his tonsils out but hope he will be in better health in consequence.

I notice you all are extravagant in writing on only one side of the paper. Why don't you economise by writing on both sides?

Aunt Emmie and party are coming back in April most likely. I suppose Wallis has accomplished the object he had in view in going over. They have had very cold weather and lots of snow but it seems to have done them good.

Thursday afternoon. Letters from Dot and Blodwen to hand today. Blodwen does not give a very cheerful report of Joe's visit to Dr who says he must rest all he can. Love from Dad

34 Dundas Street  
Cradock  
Thursday February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

It is Wednesday afternoon and it looks as though we are going to get some rain. I hope it does come as we are sadly in need of it. It has looked promising so many times that one almost despairs of its coming. I sincerely hope that when it does come, it will not be in such terrific quantity that it will do a lot of damage as it has done in many places. I am thankful that we have got one tank quite full and the new one about half full of this season's fall. I do not intend to let any run to waste if I can help it and shall, if necessary, build a large underground tank. So far no sign of any leaky places have appeared.

Last Friday I spent the whole day from 7.45 am to 8 pm in the Municipal office as Returning Officer for the by-election for the Council election. Mom sent up my dinner and some fruit for those of us who had to be all day. The result of the election was the return of Mrs Moolman who had just retired. The candidate who opposed her was quite a stranger and unknown. I hope her return will not give the Council more trouble. After a hurried supper and bath, we left by train the same night for Port Elizabeth. I should have been there the day before but had to stay for the election. The Town Clerk also went. I think my going may have done the town some good. I hope so at any rate. We had a room on the fifth floor at the Palmerston which has recently been rebuilt and furnished. My fellow Councillors, Mr Stock and wife, are also staying there. Conference occupied me all the morning but in the afternoon, we were taken to see the aerial demonstration which was very interesting. One stunt was quite new to us. A glider was towed by an aeroplane to a height of about 4000 feet and then separated from each other when the glider did a number of stunts, including looping the loop.

We spent the evening at the Gedye's - Aunt Kate Owen's old home. Her sister, Mrs Seller, whose husband I am trying to get assistance for, was staying. We had her to dinner on Sunday. Sunday morning we went to Humewood and walked about and rested for most of the time. On our way back, Mr Stock and I went over the Stirling Castle which we had watched coming in. She is a splendid vessel but looked very small when out at sea. I think this is the boat we came round from Durban in but am not sure. In the afternoon, John and Una Shingler called for us in their car and took us to tea. Their baby has grown quite a fine little chap. Needless to say, they are very proud of him. We had a little rain whilst there. We went to church in the evening but were half an hour late as we thought it commenced at 7.30. We met Mr A.C. Ingle there, also Kingsley Gretton and his wife and other friends we knew, young Jones from Sea Point also. I forgot to mention that the Mayor of Port Elizabeth entertained the delegates to lunch at the Hotel Elizabeth on Saturday and I was called upon to make a speech without warning. We let by the night train on Sunday and arrived home at 7.15 Monday morning.

Everything was alright at the house. Mrs Seller arrived on Tuesday morning and spent the day and night with us. Mum took her to see Aunt Eliza in the morning and to see the Karroo Garden, which she greatly admired. She would like to come and live here if way opens. We took her to the park in the afternoon and in the evening we all three went to a reception for the new Anglican minister and his wife. Another speech. It was a very nice social and I think the new man will be more successful in carrying on the work than his predecessor was. I sent you each a post card from Port Elizabeth to let you know where we were.

The date of the Municipal Congress is now fixed for Tuesday April 5<sup>th</sup> at the Strand. I have therefore been busy looking up the new timetable to see if we can work in a tour that will meet the requirements of the family. It is difficult to work in the dates and the following is what I suggest for consideration and discussion. The following are fixtures which I am due to attend. February 22<sup>nd</sup> Council meeting. March 17<sup>th</sup>, Trixie's wedding at Vryburg. April 5<sup>th</sup> Mayoral Congress at the Strand (near Cape Town). If we leave here on a Thursday morning, we arrive in Vryburg at about noon the following day. We could leave directly after the wedding either by

car or train to Potgietersrus with Reg and Dot. We could stay a few days there and go to Grace. From there I should have to go straight through to Cape Town for the Strand. I would like to return to Cradock by boat from Cape Town if possible or else by train and Mom could easily come back after visiting Grace and Joe as there would be no changing of carriages. I have not suggested the actual dates but that can be done when I know if the suggested plan will meet your wishes. If carried out, I should miss one meeting of the Council. I have written to the travel bureau for particulars as to cost.

Mrs Seller left this morning by train for Fish River and will spend some time with her sister, Aunt Rouena, and then goes on to Rooispruit. We took her by taxi round the town and on top of the hill on the way to the station. Mom came as well.

Wednesday evening. The rain has not come yet but it is still threatening.

The Town Clerk and I have had a long interview with the System Manager of the Railways this afternoon re the possible removal of the Railway staff from here to Cookhouse. He assures us that it is not within the range of practical politics at present. It will mean a serious loss of business when, if ever, it does come about.

Joe writes that he is feeling a bit better. Doctor has given him some other medicine. Blodwen is not going to Cape Town at present as her sister is still there and there is not room for all.

Grace suggests that if Aunt Jessie wanted someone as companion, perhaps Miss Hicks would suit her. If Mom wanted a companion, do you think she would be suitable?

Thursday afternoon. Letters from Dot this morning suggest the possibility of Reg and her going to fetch Mrs Hudson at East London early in March and spending a night here on the way back. We shall be very pleased if this materialises. It may alter our prospective dates but that does not matter. Letter from Douglas reports good rains there. Ted also sends word of renewed activities in Church and Sunday school work. All send birthday greetings to Mom for tomorrow. We are having some lady members of the church in for afternoon tea tomorrow. Frank Short's wife has a son born a few days ago. Douglas does not refer to the splendid success of his three children passing their J.C. examination. Jeffrey seems very happy at Kingswood. Denis, Ruth says, is as brown as a berry. They had a very happy holiday at Port Alfred.

I have exceeded my usual length of letters and shall be wearying you so must stop. We are always glad to hear from you and so keep the family together.

No rain yet.

Much love to each and all from us both

Dad

34 Dundas Street  
Cradock  
Thursday February 10<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

Well, Mom's 76<sup>th</sup> anniversary has passed and gone. We left it to Rev Weavers to invite the women of the church here to afternoon tea and we had over thirty. Enid, Iris and May came in to help Mom and were of great assistance. We had a few men friends, such as old Mr Dersley, Uncle Bertie, Mr Weavers etc. The lounge was, of course, too small to accommodate them all at once so some overflowed into the dining room where tea was served to the majority. We had no fixed programme but all seem to have enjoyed themselves. Most of the visitors had a look round the garden and we gave them fruit. I don't know when Mom will get round to visit them all. Mom had a couple of bottles of scent sent her and a few hankies. Aunt Eliza sent a nice card on the home beautiful. I think I must get some copies of it and send one to each of you.

Letter from Grace today says Dot is not going to her at present. I have suggested that Dot goes and spends some time with Joe as Blodwen has gone to her people at Plumstead with the children. I do not know how long she expects to be away. She looks to return via Port Elizabeth and here.

Our plans are still in the melting pot. Dot and Reg are looking to go by car to East London to fetch Mrs Hudson and take her home to Vryburg. They look to break the journey here for a day or two. Under these circumstances, we are thinking that we will cut out going to Potgietersrus this trip – that is if we can go at all – and simply “do” Vryburg, Kroonstad, and Bloemfontein. I have received a quotation from the Railway giving particulars of the suggested itinerary. Dot suggests that should we be away when they arrive, we should leave the key so that they could help themselves. Of course we want to be here when they are here. Our Cradock Show is on March 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. The Minister of Railways is coming to open it and the Council is trying to arrange a deputation to interview him as there is a possibility of a large transfer of some hundreds of railway employees and their families being transferred to Cookhouse. This would mean a considerable loss to the town. I should be here for that. We tried to arrange to interview him at Bedford today as he is visiting that town on political business but he could not manage it.

Birthday letters for Mom came from each of you and no doubt will be acknowledged in due course. Douglas reports 1½ inches of rain which was very welcome. He also reminds us that it was just 30 years ago that we migrated to Vryburg. He does not regret it and I hope none of the others do. Strange to say neither Evelyn nor Douglas refer to the outstanding success of their three children all passing the same exam together. They also report the arrival of a son to Frank Short and his wife. Did any of you remember that on January 29<sup>th</sup>, Douglas and Evelyn celebrated their 20<sup>th</sup> wedding day? I fear I forgot to mention it at the time. Hearty congratulations.

Did any of you listen in to Ruth's talk on trees about a fortnight ago? I was not able to as I was at the Council election all that day.

Thursday, 6 am. Clouds come up daily and every indication of rain is in the sky but no rain falls. We have enough water in our reservoirs to last for a few months but it is getting late for our summer rains. I hope that when it does come, we shall not have floods. I am contemplating building a large underground tank so as to be prepared for storing all that comes our way. We have had the painters about for some time doing up the outside doors and windows. I am sending each of you a set of snaps which Jo took when here at New Year. They will give you a better idea of the house.

We saw Aunt Eliza last evening as we went up there in the cool. She still suffers a good deal with her knees and finds it very difficult to rise from a chair. She hopes that Aunt Emmie will come here soon after her return from England.

This is a month for birthdays, Mom's, Muriel's, Uncle Herbert would be 80 on 14<sup>th</sup>, Christine, Pam's on 17<sup>th</sup>, Aunts Hetty, Nelly and Emmie on three consecutive days. My father died at the age of 64, Mother 77 and brother John also at 77, all in February.

Much love to all,  
Dad





34 Dundas Street  
Cradock  
Thursday February 17<sup>th</sup> 1938

My dear All,

I am very sorry that I missed posting my last week's letter on Thursday afternoon. I was very busy but had them all ready to post but in my hurry, left them on my desk. I could have kicked myself for being so careless as I know you always like to have them on Friday or Saturday. I will try to be more careful in future.

Aunt Eliza made a discovery the other day – a discovery that I knew of for some time. That was that I am getting bald or in other words, my forehead is getting further back. I do not know if it is the increased responsibilities that is causing it or the fact that since I am in the habit of sleeping out, I usually wear a crocheted cap Mom made for me but the fact remains. However, I can still boast having more wool on the top of my head than either Douglas or Joe. I am also finding it increasingly difficult to shave myself without cutting my skin instead of superfluous hair. If I could get away for, say, three months into the wilds somewhere, I could not be seen for, say, three months, I would come back with a respectable beard and have it clipped like Uncle Herbert used to. By the way, Uncle would have been 80 last Monday, had he lived.

We had a surprise visitor last Friday night. About 4.30 am I heard a heavy thud on the floor, in fact the floor of my sleeping porch shook. At first I thought it might be an earth tremor but I also heard a sort of scuffle and then I thought it was a heavy cat or dog that might have jumped off the table so of course I shouted voetsek. Then I saw the light in the dining room switch on and Mom called out "are you sick?" She also had woke up and had seen flashes in her bedroom. I made a careful search in each room but could not find any trace of anyone or anything missing. Nor was there any marks of anyone having got in through the windows – which we always leave open for the sake of getting the house cool at night. The only thing we saw out of its place was a door mat at the dining room door was not straight. We are still wondering what it could have been. Our milk is generally delivered at the time – 4.30 am but the milkman knows nothing about it. However, no harm was done and nothing is missing. It must have been something as Mom is a very sound sleeper and it is unusual for her to wake. All the windows and sill have been recently painted and there is not a scratch to be seen. Of course, the front door was locked but the door from the sleeping porch to the dining room was open. So that is that.

The opening of the extension to the Sunday School Primary Hall on Friday went off very well. Nearly £15 was raised during the evening.

Douglas writes that they have had some rain and things are looking brighter. He is always very busy and is looking forward to Arthur's help. Grace writes that Dot has not arrived yet. She has asked Joe to spend the weekends there when Dot comes rather than for Dot to go to him. They are looking forward to her visit.

Ruth writes that Jeffrey spent Sunday afternoon and had supper with her and Denis. He seems very happy and likes Kingswood. Denis is prefect this year and gets special privileges so is able to pop in and out frequently. Dot's usual letter has not arrived today (I am writing this on Wednesday).

I am sorry to say Mom is not up to the mark today. Eating too much fruit is probably the cause of a stomach upset. She is spending today in bed.

Our holiday plans have not matured during the week. It seems increasingly difficult to make plans. We are having a lot of unnecessary trouble with one of our women councillors and the head of one of our municipal departments. It would not be fair on my part to shirk the responsibilities of my office but I hope things will settle down before long. I am glad to say I have the loyal backing of all except one in the Council.

Blodwen looks to leave Cape Town about the 5<sup>th</sup> March. She reports that the children are well but the weather has been rather on the cold side. Her mother and sister are not too well. Joe

of course finds it lonely without anyone at home. He is under doctor's treatment and his blood pressure is said to be lower.

Thursday morning. I am glad to say Mom is better this a.m. and is up (9 am). We had a beautiful rain last evening and it would have been nice had it kept on all night. However, it has nearly filled both of our tanks and clearly demonstrates to me that we shall require much more storage capacity if we want to save all the rainwater that falls on this house. I am therefore getting estimates for an underground tank 16 ft long by 10 ft wide and ten ft deep. This would hold ten thousand gallons. This would enable us to be independent of the town water supply and we would have the added advantage of having rainwater for the bathroom etc. The ordinary annual rainfall would keep us well supplied.

On Wednesday evening, I attended a meeting of the Joint Council of Europeans and Bantus when the question of the Municipalisation of kaffir beer was discussed. Government has passed a new law by which Councils are empowered to deal with this question and it was to get the opinion of the natives how best to enforce the law. The meeting did not arrive at any final recommendation so I offered to attend a further meeting in the location the following afternoon. So yesterday I had another two hours with them. I hope we have convinced them that the Council's effort to manufacture the stuff and sell it under strict supervision will be to their advantage. The Council will decide on its line of action on Tuesday.

Notification has just come to hand from Howard Hemming that General Meeting of Friends is being arranged for Port Elizabeth for Easter. I do not know if I shall be able to work this in on my return trip from Cape Town after attending the Mayoral Congress at the Strand. Rufus Jones of America is expected to be there. Another important meeting is fixed for April 23<sup>rd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> here. The Government Rural Industrial Commission is to sit here. Six months of my term of office expires at the end of this month. The time has gone very quickly.

We are thinking of inviting boarders at Rocklands here for Saturday to come and have a good feed of grapes and figs. We shall have to have them in two batches as there are about eighty boarders.

Later. No letters from Joe so far. Hope he is keeping well. Dot writes that she has nothing to write about as my last week's letter had not arrived. She is still at Potgietersrus and waiting for an opportunity of a lift to Johannesburg and then on to Grace. She says their plans may have to be altered so we must wait and see. Aunt Jessie writes from Port Elizabeth. She has gone down about her eyesight which has been troubling her for some time.

We have paid for this house as Mom has received her portion of Uncle Herbert's legacy (£850 so far). Some of those who bought ground find that the farms purchased are larger than stated at the sale and they bought at so much per morgen. The properties have been re-surveyed so this is holding up the settling of the estate.

Thursday afternoon. I find we had 22 points of rain last night. It looks promising for more this afternoon or night. We can do with it all.

I must be careful not to miss the post today so will close with love to all. Mom is resting as I write and has kept about all the morning. She has not written much this week but send love to all.

Dad

34 Dundas Street  
Cradock  
Thursday February 24<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

It is early Wednesday morning and I want to get a move on. It was 11.30 before our Council meeting was over last night. Two deputations waited on us which took up to an hour of valuable time. I am thankful to say that the official who has given us such a lot of trouble has seen the error of his ways and has tendered a full apology and will be leaving the Council employ on or before June 30<sup>th</sup> if he cannot find other employment before then. Practically the whole of Monday I was occupied with consultations with his attorney. It has been a very trying time but I am glad that it is over and no doubt we shall have smoother sailing in consequence. I have never come across such a peculiar temperament. It is a useful experience. We are hoping that one of our women councillors, who has been at the back of a good deal of the trouble, will see fit to withdraw as well. So much for Council work.

I expect you remember the three large framed pictures which I took over from Aunt Emmie and had them hanging in my office at the YMCA? I tried to get the Y.M. to buy them from me but they could not afford it. So now that we have suitable rooms in which to hang them, I got a Cape Town firm to pack them and send them up. They arrived safe and sound on Friday and are now adorning one wall in our sitting room. They are steel plate engravings – two are Dora's. By the way, it is Aunt Emmie's 72<sup>nd</sup> birthday today. They have booked to return by the Cape Town Castle on April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Our boy John, who is the father of two children, approached me the other day to lend him five pounds as he now wants to get married. This would mean that he would be in debt for an indefinite period. I did not see my way to comply.

We get all sorts of official invitations. We are expected to attend a ball in aid of the Prison Officers Orphans Fund on March 4<sup>th</sup>. The D.R. Church choir is giving a sacred cantata on 26<sup>th</sup>. We shall certainly go to the latter but am doubtful about the former. Then we are notified that there is to be a Friends General Meeting at Port Elizabeth at Easter weekend. I hope to go to that on my way back from the Mayoral Congress at Cape Town. The Minister of Railways is coming to open the Show here in March and a strong deputation is to wait on him respecting the possibility of the Administration transferring all their railway staff to Cookhouse. This would mean the removal of about six hundred souls – a very serious matter for the town. A Government Commission is also visiting us respecting the development of industries in up country towns instead of so many young people flocking to the coast in search of work. All these things and others affect our holiday plans. Added to this is the uncertainty of Reg and Dot's movements. We are hoping they will still be able to visit us but I fear the motor journey from East London to Vryburg would be more of a strain upon Reg's mother than the journey by train.

Joe sent a hurried note to say he was spending last Sunday at Kroonstad. I hope we shall hear today how they all are. Letters from the family last week were very brief.

Have you seen the National Park stamps? They are rather pretty. They cannot be used as postage stamps but are advertisements.

Wednesday afternoon. Letters this morning from Evelyn, Grace, Joe and Dot. All good news. Joe left Kroonstad by same train as Dot arrived. He is to spend next weekend with them. Dot hopes to spend a fortnight there. I suggest Mom proceeds at once to join them as well and goes on to Vryburg for the wedding. Blodwen also writes that she is returning home direct from Cape Town and Joe will join her and all go to Durban for his holiday. This should be very nice. Mom cannot decide off hand but we will wire if it comes off.

I am posting this on Wednesday as I have nothing more to add.

Much love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street  
Cradock  
Thursday March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

It is Wednesday afternoon. Another month has passed and we shall be looking to make arrangements for Xmas soon. We are still getting acknowledgement of last year's Xmas cards. This week we had a nice letter from Mrs Ross Roberts who is in England. We often took them out for motor rides when we were in Cape Town.

Dot wrote early in the week saying they were not going to East London as Mrs Hudson had decided to go back to Vryburg by train. So Reg will join her at Kroonstad on Sunday and after spending a few days with Grace, will motor over to Vryburg. They wanted us to join them but Mom did not care for the long motor journey. As they were not coming to us, I suggested that we go by train direct to Vryburg and stay for the wedding and I would return directly afterwards and Mom could go on with Reg and Dot by car to Potgietersrus. I thought this would be easy but it would mean someone meeting Mom in Joburg on the way home, after spending some time with Grace and Joe whilst I am in Cape Town. However, Mom does not like the idea of being separated so we are going to stay here. We will write to Trixie for her birthday and wedding. I am sorry to miss seeing all the friends but hope all of you will come and visit us as you have opportunity. I still hope to go to Cape Town unless anything upsets my plans. Grace and Dot were hoping to pay a short visit to Joe this week. Am glad to hear he has spent the last two weekends at Kroonstad.

We had nice letters from Arthur and Rex a few days ago. They seem very pleased with themselves in having passed their exams and also Taalbond. Arthur expects to leave school in June and Kingsley may go after that. Am glad to hear that they have had fine rains in Vryburg district. Was pleased to read in the Stellander the account of the successful Beef Day Douglas had arranged.

We tried our hand at marketing last week. We sent 100 quinces to market and they were sold in lots of five and realised the magnificent sum of a ½d per lot so after deducting the market commission we got the small (very small) fortune of nine pence for the 100! We are not repeating the experiment. We have given away heaps of figs and grapes. They have been a lovely crop and if we are spared next year, perhaps we shall be able to sell some of them.

Ruth has finished writing her book of children's stories and I expect it is on the way to Uncle Willie who has promised to see what he can do in getting it published in England. I hope it will turn out to be a big financial success. Ruth has worked very hard to get it finished.

The local Sunday school made a second attempt to get to Fish River to repeat the entertainment they gave locally in aid of the S.S. funds. Rain, however, for the second time upset their plans and after getting about halfway in eight cars, had to turn back. Aunt Jessie was in town the same day and as neither of us had seen the entertainment, Mom went back with Auntie in her car and came back the next morning by train. The children went the next evening and did very well. They made over £8. I could not go as I had meetings to attend. We went to hear a cantata in the D.R. Church that evening and quite enjoyed it. We seldom do go to any entertainment nor do we play cards etc. I seldom get time to play the pianola either. On Friday night Mom is to present the prizes at the Sunday school meeting. Sunday is the annual Harvest Festival. We shall be sending grapes, figs and pomegranates for decorating the church. Mr Seller, the organist, has left Cradock. We are having a lady at present in that position. I am told she does not know how to use the stop or soft pedal.

It may interest you to know that the expenses in connection with the purchase of this house were as follows: Government transfer duty £33/3/0. This includes an item of 12/8/0 "expenses". The rates for this year amounted to 20/8/6 and fire insurance for this year 1/4/2. Of course the rates and insurance are annual charges. I am glad to say it is all paid for.

On Tuesday afternoon we paid a few formal calls. It is very tiring walking all over the place.

Thursday morning. Dot reports the death of Mr Fincham. She does not say which one. I presume she means A.W. who bought our house in Vryburg. I had a letter from him at Xmas. I see I have got to the end of the sheet.

Much love to all  
Dad

34 Dundas Street  
Cradock  
Thursday March 10<sup>th</sup> 1938

My dear All,

We are very disappointed that we are not having a visit from Reg and Dot and I am more disappointed that we are not going to Vryburg but that cannot be helped. The wedding is this day next week and I trust it will be a nice fine day – although we often say in South Africa “happy is the bride that the rain falls on”. We shall be with you in thought. It is Wednesday morning as I write and I am thankful to say we have had some nice rains the last few days. Both our rainwater tanks have been overflowing and I am arranging for the erection of two or three more so as to save all the rain that falls on our roof. If necessary, I will build an underground tank as well. This will enable us to be independent of the town supply and will ensure our being able to keep a flower garden alive in times of drought.

We heard from England that Eric had had an experience with a puff adder on his stoep. I have shot two of them in my time. I am thankful that no one was bitten. It is a long way to get news of Vryburg via England. We also hear – though not direct – that Kingsley is going to school at Eric’s.

The mornings are getting dark now and I find it difficult to rise as early as I usually do. However I do get up between 5.30 and ½ to six but I shall have to switch on the lights soon if I am going to do any writing before breakfast. I still sleep out on the back stoep and enjoy the fresh air. Last Friday evening Mom presented the prizes to the S.S. children. There was quite a crowd of them. The church held its harvest festival last Sunday and had the sale of produce the following evening. I think they did very well financially. Today - Wednesday – we are supposed to go to Mortimer to a Women’s Agricultural Show but as it rained so much yesterday, I am doubtful if it will be worthwhile going as the roads will be in a terrible mess. Will phone later on to enquire.

We are sorry to hear of Mr Arthur Fincham’s death. I have written to Mrs Fincham. I wonder if she will continue to reside at Port Alfred. She was always the delicate one.

Our old friend, Rev Hornabrook, will be 88 on 11<sup>th</sup> instant. He is going to England in May. He is a wonderful old man.

I dreamed a few nights ago that Ted had phoned to say that they were leaving for Somerset East shortly. I wish the dream would come true. It is about three years ago that he was told that he might be transferred soon.

Our boy John was away for two days and Matilda, who has been doing the washing, is again sick.

Blodwen is due to leave Cape Town on Thursday. She seems to have had a nice holiday. Four weeks soon pass. Joe says they may perhaps go to Durban for the continuation of his holiday in May. He would like to go to the wedding. Am glad Dot went to Bloemfontein for a day or so. Joe did appreciate the visit.

Wednesday afternoon. Letters from Grace and Dot tell of David and Jean having been removed to hospital as being suspected of having contracted enteric fever. Grace in her last letter said Jean was not well. Reg arrived just as the ambulance was taking the children to hospital. All of them have now been inoculated and it is to be hoped that there will not be any further outbreaks. Reg and Dot are staying in Kroonstad until next Monday and hope to be able to get over to Vryburg for the wedding on 17<sup>th</sup>. We can only hope for the best. Mrs Hudson has arrived back in Vryburg and her doctor gives a good report of her.

The woman councillor (Mrs Moolman) who has been giving so much trouble is standing for Parliament. I should not think she has a shadow of a chance of getting in. I hope not. Will post this now instead of tomorrow.

Lots of love  
Dad

34 Dundas Street  
Cradock  
Thursday March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

It is Wednesday morning, a beautiful day appears to be in store for us. The weather has been very nice lately except that some days have been a little too hot. We have both our tanks full – equal to over 2,000 gallons on hand and two more tanks will be put up this week. We shall then install rainwater for all purposes instead of the town water. This will be nice for baths etc. The first news of importance is regarding Grace's children. At the time of writing, there has not been any fresh cases, for which we are very thankful and trust there will not be. David has a private ward in the hospital but poor little Jean is in a ward with two other girls who apparently do not speak English and she is very unhappy. I hope this will not retard her recovery. Grace visits them three times a day. Reg and Dot and their boys were hoping to leave for Vryburg on Monday morning. Perhaps we shall hear today what has happened.

Aunt Jessie was in on Friday to dinner. She is very well but her glasses are not quite comfortable yet. We decided to spend the weekend with her as we have had a pretty hectic time lately. We enjoyed the quiet and rest. We went by train. Most of Saturday was spent watching the tennis players at the station courts. Quite a number of friends were there. The farmers had a meeting at the same time so I attended that. It was quite interesting listening to their discussions. They provided lunch in Uncle Herbert's Memorial Hall. Willie Saunders came along on Sunday afternoon and we had a good talk. He says his son Willie is still farming near Naboomspruit but does not seem to make much headway.

Thursday morning. We had made provision for entertaining members and supporters of the United political party here yesterday afternoon. We were given to understand that perhaps 40 or 50 might be here. As a matter of fact, only 15 turned up, consequently we have a good supply of cakes etc. over.

I must tell you that on Friday evening last week, Mrs Moolman held another of her meetings in the Town Hall and slated everyone as usual. None of the Councillors attended on principle as it was not a properly constituted ratepayers meeting. She said in the course of her speech that "the Mayor had told a deliberate lie" in connection with a Council matter. Ernest was also accused of all sorts of things and ordered to sit down. The Town Clerk, she said was not fit to occupy any public position etc ad lib. She was on the same train as we were on Saturday on her way to Cape Town. We were in the same saloon but not the same compartment. The Council has decided to hold a ratepayers meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> and to inform the public of the true state of affairs. My fellow Councillors are anxious that I should institute criminal proceedings against her for libel. It is pretty certain that the Town Clerk will do so. I have no desire to take action and am quite prepared to live down any accusation she or anyone else may care to make. She is giving the Council and the whole town a great deal of unnecessary trouble. The Council is calling a ratepayers meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> so as to explain to them the real position. I will not enlarge further as you will not be interested. Mom has not decided what to do when I go to Cape Town. It may perhaps be necessary to cancel the trip but I hope not as I want the rest and change. Have sent Trixie a wire this morning and hope the wedding has passed off very happily. Letter from Douglas says they are wanting rain again. He was with Joe on Sunday. Evidently he had an accident but does not mention particulars. No word from Joe or Blodwen but expect they are very busy after getting home from Cape Town.

I am sorry to have to cut this short but I have to go back to office just now to sign some important letters. We are both well and hope all of you are the same. No word today from Kroonstad so take it that the sick ones are progressing. Ted sent a line this week for which we are glad. Hope Grace does not get knocked up and all the members of the family keep well.

Much love to all

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Thursday March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

I do not know when last I have started writing my epistle so late as posting day but the fact of the matter is that we are living in such strenuous times lately that I have not been able to touch my letter sooner, and even now, I shall have to be brief. It is Show Day. Uncle Owen is staying with us. He came in by train on Tuesday evening and is returning by car this afternoon. Council meeting was on Tuesday evening and was not over until 10.30. Mrs Moolman has notified four of us that we are not entitled to our seats on the Council owing to some technical irregularity and has laid charges against us at the Police office. We have consulted the Attorneys and it may be necessary to resign and be re-elected again. She is out to make as much trouble as possible. Her own seat is also in question and she will probably be charged with criminal libel. She may also be standing for Parliament as an Independent. We shall not know for certain until nomination day what is going to happen. All this bother she is making is very disturbing but our consciences are quite clear so is not causing us any anxiety. It is the unnecessary annoyance that is the trouble.

Yesterday was the opening day of the Show. The Minister of Railways and Defence, Minister Pirrow came to open it. His aeroplane broke down at Bloemfontein and they had to get another from Pretoria to bring him on here. Just as the machine landed here, something went wrong and one wheel of the undercarriage twisted under the plane. It did not capsize and no one was hurt. They had to phone to Pretoria to send a third machine to take him back. Three machines in one day. He was of course late for the official opening. It only took them 1½ (one and half) hours to come from Bloemfontein. We had an interview with him in the afternoon re the rumoured transfer of many of the Railway employees from Cradock to Cookhouse. He assured us that nothing of the sort would happen for at least eight years and was not at all likely even then. In the evening we entertained him to dinner at the hotel. He is a good speaker but replied to my welcome in Afrikaans. Mom was of course there. After that, we looked in at the Show ball for a few minutes and were glad to get to bed by 10.30. Uncle Owen went to the circus in the evening.

My plans for the immediate future as far as I can see are to leave here April 1<sup>st</sup> at 9.30 pm for Port Elizabeth, leave Port Elizabeth 2<sup>nd</sup> for Cape Town. 3<sup>rd</sup> arrive Cape Town. 4<sup>th</sup> leave Cape Town. 4<sup>th</sup> arrive Port Elizabeth. 4<sup>th</sup> stay for Friends General Meeting over Easter and arrive home on 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup>. The day of our next Council meeting. Mom may go to Green Ridge for a week or so and has asked Mrs McLeod to come and stay with her here for a time. We hoped Grace and the children would be able to come here for a change but they have not referred to it yet.

Dot sent a postcard to say that Trixie's wedding passed off very happily. No doubt we shall hear further particulars later. We think Reg and Dot will be back in their home at the end of this week. We sincerely hope there will not be any further cases of enteric after this. Grace and ? keep us informed by postcards how the two patients are getting on.

Joe tells of the accident that befell Douglas when he was taking Joe and another party to see some machines. He ran into a mule which damaged his car – does not say what happened to the mule – glad none of them were hurt. The car was damaged and they had to be towed back to Bloemfontein. Blodwen is safely back home and has had a good time at Cape Town.

I might have said that the point raised in connection with my seat, i.e. that the Bree Street property was not separately valued so far as rates are concerned. Of course that had nothing to do with me.

Later. Letters from Grace and Dot to hand. Grace says they cannot think of coming before middle of next month. Jean is very thin. David has been inoculated. Both are getting on. Dot does not say when they are returning but reports all well at Vryburg. You had better continue posting here and I will leave instructions where to forward. Hope you are all keeping well,

Lots of love to all, Dad



34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Thursday March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

It is Wednesday morning and as I want to be as free as possible for the remaining couple of days before starting for Cape Town, I must begin early. This afternoon I have to open the new sports ground for the native and coloured population which the Council has fenced in and levelled for them. There are plenty of other things to do before leaving.

You will all be very sorry to hear of poor little Roy's accident in Bloemfontein last Thursday morning. Blodwen had gone into town to see the dentist and of course Joe was at his work. Roy was sitting on the kerb in front of their house when a passing motor swerved right across the road and ran over the child. Something had gone wrong with the steering gear and the car went right over the child. Fortunately a lady who knew first aid work was passing and did what she could for him. It was thought he was dead. The ambulance was phoned for and he was removed to hospital. The police phoned to the works for Joe and when Blodwen got home, Roy was in hospital. Ten stitches had to be put into his head and he was bruised all over. Both Joe and Blodwen slept at the hospital that night. Yesterday's report says he is making a wonderful recovery. It is to be hoped there will not be any permanent injury to the child. Of course it was purely an accident and Blodwen says the driver of the car was mad with grief.

We hope to hear today how Grace's family is faring. There have not been any fresh cases so far so we hope it is only a case of nursing them up. Reg and Dot, we expect, are home again by now. The wedding passed off very nicely. The Stellander had a nice account of same.

Evelyn says they are needing rain again very badly. Her garden must look lovely. They and all of us may be proud of Arthur having won the Griqualand West tennis championship for boys under 12 at school. I am sorry that my paper has again torn and I must skip a few lines. I don't know what is the cause of this happening.

Later. Letter from Grace just to hand says they hope that the children will be allowed out of hospital this week. They have been there for just a month at £1 per day! This is some expense. Ted hopes to get some reduction in the charge. They have not decided if they will come here for a change before going back to school.

Later. Two postcards from Blodwen report Roy making good progress except that one of the wounds was a little septic and doctor could not remove all the stitches for another few days. They hope to have him home very soon. Grace writes that both her patients are getting on. Neither of them have had to have their heads shaved. They hope to have them home this week. It is David's birthday, 31<sup>st</sup>. Hard lines to have to spend it in hospital. It is costing them a £1 per day for hospital fees. Joe is more fortunate in that respect as the Railway pays for wives and family illness.

Thursday. I will not trouble you with municipal matters but Mrs Moolman is still on the war path. The general opinion is that she is going out of her mind. She has a brother in the asylum. She is a terrible nuisance. The Council has right on their side so we need not worry. Mrs Harry McLeod is coming to stay with Mom from tomorrow whilst I am away. She is Mom's cousin, daughter of old Mrs Trollip. I am not taking my typewriter but will keep you in touch with postcards. If you want to post direct to me, you can address c/o Mr Tom Webster, c/o Fletcher & Cartwright, Cape Town as I do not know where I shall be staying but can always get in touch with him. No news from Bloemfontein today so take it there is no change. Grace is having a lot of trotting about but hopes soon to have her children home again. I am taking a supply of postcards with me and will keep in touch with you all. It would be nice if Trixie and husband returned via Cradock. Hope you all keep well. Lots of love to all of you and don't forget to write as often as you can. Mom will send on anything to me.

Yours lovingly,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Thursday April 21<sup>st</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

It is quite early this morning and I feel that I must get a letter off today as I have not written for nearly three weeks. I only got home on Tuesday morning and have been kept busy ever since and am by no means up to date with correspondence. However, I must say I have had a very nice change and whilst it is not always easy to concentrate on close work at meetings, it has been very nice to renew old acquaintances and meet friends. All seemed pleased to meet me. The Mayoral Congress proceedings will not interest you very much so will only say that these gatherings do afford one an excellent opportunity of exchanging views with one another on many subjects. The weather was fine all the time except for one or two little showers, none of which interfered with my movements. I saw Frank Wookey at the Congress and had afternoon tea one day with Rev and Mrs Oliver. They are all very well and remarked how well I was looking. We had much in common to talk about and were glad to hear of all the family. I was told that Kingsley Jennings is most likely giving up his government appointment and reverting to private practice. I did not see May or Constance.

At Cape Town I stayed with Gladys and Tom at Rondebosch. They have a nice home and garden in front. The ferns seem to do remarkably well and roses too. Gladys is kept very busy and entertains a good deal. Joyce and Dudley I also saw. They have a nice home and Ray is full of life. Gladys' boys are getting on nicely at school. Alan is coming to Cradock for the holidays. Mr and Mrs Halliday came to Joyce's to see me. Mr Halliday seems to be losing his memory otherwise they are well. Gladys went with me to meeting on Sunday morning. The attendance of eight was considered larger than usual. I was struck with the many new buildings which have been erected since we left Cape Town. The traffic control seemed much worse than when we were there. I only went to Sea Point once and that was to attend S.O.E. meeting in the evening so did not see much of the place. Dr Dommisee was glad to see me and said he thought I was good for another ten years' work. I spent one afternoon and evening at the Gushes at Mowbray. They are right up against the railway line but do not find the trains too noisy. They are all well and I should judge are doing better than formerly. Rev Hornabrook is going to England next month. He is just over 88.

At Port Elizabeth it was nice meeting Friends. Mr and Mrs Rufus Jones were the chief visitors and spoke very nicely in meetings and he gave two public addresses. The Mayoress entertained us all at Sea View to afternoon tea. I did not see Una but her husband told me he was being retrenched as he had over bought too much stock for the firm he is working for. They do not know yet what they will do but perhaps he may get another job in Port Elizabeth. He would like to start in East London where he is well known and his people are there. He is quite bright about it and has no fear for the future. I had a meal with Maisie and Charles in their new home. Mr Merrifield is to have an operation similar to Joe's but finds it difficult for business reasons to get the time. I forgot to say that I saw Mrs Price at Cape town and her family – or rather some of them. They were going to Port Elizabeth but the doctor said no on account of her heart.

You will be sorry to hear that Denis was stunned whilst playing football recently and was taken to hospital. He is better and is home again now. It was an anxious time for Ruth. I phoned Port Elizabeth to find how he was. We are glad to know that Roy is home again after his accident. There is to be a court case about it today in Bloemfontein.

It is nice to be home again. Mom has written to you all I think and I have not time to write much more. I was disappointed in not getting more news whilst away but am glad to find all was well. There is much more I would like to write about but must leave that for another time. I am glad to say we are both well and hope to have good news from you all during the day.

Much love to all as though named  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Thursday April 28<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

We are still alive and able to give a fair account of ourselves. The long looked for ratepayers meeting was held on Friday last and was attended by about five hundred people. Mrs Moolman proposed a vote of no confidence which was hopelessly lost but a poll was demanded and this will take place next Friday. There has been a continuous stream of congratulations on the success of the meeting and the way it was conducted. We have no fear as to the result of the poll. I have sent you copies of the Midland which contains a fair report of the meeting.

This same Mrs Moolman was nominated for Parliament on Tuesday. Her husband proposed her and her Aunt seconded her. Evidently she could not get anyone else to do it. The Election is May 18<sup>th</sup> and we shall see what we expect to see.

We had our regular Council meeting on Tuesday and Mrs Moolman was quite reasonable and even inclined to be friendly.

Yesterday we entertained 20 members of the WCTU who were to meet Mrs Roberts (President) but owing to some misunderstanding as to the time of her arrival, we had the meeting without her. Miss Sprigg, daughter of the late Sir Gordon Sprigg, former Prime Minister of the Cape, spoke instead. Mrs Roberts arrived by motor bus from Queenstown about 7.30 and was timed to address a public meeting at 8. Owing to the misunderstanding about her arrival, there was only a handful of people present. We put her up for the night. She is not up yet. She goes on by 9 am train this morning to Somerset East. She is related to the Roberts here. Mary is also staying with us from Tuesday to Saturday when she goes to Nelspoort to nurse for a time at the T.B. Sanatorium for a time. The Poplars is full up as they are entertaining Dorothy's young man. Their official engagement is being announced in today's Midland. We do not know the lucky chap but hear he is very nice. She met him in Louisvale recently. Bill Murray is his name.

We are thankful to hear that Denis is better again. He was much more seriously injured than I first realised. We can all be very thankful that his life was spared. Roy, too, had a narrow escape but he seems to be alright. The driver of the car was fined 30/-. I wonder what punishment would have been inflicted had he killed the child.

Douglas says he has booked for Kingsley and Rex to go to Kingwood next January. This will be nice for us as we shall be so much nearer to them and I hope we shall be able to go and see them and they come to us for short holidays.

Grace and Ted write that the children have good appetites but are still very weak on their legs. We have not heard if they are coming to us for a change. Dot writes brightly as usual. They seem to have such nice friends there. It is Dot's birthday in a few days time also Alan's. I think they sometimes wish, as we do, that they were nearer here. We are not looking to go away this winter. It is getting very cold in the mornings now. Last night the minimum was only six degrees above freezing. I am still sleeping out. We went to watch a rugby match yesterday afternoon against Albany. Our men were beaten. We still have a few late grapes on the vines. They have been very fine this year. When they are pruned, I must get the trellis strengthened as I notice the wooden supports are rotting.

I forgot to mention that Rev Jennings was in Rhodesia when I was in Cape Town and Mrs Jennings is in England. I met Mr Schonberg on board coming round. I had my only game of deck quoits with him. A Miss Duminey, who was on the Tiger Kloof staff, was also on board.

After breakfast. Have just seen our visitor off to Bedford. She is a very nice old lady and knows so many people we know.

I shall not be able to write more as I have to attend and address a meeting respecting Government building another dam in the river. They have practically promised this but are delaying the matter until the silt problem is settled. When that will be, no one knows.

I wonder how Aunt Emmie is feeling today. The party go on board tomorrow. They have had a wonderful time in England. They have travelled all over the country.

We are both well and enjoying the nice weather. Love from Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Thursday May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

Today Dorothy celebrates her 33<sup>rd</sup> anniversary. I hope she has a happy day – she has already written to say that she always does. Alan also has a birthday this month. We are having beautiful weather now, frosts most mornings but beautiful days after it. I have erected a small birdbath at our back door but have not seen any using it yet. I have put the two locus birds made by natives out of ox horns standing on the water in the hopes of attracting them but perhaps our local birds do not recognise them. However, they look very nice and cool there.

On Saturday last we had news from England that my old friend, Captain Upton, died in London on April 13<sup>th</sup>. I have not had any particulars but in his last letter he said he was not well. I still hold his Power of Attorney and am wondering if I shall have to act for him in connection with his properties he has in the Union.

News from Grace and Ted informs us that they have to go back to their plot outside Kroonstad. The owner of their house in the town is coming back to live there and they cannot find another house in the whole of the place. It will cost them less in rent and interest and rates etc but there will be the cost of transport for the children to and from school. A bus service is being started from those in the neighbourhood so that should ease matters in that respect. I expect Grace will have to give up some of her activities in town. They are hoping to have electric light laid on and a new road is to be constructed to open up a new township just over the river. I hope it will turn out to their advantage. It certainly is a healthy spot. They move at the end of this month.

Ruth has an article in the Outspan of 29<sup>th</sup> April. Hope you have all seen it. She has also sent another lot of stories to England for publication. Denis seems to have got over his accident wonderfully well. The doctors are pleased as they thought it might have had fatal results.

Joe and Blodwen too may be thankful – and of course are – for Roy's recovery. He too might have died from the effects of the car crashing into him. Joe has put in a claim for £15 damages and also in case anything materialises as a result of the accident in the next four years, the owner will be held responsible. I hope he may be successful in getting his claim.

We have received snaps of Trixie's wedding and are returning same to Dot. We have invited them to spend some time with us on the way back to Joburg but have not heard from them. They said when they wrote acknowledging the present we sent them that they hoped to return via Port St Johns.

Tomorrow I shall be sitting as Returning Officer all day in the Council chamber from 8 am to 8 pm. The supporters of the Council are working hard and there is very little doubt but that the vote of no confidence will be lost by a very substantial majority. This, I hope, will effectively shut up Mrs Moolman. She has not a ghost of a chance of winning a seat in Parliament either. Tomorrow and Friday will be busy days for Vryburg as they are their Show days. Hope Douglas takes some prizes. Arthur leaves school at the end of this term. They will be very glad of his help at home.

Since my return from Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, my operated eye seems to have undergone some sort of a change. I cannot see as clearly as before. I cannot account for it. There seems to be something floating over the eye whilst I am reading and I cannot see as clearly when in church. I could read the inscription on one of the memorial tablets from where we sit but now I cannot. If I have any business in Port Elizabeth in the near future, I shall run down and let Dr Stewart see if there is anything wrong. I still have the right eye that can be operated on if necessary. I sincerely hope it won't be.

After breakfast. Mary left for her new appointment on Saturday morning. Her address is Nelspoort Sanatorium, Nelspoort, Cape Province. We enjoyed her stay with us very much. Mom and I went for a nice walk yesterday afternoon to see the spot where we are hoping to build another storage reservoir for the town. It will be up the river and near where the present one is. It will cost a few thousands and will give us the water here on the spot instead of storing it in

Grass Ridge dam. We lose about 75 per cent of the water by bringing it down the 30 miles in the river. When both reservoirs are full, we shall have one month's supply on hand.

Lots of love from Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Thursday May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear Children,

We are sending each of you a present of a cheque for £20 (twenty pounds) and hope same will be of real assistance to you. We know you have had special expenses through illness, accidents etc. in your homes and we want to help you in this way.

Your loving parents  
Dad & Mom

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Saturday morning, May 7<sup>th</sup> 1938

My dear All,

I now you will be anxious to hear the result of the poll which took place yesterday. As Returning Officer, I was at the polling booth (the Council Chamber) from ¼ to eight am till past eight pm. Mom sent up my dinner and afternoon tea and we did not want for refreshments.

157 voted in favour of the no confidence vote and

352 against it.

195 majority in favour of the Council.

After I had announced the result, Mrs Moolman said the result was not sufficient to cause her to tender her resignation and she would carry on in the interests of the Ratepayers as before. So the end of our troubles may not be over yet. Her three years service as a Councillor expires at the end of August and so does mine. No doubt there will be strong opposition to her being re-nominated. However we shall wait and see.

Another item of news I have to tell you is that five lads went for a joy ride about nine pm on Thursday along the new National road and had a very serious accident. The party included Uncle Norman's two youngest boys, Rev Weavers' eldest son, Moys' son, a Port Elizabeth lad and another lad in town. Six of them in all. Moys was driving when they collided with a donkey waggon. The three sitting in front – Moys, Wright, and the P.E. lad were killed and Rev Weavers' son was seriously injured. He is still lying unconscious in the hospital. Most of the lads, if not all of them, are Kingwood boys on holiday. The P.E. boy lived next door to Friend Addis Smith at Walmer. Ernest had to get in touch with him to break the news to his parents. Uncle Norman's boys and the other lad who were sitting at the back got off with slight cuts and bruises. The car knocked over the coping of a culvert and turned over two or three times. The wonder is that anyone escaped alive. Mom went out to the spot with Uncle Norman during the day (I could not go being at the polling booth). One of the boys had all his clothing ripped off. I hear that Moys had one of his legs wrenched off. He was a twin and a very promising lad. He was not a licensed driver I hear. They attended the Methodist Church. The funeral is to take place tomorrow. Needless to say the accident has cast a sad gloom over the whole town. Mr Weavers was down to take service at Dagga Boer tomorrow but I expect will cancel same unless one of us laymen go instead.

Another item of news which I do not think I have recorded is the Engagement of Ernest's second daughter, Dorothy, to a Mr Murray, a civil engineer on the Irrigation Department and at present stationed at Louisvale. He has been in Cradock before but they met again whilst Dorothy was on holiday there recently. The news came as a great surprise as everyone anticipated the choice would have fallen in another direction.

I wrote the above before breakfast. I have since called upon My Moys and offered our condolence. He informs me that after attending the scout meeting on Thursday evening, his son (about 16 years old) asked his father if he should put his car away as it was standing in the street. He said yes but as the garage was full and he had some of his scout friends with him, he presumes he yielded to a sudden temptation for all of them to go for a spin. His son was a good driver and was passionately fond of driving. He does not blame him as he says he knows what boys are like and what he was at his age. He was a very promising lad and was getting on well at school. I also called on Rev Weavers and he had just returned from the hospital. There is still no change in his son's condition. His temperature has gone to 102. He has twice opened his eyes but has not shown any signs of recognition. They fear his skull is fractured near the neck and the top of his head is seriously damaged. Goodbye.

Love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
As Thursday May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

There does not seem much news to report this week but I expect I shall fill the sheet before posting. I wrote to you since last Thursday about the awful accident to Rev Weavers' son and the two boys who were killed last Thursday evening. Mom and I went out on Saturday to the scene of the accident and it is wonderful how anyone escaped sudden death. None of the survivors can explain exactly what happened except that the car collided with a donkey wagon – none of the animals were hit. The car after travelling on the edge of the causeway and knocking over three or four of the curbing stones, landed on its side. The two lads killed were lying far apart and the car was a perfect wreck. Rev Weavers' son has at last gained a certain amount of consciousness but his collar bone is broken and there are multiple other injuries. His skull is fractured. Uncle Norman was here this afternoon (Wednesday) and says they were travelling about sixty or seventy miles an hour. The funeral of young Moys took place on Sunday afternoon. The church was packed, including the wings. Several people had to stand and crowds could not even get inside the building. Mr Weavers conducted the service and had wonderful strength and fortitude throughout. It is estimated that at least a thousand persons were at the graveside. He also conducted the service in the evening although ministers as well as laymen offered their services in order to relieve him. He had been most brave throughout. Of course it will be a long time before his son can go back to Kingswood. I do hope this accident will be a lesson to all of you not to do any speeding or take unnecessary risks.

I have heard from Dick Upton's nephew that I have been remembered in his Uncle's will but it will probably be several months before it is forthcoming. His nephew who resides in Pretoria, is his executor so far as his S.A. investments are concerned.

I am expecting to hear any time now that Aunt Emmie has arrived back in S.A. We all hope she will be able to come to Cradock before she settles down.

This day next week will be the Election and everyone will be anxious to hear the results. Locally we do not expect Mrs Moolman will get more than 100 votes. The United party held a mass meeting in the Town Hall last evening when Senator Conroy gave a slashing speech in reply to some of her questions. She will not be shut up. In her opinion she is the only person who is right and everyone else are wrong. She is giving all sections of the community a bad time but it will come to an end before long I hope.

We have had nice letters from Ruth, Grace and Dot. Grace is very disappointed at having to go back to the plot. She fears that there will be a lot of repairs to be done and they have not the electric light there at present but I hope that will be fixed up before long. Dot reports all well in her circle.

We have been fortunate in being able to use rainwater for our baths but shall have to revert to the town supply shortly if it does not rain very soon. On Sunday it looked very promising but it has all cleared off again. It has saved us from having chaps this winter.

Our boy John got married this morning so has the day off. I got a cake for him at the bazaar yesterday. Hope he turns up tomorrow.

Thursday afternoon. John turned up as usual. Letter from Joe does not refer to Roy so suppose he is alright. We have not started fires yet. We find our dining room is nice and warm also our bedroom. Letter from Grace also came this a.m. Jean says she hopes to catch up to the other scholars in her class. I am glad to say that Rev Weavers' son has so far regained consciousness but his is terribly sleepy. We all hope for a complete recovery but expect it will be a slow progress. I have four meetings this afternoon and evening to attend so must stop and have a few minutes rest before going to the first one at three. Hope you are all well. Lots of love and thanks for all letters received.

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Thursday May 19<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

I do not know when I have started my letter so late. It is now 4 to 11 and I have just been listening for the election results. So far no Nats have been recorded but their returns will be sure to come in later. So far the United Party are going strong with a lead of 53. No doubt others of you are also listening. We had a very heavy poll here yesterday. I do not think Mrs Moolman will get more than 100 votes.

We have seen, or rather the boy has seen, a few rats in the garden so have got some poison bait and hope that will stop the chance of them increasing. The Council is taking every precaution to guard against the introduction of plague from Port Elizabeth. The Council recently purchased three white springboks but unfortunately two ewes have died. We are trying to get some more to add to our Zoo.

Letters from Joe and Blodwen state that they are going for the rest of their holiday to Durban. They leave on Saturday night by train and return the following Sunday night. Apparently they are not taking their car. Joe has lost on the cattle he had running at Eric's. Owing to the drought, they had fallen off in condition and Douglas advised selling. However he made a good profit on the former transaction.

Young Weavers is still making very slow progress. He has periods of semi-consciousness but wanders considerably. His shoulder has been set and he appears to be suffering a good deal of pain. No one is allowed to see him.

Grace is more reconciled to going back to the plot now that way has opened for her to have electric light laid on and repairs to the house effected. The people who were living there now do not want to leave as houses are so scarce in the town.

Denis was able to earn £3 pocket money by counting the number of cars passing certain points for the National Road Board. Am glad to say he has quite recovered from his football accident and was playing in the school first team for under 19 against Albany. He was mentioned in the report of the match. I am glad to hear that he is joining the church next month. He is joining the Presbyterian Congregation.

We are looking to go to the Fish River Fete on 26<sup>th</sup> and hope they have a good day. This will be the second occasion when we shall all miss Uncle Herbert's presence. I am trying to get the rest of the family to pay off the balance of debt resting on the Memorial Hall. Uncle Herbert was very anxious that it should be free of any debt.

Aunt Emmie and party returned safe and sound last Friday. Muriel said Wallis went on by the same boat to Durban the next day as they were afraid of infection by diphtheria which is said to be bad in Cape Town. The weather was very wet there as well. We wish we could get some of it here. We are hoping that Aunt Emmie will come up here before she makes up her mind where to settle down. It is wonderful how she has travelled about in England. Her letters have been most interesting.

Trixie has settled down after her honeymoon. We had hoped that they would have come this way but they returned from East London via the Transkei.

The people who took our old flat kindly sent us some of the grapefruit the other day. We are enjoying them. We shall plant a tree as soon as the season is right. We are also planning to get a number of roses to form a trellis along the north and south walls. We hope to have a very nice garden this year. Have had a lot of manure ridden? on and every day make some improvement. The vines will have to be pruned about July and the trellis strengthened considerably. Today I have received 30 old boiler tubes from the railway which make excellent standards for supports.

After dinner. The results of the election are coming through very slowly. No change since 11 this morning. I received a very nice letter from Rev McGee, formerly of Harrismith. He has practically retired and both his daughters have babies.

Love from Dad



34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
As Thursday May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

It is Tuesday evening 24<sup>th</sup> but as we are going out by tomorrow mornings train to Fish River to help them get ready for the annual Fete on Thursday, I thought I would pen a few lines so as not to disappoint you in not getting the usual. We have just returned from church where a special bi-centenary service in commemoration of the two hundredth anniversary of the conversion of John Wesley. Perhaps some of you have been attending similar services. From all accounts Wesley worked wonders and saved England from civil war. The state of the country in the 18<sup>th</sup> century must have been very dreadful. I conducted the service here on Sunday morning and had quite a good congregation.

Well the election is over and we got our United Party man in by a good majority. Mrs Moolman, who stood as an Independent, only secured 36 votes. She has to forfeit her deposit of £50 to Government. Perhaps she will now see that she has not got the confidence of the people as she thought she had. We all hope that she will now see the wisdom of withdrawing from public life and attending to her cafe. Her business has practically gone to pieces and she has been having a liquidation sale.

Rev Weavers came in about a quarter to ten to try and get London on the air to hear the service from Wesley Chapel but we could not pick it up.

Wednesday morning. Am up at 5.30 in order to finish this before leaving a 7.25. Have taken Mom her early cup of tea and breakfast is nearly ready. John should be here in a few minutes.

Of course you all saw the result of the elections. Our Mrs Moolman only got 36 votes. Enough said.

Mom and I went to a vocal song recital in the Town Hall on Friday evening, it was got up by a local lady and was a great success so far as quality was concerned. The attendance was very disappointing.

On Saturday I went to two sales and amongst other things I bought a solid walnut expanding table for a mere song. It has been painted which had spoilt it to a very large extent. I am having it cleaned up and oiled. It will be large enough when extended to its full capacity to seat all the family and grandchildren at meals on our Golden Wedding, if we are spared to see it. So please all of you book that date. October 14<sup>th</sup> 1941.

We are having our Council meeting on Friday this week as yesterday was a holiday. We hope to be home either Thursday evening or Friday morning. We just lock up the house.

We have not received any letters from any of you this week (holidays always upset the postal arrangements). Hope there will be good news from all of you when we return.

Joe and Blodwen are spending the week at Durban. Hope they are having a nice time.

Must stop now and see to breakfast, lots of love to each and all.

Dad  
6.30 am

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Thursday June 9<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

A few weeks ago I mis-sent one copy of my circle letter to Mary instead of Grace and Mary has asked that I should continue sending her a copy as she seemed interested in the items of news. So I am trying to do nine copies today and if successful, will continue to do so if I do not forget. I have got so used to doing eight that I may make a mistake some time. I never re-read my letters but have kept a copy of same for several years – in fact ever since I started typing them. Perhaps some day I may find time to look through them again and no doubt shall realise what an awful typist I have been. So that is that. I am glad that you are all interested and if it has the desired effect of keeping the different members of the family in touch with each other, I am well rewarded.

The past week has been an exceptionally busy one and this and the next are likely to be the same. For instance, I have only had one free evening this week. Two evenings I have taken the chair at public meetings, one at which the Commissioner of the Salvation Army gave a most interesting address on Social Work and the next evening one addressed by the Government Probation Officer from Port Elizabeth. Both were well attended and greatly appreciated. There have also been a number of committee meetings and a special Council meeting at noon today and I have also to attend a lunch at the hotel given by the Chairman and Master of the Rhodes University. Yesterday afternoon four of heads of the Union Defence Force paid an official courtesy call at our home at which Mom provided afternoon tea. The Salvation Army Commissioner, we put him up for dinner, bed and breakfast. If any of you have the chance of hearing him, do so. He is very interested in cattle and hopes to visit Vryburg some time. He left by early train the following morning after I had given him breakfast. After his lecture we invited some of those who wanted to come home with us and have a cup of tea. They all quite enjoyed it.

We are expecting to hear the verdict in Mrs Moolman's case about Wednesday next. Have not seen anything of her since the trial was over. I doubt if she will attend the special Council meeting today.

Monday and Tuesday we were without any servant. John was alright up to the time he left on Saturday – we always give him the afternoon off – and Sunday as well – we go to Mrs Derecourt's for Sunday dinner and get our own breakfast and supper. We told Matilda she could come and work as before but did not turn up on either until washing day. It is nearly eight now and neither have put in an appearance. I don't know what is the matter except John sent note borrowing some money as he was sick. The only solution that I can see is for the maid to sleep in but we have not suitable accommodation for that. We are enjoying our fires in the dining room every night.

It is Rex's birthday tomorrow and Arthur's on 22<sup>nd</sup>. The latter is going to spend some of his holiday in Maritzburg with a school chum before he settles down to farming.

Denis was to be admitted as a member of the Presbyterian Church last Sunday. I am glad he is identifying himself with some denomination.

Rev Weavers' son is making good progress. His parents have now told him what happened to him. We have not seen him yet. He is at home now.

Last Friday two councillors and I went by car to Sterkstroom to attend a Government Commission regarding the linking up of branch lines and dead-ends. There were about 100 delegates there and I hope something may come of it but in any case it will be some years before it will happen. We passed through Tarkastad and I took the opportunity of spending a few minutes with Hubert de Beer who used to work for me in Vryburg. He is now running the Tarka Herald. His eldest son is helping him but it is a very small affair and I doubt if he is making a living out of it. I am sorry for him.

Last Sunday afternoon I went to see an old woman in the location who has just passed her 98<sup>th</sup> birthday. She was sitting crouched on the ground by her doorstep. She is the daughter of a

slave and seems to be in possession of her senses. She said she was quite prepared to pass over. She could not speak in English so I used an interpreter.

After church last Sunday we met a Mr and Mrs Every of Port Elizabeth who are staying at Mrs Derecourt's for a holiday. They are related to Percy Collett (since dead). They spent the evening with us after evening service and we listened in to A.N. Wilson's talk. We had some pianola as well. (8.15 Matilda has just arrived and is getting breakfast ready. Of course the water etc is already boiling.)

Grace writes that she is getting settled in her old home. The electric light is not yet laid on and there is a good deal still to do but in time will be straight. They have bought a new bath etc and will have hot and cold water laid on. She has resigned from the secretaryship of the Women's Auxiliary but is still interested in the work.

Dot writes that Reg has decided to take over the local bio in Potgietersrus. He will let the cafe and tearooms attached thereto. The firm he is working for are turning the concern into a cooperative concern. I do not know if he is still concerned in that. They recently went to Pietersburg for the Show and incidentally met Ted Browne. They were going to Joburg to see Trixie yesterday.

Joe and Blodwen enjoyed their trip to Durban and Blodwen says she would like to live there. It is fearfully hot in the summer but delightful in the winter. They do not say if they saw Dossie but saw a good deal of Rev and Mrs Perry. Blodwen has joined the choral society and expects to be singing on the wireless one of these days. You must all listen in when she does.

I have decided not to renew the subscription to Punch so you will be receiving them after some time in July. When they come back, I send them up to the hospital.

After breakfast. It looks very nice for rain today. The minimum thermometer only registered 44, twelve degrees above yesterday's reading. We have only had ice once or twice on the birdbath this season. Perhaps we shall have a late winter. Only two weeks to the shortest day.

We have been re-erecting our vine trellises by substituting old boiler tubes for wooden posts which have rotted in many places. We are also busy erecting trellises for roses or runners along each side of the house so that we can have shade in summer and sunshine in winter. We have engaged a man to prune the vines early in July. We are also going to plant some more fruit trees.

After dinner. Have had a special meeting of Council and attended lunch with others given by the Rhodes University Chairman and Principal. It passed off very nicely. Only two speeches. We are having our Friends reading here this evening. Only a few attend.

Aunt Eliza is about the same. She experiences more difficulty in getting up and down the small steps in her house. She is doing her own cooking instead of having her dinners from Mrs Derecourts. She enjoys the food better. Aunt Emmie is staying in Cape Town for the present. Doctor does not approve of her coming up country.

I think I have given you enough for this week so will stop. We are always interested in all the news you give us. Hope you all keep well through the winter. So far we have not had colds.

Lots of love to all from  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Thursday June 16, 1938

My dear All,

It is quite early and very cold but I must get a move on if I want to get through. I have an important Water Committee at eleven to consider building a new storage reservoir in town and installing water meters. The water question is getting serious. We only have about enough in hand for three months unless it rains. We have had to reduce the hours for watering gardens to one hour per week. For the last three years we have not had our usual summer rains and Grass Ridge dam is nearly empty.

Last Monday was just a year that Uncle Herbert passed away and tomorrow 17<sup>th</sup> it will be fifteen years since Uncle James was called away. How time does fly. Here we are nearly half through 1938. Truly we know not what awaits.

You will be glad to hear that Mrs Moolman's case is settled and she has to pay all costs. This will amount to several hundred pounds. I am really sorry for her but am thankful that it is entirely her own fault. However she will be able to pay is the problem, her cafe has been shunned by most people and she is heavily bonded. Most likely she will have to close down and leave the town. We shall wait and see. She has not resigned from the Council yet. If the whole of the judgement is published, I will send each of you a copy.

We have had it much colder this week. On Wednesday we had fire going in the dining room all day. We had a misty sort of rain one day which has added a little water to our tanks but not sufficient to warrant switching over again to rainwater for our bathroom etc. There was a very heavy dew last night but it did not actually freeze. I still take the records every morning.

On Monday morning I went with other Councillors to Dr Budler's farm, Braakvlei, to inspect his waterworks. He has offered the Council the water rights on 500 morgen of his ground but as there is practically no water in Grass Ridge, the offer is no immediate relief to us.

We have had a number of visitors the last few days. Yesterday afternoon Mr Berry from Queenstown dropped in and spent the night. Have just given him early coffee (or rather tea) and he has left for his home. He was one of the signatories to the illuminated address the Young Men's meeting gave me many years ago. Grace and Dot used to play with his children when they lived in Hospital Street. Cousin Harry Collett and wife dropped in on their way home from Healdtown and had dinner with us. The same day, Willie Saunders and wife and Clifford had supper and spent the night with us. Uncle Jack and Agnes had dinner with us another day. We are always pleased to entertain our friends.

I called on our new Station Master this week. He asked if I was related to Mr Butler who ran the paper at Vryburg. He was then Station Master at Polokwani and used to go there to report Farmers' meetings and on one occasion had a meal with them. He remembered my trying to prove to his little girl that she had eleven fingers. Strange how small the world is. He has recently been transferred from Windhoek.

We have had nice letters from Arthur and Rex in reply to our birthday greetings. Rex leaves school this quarter and Rex feels sorry to leave Kimberley for Grahamstown. He says perhaps Kingsley may go back with him next term so as to get used to being away from home before going to Kingswood. He is at present at school with Eric and Freda's children.

Grace and Ted are settling down at the plot but have not got the electric light laid on yet. It is coming. Ted hopes to lay down a tennis court there some day.

It is not eight yet but I do not think I must attempt to write a second sheet as I did last week. We are holding a WCTU buy and bring sale this week and Mom is responsible for the flowers (which are very scarce at present). We have a few engagements ahead of us. Next Tuesday we go to Mortimer to see if we can help them regarding getting a District Nurse. Mrs Dodd is back from Cape Town after selling her furniture. George and Hilda Collett are going to live at Groenkloof. George has already gone there.

Love from Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
As Thursday June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

I am starting my letter on Tuesday morning early as we are going to Mortimer station to attend a meeting of farmers and others who want to organise a District Nurse Association for their area. I don't know that we, as a Corporation, can help them as it really should come under the Divisional Council but there is no harm done in going and trying to help.

You will be surprised to hear that Mrs Moolman is not yet satisfied with having gone to law and losing her case, she is, I hear on good authority, lodging an appeal against the judgement. I sent each of you a copy of the Midland News containing the judgement from which you will see she has no hope of winning her case. However, we shall wait and see.

We have had a few showers since I last wrote but not enough to fill my tanks. Four of them are connected at the bottom (as well as the top) so they all fill equally. There is about enough in each to fill one tank. Some parts of the country have a great deal more than we have so I am hoping there is more to follow. We have finished putting in the poles etc for the trellis each side of the house and we are anxious to get them covered with roses or runners of some sort so as to give shade when winter comes. We have let John go as he was too unreliable and have secured a younger boy (who has passed his fifth standard in the coloured school) and will see how he works. It is so cold in the early mornings that the servants can't seem to come early enough to be of any use before breakfast, which is now ready before they arrive. In the summer, no doubt they will come much earlier. It is the shortest day of the year today (21<sup>st</sup>). Mom has been busy getting holes ready for trees etc. The soil here is very good. We have crowds of cabbages, beetroot and potatoes growing. I think we shall do our own cooking from the beginning of July. Perhaps we shall get one of the high pressure cookers which is supposed to cook a whole dinner in ten to fifteen minutes. Of course we have always got our own breakfast and evening meal. We nearly had a fire one evening. We took the gadget for boiling water out of the receptacle and left it on the table without pulling out the switch. Fortunately I went into the kitchen to lock the door before we went for a walk and discovered the table was burning. No great damage was done I am glad to say.

You will be sorry to hear that Ruth's mother has had a slight stroke which has affected her speech. Her sight has also been failing for some time.

Arthur has sent us such a nice photo of himself with the Tennis champion shield he won and nine cups he has also won at tennis. If the others have not seen it, I will send it round before having it framed. He leaves school this week. Denis has been captaining his football team this season. This has taken him to other towns to play which has been very nice.

Wednesday afternoon. I was not able to add more yesterday as we were very busy. We got back from Mortimer in time for dinner. Rev Weavers took his son who was involved in the motor accident recently with us. He seems quite normal. In the evening we entertained the teachers of the Sunday School here. There were 16 of us all told. They quite enjoyed the evening. They held their usual monthly meeting here.

Uncle Gervase, Rouena and Pam arrived just at dinner time. Pam has come to see the dentist as she has a nasty abscess and he cannot do anything until the inflammation has gone down. Gervase went home after dinner and took Hope with him. Aunt Rouena will stay here with Pam for a few days.

Last week we had two Government Commissions here. One was the National Road Board and the other was about the shortage of native labour for farmers. All these gatherings are very interesting.

Blodwen wrote an article on her visit to Cradock which was published in the Midland recently. It was quite good. We are expecting Aunt Rosa on a visit shortly. She is visiting all her brothers and sisters. She is very bright. I do not think I shall be able to add another sheet so will close.

Lots of love, Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Thursday June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

I am writing this under great difficulties. I am sitting up in bed with plenty of pillows behind me. I do not want to break the continuity of my letters but this one will of necessity have to be a short one. I developed a nasty cold on Saturday and went to bed early. I have been coughing almost continuously ever since. I got up for meeting on Sunday morning for an hour or so and went to bed again directly after dinner and stayed there until Tuesday morning. I was feeling much better then and went to Council meeting that evening. It was an important meeting as had to consider the engineer's plans and estimates for £35,000 scheme for increasing our water storage. Mrs Moolman was not there. It was quite a good meeting and I got to bed about ten 40. I had ordered a taxi to take me up but as he did not come at the appointed hour – 7.15, I walked up and found to my disgust I had made a mistake of an hour myself, so walked back home again. He came at the right time. I went to office on Wednesday morning but did not rise until after breakfast.

The afternoon was very windy and uncomfortable so I turned into bed again and here I am still. Last night I had several fits of coughing so phoned for Dr to come down. I am trying to get this finished before he comes as he may disapprove. It is just eleven. I have the typewriter supported on my knees on my little table but it is very awkward.

I have not been sleeping out the last few weeks so perhaps that may have had something to do with having caught cold.

Later. Dr Scholtz has been and says I must stay in bed until Saturday, so that's that. He has given me a prescription which will ease the cough.

I am not able to go into details of family news as it is very awkward to write under these conditions but must state the Mrs Brown is considerably better and Ruth has been able to let the nurse go. I hope there will not be any relapse. Blodwen writes that she will come down if we need help. We are managing all right so far, Mom will take some of my medicine.

You will be sorry to hear that Joyce and Dudley Townshend are having a very anxious time with their little boy Raymond. The drum of his ear has had to be pierced and Joyce is in very poor health herself.

Today is the end of the half year. It is wonderful how quickly time goes. I am sorry not to fill the sheet this week but I know you all will excuse me. Will try to do better next time. Thanks for all letters received recently. Will answer them in due course.

Had a nice letter from Dick Upton's brother recently. This week brought news that my brother Willie was not well. It was his 77<sup>th</sup> birthday on 27<sup>th</sup>. Hope for better news next mail. A long letter from Mrs Halliday came this morning. She wishes to be remembered to all of you. We should have reading here tomorrow evening but suppose we shall have to postpone it.

Dr says it will be alright for me to go to Port Elizabeth next week. I have some Municipal meeting to attend and shall take the opportunity of consulting Dr Stewart again about my eye.

Much love to each and all from  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Sunday afternoon, July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1938

My dear All,

In case my last Thursday's letter may have given you the idea that I was really seriously ill and as I am better this afternoon and am allowed by the doctor to sit up but not get dressed and not to go out of the room, I may as well write as do nothing. How far I can get remains to be seen. I am sitting in my dressing gown near the bay window in our bedroom, the setting sun is shining and I suppose it will be down in another hour or so. Then I shall be back in bed. Since Thursday I have been getting better and Mom has been doing the reverse. So today she is more the patient and I am trying to do the nursing. Dr came just about dinner time and said we were both doing well. Neither of us have had any temperature to speak about so it is just a matter of patience for our coughs to ease off and we shall be quite OK. I hope this may be so by the morning. Matilda served us both with breakfast in bed – she does not come till past eight – and was surprised to find us both patients. Mrs McLeod kindly popped in and gave a hand and we have managed to our satisfaction. It is now about four and Mom is up. We have all the necessary outfit in the way of electric hot water heaters etc by us and no doubt we shall be quite alright by the morning. We are still continuing with Dr's medicine and inhaling Friars Balsam and taking throat lozenges. Of course the maid is off on Sunday afternoons. Ernest came along last evening to see how we were getting on. Alison has had the same sort of cold for the past week and has a house full of visitors. All the young folk from there went to dance at Fish River Hall on Friday night and seem to have enjoyed themselves.

Some time ago we invited Mr and Mrs Ross Roberts to come and stay with us for a while and on Saturday morning we got a letter saying Ross would break his journey here while Milly and daughter had to go on to Worcester. They look to arrive on Wednesday morning. So of course, under the circumstances, we have had to make other arrangements. Mrs Arthur Roberts called on Saturday evening to say that she would make a plan although she had her daughter and three children with her. However, we hope to see them before we leave – if we do go to Port Elizabeth Wednesday afternoon by car. The Town Clerk will take us. Old Mr Dersley came to see me one afternoon but we have not been overburdened with visitors. Mr Cursons has also been.

Ruth is in Port Elizabeth most likely today. Shall hope to see her if we go. Her friend, Miss Chalker, has very kindly made it possible for her to have this change. She took Mrs Brown to stay with Mr and Mrs W T Brown for a while. It is a great relief that she is so much better to be able to travel.

After more than a year's silence, I had a long letter from my old typist, Miss van der Walt who worked with me for some years at the YMCA. She got married shortly after I left. We generally exchanged Xmas cards. Last year nothing came so I wrote to her Dad at Cape Town and the letter referred to was in answer to same. She has been very ill and had to go to her people and is still there. On Wednesday I had a telegram from her saying her father died that morning so I must try to get a letter off to her soon.

Since writing the above, old Mr Metcalf, Dulcie and some of her children, Dorothy (Ernest's) and Joe Collett's daughter, Amy and Rev Weavers have called. We have just finished our evening meal having it together in our bedroom and now are getting ready for turning in for the night. It has just struck six. Perhaps someone may call after service and will get them to post this. If you do not hear to the contrary, you may take it that we have gone to Port Elizabeth. Perhaps we might spend the weekend there for a change. In any case, write as usual. We have much to be thankful for that we have such comfortable Epeda mattress and home comforts in our old age.

Heaps of love to each and all as though named from  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
As Thursday July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

I am glad to be back home again after the days at Port Elizabeth. As you know, I left on Wednesday about one pm and after spending a little while in Grahamstown to get a cup of tea, pushed on to Port Elizabeth arriving there just on the stroke of seven. After dinner, had a short walk along main street and went to bed early and had a good night. I hardly coughed at all. I got very tired towards the end of the journey in the car and think I had a little nap. The road is much better via Grahamstown than via Zuurburg – the way we came back. There were five of us in the car, the Town Clerk drove and Mr Michau and I occupied the back seat whilst Councillor Venter and his wife were in front. They went down on private business.

The meetings commenced on Thursday morning and were very interesting. I hope (and think) our contributions to the various matters discussed were helpful and I hope may result in furthering the interests of Cradock. It will not be of interest to any of you to go into details but they were reported fully in the press. On Thursday evening I took the opportunity of visiting one of the S.O.E. lodges and was warmly received. We were entertained at luncheon on Friday by the Mayor and we left for home about four pm via Zuurburg. It was a very pretty sight just at sunset with the glorious tints on the mountains. As it got darker we could see the lights of Port Elizabeth fully sixty miles behind us. One of the party had purchased a few meat pies for the journey and had one himself which gave him considerable internal trouble until he got rid of it. The journey was uneventful otherwise and we reached home just at eleven. I was sorry to find that Mom had been in bed all the time I was away as her cold was troublesome and the weather cold and miserable. Mrs McLeod had looked after her well and she is now alright again except for slight ear trouble which I hope will soon pass away. Mom's hearing is not improving I am sorry to say.

Aunt Jessie and Aunt Rosa came to town on Tuesday. Rosa is staying with us for a while. She has been away from Dwaal for some weeks, in fact ever since the Fish River Fete. She is looking very well. We hope she will stay for a week or more.

On Sunday last we had the President of the Conference preaching here in the evening. He gave a wonderful discourse. He is stationed at East London at present. He was at Mafeking in my time. He and Rev Weavers had breakfast with us on Monday morning before he started on to his next place. Mrs Weaver was away from home at the time.

Wednesday afternoon. I had to open a couple of newly made tennis courts for the non European population. It went off very well. After it was over I hired a taxi and took Mom and Aunt Rosa to the egg rock as she had never seen it. We came back via Hales Owen. It was such a nice afternoon. Next Wednesday we are having a visit from the Australian farmers who are touring S.A. I suppose this will mean my giving them a diner or lunch. Nothing has yet been said about the annual election which takes place at the end of August. There is plenty of time yet.

Ruth is hoping way will open for Denis to be able to go to Rhodes University next year for four years. He would like to get a professorship in History and English. I am glad to say Mrs Brown is better and is staying at Somerset East for a while. Douglas had been in Bloemfontein seeing Lynne play hockey. Joe has been laid up with blood poisoning in his leg but is back at work again. Otherwise all the homes report all well.

Matilda has let us down again so we have finished with her. Have got another maid and hope she will be satisfactory. The little boy seems to be doing alright. The Town Clerk has given me an alarm clock which is worked by electricity. I have not connected it yet. All the vines are now pruned and we hope they will bear as well as they did last year. Ross Roberts spent a couple of evenings with us. He has gone back to Cape Town.

Love from Dad



34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Thursday July 21<sup>st</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

I am late again this week in commencing my letter. It is a raw sort of morning – misty – but no doubt this will soon change when the sun comes up. Meanwhile I want to get on as “time is few” as a native boy said. Public duties seem to increase as my term of office draws to a close. Yesterday we entertained a party of eleven Australian farmers who are touring the Union on a good will mission. This involved meeting them at the station at 7 am and as the train was late, involved two journeys. Then I went with them and some local farmers after breakfast to visit some sheep farms and had morning tea at Tarka training farm. I did not go with them to a cattle farm in the afternoon but entertained them and Councillors to dinner in the evening at one of the hotels. Over thirty guests were invited. Some of my Councillors wanted me to break my rule and let them have liquor but I explained to the guests that during my term of office, liquor was excluded and they quite appreciated my views. Mom of course went as well as there were two ladies in the party and my Deputy Mayor is a lady. It was quite a nice function. Mr Metcalf was present.

On Sunday afternoon we held the usual Delville Wood Day Service. Three of the local ministers took part and there was a large attendance of police, Defence Force, scouts and guides as well as returned soldiers and general public. It afforded me an opportunity of bearing my testimony regarding the futility of wars. It was a very impressive gathering. The usual wreaths were placed on the cenotaph.

Some of you have reminded me that I have not referred to my visit to Dr Stewart re my eyes whilst at Port Elizabeth. I never re-read my letters and just write as I think of things. During the week, if I do think of something I want to refer to, I make a note of it and keep it by me. However, I managed to squeeze in a short interview with him and he was pleased to see me – at least he said he was. I told him of the difference I noticed during the past few months and he tested my sight again and at one stage thought that after further tests with very small type, he considered that I had nothing to worry about and had better leave well alone. So that’s that. There is no doubt that there is a marked difference but if he is satisfied, I suppose I must be. He made no charge for the interview. He enquired how matters were getting on in the Council with regard to Mrs Moolman. Quite a number of people in Port Elizabeth made similar enquiries. Since the court case she had against Mr Cull went against her, she has kept very quiet. We have not heard anything more about her appealing against the judgement. She has not attended the last two Council meetings and if she does not attend next Tuesday’s, I shall have to declare her seat vacant.

Rosa left us on Tuesday after spending a week with us. We have enjoyed her company. She is very quiet and slow in her movements. She is very happy living with her children visiting each from time to time. They are all glad to have her. She had a phone message from her daughter on Saturday saying she and her husband were coming to Fish River on business on Sunday so as that was service day, Rosa and Mom went out with Rev Weavers on Sunday morning and returned in time for Delville Wood Service. I would have gone with them had I not been planned for service in town.

Uncle Bertie has been in doctor’s hands for some time for neuritis and has been having a series of injections and electric treatment. He has now gone home to the farm and Rosa is there as well. Rosa is going to spend another week with Aunt Jessie as her companion is leaving this week. She (Aunt Jessie) would like to do without a companion but none of us approve of the suggestion. Uncle Dudley (the baby of the family) celebrated his sixty-third birthday last week. All the eleven remaining members of the family (except Bertie) are well. Must now stop for breakfast and go to the station to see the Australians off to Port Elizabeth.

Love to all,  
Dad

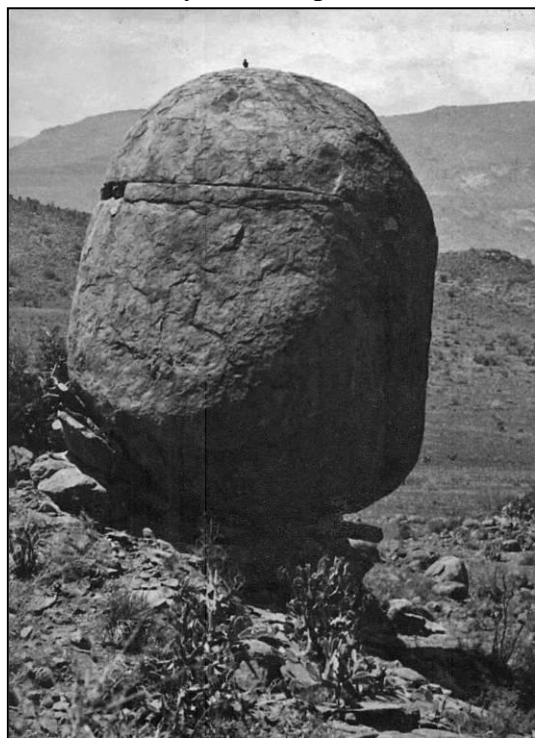
34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Thursday July 28<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

There are many things I want to say but the job is to find time in which to say them. I generally keep a scrap of paper on my table on which I make notes of such matters. I cannot trust to my memory as I used to do. These are some of the things. Our double Jasmine is out in full flower just at present. The arch in front garden is a sight to enjoy. We have planted a dozen roses, a grapefruit tree, flowering peace trees and have on order a dozen fruit trees. Our vine trellis is in good order now that it has been strengthened. All we want is rain. I am very anxious to see my six tanks full and running over. We have still got a good supply of rain water but are using it carefully.

The electric clock the Town Clerk gave me is keeping wonderfully good time. We have it on our bedroom mantelpiece. It is perfectly silent but has an alarm attachment which I do not use. I always manage to wake without it.

It may interest you to know that we have 23 electric lights in the house: 1 on the front stoep, 1 in the drawing room, 1 in spare room, 3 in our bedroom, 2 in bathroom, 1 in work room, 4 in dining room, 1 in kitchen, 1 in lobby, 1 in small pantry, 1 in large pantry, 1 on back stoep, 1 in w.c., 2 in garage, 2 in long passage. In addition to these we have 1 plug for heater in drawing room, 1 in our bedroom for heater and clock, 1 in dining room for wireless, 2 in kitchen each with three ways for hot plates and stove.



I think you have all been to see the egg rock on our commonage. The Council is having the following particulars erected on notice boards nearby: height 32 feet, circumference 70 feet, approximate weight 480 tons, Some egg.

Aunt Rosa has completed her visit to Uncle Bertie and is spending a few days more with Aunt Jessie. Then she goes back to her home. She has been away since the fete, May 26<sup>th</sup>. Uncle Bertie is a little better but still suffers a good deal of pain. Wesley Collett, brother of Harry Collett, died suddenly in Port Elizabeth on Tuesday. We had not heard of his being ill.

Uncle Gervase's daughter, Pam, has gone to teach at Mr Bowers' farm near Eric and Freda in Vryburg district. Her sister Barbara contracted chickenpox on her way from Cape Town and has only now gone back to her school. I think she will leave Cape Town for good at the end of this year. Beryl has asked me to try and get a sundial for her garden. I have sent her prices of same from Durban £3 each.

She says she must wait for her ship to come in first.

We have not heard when Aunt Emmie will be coming but it seems hardly worthwhile if she may only stay here three days. We shall hear in due time. Aunt Eliza says she is feeling better lately but her knees still prevent her moving about freely.

It was nice to hear via Joe that Arthur had seen Muriel at Maritzburg. We have not heard from Vryburg for some time. Hope they are all well.

You should see our violets and arum lilies. They are quite pretty. I have not decided if we will go to Synod at Grahamstown. A government official is coming to interview the Council on 17<sup>th</sup> and I should be here for that. We will see in due time.

Ever since we had flu, we have got into the way of making our early coffee overnight and having it in a thermos flask so we have it at any odd time during the night or morning. It is very convenient.

We are expecting Joe and Blodwen and children to arrive on Saturday morning but they have to return by early train on Monday. Hope the weather will be nice for them. Joe seems to be in a poor way so far as his health is concerned. I want him to be thoroughly overhauled by our local doctor to see if he should give up his job on the Railway. Blodwen says she would like him to get on to a farm as manager or on his own. He was off work for a week again recently.

Grace writes that Ted is spending his month's leave working on the plot. They are having a veranda built in front and the electric light and telephone laid on so they will be much more comfortable than they were before. The new national road seems as though it will go much nearer than the present one and so shorten the distance to town. This will be a great advantage for the children going to and from school.

It may interest you to know that I have written to two places about accommodation during the school holidays. As you know, I have hoped way may open some day for us all to meet somewhere. I know Cradock has no great attractions for you but the sea has. When I get replies, I will let you know what we suggest or may be able to do. In the meantime, I want you all to think the matter over. In any case, we should want you to visit us here as well as the sea. I hope to be able to manage something which will be no expense to any of you. If it cannot be arranged for all to be together at one and the same time, it may be possible to arrange it piecemeal but I should like it to be a real family reunion. Think it over and let us know your views.

Thursday morning. Since writing the above, we have received letters from Grace and Dot and we are expecting Joe and Blodwen on Saturday morning. Grace does not think Ted can get away early in January. Dot hopes they will be able to take theirs – three weeks – about the middle of January. Grace says if we do not go to the sea, she thinks they would join with the Howards – friends of theirs – at the sea. We shall talk it over with Joe and Blodwen.

Last evening we entertained the W.C.T.U. and friends and a Miss Strout, an American lady who is travelling round the Union in the interests of that organisation. It was not a very large gathering but quite representative of the town, including the Magistrate and wife, Principals of Boys and Girls schools etc. She is a very good speaker and I hope good was done. Last Monday I spoke to 450 boys at the High School at 8.40 am. Next Monday I am going to Rocklands. I also want to visit the Wilson School just opposite our Bree Street flat. Before my term of office ends, I am hoping to arrange an evening for all the teachers in town. Our Council meeting last Tuesday was over in record time, was home by 9.30. Mrs Moolman was not there but sent a note asking for leave of absence. We do not know what she is going to do.

Aunt Jessie had dinner with us on Tuesday. She has not got a new companion yet but has answered an advertisement.

We have not heard when Aunt Emmie is coming but it will be sure to be before the hot weather sets in. We are still getting cold nights but have not had frost for some time. I still keep a register of the temperatures every day. Aunt Eliza says she is not having so much pain in her joints as formerly. She looks to come and see us again when Aunt Emmie is here. She has only been in the house once. We have had fire twice in the drawing room and it burns very well.

Both our servants are doing fairly well. They do not come early enough to please me but we are rather far from the location and the mornings are still dark for them. Their early coffee is always ready for them by the time they come. I still rise early.

I must not stop to add more now as I have some church correspondence to do.

Mrs Brown is still at Somerset East but is much better. Rev Weavers had to go and fetch his son yesterday from school as he had not been so well lately. They think he has been trying to catch up some of the work he lost during his illness. We all hope it is nothing serious.

Love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Thursday August 4<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

Joe, Blodwen and the children arrived safely on Saturday morning. Joe seems better than we expected. The same afternoon I took him to be overhauled by my doctor. He gave him a very thorough overhauling and his verdict is very satisfactory. He advises Joe to have an x-ray of his lung if he continues to feel a pain there but he could not detect any mischief. Joe told him of the various operations he had had and the work he has to do. Of course it would be better for him if he could get a lighter job and that may come when he gets promotion. Joe is very thin and always has been. We are all feeling relieved that the report seems so satisfactory.

Mom has not been well since they arrived. She did not go out at all on Sunday but was up and about. Joe decided to stay over until Tuesday but Blodwen and the children are staying for a few days longer so as to help. On Saturday afternoon we hired a taxi and went as far as Pauls river and saw the place where those boys were killed in the motor accident. Perhaps Mom may have caught cold then. Blodwen sang a solo "hold Thou my hand" in church on Sunday evening very nicely. Mom stayed and looked after the children but when I got home, Merle was in great trouble because her daddy was not here. They had gone to see Rev Weavers and Ernest. Mom has stayed in bed and her cold is certainly better but her chest is wheezy. Joe left by early train on Tuesday and I suppose he is back at his work by now (Wednesday morning). He seemed very pleased with the improvements we have made since they were here at New Year just after we had moved in. Of course he was soon able to find something to do. He is surprised how the garden has developed.

Thursday morning. Mom is still in bed. Her chest has been wheezy but the medicine is apparently doing its work. For the first time we lit the fire in our bedroom last evening and I am glad to say it burned very nicely. We shall repeat it again today. I hope when it gets warmer during the day she can get up. Our boy has been away ill for the past two days but is back this morning. The maid has been working all right. Blodwen goes home by early train on Saturday. Hope to hear from him today. Ruth writes that she was phoned for late on account of her mother having had another severe heart attack. Miss Chalker drove Ruth and Denis over during the night and Mrs Brown was removed to hospital. Their doctor says she is suffering from diabetes. She has so far recovered that she is looking to go back to Grahamstown at the end of this week. Mom and I look to go to Grahamstown Synod on Saturday night 13<sup>th</sup> and return on Tuesday night. Of course this will depend on how Mom is.

Last Monday being holiday we did not receive our usual supply of letters from you but hope they will come today. We received a stembok from Douglas yesterday and hope to enjoy eating it during the next few days. We have had some very sharp frosts lately. It is just as well as the weather has been very mild for some time and it is too early for the trees to start blossoming. We hope to have a nice show of roses etc.

Afternoon. No word from Joe this morning. Blodwen has decided to return by this evenings train. I have asked Doctor to call along this afternoon to see Mom. The weather has turned so cold that Mom has not been up. Letters from Grace and Dot to hand. Glad to hear that rains have fallen in Krugersdorp and that the improvements to the house are getting on well. Sorry to hear Mike is troubled with a skin disease but hope it yields to treatment. Will write again during the next few days. Thanks for information re holiday plans. Will let you know when I have got fuller information.

Lots of love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Sunday August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

It has been difficult to write during the last few weeks owing to Mom's attack of bronchitis and consequently having to stay in bed for treatment. Am glad to say she is much better now but has not ventured beyond the garden for some time. Now that the weather is getting warmer – during the daytime – but still very cold at nights. Then I had another bout of coughing but it was only necessary to stay in bed for about a day and half. Hope from now onwards we can get back to normal.

It was nice having Joe and Blodwen for the few days but the time was too short to do very much. If nothing else, the trip was worth it for the interview with our doctor has given us confidence that there is nothing seriously wrong with his health. Joe has always been thin and when he gets his promotion, he will not have such trying work to do. May that time be soon we all hope.

The subject of Xmas holidays has not been forgotten. I have received reply from Jeffreys Bay (near Uitenhage and Port Elizabeth) and they say they are all booked up owing to so many engineers working on the National Roads being there.

Alice Biggs says they will naturally require their bungalow at Bushmans River Mouth during the school holidays but gave me the addresses of some people she could recommend. They have replied quoting accommodation for December, January and February from £8 to £12 per month. These prices include furniture but not provisions. Some quote garages and boat extra. Of course I realise the difficulty of getting all the family together at one and the same time. Ted, Reg and Joe cannot get away just when they might like to. Mom suggests that perhaps some may not like the sea and would prefer to stay here with her whilst others could be at the sea. That of course could be arranged. Some of the family have suggested that they prefer going to a quiet place where fashions and dress are not taken into account. I think such a place should be suitable for all concerned. All the parties who have written about accommodation want replies as soon as possible so I shall be glad if you will make up your minds definitely and let us know what to be about. It is only five months now to Xmas and the time will soon be gone.

I think I have already told you that the Ratepayers approved of our scheme of building another storage reservoir at a cost of about £30,000. This will take about two years to build. It will be very interesting watching its progress.

We have changed our bedroom round since our illness and have taken the twin beds into use, transferring the double bed into the spare room. We like the change and it makes our room appear larger. Mice and rats have been with us since we came into possession. I recently saw one in the bathroom but had nothing with which to catch it. I set a trap and went again to see the result and the beggar twice jumped into the bath – it was empty – and jumped on to the side and got away. I laid some poison and although taken, it did not seem to take effect. Next day I got a proper trap and after two nights' efforts, succeeded in catching a pair of them. We are looking out for more.

Rev Lionel Fletcher is holding services in the D.R. Church here for the next eight days. There was a welcome meeting to him last evening. I was asked to welcome him on behalf of the town.

We are going up to see Aunt Eliza this afternoon so will post this on the way. I hope there will not be any further cause to interrupt the usual regularity of posting but latterly it has seemed impossible to keep pace with sickness and work. Thanks for all letters received lately. Will try to answer them shortly. Hope all are well everywhere.

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Thursday August 18<sup>th</sup> 1938

My dear All,

I am able to start my letter early this week. Hope to be able to get it off on the usual day. I am glad to be able to report that both of us are better although not quite up to concert pitch. When I am lying still in bed I do not cough very much – in fact some nights I go through the whole night without a single cough but as soon as I am up and about, the cough is more or less troublesome. I am still taking doctor's medicine and sucking throat lozenges. I try to avoid going out at night as much as possible until quite well again.

On Sunday afternoon we went to the D.R. Church to hear Rev Lionel Fletcher who gave a splendid address to young people. The Methodist, Baptist and Salvation Army have decided not to hold evening services on Sunday whilst Mr Fletcher is here. Harry Collett's wife and daughter, Mary, are spending a couple of days with us on their way back from Synod so as to hear Mr Fletcher. They turned up on Tuesday evening and go on to Middelburg on Thursday. We expect a number of country folk in on Sunday for the same service. The Dutch church is being filled each evening.

My Mayor's minute for the year is being typed. Will send you copy if it is published. Mrs Moolman is working up more trouble I hear.

I forgot if I mentioned in last week's letter the excellent report Denis has received from the acting Principal of Kingwood. This is what he says: "Denis has been a pupil of Kingswood since 1928. In all round ability, work, games, athletics, cadet corp and other social activities he has been one of our outstanding successes. He gained a first class J.C., he cannot fail to gain a first class matric, he has been head boy in the 6<sup>th</sup> form. He has been awarded first XV Rugby colours and this year has been captain. He is an officer in the cadet corps, and is remarkably keen and efficient. As head prefect in the junior school, he has shown infinite tact and patience. He is a boy of sterling character with a pleasant disposition and gentlemanly manners and I regard him as the best type of Kingswood boy." This is fine testimony indeed and one which as a family, we may all be proud. Ruth says she has entered him for Rhodes college next February. I am sure we all wish him every success.

Blodwen won a prize for a recipe in some cooking competition which is also all to the good.

Douglas says they may be able to come for a short holiday about the beginning of the year. The Amblers are going to them for part of the holidays. This is good news. So far Joe and Blodwen have not intimated what they will be able to do.

We are sorry to hear that Kingsley had a nasty kick from a donkey he was riding on the farm recently and had to have some stitches put in his chin. He was detained in hospital for a short while.

Thursday morning. Yesterday morning amongst other official duties to be performed, I met the presiding judge – Mr Justice Fischer – from Bloemfontein – who opens the Circuit Court here this morning. His train was up to time. The Magistrate, and the O.C. Police were also present. We escorted him to his hotel. In the afternoon, the Magistrate took him and myself to watch a football match. He is evidently a very keen sportsman. After that we took him for a drive along the mountain drive and about town. This is his first visit and he is charmed with the place. Mom, Ellie and Mary Collett spent the afternoon on a farm nearby while Harry played bowls. Mary and I had supper together and all of us went together to Rev Fletcher's service afterwards. Our visitors will be returning to Middelburg after breakfast. There is to be another Ratepayers meeting on Monday evening and the last Council meeting for the Municipal year meets on Tuesday evening. I have not heard if there is likely to be any competition for either of the seats. The Mayor is elected on the first Monday in September each year.

Love to all

Dad

334 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Thursday August 25<sup>th</sup> 1938

My dear All,

Something went wrong with the typewriter this morning and after spending more than an hour on it and then giving it up until the shops opened so that I could get it fixed up, I had one more try at it and touched the right lever and so made it right. It has thrown me back for the day. However I hope to catch up time and post as usual this afternoon.

First of all let me say that we both seem to have got back safely to normal so far as our coughs and colds are concerned. We have experienced some strange weather the last week. It seems to have been general all over the Union as Dot and Grace report similar conditions. It has been trying to rain this morning. The stoep is just damp so I hope it is a foretaste of further showers of blessings to come. The state of the district is very serious.

We have been invited to attend the opening of the Jakens Sluit Bridge tomorrow. If the weather is fine, I hope to attend. This is the sluit of which I wrote about over 51 years ago when I had my first trip out of Cradock with Uncle Walter. Uncle John made a comical sketch of the scene which I still have amongst my treasures.

I forget if I told you in recent letters that I picked up another nice bargain on a sale. We have wanted a larger sideboard in the dining room. There was a beauty on a sale a few weeks ago which I got for £5/5.0. The owner said it cost over 30/-/-. It stands eight foot high by six feet long. It has four drawers and two cupboards and three pieces of looking glass, all in perfect order. It suits our other furniture nicely. When will you come and see it?

We have received invitation to Eileen Geard's wedding at Vryburg on September 5<sup>th</sup>. We shall not be there but will send a wire of congratulations.

During our sickness, we had fire in our bedroom and we have also enjoyed fire in the parlour. They all burned very well. The stove in the kitchen, which was in the house, we have never used. The former tenant used it up to the time we bought the place. I have recently examined it and find it is burned through to the boiler and have tried all over the Union to get fresh parts but without success. The name of the stove is The Epicure. It has been a good one in its time. Aunt Rosa highly recommends the AGA Stove. Unfortunately they cost one hundred pounds each. She bought five of them and gave one to each of her children.

Holiday arrangements seem to be developing satisfactorily. Una has written fully recommending a house near East London, Nahoon River Mouth. It is only five miles from the centre of East London, has electric light and water laid on and is comfortably furnished. It has three bedrooms and a large stoep and is close to the river for bathing and boating. I have written to say that I will let the owners know by the end of this month or first week in September. All except Ruth have written about joining the family group. Joe is doubtful if he will be able to come as he had no leave due to him. Blodwen wants to go to her people in Cape Town if possible. Douglas and family can come about the first week in January. Grace about the same time, and Dot thinks she could come about the middle of January. Reg a little later and would pick up Ted on the way. I am therefore looking to book the place from the first week in January for a month or six weeks. Of course we shall expect all of you to spend some part of the holiday here as well. We shall want at least two cars for getting about. If I can get a chance of running down to East London, I should like to see the place before finally deciding.

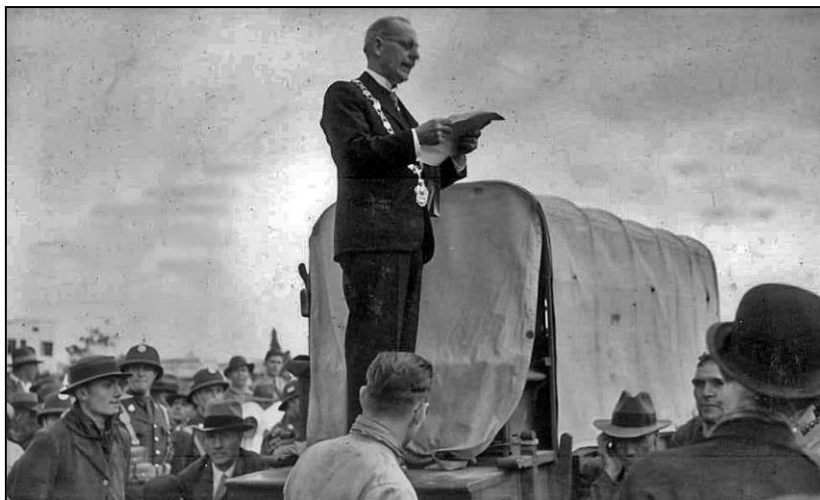
The annual election of three councillors took place yesterday. The same three were declared elected unopposed. Mrs Moolman tried to get three others to oppose us but without success. This morning I have received her nomination for which I am very thankful. I hope this will be the last of her trouble. We noticed in the papers this week that her sister, Miss Le Grande, Principal of Rosebank Girls School, fell overboard the Windhoek on her way back from England and was lost. It sounds very strange. The Council passed a vote of sympathy with Mrs Moolman, who by the way did not attend the Council meeting.

Grace in a recent letter says she has turned her hand to soap making. They are all very pleased with the improvements made to their house since they returned to the plot. They have

put on a new veranda and now she is doing up the inside. She has coloured most of the rooms etc.

Thursday afternoon. A steady drizzle has been falling all the morning but not enough to register very much. However it is a promise of more to follow. We have got the fire burning in the dining room this afternoon as it is so cold.

In a recent letter from Dot, she speaks of having the boys in bed on account of colds and she says there is so much flu about and also measles. I hope they escape. She also mentions that Rev and Mrs Legg are looking to go overseas in a year or so on a lecturing tour.



I have been asked to welcome the Voortrekker wagons when they arrive here on September 30<sup>th</sup>. One will have to be careful what one says as it seems that the promoters are trying to make political capital out of the movement. I am also down to open the Church of England bazaar in the Town Hall on 9<sup>th</sup> September.

This afternoon we are having the chimney sweep in to do our five chimneys. They have not been done since we bought the house. He comes up from Port Elizabeth about every six months and has a regular list of customers.

Mrs Jack Forbes and her sister Myra – sisters of Harry Collett, came down from Middelburg last Friday afternoon to attend Rev Lionel Fletcher's meetings. They stayed with us and left on Saturday after breakfast. The Mission closed on Monday night. All the meetings were well attended and much good has been done. This morning I received a deputation from the Kerkraad of the D.R. Church asking for the 14<sup>th</sup> of September to be set apart as a day for prayer for rain. If they present a united request from all the churches, this will be done. It means that all the shops will be closed for the day.

Crowds of people are going from here to Pietermaritzburg for the test match (Rugby) against England. I have been watching the local matches on Wednesday afternoons lately so as to show my interest in local sport.

I must close now and get to post. We have a pillar box just at the top of the lane.

Thanks for all letters received lately. Keep it up.

Much love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1938

Dear Children,

It is a great pleasure to us to be in a position to give you each a further present in cash of £50, and to express the hope that it will enable you to be freer of financial worry – if you have any – we hope the gift may enable you to give the best of education to the children or purchase some needed comfort for the home.

Yours very lovingly  
Dad & Mom



34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Thursday September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

Joe, in a letter to hand this week, says he has served 15 years on the Railway and it is nearly 21 years since he left home to start work at De Beers in Kimberley. A lot has happened to him and all of us since that time. We all have much to be thankful for. We have had our joys and sorrows and with all we have very much to be thankful for. I am and I hope you all are.

We have just received from Evelyn an enlarged photograph of Lynne as bridesmaid to Trixie on March 17<sup>th</sup> last. It is a very fine photo but rather large to send round by post. We shall certainly have it framed and as we are looking forward to having you all here during the long holidays, you can see it then. Meanwhile many thanks Evelyn for it. We are very proud of our eldest grand-daughter, Evelyn has also sent some plant roots. They were rather dry on arrival but as Mom is notoriously successful in getting things to grow, I hope these will soon show signs of life. Aunt Emmie brought some primrose roots from England and has sent one to Eric as an experiment. We are still having very cold nights. The maximum in the shade frequently jumps from 49 to anything up to 82. These sudden changes accounts for much of the sickness which is so prevalent just now.

I have just listened in to the seven o'clock (am) news service and am thankful that the political situation in Europe seems easier.

Aunt Jessie was not at all well last week and as Olive was in on Friday, Mom went back with her on Saturday morning to give a hand. Aunt Gladys (Norma) had been staying there for a few days. I could not go as I had a service to take on Sunday morning. However, Mom came back by train on Monday morning and reports that she is on the mend. It is very awkward her not having a lady companion staying with her.

Our holiday plans seem to be working out as we hoped they would. We are trying to take a run down by car to East London this week – perhaps today (Wednesday) and see the Nahoon River mouth proposition which Una so strongly recommends. The Town Clerk wants to go to Port Elizabeth to see the English Rugby test match on Saturday and we may be able to fix up a plan with him.

We shall not be keeping our maid after the end of September for domestic reasons. She is very slow and does not take much interest in her work. The boy is doing better and is getting interested in the garden work but of course has to be watched all the time. I am glad to say they both come earlier in the morning now that it is getting so much lighter. The sun shines into our dining room door about seven. We had a chimney sweep in last week and he did all of our five chimneys for 20/-. The kitchen and dining room chimneys were the dirtiest. We have not used the kitchen fireplace (stove) since we bought the house. I have tried all over the Union to get replacements for the stove, "The Epicure" it is called, without success. If we want a stove, we shall have to scrap this one. Unfortunately the Aga stoves do not have hot water systems attached and only as separate units.

The above was written before breakfast. Since then, letters have come from Grace, Joe and Dot. Our Town Clerk has a paralysed child who has occasionally to consult a specialist at Cambridge, near East London, and he is trying to arrange to take him, and us, by car on Friday and so kill two birds with one trip. We should return on Sunday or Monday as we have to be back for Council meetings on Monday. Aunt Jessie was up yesterday we hear. Aunt Eliza is keeping well but never goes out.

Thursday afternoon. We are going to East London by car tomorrow, leaving here about ten and look to be back either Sunday afternoon or Monday morning. We are having plenty of wind today and it is quite warm, if not hot.

Lots of love to each and all and thanks for all letters.

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Thursday September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

You will be interested in hearing that Mom and I went to East London on Friday with Mr Van Heerden (Town Clerk) and his wife and three little girls. We left here at 10.15 and went via Tarkastad, Queenstown, Stutterheim, Berlin arriving in East London exactly at 6 pm. Mom was a little car sick a couple of times and was glad to get to bed on arrival. However she was quite alright by the morning. I phoned to John Shingler and he arranged with the owner of the property to take us to Nahoon Mouth. Mrs Martin (wife) took us in her car. The place is not a palace but we think is quite suitable for our purpose. The outlook is very nice and the river and mouth are not too far away. There are other houses and a large tea room close by. The bush is clean and there is ample room to enjoy oneself. There are swings etc for the children and bathing cubicles etc close at hand. The furniture is nothing to shout about but I suppose suitable for holiday purposes. Mom is glad that it will not be necessary to polish the floors. I think I can manage to get a couple of tents from the Municipality here. In the afternoon, John and Una took us to Bonzo Bay which is quite a pretty place but has not the convenience of light and water. My difficulty now is to know from what date to book the place. Will you therefore each of you give us the approximate dates that you each can look forward to coming. As I said before, we shall expect you to spend some time here as well as at the sea. It will not be necessary for us (Mom and me) to be at the sea all the time or even perhaps at all so far as that goes but of course we should like to be with you. I suggest hiring the place from January 1<sup>st</sup> for a month so perhaps some of you will be able to spend Xmas with us here and others come later. In any case, I shall stipulate that in the event of war breaking out, I have the right to cancel the agreement. So much for that. Please let me know as soon as possible. I want you all to have a good time at our expense. We tried to see Denis as he was in camp with the cadets. The camp was a few miles out of town but unfortunately for us, he was off duty and had gone to town. We saw one of his crowd in town but he did not know where he was. He said that he was an officer and consequently had no restrictions as to the time he had to be back in barracks. We spent the evening with John and Una in their comfortable new home. They are looking forward to seeing you all down there. Their little boy is growing very nicely and has a fine crop of curls. We left at 7.15 on the return trip and came back via Alice and over the Hogsback and Fort Beaufort, Bedford. We arrived home at 3.45 just in time to change and keep an appointment at 4.30. The wind and dust was dreadful. Fortunately the wind was in front of us. The scenery over the Hogsback is wonderful. Time and the weather conditions did not allow us to linger but it is a place well worth going out of your way to see. It reminded me a good deal of the Woodbush road on the way to the Game Reserve. I hope you will see it. Now that we have got so far with the arrangements, I hope everything will work out to the satisfaction of all concerned.

On Monday morning a Caucus meeting of Councillors was held at the Deputy Mayor's house when I was asked by the majority to accept the Mayorship for another year. At the Council meeting the same afternoon, to my surprise, the Councillor who was in the minority in the morning was again proposed and again lost. I am sending you each a copy of the Midland News which will save some writing.

The Librarian here is getting married in December. I wonder if Ruth will apply for the position. Ernest's Dorothy is to be married on December 14<sup>th</sup>. Uncle Owen and Rooispruit people are going to Vryburg shortly. Prayer meeting for rain were held in town yesterday. Rev Malherbe and I went to Fish River and a service there. Aunt Jessie is better again. Aunt Eliza is also better but does not go out.

Lots of love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
As Thursday September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

You must excuse me if my letters are disjointed but I find I must write as I think of things I want to say. As a matter of fact I generally have a slip of paper by me during the week on which I make notes of things I want to write about.

If you have not destroyed the Mayor's Minute (Grace calls it a blooming half hour), will you please return them as we have run short of them in the office. Another thing which please remember is if you have occasion during my term of office to wire or cable (Uncle Willie please note) you can address such to Mayor Cradock, it may save you a few words.

In order to save unnecessary writing, I have ordered the Midland News to be sent to each of you up to December 31<sup>st</sup> so that you can see for yourselves what is happening of general interest. There is always items of news that may interest you apart from any public work in connection with our duties. If it does not serve any useful purpose, I can stop it after the end of the year. In any case it will swell Ernest's subscription list for the time. He has given me special terms for a quantity.

On Sunday afternoon I called to pay respects to a Mr and Mrs Nel who celebrated their diamond wedding. They run the Collett family pretty close. They had ten children, one died early in life but the others are all living.

Our trip to East London last week took 7½ hours going and covered 230 miles and 8½ coming back and covered 232 miles. The direct route is about 180 miles.

I have seen the typewritten evidence in connection with Mrs Moolman's case. It occupies 347 pages of foolscap. 15 copies had to be done and must have cost a pretty penny. This has to be done before she can submit same to the Judges of the Appeal Court. I don't see that she has the remotest chance of winning her Appeal. However we shall have to wait and see.

All of you except Douglas refer to the holiday plans. Grace suggests coming here as soon as possible after the schools break up in Kroonstad. I don't know when that is. In the Cape it is December 9<sup>th</sup>. Ted cannot get away until after Jan 1<sup>st</sup> and the present plan is for Reg and Dot to pick him up on their way down. Dot suggests our taking the house from Jan 5<sup>th</sup> to February 5<sup>th</sup> and for them to spend a few days here on their return home. In a former letter Douglas said they could not come before New Year as the Amblers were coming to them but they would go to Frank's whilst they (Douglas and family) were away. Ruth said she was not sure if she would be able to come. I do not yet know if she is going to apply for the librarianship of the library here. It would be nice for us if she gets it. Denis can come. Joe will probably take unpaid leave and bring one of the children if Blodwen goes to Cape Town as her Mother wants her to do. I have suggested to Aunt Emmie that perhaps she would be able to come to East London whilst we are there. I know she would like to do so if Eric and Freda could see their way to do the same. No doubt we could get extra accommodation if not at the same spot, somewhere in the neighbourhood.

We are having wonderful weather lately. We had given up fires and shed cardigans etc but have had to take to them again. As I write (Wednesday evening) it is looking nice for rain. Aunt Emmie writes she is tired of the rain and cold in Cape Town.

Our old boy John appeared on the scene today asking for work. We are thinking of taking him on again.

Thursday morning. The news has just come over the air that Mr Chamberlin is leaving for Berlin this morning and I do hope his efforts in the interest of peace may be entirely successful. I think his visit, as Premier of Britain, is unique in the history of the British Parliament. The last thing the world wants is war.

No rain has fallen during the night but the indications are that rain is not far off. There was a lot of wind during the night.

We are holding a mayoral service on Sunday afternoon, 4.15 in the Methodist Church.

I do not think I have thanked you for your congratulations on being re-elected to the Chair. Some have commented on the matter and thought I should have stood down. I did not seek the appointment nor did I ask anyone to vote for me. We had a Caucus meeting at the Deputy Mayor's house on the morning of the election – as is usually done – so as to save any discussion at the Council meeting. It was there arranged that I should be re-elected. Our youngest Councillor was hoping to get it but the others all considered him too young. He is 33 and very ambitious. He suggested another who was not expected to take it in the hope, apparently, that he would be nominated. It was revealed at the Caucus that there were only two who would support him and six were in favour of my taking it again. This was the understanding when we left the meeting. To our surprise when we came to the Council meeting, this ambitious young man repeated his nomination and it went to the ballot. Both candidates left the Council Chamber whilst the ballot was taken with the result that I was elected by four votes to two. If I find the work too arduous, I shall give it up but as Mrs Moolman has now resigned her seat, we look forward to an easier time and more harmonious working. We have since elected another councillor in her place. He is the MPC for Cradock. The only objection to him is that he makes the fourth Michau on the Council. They are all related. There are only two Englishmen on the Council. Needless to say that I have learned a good deal of Council work during the past year and so can expect this year to be somewhat easier. We have some very big schemes to put through which will provide plenty of interest. Our new storage dam costing about £26,000 will be a big undertaking. I think quite as many, if not more, Afrikaans ratepayers have congratulated me on my re-election.

This month (18<sup>th</sup>) Aunt Eliza passes another milestone and Joe also the following day. Many returns to each.

Later. Nessie writes asking for my opinion regarding her applying for the librarianship here.

I shall be taking up too much of your time reading if I write any more so I had better dry up as someone said.

Much love to each and all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Thursday September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

There has been a decided change for the better so far as the weather conditions are concerned. The last few days have shown us that we are in for summer weather. Yesterday the shade maximum temperature was 94 and the minimum for the past 24 hours was 49. We watched the final football match for the season played in that heat. Incidentally, Mom presented the cup to the winning team. This happened to be our local boys who have won it for the fourth time in succession.

On Joe's birthday (last Monday) we noticed that first sign of leaves appearing on our vines and fig trees. In a few days everything will be very lovely in the garden in spite of the fact that we have not had any rain yet. The wisteria is well out in flower. Next year if we are spared, it will be a grand show as we are training it over our newly erected trellis on the south side of the house. Most of the roses and fruit trees we planted seem to be alive. Water is the constant trouble. We are only allowed about half an hour for furrow water twice a week. The water is not too good for trees. Tap water we are allowed to use for garden purposes only for an hour once a week. So you can see it is difficult to do much. Yet the place is looking very nice and we shall get rain soon I feel sure. We still have some rain water in our tanks and when they are filled, I think we shall be quite safe in any drought. I calculate that two inches of rain on our roof will fill them all.

I hope you are getting the Midlands. They are sent direct from the office so I do not have the opportunity of marking anything special. If you are interested enough to look through then you will see what we are doing in the public life of the town. On Monday last I had no less than six meetings to attend. Five of them were Council Committees (not reported) and a special Council meeting to receive a deputation from the Voortrekkers who want the Council to pay for most of the expenditure in connection with the festivities next weekend.

The Mayoral Service last Sunday afternoon was well attended and appreciated. One lady brought me a £5 note the following day as a thank-offering for the church.

Holiday arrangements are still about the same. From what I can see, it looks as though most of you want to come about the middle of January. Douglas says the last fortnight before schools reopen. That is generally about the last week in January. Grace looks to come to us as soon after the school breaks up in December and spend Xmas with us here and then to the sea. Ted can only come about the middle of January with Reg and Dot. Joe can come any time but we do not know for certain if Blodwen is going to Cape Town. Reg and Dot thought they would come about January 17<sup>th</sup>. Dot suggested our taking the house from January 4<sup>th</sup> to February 5<sup>th</sup>. Ruth does not think she will be able to join us but says Denis will do so. In any case I am booking the house so that's that.

Ruth has put in her application for the Librarianship here. There's about a dozen in so far and the selection will be made about the end of the month and duties begin December 1<sup>st</sup> I think. I think Ruth stands a good chance of getting it. If she is, it is probable that Mrs Brown will go to her sister Iris. Denis is booked for Rhodes University in February and Rex will be going to Kingswood about the same time.

The news from England this morning seems more hopeful that war will be avoided for which we all may be truly thankful.

Joe and family are expected at Grace's for the October holiday weekend. Three months time and Xmas will be here. A lot may happen before then.

I must not attempt another sheet this week. We are both keeping well and looking forward to seeing you all in due season.

Much love to and thanks for letters received  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Thursday September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

Rumours of war are in the air. What a terrible outlook for civilization. It is too terrible to contemplate and yet it seems as though Hitler is determined to have his way and take more land for Germany. Everyone had hoped that the last was indeed to be the last, but if war does come now, I fear that it will outclass all former ones for slaughter and innumerable horrors. Listening in this (Wednesday) morning to the news from overseas, it seems that unless a more sane attitude is adopted by Thursday, war will be declared. One thing the British nation can be proud of is the fact that her statesmen have done everything in their power to avert such a calamity and we must still hope and pray that their efforts may be successful.

The world position makes me wonder if we shall be able to go through with our holiday plans. As a matter of fact, I have not definitely written saying when we will come as I have been waiting for news as to when each family can arrange their dates. I wrote to the party stating that if war broke out, I reserved the right to cancel arrangements. This she did not agree to. However, we will wait a little longer and hope that the situation may clear. I have all along felt that there will not be war and I sincerely hope a "way of escape" may yet be found.

The news of the past week so far as our local happenings are concerned have not been of great importance. On Thursday last we had a terrible dust storm. It was reminiscent of former days before we had tarred streets. We could not see across the street. Worst of all, there was no rain after the wind. The natives have a rather nice saying in connection with dust storms: "the Master always sweeps the floor before he puts down a new carpet". A number of big trees were blown down in the park and some fell on the high tension wires and put part of the town lights out of gear. Fortunately no one was injured but it is a further warning that we must not let any trees grow higher than twenty feet.

The next excitement is the arrival of the Voortrekkers wagon on Friday afternoon. It is expected there will be about six thousand people here to see it. We have arranged for the erection of loudspeakers. I have to give an official welcome on the market square and there will be several functions to attend. I shall be glad when it is over. They are staying here until Monday morning. Of course the Dutch are making a big fuss over the event.

Douglas and Evelyn write that Lynne has not been well – they have brought her home from school for a time. All the others in the various families seem to be fit and well.

We are hoping that Ruth will be successful in obtaining the librarianship here. There are over a dozen applications so far.

Uncle Norman's son Godfrey is in hospital and has had his appendix removed. He is getting on very nicely.

Another maid came this morning to say our girl has a baby so she is taking her place. She was leaving at the end of the month.

Blodwen writes that she is on the list for broadcasting when the new studio is opened in Bloemfontein. We shall be glad to hear the date.

Una writes that they will not be able to come to us for the long weekend as we had invited them to do. They have always been so good to us. We should have been pleased to have them.

Grace and Douglas have birthdays next week. Many happy returns to both of you. I hope you will have lots of letters and presents.

Wednesday evening. Ruth phoned re her application. She would like to commence her duties (if she gets the appointment) on January 1<sup>st</sup> instead of December. Will have to wait and see first.

Wednesday evening, 28<sup>th</sup>. The news just over the air that Hitler is meeting Chamberlain, and the French Premier and Mussolini tomorrow is a good omen. The correspondence with President Roosevelt is also hopeful. We are living in most serious times in the world's history. We may not realise what we are passing through now but history will reveal it. The lives of

millions of men, women and children are in the balance. The prayers of the civilised world are for "peace in our time Oh Lord".

Thursday morning. Last evening as I was typing after listening to the news, I answered a knock at the front door and a well dressed gentleman asked if I could give a poor man who had come all the way from Cape Town without anything to eat a meal. Lo and behold it was Dr Charles Anderson of Cape Town who was passing through by car from the Game Reserve. He had just arrived with his son and daughter-in-law on their way back to the Cape. He owns a property here and came in to see about it. We were mutually pleased to meet and enjoyed a good chinwag until nine when I took him back to the hotel. He knows Aunt Emmie and I knew him in connection with YMCA work. Mrs Phillipson, who ran a fancy-workshop here, is his sister. She and her husband have left town and are living with members of their family in the Transvaal. They are trying to get Mr Phillipson into the Brown Laurence Home at Pinelands.

I have just listened to the seven o'clock news and the outlook is much better. I think Hitler and Co realise that the civilized world is up against him. Chamberlain has played a wonderful part in this crisis.

I hear that Mrs Moolman has been able to find security for her deposit to the Appeal Court of £250 before they will hear her Appeal against the judgement in her case against Mr Cull. By the way, he is just back from a four month's trip overseas.

I find that the last 1000 envelopes I had printed have lasted me just over fourteen months. This is apart from what I use for my Xmas cards.

After dinner. The news is still hopeful. The joke of the day is that Hitler is sick and has had to take a strong dose of Chamberlain's medicine. I hope I shall hear more good news this evening. Do you tune in to Grahamstown? Do you get the same annoyance as we do so often that the line from Johannesburg is out of order and they will give us some records instead. This so often occurs just at News time. There has been a lot of correspondence in the Eastern Province Herald about it and I have written to the Broadcasting Corporation on the subject but get no satisfaction.

I must get up town and have a shave otherwise I might be mistaken for a Voortrekker tomorrow. Quite a number of residents have let their beards grow. We shall see some funny sights no doubt.

Thanks for all letters received. Dot's weekly epistle only arrived today. All good news.

Much love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Sunday October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

We are picturing Joe, Blodwen and children at Kroonstad today. It is very hot here this afternoon. We were going over to see the christening service at the Voortrekker laager but have given it up on account of the heat. You will have seen an account of the doings since Friday afternoon in yesterday's Midland News.

My reason for writing now is to say that owing to the result of the splendid efforts of Mr Chamberlain in averting war, I feel that it is safe to go on with the arrangements for our family gathering. I am therefore writing to the party booking the house from early in January for a month and hope that all of you will be able to arrange to come down during that time. It would be nice if it were possible to be altogether if only for a day or two but if that is impossible, then we must be satisfied with seeing you separately.

I take it that Douglas and family will come by car, Grace and her contingent, except Ted, will come by train and spend Xmas here unless she thinks she can manage the car. Joe, I suppose, will be able to get a concession ticket direct to East London and return via Cradock. Blodwen, we understand, is going to Cape Town with both the children. Reg and Dot look to come by car and pick up Ted and will either call here on the forward or return trip. If Ruth gets the Library position, she fears she will not be able to join us but hopes Denis will be able to. We shall look to receive the actual dates later on. Mom and I do not expect to be at the sea all the time. In fact, Mom has suggested that she should stay here with any of the party who may have been down and are on the way back. We can arrange all such details as way opens.

We cannot be thankful enough for the action of Mr Chamberlain in averting war. The consequences of which were too terrible to contemplate. This is the beginning of a new era, I trust, in the way settlements of international differences will be settled in future.

I am not going to write more now or I may find it difficult to fill a sheet next Thursday. I thought I had better let you know as soon as possible after what I had written in my last letter.

Today is Grace's birthday, Ernest's tomorrow and Douglas' on Tuesday.

Much love to each and all,

Dad



34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Thursday October 13<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

The Library Committee met last night and appointed a local lady, Mrs De Jongh, as librarian. Her husband died a year ago. He was secretary to the local school board and Divisional Council and left her very badly off. Needless to say I did what I could in Ruth's interest but the voting was by ballot. I phoned the result as soon as I could get through to Grahamstown. It is quite evident that experience and qualifications have not weighed with the committee. I hope some better opening will offer for Ruth. I am hoping she will come up here for a rest and change and perhaps she may be able to join in the seaside holiday.

I had a long letter from my former typist at the YMCA who is married and has had two disappointments. She married a farmer in the Barkley East district.

Dot's last week letter arrived later than usual. She tells of the nasty accident which befell Mrs Hudson and Donald on their way to East London by car. It appears that a tyre burst and overturned the car but it righted itself afterwards. Neither were seriously injured but the car was wrecked. It is a wonder how they got off so lightly. They completed the journey by train. Dot also tells of the sad accident which befell a Mr Mogg who lives in Potgietersrus and a great friend of theirs. Something went wrong with the lorry he was driving and he was seriously burned and subsequently died from injuries. It was a brother of his who was so kind to Harold when he was so ill in Kuruman. Mom and I met them in Potgietersrus when we were there.

I told you that I had booked the house at Naheen for January. On Tuesday I received a short note from the lady saying she had handed over the letting to an agent who had made other arrangements. This is very disappointing but I am not giving up the idea. I have phoned to Jeffreys Bay and am informed that a large house – five bedrooms etc may be available but is under offer up to 15<sup>th</sup> instant when he will let me know if we can have it. Meanwhile I am going to phone Una and see if they can hear of anything else we can get there. I think we all should prefer East London. I am afraid I delayed too long in closing with the Naheen party but the war clouds looked so ominous that I did not feel justified in fixing with them until the outlook was clearer. However, way will open. Since writing the above, I am wiring to an agent at East London and also inserting an advertisement in the local paper to see what other places may be offering. Letters from Douglas and Dot to hand today (Wednesday) report all well. Douglas has had a sick house but all are better. Children gone back to school. Rain is still badly needed there. Dot says they had a busy time with the Voortrekkers when they passed through.

Mr and Mrs Willie Saunders and Kate Dudley had dinner with us on Tuesday. They have altered Grass Ridge house by putting a door at the end of the long passage. I think we will spend next weekend there – going out by train to Fish River. Aunt Jessie has got a companion from King Williams Town. Have not seen her yet.

We have had about ¼ inch of rain since my last letter, of course it has not made much improvement in our tanks. We are installing an Esse stove and hot water attachment this week. We think it will be economical in every way.

Do you get the wireless news from Grahamstown? Our reception is so bad and I am constantly complaining about it. I wonder if you are troubled in the same way. It is generally when the news is due that there is trouble.

I do not think I will be able to add more this week but will not post before tomorrow. We are both well and keep busy. Annie Bertie had dinner with us today. Iris was 33 last week.

Lots of love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Friday October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

I do not know that I have ever before written to you on two consecutive days but as this is a red-letter day, I may be excused, if such were necessary. We were reminded quite early this morning – not that we had forgotten the date – by receiving a golden envelope from Kroonstad conveying congratulations from the family on reaching the 47<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our wedding day. Similar messages had come in the ordinary way by post from most of you – for all of which please accept our warmest thanks. So far the day has been spent without any unusual incident. It is beautifully fine, not too hot or too cold, just right. We have not seen the multitude of hopping locusts which we encountered on walking from the wagon house at Grass Ridge after we were married to the house. Aunt Jessie was in and brought us some sweet peas as she had also remembered the day.

We have much to be thankful for all the mercies we have had so abundantly showered upon us during all these many years and we trust we may be spared to each other and our dear ones for years to come. We often feel very lonely and isolated but suppose that cannot be helped. You all naturally have your own circles and interests and duties to see to as well as your dear children to train. We must be content to be lookers on, interested lookers on, and do any little tasks that come our way. We are very thankful for the measure of health and strength which we enjoy and it is a real pleasure to be of service to others less fortunate than ourselves.

No doubt you were somewhat disappointed regarding Naheen River Mouth but strange to say in last night's Midland is an advert of four cottages to let about 11 miles from East London. I therefore wired for particulars first thing this morning but up to the time of writing, no reply has come to hand. I am writing to the Shinglers to have a look at them so I hope we shall find that they are suitable. Of course I will let you know as soon as anything is arranged.

Ruth writes that she really did not know how she would have managed if she had got the library position as her Mother is so dependent on her. However she has decided to give up the house in Grahamstown at the end of November and eventually live in Port Alfred for some months. We hope she and Denis will come to us soon. She also hopes to join us at the sea about the first week in January. I have to go to the Hospital Board meeting just now so must stop. Thanking you all again for your good wishes for the future and with love to each and all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Thursday October 20<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

Today is Ruth's birthday. I am sure you all wish her very many happy returns of the day and trust that the coming year will bring much joy and peace and prosperity. It will mark the entry of Denis, the first member of the Butler family to enter a University. We wish him success and may he bring success and distinction to the family as well as himself.

The past week has been much the same as former ones. Plenty to do but nothing of outstanding interest to the family. The St John's Ambulance demonstration last Wednesday evening was a success. It was past eleven before the entertainment part of the programme was over but all enjoyed it. As a result, there is likely to be a decided increase in the number of members.

On Monday I had an interview with the Director of Broadcasting who was passing through here and he informs me that we may expect to have better reception in future. He admits that the line between Johannesburg and Grahamstown is frequently "tapped" by unauthorised people at Stations which is the cause of the trouble. I have written complaining of the unsatisfactory reception so many times and have felt sure the cause of the trouble was the Post Office. One person was caught in the act and has been dismissed.

We have decided to spend this weekend at Grass Ridge. We can both do with a change if only for a couple of days. We have not been there for a very long time.

Monday evening the mere men of the church entertained the congregation to the annual social and did it very well. You will see it reported in last week's Midland.

Our old boy John is back at his old job again. He is a good worker if he can only keep well. The maid will be leaving at the end of the month.

Holiday arrangements are progressing. I have asked Mr Shingler to report on three places I have been offered. One is at Bonza Bay and two others on the west bank of the river. As soon as anything definite is arranged, will let you all know.

Thursday morning. The above was written yesterday. The man who built and lived in this house (Mr Sam Pietersen) was buried on Tuesday. He had a very beautiful garden in those days and we, or rather Mom, is trying to get it greatly improved to what it was when we bought it.

Mrs Hudson writes that she is looking to go to Nugent for December and January as she does not like crowds of people. Grace tells of a 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday party she gave for the young man who stayed with them when in town. It was quite a big affair. Am glad to hear they have had good rains. Dot says she is holding thumbs in the hope of getting some as well. We have not had any yet but are still hoping. Our new stove has not arrived yet. We have had the kitchen all painted out in readiness for it. At the church quarterly meeting on 14<sup>th</sup>, we were invited into the parsonage where the WCTU were holding their meeting. We were greeted with hearty congratulations on our anniversary. We had quite a pleasant time together. We have not heard from Vryburg or Bloemfontein this week yet. Hope all are well in all homes.

It was four years ago on 11<sup>th</sup> that we arrived back in Cradock. What a lot has happened since then. A nice letter from Una today says they will be pleased to look at any places we suggest. The Jeffreys Bay offer does not appeal very much as there is no shade except on the stoep. However we will find a place somewhere. We phoned our birthday greetings to Ruth last evening. Letter from Blodwen reports all well there. They have not told us much of their trip to Kroonstad. I have to go to the Location dispensary this afternoon as the Native nurse is leaving in a day or so. I must therefore come to a close and finish my letter.

Love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
As Thursday October 20<sup>th</sup> 1938

My dear All,

We had a nice time at Grass Ridge over the weekend. We caught the early morning train and Uncle Dudley and Katie met us by car. We called at Saltpond and had a cup of tea with Aunt Jessie and met her new companion. I do not remember her name but I think she is a widow from Stutterheim way. Saturday afternoon, Willie Saunders, his wife and Gordon came down to see us and stayed the evening. May also came and some of them played tennis. Hopping locusts were about and their presence reminded us of our wedding day experience 47 years ago. They have made a very nice improvement by putting a half glass door in the long passage and making the door into the front passage and drawing room open into the passage instead of the dining room. We occupied the school room this time. The large spare room is seldom used. The rocking horse still stands on the stoep and very little change has been made in the arrangement of the furniture. The veldt was terribly dry. Ernest Saunders and his wife and child also came across and we went to see them on Sunday afternoon. I had not been to their place – just over the river, before. They have a very nice home and seem very happy. Their elder children are at school on the brother's farm. Clifford said he hoped to see Douglas when he comes down. On Sunday morning Uncle Norman and wife came over to see us and stayed to dinner and the evening. We enjoyed some singing and general conversation. Troppip, who is in charge of the Dam, also called so we saw quite a number of friends and relations. Jeanne is expected on a month's holiday from Johannesburg next week. She is very pleased with her first year's nursing experience. We got home by the early morning train – leaving the farm about 6.15 and home by 8.30. It seemed as though I had been away for a week.

You may have noticed in the Midland that I had received an enquiry from overseas for the whereabouts of a certain Miss Botha. After writing to the Graaff Reinet and Somerset East papers, I got in touch with her today. She married a Mr White who lived with us in Market Street house about 40 years ago. I knew he had married a Dutch girl. He died some years ago and now one of his brothers has written to find out where she is. She has married again and is living in Somerset East. It will make quite an interesting story some day. The world is indeed very small. Another interesting discovery has also come to light this week. I do not know if you remember Miss Ruby Adendorf who was the music teacher at Vryburg. She wrote to me asking us to call on her sister and brother-in-law who is in hospital here. He is a great friend of Mr and Mrs W.T. Brown and of course Ruth etc. They have been living at East London but have had to leave on account of his health. He used to visit at the Browns in Vryburg during the holidays and remembered me. We went up yesterday and had a very interesting chat. He is undergoing some gold treatment and has to stay in for a month.

No doubt you will have seen the report in the papers of Mrs Moolman's Appeal case against Mr Cull. She has been washing more dirty linen in court. Judgement is reserved.

I have been asked to start a fund for purchasing a motor ambulance for the hospital. I hope to get the appeal in today's paper. I have £50 promised so far.

Next week we are giving a social in the Town Hall for all the teachers in our three public schools. I hope it will be a success.

We had just over half an inch of rain on Monday. The river has been down since then and this will relieve the water situation for a time. Neither of our seven tanks are filled but we have enough to go on with. We have never been quite out. We shall now be able to use rainwater for our baths. Our new stove is supposed to arrive this week.

Our old friends, Mr and Mrs Dersley, celebrated their Diamond Wedding last. We were very sorry to be away but as we had previously arranged for Uncle Dudley to meet us at the station, we did not feel like putting them off. From all accounts it was a very nice function they had in the afternoon.

You will all be anxious to know how the holiday arrangements are progressing. Una has written a very glowing report of the Rock Cliff proposition so I have written booking it for the

whole of January. I am inclined to book a second cottage as I am hoping more of you will be able to come and it would be nice to have plenty of room. Aunt Emmie would also like to come to East London if Eric and Freda and children could also come. She might then work in a few days in Cradock. It would be nice if Aunt Eliza would also go to meet her there. I do not know if any of you are keen on seeing the motor grand prix race which is held near the place where we are to stay. If so, we ought to be there a day or so before. Personally I am not very keen as there are very likely to be accidents. I have asked them to provisionally reserve a second cottage. Two months from new Xmas will be behind us, so there is no time to lose in making our final plans. I am paying in advance for the one cottage. It will be necessary to make out lists of what will be needed to take Thursday afternoon.

Mom has gone to a service in connection with the W.A. and I must finish the post. Thanks for all letters received. I have tried to answer them all but should like more time to do so properly. We are both keeping well and busy which is much to be thankful for. Aunt Eliza still keeps moving as the policeman says. I wish she would get about outside more than she does.

Much love to each and all.

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Thursday November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

It is Wednesday afternoon. I have had a short rest, a violent gust of wind caused me to get up and see to doors etc. Clouds are showing up nicely for rain and we can do with more after last week's 1.9 points. Mom reckons we should get rain eight days after the last. It does so happen sometimes but you cannot bank on it being so regular. We have been able to relax our water regulations so as to allow householders to water their gardens three hours (4 to 7 pm) daily from yesterday. This will be a great blessing to those who have gardens. I have signed contracts with two different firms for building our new storage reservoir amounting to about £20,000. They hope to complete the work within a year. When that is done I reckon Cradock will have enough storage for any future drought. Grass Ridge dam caught over '000 acre feet as a result of last week's rains.

Ruth writes that she is coming up for the weekend to discuss some business with Mr Thomas. I don't know what. Perhaps she may be here in the morning and so be able to attend the social we are giving in the Town Hall to all the teachers and school board and committee members. We expect about 80 to 100 to be present.

The Rock Cliff man has written to say that he can only let us have the two cottages from January 1<sup>st</sup> so I have wired him closing the bargain. Dot writes that their contingent look to leave Potgietersrus early in January and will spend a week with Reg's mother at Stutterheim on the way down. They look to return here via Grahamstown for "a day or two". We shall not be satisfied with that and hope they will be able to give us more time than that. Reg has left the firm he was with. A short time ago he purchased a bioscope property and is running that. Grace says that Ted may not be able to come at all as the Postmaster is going on leave for January and December and he may have to stay to take charge of part of the Postmaster's duties. This is very disappointing and will mar the enjoyment of all of us if he is away. Douglas looks to come during the latter part of the school holidays but no date is mentioned. Blodwen is going to Cape Town for Xmas and we hope Joe will be able to come to us for his holiday and go on with us to East London. It would be mighty lonely for him in Bloemfontein alone. Ruth and Denis are looking to join in some time. We can discuss matters when she is here. It is Blodwen's birthday on 4<sup>th</sup>.

Miss Ruby Adendorf is still teaching at the Training College Paarl. Her brother-in-law is still in hospital. His name is Jones and always stayed with the Willie Browns when he came to Vryburg for holidays and shooting trips. He was a great friend of Eric and Harold Brown, Nessie's husband. We must go and see him again.

Our new stove arrived yesterday and will take a few days to be put together.

Douglas reports having had some rain. Arthur is busy erecting a grape trellis along the eastern side of the house.

On Sunday I lost my voice almost entirely. Got up for meeting and went to bed again about four. Monday rose after breakfast and attended to business as usual. It is practically alright now I am glad to say. It generally happens when I am a bit run down.

Thursday afternoon, 3<sup>rd</sup> instant. Mom and I went over to the station at seven this morning to see Gwen Hudson pass but she was not there. Mr Sam Hobon was on the train going to inspect the Kimberley schools. Ruth is arriving on Saturday 7 am. We have had another third of an inch of rain since I began this letter. Tanks not full yet. New stove is being erected today.

All well, lots of love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

It is raining as I am writing this.

It is Thursday morning – early as usual. One of Remington's men called to overhaul the machine and that was as far as I got in the writing line. I hope he has improved it and that it will spell better than before.

Let me tell you the good news that we had 92 points of rain yesterday making a total of 3.44 inches since September 24<sup>th</sup>. My tanks are not full yet but we have enough to keep us supplied for a year or so. More rain is still about and I guess we shall have them all full very soon. We shall take the precaution to lock the taps when we go away.

You will be glad to know that I have received word from the Rock Cliff man that my telegram was just in time to secure both cottages for January 4<sup>th</sup> so the uncertainty in that respect is settled. The next thing to be settled will be the order of occupation. Joe is planning to spend Xmas with us and may come by car. He wants to bring one of the children and Blodwen the other when she goes to Cape Town. This seems a good idea and I hope it will be carried out. If he comes by car, he could bring Grace and the children along – if that could be arranged. Of course if Ted cannot get away at all, that may have to be altered. Reg and Dot look to come about the second week in January and Douglas for the last two weeks of the holidays. Ruth is not sure of her plans but hopes to spend some time at Hamburg (near East London) and will be glad if she can be fetched from there to Rock Cliff – which of course we can manage. Denis is also looking forward as well.

We had a nice weekend with Ruth. She arrived on Saturday morning and left again on Monday morning. She had a long interview with Mr Thomas who is taking over the bookshop from the first of January on his own account. He has made Ruth a certain offer and she is considering same. In any case she could not make any change before March 1<sup>st</sup>. Ruth thinks her mother would be in better health here. Of course we should be pleased to have her near us. I do not expect any of you would remember a Mr Jones who used to visit Vryburg and stay at Mr Willie Brown's in school holidays. He married Ruby Adendorf's sister. He has been in hospital here for some time after spending some weeks with George and Hilda at Groenkloof. Doctor has now said he cannot do anything more for him so they have gone back to their home at East London. It is very sad. However, on Sunday, Mrs Jones motored us out to Groenkloof as Ruth naturally wanted to see Hilda and Mrs Jones had got some of her belongings from there. We spent an hour or so there. Uncle Walter was sitting outside in the warm sunshine. He seemed as well as usual and had just returned from a trip to Victoria West. We got back to town and went to service as usual.

Mr Gush who married Mabel Willmore of Vryburg is spending some time in Cradock. He has a contract to build some houses. He hopes to get his wife up on a visit and we shall be pleased to renew old acquaintance. They have one son. Mom and I went to the station to see Gwen Hudson pass but she was not on that train. However I saw her on Monday morning. Her father was slightly better when she left. She was looking very well. I see in the Northern that Rev Watson is leaving the ministry at Vryburg. I understand he is divorced from his wife. I wonder who will be sent in his place.

I am glad to say my voice has returned. We had a number of Guy Faulks on Friday night. They were well behaved and pleased with the pennies given them.

After breakfast. Please all of you bear in mind that we don't wish any of you to spend money in buying any presents for us for Xmas. We are not giving presents this year. The East London trip will, I hope, suffice.

Love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Thursday November 17<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

I generally begin my letter on Wednesday but this week it has not been possible. It is still early in the morning but I must push on.

It has been a hectic week. I think I mentioned in my last that one of the teachers and his wife who attended our social – a prominent Voortrekker – felt unwell and left the social early. On the Sunday he died from heart failure. The following Tuesday morning I addressed the Boys School at the invitation of the Principal. He had a sore on his hand – he thought an insect had bitten him. The same evening he had to have the doctor who declared it was blood poisoning. He was removed to hospital on Sunday and died the same night. So two of the staff passed away within a week. He was not a popular principal and it is stated that he was the cause of much of the unpleasantness that has arisen in the past few years. His widow phoned to me asking me to speak at his graveside. All the school children were there and most of the town's people. It was a trying ordeal but she thanked me afterwards for what was said. Coming as it has done just at the end of the school year and the examinations sitting has been most awkward from an educational point of view. However these things are not for us to judge.

Then again the weather has been most strange. Ted in his written on Sunday remarked about the excessive heat. It was not too bad here but on Tuesday, it was bitterly cold. This was the day of the funeral. I put on my pullover and my scarf as well as an overcoat. Rain also fell and the wind was bitterly cold. However I am thankful to say I do not appear to have taken a serious cold. We have hardly seen the sun for a couple of days but as I write – a little after six – it is shining brightly now. My tanks are not yet full, most of them are two thirds but it will take another inch or two to fill them. It is a treat having hot and cold rainwater in the bathroom. On Monday I had four committee meetings to attend and Tuesday five, as well as the funeral and we had reading here the same evening. Yesterday there was a singing competition in the location church between three choirs. It was still bitterly cold and I was glad to keep my overcoat on all the time. The function was organised by the WCTU. The singing and recitations were very good. Mom did not go but a lady called and took her to the hospital and distributed flowers to the patients. Bedsocks and warmer clothing have been in demand. Tomorrow night we have to attend speech day at Rocklands Girls' School breaking up. The Principal here too has been on the sick list but is better again. Who says a Mayor's life is a dull one? It is all very interesting.

Holiday arrangements are developing 'according to plan'. I have not had a reply to my query as to the position of the two cottages or if there is good fishing there. If the cottages are close together, I shall try to get a tent or bokseil between them so as to use the space for a dining room. The owner says he will be able to cart our luggage from town if it arrives on one of his regular days for going to town. It would be an added pleasure to me if it could be arranged for all of us to be together for part if not all the time. Douglas looks to leave Vryburg on January 12<sup>th</sup>. Joe may perhaps spend Xmas with us. Ruth and Denis look to join us about the middle of January. Grace and children we hope will be here for Xmas but as Ted cannot get away at all, her plans may be altered. Reg and Dot also speak of the middle of January. We should like definite dates if at all possible. I have made arrangements for sending an order to East London for groceries etc. etc. so as to save taking things from here. If there are any special lines you think of or require, please send your lists along in good time. We are taking John with us and can possibly get a local maid there.

We are very sorry to hear that Grace is still suffering from boils. Do hope they will yield to treatment. Reg, too has been laid up with swelling of the ex glands in his neck. Dot does not say if they had a doctor. We had a very neatly typed letter from Lynne recently. She is evidently qualifying to be her Dad's private secretary.

I have just taken two temperatures for the past 24 hours. It actually froze and the maximum was only 61. Hope there has not been losses of stock.



After breakfast. Ted has sent us snaps Joe took when there for the October bank holiday. Ted's boys have grown tremendously. Pam also is shooting upwards. Roy and Jean have also grown.

Whilst I think of it, all of you will bring your cameras as snaps will be very interesting.

It will be a great pleasure to us if it is possible for all to be together if only for a few days. I feel that the children do not see enough of each other as the family is so scattered. I know it will be difficult to accomplish this as you are not all your own masters but we will try.

Thursday afternoon. It has turned out a beautiful day so far. The air is fresh and crisp and it seems a shame to be indoors so I hope after tea Mom and I will go for a walk.

Dulcie Moorcroft was here this morning and says she was at Groenkloof and Grass Ridge a few days ago after they had had a terrible hail storm. You children will remember the fine old mulberry trees at the back of Groenkloof house, which no doubt you have climbed many times, was blown right over. Uncle Walter is going to saw off some of the branches and re-erect the trunk. Grass Ridge garden also suffered considerably and the house at the dam had several panes of glass broken. We may be thankful that the same storm did not visit us.

We have had a good show of arum lilies and are hoping that there may still be some by the 14<sup>th</sup> of December for Dorothy's wedding. Our roses are growing well.

You will be interested in hearing that Mrs Moolman has lost her Appeal against the judgement in the Supreme Court in the case she brought against Mr Cull for deformation of her character. She has to pay costs as well. These are expected to be in the neighbourhood of £1000. Had she won her case, life here would have been unbearable for any public spirited person. Where she is likely to raise the necessary money to pay up is a problem. You will see the full judgement in next Saturday's Midland.

I must really stop now or I shall tire you. I trust you are all well and that we shall continue to hear from you regularly.

Much love from  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Thursday November 24<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

Time is flying very quickly. A month's time and Xmas will be at our doors. I am glad to say that arrangements for our holiday seem to be making satisfactory progress. Of course no one can plan with any degree of certainty but we all hope that nothing will happen to interfere with our long looked for trip to East London. I have passed round for inspection a snap of the cottages. They are nothing to boast about but so long as they are clean and comfortable, we shall be satisfied. They will be next to each other and I am arranging to hire a tent or marquee which we can use as a common dining room or extra sleeping accommodation. I have sent round a list of what I propose ordering in the way of food stuffs for a start so that when we get there, we shall have something to eat.

Joe will come to us for Xmas and return to his work and come again by car for New Year. Grace and children look to leave for Bloemfontein on December 16<sup>th</sup> and spend the weekend with Joe. We do not yet know when Blodwen starts for Cape Town. Grace will then come on here and we look to leave – some by car and the rest by train – on Tuesday evening arriving at East London at noon on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> January. Dot writes that we may expect them to arrive direct at East London on January 10<sup>th</sup>. Ruth and Denis will be staying near there and can be fetched by car. Douglas and family will, I suppose, go by car direct to East London about the same time but we have not heard definitely the date. I am looking forward to having all together if possible if only for a day or so. We have not made any plans yet for anyone to stay in this house while we are away but it has occurred to me that perhaps the Dodds might like to come to town for a while. I am going to sound them. Of course it may be that some may not want to stay at the coast all the time so we must be prepared to put such here if necessary. I have arranged transport of the luggage if sent down in advance. We are leaving to each of you to bring what you think will be needed in the way of sheets and rugs. Note there is plenty of sand there so don't bring anything that will spoil. Our boy John is keen on going and I have written asking the party if a maid servant can be obtained locally. Please keep account of your expenses as we will pay them. This is our Xmas present as may not be able to do it again. Do you think it would be worthwhile hiring a marquee 40 ft by 20 ft? I am trying to get a smaller one if possible. Let us know as soon as possible if there is anything else any of you think of that will add to your comfort.

Am glad to say that Grace is better of her boils. Am sorry that Ted will not be able to come at all. His parents have let their house at Doonside so they will be going to Kroonstad and be with Ted. This will be nice for all concerned.

Ruth has decided to come to Cradock and work with Mr Thomas at the bookshop from March 1<sup>st</sup>. It will be a big wrench for her to break away from all her friends in Grahamstown. I hope the arrangements they have made will work very satisfactorily.

I have started addressing my 350 envelopes for this year's Xmas cards, it is some job. There will be a similar number of "official" ones to do as well but I shall get the office typist on to that job.

We are sorry to hear that Gwen Hudson's father died shortly after she had been down to see him.

Thursday afternoon 24<sup>th</sup>. I must avoid missing the post as I have done the last two weeks for which I am sorry. Letter from Grace received today says their schools are breaking up on 9<sup>th</sup> so she and the children are leaving for Bloemfontein on 10<sup>th</sup> and will leave there on 12<sup>th</sup> arriving here on the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup>. So they will be here in time for the wedding on 14<sup>th</sup>. This will be alright so far as we are concerned and hope nothing will prevent the plan from materialising. We are now beginning to realise that the holiday is really going to happen. Each family must please bring what they think necessary in the way of sheets, pillows and rugs. Please see that they are suitably marked. We shall take a few thermos flasks, enamel plates etc. Lots of love and looking forward to all having a good holiday, make any suggestions you may think of. Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Thursday December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

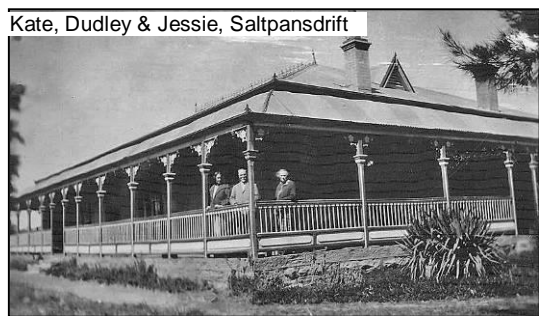
It seems as though I shall only have about two or at the most three more circle letters to write this year, unless I take the typewriter with me to East London which perhaps seems hardly necessary. However we shall see later on. Christmas is very near now and I hope all our long drawn out plans will materialise to the satisfaction of all concerned. It will be a great disappointment to us that Ted, Blodwen and her children will not be with us but we quite understand the position. Am glad Ted's parents have decided to go to Kroonstad for the holiday, having let their house at Doonside. Blodwen has only spent one Xmas with her people since she was married and her mother has not been at all well for some time.

We are looking forward to having Grace and children and Joe here for Xmas day, Grace and Co arriving about the 13<sup>th</sup>. Her boys may even arrive earlier than that. Am glad some representative of our family will be present at Dot's wedding on 14<sup>th</sup>.

What funny weather we have been having - Sunday and Monday were very hot and Tuesday quite cold. However we have had a little rain which is very welcome. Tanks not full yet. Of course we are using a good deal for baths and the flower garden.

We offered our house for the holidays to Mr and Mrs Dodd but they do not see their way to accept. They spent a nice afternoon with us on Monday. Nessie's children are growing nicely. They hope to see something of you when you are here.

We spent the weekend at Uncle Norman's, Katkop. They have not the wireless as



Neville has that at Aunt Jessie's. He is fixing up an electric light for Saltpond for her. It does seem such a pity that Uncle Herbert did not have it in his time. We went up to see Uncle Walter in the afternoon and the Saunders were there as well. We had a lift back by car as Mr Collin was bringing Enid in. Douglas fears that unless they have rain soon, he will not be able to come down. I do hope that will not happen. It would be a sad disappointment to all.

Thanks for comments on the list of provisions which I sent you, I am making some slight alterations. I have secured a tent. We think that each family should bring a knife, fork and spoon and mug. Sheets and a pillow for each will be needed. We are taking four mattresses besides what will be on the beds. The following is the list of furniture which they say is in the houses: two single beds and coir mattresses, chest of drawers, corner wardrobe, washstand, toilet set and candlestick. Dining room: sideboard, table, 6 chairs, lamp. Kitchen table, cupboard, wood stove, primus, bath, bucket, baking pans, frying pan, set five pots, 1½ dozen cups and saucers, ½ dozen plates (dinner) ½ dozen soup plates, ½ dozen breakfast plates, two meat dishes, 2 pie dishes, 2 milk jugs, butter pot, sugar basin, tea and coffee pots, water kettle, 2 basins, salad dish, enamel plate, ½ dozen egg cups, mug, ladle, 2 irons, lamp, strainer, broom, dustpan, salt, pepper and mustard bottles. This seems pretty complete for camp life.

We have had all our vines "topped" by the same man who did the pruning and by all appearance, there should be a good crop of grapes.

On Saturday afternoon I have to present the Voortrekker mugs to all the school children on the Market Square. There should be about 1000. The country schools will be distributed on the respective farms.

As I do not expect any more letters from any of you this week and as it is Wednesday afternoon, I may as well post a day earlier than usual. It is raining nicely as I write (4 pm) and if it keeps on like this for another hour or so, all the tanks should be full. I have to go to a committee in the location at five so will post these on the way. We are both well and are looking forward to seeing you all in the near future.

Lots of love from Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Wednesday afternoon, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

In a letter today from Douglas, he says Eric is very ill, had contracted pneumonia and is rather bad. Doctor from Vryburg spent five hours there and was coming again. Fortunately Freda is a trained nurse and there is another close at hand. They have also a number of good friends near so we hope he soon recovers. It is the 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their wedding day on 10<sup>th</sup> and it is also their birthday. We shall be anxious for further news.

Douglas reports having had some good rains and hopes for more. He thinks they will bring their motor truck as well as the car. This will be handy for luggage and if he and Evelyn want to stay longer, Arthur could motor Lynne and Rex back for school.

This day next week Dorothy will be married – in the morning – and we hope Grace and the children will arrive on Tuesday morning. I have been asked to propose the health of the parents of the bridegroom. I have not met them yet but suppose it will be alright. Last evening I had to open with a speech the dance given by the Municipal Employees' Association in the Town Hall. Mom did not go but it went off satisfactorily. We are having crowds of subscription lists to subscribe too just at present. Xmas trees have been on for some time and what with schools breaking up, it has been a busy time. On Saturday morning, I distributed – with the assistance of others – some hundreds of Voortrekker mugs to school children. On January 2<sup>nd</sup> I have to give a welcome to a native church conference. We look to leave the following day for East London.

The farmer writes that he will try to get a native girl for us but adds they are very independent. Our John is quite looking forward to going. Una writes that she thinks we could do better by buying our requirements – groceries – at Woolworths. She says if Ronald does not go to them, she can lend us a stretcher and mattress and a cot-size mattress. Mrs Rickett and other old Vryburg friends are looking to come and spend a day with us on the camp. Blodwen leaves for Cape Town on the 16<sup>th</sup>.

Ruth writes that her mother is bad again and is in a nursing home. She is packing up in order to leave the house on Friday. Her address will be c/o Keiskama Hotel, Hamburg, Cape Province (this is near East London). We are to fetch her and Denis when they come to us. She also tells us that Denis has won a £30 bursary for three years at Rhodes. This is indeed good news. I think there is prospect of his winning others as well. This will be a great help.

Mr Dersley has been down today taking a few snaps of the house. It was his own wish to do so. I am sorry to say that his wife had a fall in her house last week when she stooped to pick up a parcel in the passage. Dr says one rib is bruised. She is suffering great pain. They are such a dear old couple. She evidently fainted. Fortunately her husband was in the house at the time.

I have nearly finished addressing seven hundred envelopes for Xmas cards and hope to post them in a few days. Some have already been received. Next week I shall be entertaining all the European members of the staff of the Council to supper and bioscope as I did last year. The work commenced this morning on the new storage reservoir. It is wonderful watching the mechanical excavator digging out the ground and riding it away. When the present reservoir was built, it took about 1000 natives to do the work. Now it is being done by about ten men and done better and infinitely faster.

Will post this now and go and see Aunt Eliza.

Much love to all  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Sunday December 11<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

It is not often that I use my typewriter on Sundays but today I feel that I must as I am sure you will all be sorry to hear that Ruth's mother passed away on Friday evening. I had just gone to bed after attending my last Council meeting for this year when the phone rang and I was told of her mother's passing about an hour before. I at once offered to come down for the funeral, which was timed for three pm Saturday, but Ruth did not wish it. The evening train usually leaves here about 10 pm but was late that night. I found that if I hurried, I might be able to catch it but on second thought I rang Ruth up and suggested coming by the day train which would only arrive about 5 pm. Ruth did not wish this so I did not go. Friday was a busy day for me. Mom and I attended the breaking up and prize giving at the Boys School at 11 am where we had morning tea and I was called (unawares) to give an address to the school. In the afternoon I attended the Hospital Board meeting and in the evening was our Council meeting. When the phone rang, my first thought was that there was bad news regarding Eric but am glad to say that so far the news seems to show that he is gradually getting better – though still very ill. In addition to his attack of pneumonia, he is suffering from asthma. Doctor says he can come to Cradock for a change when he is well enough to travel. Aunt Emmie wants to come here as well when that happens as she may not go as far north as Vryburg.

At a quarter to six last evening (Saturday) a telegram came and my mind at once flew to Eric. However it was from my sister-in-law, Willie's wife as follows "Willie passed peacefully unexpectedly Friday inform sisters." This was a great shock as although we knew he had had a bad turn last June and that he was on diet treatment and had to give up some of his activities, which indicated that he was breaking up, we did not expect this to happen. Within ten minutes I manage to get a telegram off to Gladys as follows: "Webster Bankok Grove Road Rondebosch, Cable received 5.45 Uncle Willie passed away peacefully unexpectedly Friday inform Emmie". The telegraph office closes here at 5 pm so this was the only way of getting the news through without waiting to wire on Monday. I also rang up to Ruth to enquire how she and Denis were bearing up and also to tell them the sad news. She said there had been a large attendance at the funeral and lots of lovely flowers. Everybody had been very kind to them. They are giving up the house at once and their address will be c/o Keiskama Hotel, Hamburg, Cape Province (this is near where we are going for January). Denis is of course home with Ruth. I also phoned on Friday night to Hilda Collett at Groenkloof but they had already had the news of Mrs Brown's death from Mr Willie Brown from Somerset East. They were not able to go to the funeral.

This (Sunday) morning I have sent a cable to England, having had to telephone same to Port Elizabeth first, as follows: "Balmaha, Liverpool. Loving sympathy from all." The Post Office said they expected it would be delivered today. Of course we went up as soon as possible to tell the sad news to Aunt Eliza. She was not greatly surprised as she had noticed from Uncle Willie's letters that he seemed to be failing in health. I had received a six page letter from him a short while ago – the longest I have ever had from him I think. I only answered it the day he died (Friday) thinking he would get it by Xmas. We had meeting here this morning and reference was made to the sad events of the past few days. The comfort is in the fact that both Uncle and Mrs Brown were fully prepared for what has happened. My word to all of you is "be ye also ready for we know not what a day or an hour may bring forth."

We are picturing Grace and children spending the day at Bloemfontein and arriving here on Tuesday morning. We have made plans for sleeping eleven extra here on Tuesday night. Two weeks today will be Xmas day. I have been asked to take the service at Fish River next Sunday morning.

Love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Thursday December 18<sup>th</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

It is early Wednesday morning and if I do not make an early start, I shall not get much done before the wedding which is timed for 10.30.

First of all let me say that Aunt Emmie did not get the news of Uncle Willie's death until Sunday morning. I sent the telegram to Gladys and they were out all the evening and got the news about midnight so did not disturb her mother until Sunday morning. I was advised from the Post Office that my cable was delivered to Aunt Nellie on Sunday. It will be some time before we get any details from England. I do not know if I told you that this is the third of my brothers who have passed away suddenly.

Grace and her four children arrived about nine on Tuesday morning. The train was about an hour late. I just got to the station as they were getting out of the train. The children walked over with me whilst Grace came in the taxi with the luggage. About 10.30 Aunt Letty, Florrie, Kathleen and Boy, Ruth and Denys (Florrie's children arrived in one car having left Graaff Reinet about six). It was quite a cold morning coming over the mountain they said. Boy Vorster, Ruth and Denys did not sleep here but the rest did. We had planned to put them all up. Grace's children have grown tremendously. All seem interested in all they have seen so far. In the afternoon they were busy shopping, going to the park, my office and went to see Aunt Eliza as well. Her knees were giving her some trouble due no doubt to the cold morning. She had received letter from Aunt Emmie about Uncle Willie's death. No later news from Eric so take no news as good sign that he is making progress.

The morning is nice and bright and everything points to having a fine day for this important event. It is anticipated that there will be a big crowd. The ceremony is taking place in the Church of England and reception, or morning tea as it is called, in the Church Hall. I am down to propose the health of the parents of the bridegroom (whom I have not met yet). The presents are very numerous and costly - think that is the usual phrase used on such occasions. More about this later on.

All the Graaff Reinet contingent are leaving after dinner. They are very busy on the farm - shearing, ploughing etc. We learn from them that Mary is leaving the Sanatorium at the end of the month and taking a long holiday.

We have taken Matilda on again whilst we have a full house, so both our old hands are back again.

Thursday morning early. Well we had a full day yesterday and everything went very happily. Most of the family relations were there. Only Uncle Walter, Aunts Rosa and Agnes were absent of Mom's family. Crowds of Colletts and a full representative gathering of the general public. The church was full and the Church Hall at the morning tea was also crowded. Everything in the way of dresses and decorations were as they should be - neat and becoming. The toasts were given in appropriately short speeches. The weather was perfect. Aunt Jessie was here to dinner - over a dozen in all. Aunt Letty and the rest of the Graaff Reinet detachment left about 3.30. Uncle Owen, Aunt Kate and Beryl came to see us in the afternoon and went to see Aunt Eliza. Beryl had a faint whilst here but was alright after a rest. The wedding presents made a fine show at the Poplars. We got such a nice letter from my brother Willie, beautifully written only a few days before he died and which will probably be the last we shall receive. He sent his Xmas greetings. His is dated 5<sup>th</sup> and he passed away on 9<sup>th</sup>.

Letters from Douglas, Evelyn, Dot and Joe are to hand today. Many thanks for all news. Glad to hear that Eric appears to be getting better but I doubt the wisdom of his venturing coming down by car with Douglas. The journey might be too much for him. The children are all round me watching the operation and I am near the end of the paper. I had better stop. Much love to everyone and thanks for all news,

Much love from  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1938

My dear All,

It is Wednesday morning and the rest of the household is fast asleep. I have just marked on the wall where the shadow of the sun fell as today is the longest day of the year. Time is rapidly flying and I suppose I shall only address one more dear all this year. Uncle Willie, in his last letter to me, referred to the interest he always took in reading my weekly contributions as he said he often gleaned items of news regarding South Africa which he would not otherwise get. He thought that perhaps some of the family or myself in years to come, if they had time, might be interested in rereading them. I have a complete set of them since 1933. So far we have not received any details of his death.

Douglas and Evelyn reported in their last letters that Eric was making good progress and they had offered him a seat in their car as far as Rooispruit. Douglas and family hope to arrive at East London about 10<sup>th</sup> January. They propose bringing their lorry as well as the car. Grace thinks Joe may come down by car this weekend and leave the car here and then come the following weekend and go on to East London. This will be very nice if he does as we miss the car very much for getting about. I have been asked to present the prizes on Monday next at Lake Arthur Speed Boat Regatta. Hope he will be able to attend. We are sending off some luggage by train this week as owing to the holidays, the train service may be delayed.

We had a nice shower on Sunday afternoon and the river came down in flood later. It was higher than it has been for some years. There was a little hail but did not do any damage to our fruit. We are enjoying our figs very much. Grapes are coming on but will not be ripe for some time. The children and Grace spent part of a day at the warm bath, they took food with them. They went by taxi and came back also by taxi in the rain.

I took all the members of the staff to supper and bio afterwards on Friday night. Grace and children only stayed for the first part of bio. They have been up to play with Dulcie's children and are fond of going to see the baboons in the park. Have taken them up to see the excavations for the new reservoir which interests the boys very much.

Xmas cards are rolling in numbers daily. Last week we distributed over 30 parcels of groceries to poor people – mostly Dutch. They have been very pleased. In two cases they asked for money as well to buy meat and another wanted money for clothing. On Xmas Day we look to visit the hospital and old peoples' home and take flowers and sweets. I am not going to gaol this year as a special permit has to be obtained from Pretoria and I have not applied for one. I am not taking my typewriter to East London, only a supply of postcards. If Aunt Emmie comes to Cradock, as she wants to do if Eric is able to come, I shall probably return from East London earlier to see her as her doctor says she should not stay in this altitude for more than a few days.

Wednesday afternoon. Letters from Douglas and Evelyn and Dot report all good news. Eric is making progress and all are looking forward to the sea. Our postal address will be Rock Cliff Cottages, P.O. Wood Brook, East London if you want to have your post sent on to you. Wood Brook is also a telegram office. The post only goes out three times a week. The local manager of Hepworths is at present staying in the cottage we shall occupy and says it is a very nice place. I look to write one more letter this year.

Mrs Webb of Bloemfontein (Mom's cousin) died in Pretoria last Friday and was buried in Bloemfontein on Monday. Joe was one of the bearers. Lots of love to all and may you all be happy and have safe journeys to the coast and good weather whilst there.

Happy Xmas to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Tuesday afternoon, December 27<sup>th</sup> 1938

My dear All,

Christmas 1938 has come and gone. We shall be interested in hearing how the various homes have celebrated the day. So I had better start telling what we did. It was Sunday and service had been arranged for 7.30 am which we all attended. The organist either forgot to attend or did not think of the service and had to be sent for and so service did not start until ten minutes late. All eight of us were present, Joe having arrived the evening before. The service was well attended and a retiring collection was taken on behalf of the Marsh Memorial Homes at Rondebosch. Pam and Jean withdrew from the service owing to their colds being rather troublesome. After breakfast, Joe motored Jean and I up to the hospital where we met the Matron who took us to each patient and Jean gave each a bunch of flowers with an appropriate text attached. The wards were very tastefully decorated and all seemed pleased with this little service. Whilst this was in progress, Joe had gone to fetch Mom and then we three went to the old peoples' home and distributed flowers and a hankie to each of the inmates there. I forgot to say that on the way up, we called to wish Aunt Eliza a merry Xmas and found her much upset because her regular servant had not turned up and sent a substitute who was not of much service. The electric light had also failed the evening before and the baker had forgotten to deliver her bread. It was only natural that all this combination of incidents were very disturbing to her peace of mind. We begged her to come and have dinner with us but she declined the invitation. We called again later in the day and found everything calm and normal. All except myself stayed home on Sunday evening. In the afternoon we all went for a walk to the site of the quarry extension which had made most of us very tired.

I must go back a little regarding Joe's arrival. We had all along hoped he would come by car so that we could use it for getting about in the district. On Saturday afternoon, as Grace and I were going up town to do some shopping, the telegraph messenger gave me two telegrams, both from Joe and exactly the same wording, that he hoped to leave Bloemfontein about four via Steynsburg. We therefore calculated that he would be arriving during the night. To our surprise, as we were sitting at supper (about seven) in he walked. He had knocked off work early and left about noon covering the 251 miles in just seven hours. We were delighted to see him. Monday he motored Grace and children to Lake Arthur to see the speedboat races. Mom and I followed after dinner as I had promised to present the prizes. The heat was terrible, 100 in the shade at my thermometer. They did not stay for all the races but brought Mom back to town and went out to the warm bath. I came back with one of the officials. They were all interested in the races but the heat was too awful for words.

Last evening Aunt Eliza honoured us with another visit. Joe took her and Mr Thomas for a spin round the town and they spent quite a time with us. We wanted them to stay to supper but no persuasion could prevail. She was very interested in seeing the decorations etc. Joe left by train this a.m. for work and looks to be back on Saturday morning. Our plans have not been altered. Mom, Grace and children leave by train Tuesday night and Joe and I and the boy early on Wednesday morning, arriving there before Mom and co.

We have not yet had particulars regarding my brother Willie's passing but should hear this mail.

I think this will be my last letter for the year, so will wish you all a very happy and prosperous New Year. Hoping to see you all very soon.

Yours affectionately  
Dad